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Under the Heel of the Dragon

ISLAM, RACISM, CRIME,
AND THE UIGHUR IN CHINA

Blaine Kaltman

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To my parents

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China and its major cities. *Source:* Adapted from Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook, 2001* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001), 104.

Uighur Ethnic Enclaves

THIS IS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY of the attitudes, behaviors, and interactions of Han Chinese and Uighur, a Muslim minority group from China's northwestern province of Xinjiang. It explores how Uighur, both those living in their traditional homeland and those who have migrated to China's coastal cities, are coping with the broad changes taking place in Chinese society and the social and economic disadvantages that they face because of their minority status. The central question of this study is whether Uighur are interested in assimilating into dominant Han society or whether they have rejected Han societal goals.

According to China's 2000 national census, the total Uighur population is 8.3 million. They are China's fifth-largest minority nationality. The Uighur are an understudied group, even though their ancestral homeland, which borders Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, and Tajikistan, sits astride one of the world's most troublesome regions. However, the recent opening of China's northwest to tourism, ethnic unrest in Xinjiang, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and the Chinese government's oppression of religious minorities have raised Western consciousness of the plight of the Uighur.

The Uighur are believed to have settled Xinjiang's Tarim basin in the sixth century CE. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries CE, a Uighur kingdom flourished in Xinjiang, and Uighur began converting from their previous Buddhist beliefs to Islam. The majority of Uighur today consider themselves Sunni Muslims.

The Uighur, being Turkic, are as physically distinguishable from Han as African Americans are from their European American counterparts. Their language, which is written in the Arabic script, belongs to the Turkic family and has been a major factor in maintaining their sense of national identity. "Uighur," roughly translated, means "unity" or "alliance."

China, like most large countries, is multiethnic, but one ethnic group—the Han, who make up 92 percent of China's 1.3 billion people—dominates its politics, government, economy, and culture. Among ethnic Han, the Uighur have a reputation for being a fierce, primitive, and criminally minded people. Many Uighur struggle to communicate in Mandarin, and this adds to the Han perception that the Uighur are a backward people.

Statistics concerning Chinese minority groups are difficult to obtain, and the accuracy of the data is often questionable. Working from the available statistical data and from anecdotal evidence, prior studies of the Uighur have concluded that, compared to Han, Uighur have shorter life expectancies, lower levels of education, higher unemployment rates, and lower per capita incomes. They are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and their religious activities are closely monitored and, in some cases, suppressed by the Chinese government.

Much of the information in this book was gathered from in-depth interviews with Uighur and Han respondents. The interviews were conducted in Mandarin without the aid of an interpreter and without the knowledge or sponsorship of the Chinese government.

Between March 2004 and February 2005, I conducted 217 in-depth interviews in four cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Urumqi, and Shenzhen. In all of these cities, Uighur constitute the minority population and, in all but Urumqi, a very small percentage of the population. Even in Urumqi, a city with a population of 2.1 million

and the capital of Xinjiang, Uighur make up only 13 percent of the population.

Using the Uighur in a minority situation as a construct, I sought to probe Uighur and Han attitudes toward the dominant Han society, how the Uighur cope with their minority status, and how the Han, in turn, perceive the Uighur and their coping practices. I designed my interviews to include discussions of cultural marginalization, educational opportunities, employment and economic development, social inequality, religious practice and participation, national identity, Han-Uighur relations, criminal stigmatization, and institutionalized racism.

I addressed these subjects with Uighur and Han of varied backgrounds in the four research locations and was surprised by the consistency of the answers I received from Han in all locations and from Uighur living in Shanghai, Urumqi, and Shenzhen. Han generally held discriminatory views about the Uighur, and the Uighur, in turn, expressed racist views about the Han.

Many Uighur who live in Beijing are second-generation Beijingers or have lived there a long time, and they tend to retain legitimate employment. They seem to be less critical of the Han and more willing to make an effort to become part of dominant Han society. They also seem to perceive less racism on the part of the Han and, perhaps as a result of this, are better adjusted to their minority status.

I made every effort to obtain representative samples of Han and Uighur interviewees in Beijing, Shanghai, Urumqi, and Shenzhen; but since mine were nonprobability samples, it is not possible to obtain a valid estimate of the risks of error. Although using statistical tests for significance or measures of association would be inappropriate, I did, however, compute percentages for respondent answers in all of the cities in order to make my findings easier to comprehend.

Percentages for Han responses are shown in the aggregate because the views expressed by Han interviewees in all four cities were so uniform as to be virtually indistinguishable. Percentages for responses from Uighur living in Shenzhen are not included because I was unable to interview a large enough number of Uighur in that city to make such calculations meaningful. In Shenzhen, the Uighur population is significantly smaller than in the other cities because the development

of Shenzhen as a modern city began only in 1980, when it was designated a “special economic zone.” As a result, Uighur migration to Shenzhen is a relatively recent phenomenon. In total, I interviewed 92 Uighur and 125 Han. Table 1 (see appendix) lists the distribution of Uighur and Han interviewees by age, sex, marital status, occupational classification, and location. Table 2 contains the distribution of interview responses.

To supplement these interviews, I carefully observed Uighur-Han interactions in each research location. I also took advantage of every opportunity to engage Uighur and Han in conversation while on the street or in buses, taxis, markets, stores, mosques, temples, bars, and restaurants. Although not included in the percentages that I calculated, a number of these chance conversations yielded useful information.

Many passages in this book are translations of salient portions of the interviews that I conducted and the conversations that I had. In them, the respondents speak in their own words and expose the inner thoughts of Han and Uighur from all walks of life, including some admitted criminals (drug dealers, robbers, pickpockets, and purse snatchers).

Most Uighur with whom I spoke during the course of this study lived in Uighur ethnic enclaves and coped with their minority status by avoiding all but essential contact with Han. The remainder of this chapter is a description of the Uighur enclaves and neighborhoods in Beijing, Shanghai, Urumqi, and Shenzhen.

Beijing

Beijing is China’s capital city. It is a massive and very expensive city in which to live. Even Han locals admit that Beijing can be overwhelming and overpriced. The city is centered on Tiananmen Square, which is surrounded by tourist sites like the Forbidden City and Mao Zedong’s tomb. Every day it is crowded with tourists, locals, and hawkers. The streets surrounding the square boast some of Beijing’s finest shopping, hotels, and entertainment.

Uighur in Beijing seem generally better off than their Shanghai, Urumqi, or Shenzhen counterparts. The two Uighur neighborhoods

in Beijing are Niu Jie (Cow Street), considered by most local Han to be the city's Muslim district, and the Haidian suburb, particularly the Wei Gong Cun area. The Uighur I interviewed who lived outside these two enclaves spoke fluent Mandarin with standard accents, had good jobs, and resided in otherwise all-Han apartment complexes. Aside from their abstention from eating pork products—something all Uighur, regardless of background or societal position, said they refused to do—and their physical appearance, there is little to identify them as a Chinese minority. Some of these Uighur who do not reside in the enclaves look down on those who do. One young man told me that the enclaves are “poor, dirty, and too far away,” adding, “I am not interested in those places.”

NIU JIE

Niu Jie is home to Beijing's most famous mosque, the Niu Jie Mosque, and because the signs for stores and restaurants are in both Arabic script and Chinese characters, it resembles a street in the Uighur section of Urumqi. Niu Jie has several Xinjiang restaurants. The street is also home to several grocery stores, a pharmacy, and a tea shop. The staff in these stores appeared to be Han. Some may have been Hui (Han Muslims), but none of the employees wore a traditional Muslim prayer cap. Customers appeared to be Han.

In the back streets surrounding the Niu Jie Mosque are a few vegetable and meat markets. There, most vendors are Hui, identifiable by their head garb, and a few are Uighur. The customers were a mix of Han and Hui. Although I never saw any pigs hanging on hooks or similarly blatant displays, pork products were being sold in the meat markets.

At the start of Niu Jie is a large mural in which each of China's minority nationalities is depicted in traditional costume, dancing, playing a traditional instrument, or preparing food. The street itself is wide and relatively untrafficked. The high-rise apartment buildings lining the street are old, and beggars with deformities and missing limbs wander the street, a sight otherwise unseen in Beijing except at the train station. Many, if not all of the beggars are Hui, and most of them congregate outside the mosque.

There is no noticeable police presence on Niu Jie. Han uniformed traffic police sometimes direct the increased street traffic outside the mosque before and after Friday afternoon services, particularly during Ramadan.

WEI GONG CUN

The Wei Gong Cun area in Beijing's Haidian suburb is known for its Uighur population, although according to Beijing Han there are fewer Uighur there now than there were a year ago. Most Han believe that this is because of local government efforts to clean up the area and rid it of unemployed Uighur who, as one middle-aged female Han office manager said, "give Beijing a bad reputation as being a place for thieves."

Wei Gong Cun is about twenty kilometers from Tiananmen Square and the city center. Most Han and Uighur working and living almost anywhere else in Beijing believe that Wei Gong Cun is too far away. A Uighur on Niu Jie told me, "There's nothing out there." Compared to the rest of Beijing, there is little shopping or entertainment in Wei Gong Cun, although the surrounding suburb has a Pizza Hut, a KFC, and some massive shopping malls.

Wei Gong Cun does have the Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue, a university for minority students. Most Uighur seem to be concentrated in the area around the university. The campus and surrounding area are in poor condition when compared with much of the rest of Beijing, including the other areas of Haidian. The buildings are old, and the streets are poorly paved and riddled with potholes. There is very little motor traffic, but there are a number of pedestrians—mostly students and people living in the apartment complexes around the university. There is no noticeable police presence.

There are several Xinjiang restaurants in Wei Gong Cun, particularly in the labyrinth of run-down streets surrounding the university; surprisingly few of them, however, are Uighur-owned or even have any Uighur working in them. Most are owned and operated by Hui or Han. Some of them even serve pork, although most do not.

Uighur in Beijing seem generally to resent the idea of Han selling Xinjiang products. "There are many Xinjiang restaurants here," ex-

plained one Uighur goat meat seller in Wei Gong Cun, “so they [customers] can go wherever they like. Many Xinjiang restaurants here are fake, though. They are opened by Han. The cooks there are Han. They don’t serve real Xinjiang food. We are Uighur. Our food is real Xinjiang food.”

“What about Hui restaurants?” I asked.

“Yes,” the man replied, “the Hui have restaurants. That’s different, though, because many Hui are Xinjiang people. But some Han—they know Han like to eat Xinjiang food, so they cook it and pretend they are a Xinjiang restaurant. But they are not.”

While some of the Han running Wei Gong Cun’s Xinjiang restaurants do come from Xinjiang, more often than not they are simply trying to make money from a name that’s popular. Beijing has more Xinjiang restaurants than any city I’ve been to in China, including Urumqi.

Wei Gong Cun also has a Han-owned grocery store that has a Hui butcher working inside and does not sell any pork products. According to an older Han woman I met shopping there, this is not uncommon. “The Han know that there are minorities in the area who will want to eat Muslim food,” she said. “Also, there are many Han who like Muslim food. Many think it is cleaner and healthier. But just because it [the grocery store] is Han-run doesn’t mean that Muslims don’t work or shop here. Stores like this usually respect Muslim beliefs. It’s a way in which everyone can be happy.”

On most days in Wei Gong Cun, I saw, at most, only three to five Uighur—usually middle-aged or young adult men working at one of the Uighur-owned and Uighur-operated Xinjiang restaurants. The streets, while not deserted, were not well trafficked. There were some Han students from the university wandering about, along with the usual crowd of Han residents of the area. There were some Hui—all young adult men—working in a few of the restaurants around Wei Gong Cun, but even their numbers were limited.

While similar to Niu Jie in its number of Xinjiang restaurants and its run-down condition, Wei Gong Cun differs from Beijing’s other Uighur enclave in one important respect: there is no visible mosque in Wei Gong Cun. According to a few of the Uighur living in Wei Gong

Cun, there is a mosque in the area. Most of them, however, said that they had not been to the mosque and did not know where it was.

One middle-aged Uighur shop owner gave me directions to the mosque and claimed that local taxi drivers and even Han living in Wei Gong Cun would know how to get there, but this was not the case. His directions were inaccurate—on several different occasions I tried but could not find the mosque on foot or in a taxi—and local Han knew nothing of the mosque. One Han taxi driver after a futile search of the area told me of a Hui mosque located twenty minutes outside the Wei Gong Cun area, clearly not the mosque I was looking for. The Uighur who gave me directions to the mosque remained at his restaurant even on Friday afternoons during Ramadan. Contrary to his claim, “It’s too busy to go and pray,” there were hardly ever any customers at his restaurant.

Shanghai

Shanghai is a vast sprawling metropolis. It is also one of China’s most modern and international cities and, as a result, can be a very expensive place to live. Shanghai is divided into two sections: Shanghai proper, and the recently developed industrial and business district of Pudong. While Shanghai does not have a city center, per se, most of its shopping, restaurants, and hotels are within a few kilometers of the Waitan (also known as the Bund), the waterfront in Shanghai proper.

Shanghai’s Uighur area is limited to two streets, Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu, which intersect about one kilometer from the waterfront. As I observed, and according to local Han and Uighur, most Uighur in Shanghai stick to this area and the surrounding streets. Indeed, most Shanghai Uighur admitted to never having been more than a few kilometers from the waterfront, except when arriving at the train station. I never met a Uighur who had been to Shanghai’s stadium area, Pudong, or any local tourist sites like the Temple of the Jade Buddha. Most Uighur in Shanghai travel by foot and never go very far.

When I asked local Uighur why they ended up on and around Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu, no one could offer me a better answer

than “This is where my family or friends had come” or “This is where other Uighur were living.” Only one Uighur man, the owner of a barbecued goat meat stall on Yunnan Lu, offered “cheap rent” as an explanation for why he had settled in the area. According to local Han business owners, however, rents on Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu are more expensive than in many other areas in Shanghai.

According to local Han and Uighur, there are no strictly Uighur housing complexes in Shanghai. Still Uighur do not seem to benefit from this arrangement. They merely share older, cheaper housing with poorer Han. Even in the Uighur area of Shanghai, Uighur are in the minority. There are far more Han-owned shops selling typical Han products on Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu than there are Uighur establishments.

Shanghai, like most Chinese cities, is replete with Xinjiang restaurants. Many are Han- or Hui-owned. Even in Shanghai’s Uighur neighborhood there is a Han-owned restaurant specializing in goat meat, a Uighur specialty sold by Muslims throughout China. The Suzhou Yang Rou Guan (Suzhou Goat Meat Restaurant) is a popular place. It is often crowded with Han but is looked down on by Uighur.

“They don’t sell real Xinjiang food,” explained one Uighur hashish dealer, who appeared to be in his thirties. “Real Xinjiang food is Uighur, but now not many Uighur can afford to own restaurants here [on Guandong Lu]. I don’t know whether Han can tell the difference, but I wouldn’t eat there. No Uighur would.” In Shanghai, all the Uighur-owned or Uighur-operated establishments that I was able to find were located in the Guandong Lu/Yunnan Lu area.

There is no visible mosque in Shanghai’s Uighur enclave, although a few Uighur did claim to know of one. Still, despite their claims and my best efforts to follow their directions, I found no mosque in the Uighur neighborhood or the surrounding neighborhoods. According to educated local Han, there are no mosques in Shanghai. Most, however, claimed to know of Christian churches and Buddhist temples.

Just beyond what most Shanghai residents consider the Uighur area is the city’s famous Huai Hai Lu, a long, bustling shopping street of glitzy designer stores and upscale restaurants. Even Häagen Dazs and Starbucks have shops on Huai Hai Lu, drawing crowds of Chinese

nouveaux riches. Uighur rarely stray onto this street. However, many shoppers and tourists pass through or at least by Shanghai's Uighur area, since it is not far from Shanghai's Ren Min (People's) Square, a famous tourist spot and an important subway station. Compared to Uighur areas in Beijing and Urumqi, Shanghai's Uighur enclave has the greatest police presence.

Urumqi

Urumqi is the capital of Xinjiang Province. It is a relatively modern city, most of its development having occurred in the last ten years. Urumqi's outskirts are, for the most part, rural and undeveloped, although there are some factories and industrial areas, including coal mines and oil fields. According to the most recent Chinese government statistics, in 2002 Urumqi's population was 2.1 million. There are forty-nine minorities residing in the city and its surrounding area. Uighur constitute the majority of the minority population, making up 13 percent of Urumqi's total population. While Urumqi's Uighur population is too large to reside in one or two discrete ethnic enclaves, Xinjiang's capital city does have distinct Uighur areas, most notably the Er Dao Qiao Market, the Hantangri Mosque area, and the Uighur area on the outskirts of the city.

ER DAO QIAO MARKET

Ren Min Lu (People's Road) effectively divides Urumqi along a north-south axis. The north side is the city's Han section, and it is far more developed than the south side. Across Ren Min Lu, on Urumqi's south side, is Er Dao Qiao Market, Urumqi's most famous Uighur market area. There the Uighur sell whatever they can—mostly Uighur specialty foods, tobacco, cheap clothing, and electronics. Even here, Han have established their presence, selling Uighur souvenirs like Muslim head scarves, Uighur musical instruments, and handwoven carpets that they claim are imported from Turkey. Most of their customers are tourists, since Uighur and Hui tend not to purchase such souvenir items.

Nevertheless, in the market and the shabby brick ghetto that surrounds it, Uighur life seems to hold on in a changing Urumqi. Men sell goat meat skewers and bowls of tea from battered wooden carts, roll their own cigarettes in newspaper, and while away the afternoon playing chess and cards. Many Uighur men still wear traditional hats; many Uighur women wear head scarves, and a few also wear veils.

In this Uighur area, there is not much interaction between the two ethnic groups. The Han selling Uighur goods in Er Dao Qiao Market seem to keep to themselves. I observed only Uighur eating at Uighur food stalls or bartering with other Uighur for fruit and goods. The occasional Han walking through the bustling streets surrounding Er Dao Qiao was usually wearing business attire and talking on a mobile phone. The Uighur eyed but basically ignored them. As a foreigner in Urumqi's most famous Uighur neighborhood, I received about the same amount of attention, unless someone was trying to entice me into his stall.

THE HANTANGRI MOSQUE AREA

The streets surrounding Urumqi's Ren Min Square have fancy hotels, department stores, and restaurants. East of Ren Min Square is the Hantangri Mosque, the center of another Uighur area. The first and second floors of the mosque house an indoor shopping mall where Uighur vendors sell Uighur goods, such as traditional hats, silk rugs, faux-gold jewelry and ornate hair clips, knives, and so on. This arrangement is typical of all the mosques in Urumqi. The mosque rents out its lower levels or surrounding land to vendors (always Uighur) who, in return, help pay the costs of running the mosque. While most of the vendors spoke enough remedial Mandarin to sell their products to Han or Hui, I never once saw non-Uighur customers wandering the mall at any time I went there.

A small outdoor market surrounds the Hantangri Mosque, where Uighur sell typically Uighur foodstuffs, such as almonds, dates, raisins, fruit, goat meat, and *nang* (a flat, round bread that resembles a pizza crust) from wooden carts and tiny shops. There are more Han passing through the Hantangri Mosque area and patronizing the Uighur shops than there are in Er Dao Qiao. This may be because of

the area's proximity to Ren Min Square and the Han north side of Urumqi.

URUMQI'S OUTSKIRTS

Urumqi's outskirts are composed of desolate, impoverished Uighur ghettos. They are far removed from the comparatively glitzy center of town, where shopping streets surround fancy hotels. Even the Er Dao Qiao Market appears lively and wealthy next to Urumqi's surrounding neighborhoods with their donkey- and horse-drawn wooden carts, crumbling old buildings, and dusty, potholed, and manure-ridden streets. Here, most Uighur men wear traditional hats, and the few women I observed—they are rarely seen in the streets—wear veils. Han do not stray into these areas. Shop signs in Urumqi's outskirts are written in Arabic script. There is very little traffic, particularly in the midday heat. Occasionally a car drives by, kicking up clouds of dust in its wake, but I never once saw a taxi.

For Uighur living far from the Han section of town and the city center, Urumqi's development, for the most part, does not appear to have created additional legitimate opportunities. In Urumqi's outskirts I once met two Uighur men who appeared to be in their early thirties; they were wearing traditional hats. As I walked past, I smelled hashish. They were smoking cigarettes hand rolled in newspaper. They didn't seem concerned about the police; according to them, neither police nor "Han people" ever strayed into their neighborhood.

They lived at home with their parents and described their homes as "Uighur" and "traditional." They were Muslim and said they prayed regularly. Neither was married or employed. Apparently they spent their days hanging out, smoking, and doing nothing.

"We can't find jobs," said one.

"Maybe there is work in the center of Urumqi, but not out here," said the other. "But it's difficult to get there, and we can't afford to live there."

"Many Uighur live in Urumqi proper," I said.

"But they've always been there. Just as we've always been here. It's not as though we can simply move there. Most Uighur stay in the same place, even the same house their entire lives. Some people go

there [the center of town] to sell their things, and a few do try to get jobs there, but that's much more difficult."

"Also," said his friend, "apartments are getting more expensive in Urumqi, and most neighborhoods have been taken over by the Han."

"Urumqi is more developed now than before," said the first Uighur, "but the development has happened in the city itself and has benefited Han businessmen"

"And Han workers," added his friend.

"But it hasn't changed anything out here. It's neither better nor worse. We still live as we always have. Maybe for some Uighur things have gotten better. Some now have better jobs and better education. And maybe for some things are now worse because things have become too expensive for them or they have too much competition from the Han to be successful. But for us things are the same, and I don't think that will ever change."

Shenzhen

In 2005, Shenzhen's population was estimated to exceed 10 million, but the Chinese government admits that the constant influx and exodus of migrants makes it virtually impossible to accurately determine the city's population. I did not find a Uighur enclave in Shenzhen, and almost all of the Uighur I interviewed there told me that they did not know anyone outside their family or the friends they moved to the city to be with. One possible explanation for this isolation is that Shenzhen's Uighur population is considerably smaller than that of Beijing, Shanghai, or Urumqi, and the vast, sprawling nature of the city seems to disenfranchise even Han locals and migrants.

There are some Han-owned but Uighur-operated Xinjiang restaurants (which serve pork dishes) in Shenzhen, especially in the Nanyuan Lu shopping area. There are also several advertised Xinjiang restaurants that are owned and operated entirely by Han. Uighur in Shenzhen, as in most other cities, believe Uighur cuisine to be the authentic Xinjiang food in the city. Some even take part in fooling Han customers into buying inferior food products because, after all, Han customers

are ignorant as to how “real Xinjiang food” should taste. According to one thirty-six-year-old Uighur licensed honey cake vendor, although Han customers purchase his inferior product, Uighur know better.

“The honey I use isn’t as good,” he explained. “Sometimes I use sugar and water instead, but I sell it only to Han. Uighur wouldn’t buy my honey cake because they know it’s lower quality than in Xinjiang.”

“Do the Han know?” I asked.

“No,” answered the man. “The Han don’t know about Uighur food, but they think Xinjiang food is interesting. They see me here selling my honey cake and think I’m interesting because of my hat and because it’s a food they’ve never tried or maybe even never seen.”

“Do you wear your hat to look good for the Han?” I asked.

The Uighur smiled faintly. “I wear the hat because I am Muslim,” he answered. “But it does appeal to the Han. I think it may help attract them to buy my food. When Han want Xinjiang food, they want it to be authentic. There are many Han now selling Xinjiang food. Maybe they’re from Xinjiang or have been there or lived there many years. But real Xinjiang food is Uighur, and Han know this. So when they buy Xinjiang food, they want to buy it from a Uighur.” He laughed and added, “Even if it’s lower quality than we Uighur would buy or eat. The Han still see us Uighur and think this is real Xinjiang food because Uighur are real Xinjiang people.”

Contrary to his assertion, the Han I interviewed seemed to prefer Han- or Hui-owned Xinjiang restaurants to Uighur-owned restaurants because they believed they were cleaner.

Cultural Marginalization and Institutionalization of Blocked Uighur Mobility

MOST UIGHUR BELIEVE that their economic and social mobility is severely limited within the dominant Han society. Han, on the other hand, generally believe that Uighur limit themselves by failing to learn the Chinese language and by adhering to Islamic religious beliefs and customs. This chapter examines Uighur and Han views with respect to language, educational opportunities, employment and economic development, social inequality, family planning, religious practice and participation, and national identity.

Chinese Language

All of the Uighur I interviewed expressed the view that Chinese (Mandarin) was very difficult to learn. Just as an Italian may learn Spanish more easily than Russian, Uighur find it easier to learn the languages of Central Asia than to learn Mandarin. With its multiple tones for each character, Mandarin is as difficult for a Uighur as it is for any Westerner. With the exception of those working in professional occupations,

no Uighur I interviewed was able to read and write more than a handful of Chinese characters.

Although many Uighur accept the need to learn Mandarin as a prerequisite to the kind of education that will enable them to get a good job and have a better lifestyle, a large number of Uighur simply do not want to learn a language they consider to be imposed upon them by an alien regime.

Of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi, 65 percent resented the fact that they needed to learn to speak Mandarin in order to succeed in Han society. They believed that Han discriminated against Uighur who could not speak Mandarin well and that this limited their opportunities to get good jobs. This was the case among single male Uighur non-professionals, 89 percent of whom resented having to learn Mandarin. Male Uighur professionals were the exception: all of them thought that learning Mandarin was a good thing, as good spoken Mandarin is a crucial factor in opening legitimate opportunities for Uighur.

Uighur women seemed divided in their attitude toward learning Mandarin. All the married Uighur women I interviewed in Urumqi objected to having to learn Mandarin. Conversely, all the single women thought it was important to learn Mandarin and did not object. Perhaps single Uighur women can more clearly see the benefits of learning Mandarin, since married Uighur women are less likely to start a new profession or career.

Sixty-nine percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Shanghai expressed resentment at having to learn Mandarin. In Shanghai, as in Urumqi, single male nonprofessionals and married women objected to having to learn Mandarin, while single women thought it was important to learn.

Uighur in Beijing seemed much more willing to accept the need to learn Mandarin. Their Mandarin was much better than that of Uighur in Shanghai, Urumqi, and Shenzhen. Even in Beijing, however, 40 percent of the Uighur I interviewed expressed resentment at having to learn Mandarin.

Of the Han I interviewed, 98 percent believed that it was essential for all Chinese citizens to learn to speak Mandarin, and most of them

could not understand what they viewed as the reluctance of the Uighur to do so. Some felt that the Uighur were either too lazy or too stupid to learn the language of the Han.

While discussing the importance of learning Mandarin with a twenty-nine-year-old unmarried Uighur man originally from Kashgar, I was introduced to the expression “Chinese Uighur.” It is a derisive term referring to Uighur who have learned to speak Mandarin properly and are making every effort to assimilate into Han society. While usually relatively well off economically, these Uighur are generally looked down on by other Uighur who feel they have sold out or betrayed their identity to advance in Han society.

As the man from Kashgar explained, “I think it’s harder for Uighur than for Han, because we do have to learn a second language. And, although the Chinese government encourages businesses to hire Uighur in Xinjiang, no one will hire a Uighur who can’t speak good Mandarin. But now, as Xinjiang becomes more developed, it is getting easier. Uighur children learn Mandarin at such a young age that it’s not so hard for them.”

He laughed and said, “You know, now there are many Uighur in Urumqi whose Mandarin is better than their Uighur because they go to Han schools, where all their classes and interactions are in Mandarin. Especially those rich Uighur children who have parents who send them to live at Han schools. They spend more time speaking Mandarin than Uighur, and when they come home they forget how to speak Uighur. In fact, now more and more Urumqi Uighur, middle-class Uighur children, can’t read Uighur. They can still speak it, because it’s their first language, but they never learn to read. And some speak it so poorly.”

He laughed again and said, “We call them ‘Chinese Uighur’ because they aren’t real Uighur.”

I asked, “What do you mean by ‘real Uighur’?”

“My meaning is Chinese Uighur don’t read Uighur. They might not eat pork, but they don’t know why. They don’t keep Uighur traditions and culture alive. Many of them date Han or Hui girls. Many don’t go to pray.”

Educational Opportunities

Ninety-nine percent of the Han I interviewed believe that Chinese education is improving, if not already good, and that minority peoples have the same educational opportunities as Han. Many Han interviewees, however, acknowledged that education in rural and typically minority areas in China is inadequate.

The general perception among the Uighur I interviewed, except for those living in Beijing, was that the Chinese government's minority education policies limited their educational opportunities and that the quality of education that the Han received was better than what the Uighur received. Furthermore, most Uighur believed there are better educational opportunities outside of Xinjiang. Indeed, all of the Uighur professionals I interviewed had received some formal education outside of their home province.

Eighty-eight percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai felt that Han children received a better education than Uighur children, as did many of the Uighur interviewed in Beijing. Urumqi and Shanghai Uighur maintained that the discrepancy in educational opportunities and achievement was due to discriminatory governmental policies, while Beijing Uighur believed that it was the case only because Mandarin was not a Uighur child's first language. Uighur interviewees in Beijing generally felt that the Chinese government was making real progress in improving the educational opportunities for minority students.

Most Han and Uighur agreed that there are better educational opportunities in Urumqi, Beijing, and Shanghai than in predominantly Uighur areas in Xinjiang. The main reason for this disparity is that Mandarin is not always taught in Uighur area schools or is not taught by native speakers of the language. Also, throughout China, schools and universities in developed cities are considered by both Han and Uighur to have better teachers and facilities. Beijing and Urumqi have some schools and universities catering to minority students or specializing in minority studies; however, Shanghai and Shenzhen do not.

The use of Mandarin as a vehicle for instruction and the benefits of learning Mandarin versus the Chinese government policies de-

signed to maintain Uighur culture and language were issues that frequently came up during interviews. According to one Uighur businessman who was in his midforties, “This [the Uighur need to learn Mandarin] is a tricky problem because, while more and more schools [in Xinjiang] are teaching in Mandarin, there are still far too many that don’t. Many Uighur teachers don’t speak Mandarin. This is especially true outside Urumqi. Furthermore, the Han government wants Uighur to maintain their local language, so they encourage Uighur schools to teach in Uighur.” He thought for a moment and then added, “But this should be a Uighur responsibility. The Han know little of our culture. It’s up to Uighur parents to teach their children our language and about our Uighur culture. But it’s up to the schools to teach our children Mandarin and Han culture.”

Although many Uighur parents want their children to have a proper education and to learn Mandarin—which almost always means attending a predominantly Han school—they feel that being a Uighur student in a school where Han teachers and students make up the majority population is difficult because of racist attitudes and language difficulties. Some Uighur believe that Chinese government policies encouraging instruction in Uighur, not Mandarin, are designed to limit Uighur development in Chinese society.

One Uighur teacher, who was born in Kashgar but moved to Urumqi when he was in middle school and then to Taiyuan to attend high school, believed this to be the case. “My parents wanted to make sure I learned proper Mandarin,” he explained. “Being Uighur, it’s difficult to learn proper Mandarin. Most Uighur, especially in Uighur areas like Kashgar, go to Uighur schools with Uighur teachers. Many of the teachers don’t speak Mandarin, but even the ones who speak very well don’t speak it like the Han. Also, some teachers don’t speak in Mandarin because they know the students won’t understand them. You know, the Chinese government says they encourage Uighur to learn Mandarin, yet at the same time they want to keep the Uighur language alive. They don’t want the world to see them as bad, as not protecting their minority cultures. So the government allows and even encourages Uighur teachers not to teach in Mandarin. But this holds the Uighur back. I believe the government does this on

purpose . . . [so that] they can look like they care about the Uighur by trying to protect their language while, at the same time, they make sure the Uighur can't advance in Han society because they don't speak the major language."

When I asked why the Chinese government would want to hold the Uighur back, the man replied, "The Han are a proud people, and much of China's government and culture is Han. In fact, the Han are more advanced, in some ways, than many of their minorities. But in other ways, they are not. You know, for one race to view themselves as superior they need to view another race as inferior. So for the Han it's natural to look down on Chinese minorities, especially minorities in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet, where people are poor and there is less industrialization. What I find strange, however, is that Han don't look down on their own people who live off the more modernized east coast. Not all Han live as developed as they do in Shanghai and Beijing. Many, especially in Yunnan and Guizhou, also live as Chinese minorities do—very primitive."

I said, "Han in Xinjiang seem to live well."

"Yes, Han in Xinjiang live very well, although now, as more live there, that is changing. But there are still good opportunities for Han in Xinjiang as China develops the region. There are even opportunities for Uighur, but they trickle down to us from the Han. For example, there is construction to be done. Han are hired and brought from other provinces to complete the project. As a result, now perhaps local Uighur can sell them food. But it's not as if the Han have offered the same jobs to Uighur. I do believe that some of this has to do with language, but I also believe that government minority policies prevent Uighur from learning Mandarin and that while this serves to protect the face of the Han government, it does nothing to help Uighur advance in Han society."

The man went on to explain, "My parents knew I could never have a better life, a life equal to that of a well-off Han, unless my Mandarin was perfect. So I attended a mixed middle school in Urumqi. I worked hard and made good grades. I had Han friends and paid attention to their ways, as my parents told me to. In Urumqi it was easier, but when I moved to Taiyuan to study in a private high school, things

were more difficult. I was alone and far from home. I was the only Uighur there. The Han students made fun of me. The Han teachers basically ignored me. There were some Hui there, but they aren't Uighur and couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand them. The truth is that most Hui, I think, wish they were Han. Many of them aren't even Muslim. I don't understand what they are, and maybe neither do they."

URUMQI

Many Uighur, particularly young Uighur, seem to believe that learning Mandarin is essential. This is the case even in Xinjiang, particularly in Han-dominated Urumqi. The principal of Ai Wei Ke, an Urumqi technical school, certainly thinks so. "Mandarin must be learned," said the well-to-do, middle-aged Uighur man. "All Uighur must learn Mandarin, just for life." Apparently he had started learning Mandarin while in middle school and had learned some English while attending Xinjiang University.

I asked, "Do you teach Mandarin here?"

"Yes," he said, "if a student wants to learn. But most students at this school already speak Mandarin. Plus, the environment here helps them to learn. You know, it's very difficult to go out in Urumqi and not hear or speak Mandarin." The principal went on to explain, "We teach English and computers here, to help Uighur find a good job. Speaking good Mandarin is no longer enough, since more and more Uighur are learning it, and there are always enough Han who can speak it. If Uighur want to find a good job nowadays, they have to learn English and computers."

"What about university education?" I asked. "Is that necessary?"

"It's helpful, but not essential. Some of our students are university graduates, but most of them are not. University can be very expensive, so not all students can attend. But as long as they can speak some English or know how to use computers, they will be able to find a decent job, at least in Urumqi."

"Are all your students here Uighur?" I asked.

"Not all," he replied. "We have a few Han students, some who come to learn English and a few learning computers, but most of our

students are Uighur.” Ai Wei Ke is located right outside the Er Dao Qiao Market area, and classes are relatively inexpensive. “We also have a Han teacher,” the principal went on. “He teaches computers, but he can speak Uighur quite well.” He laughed and said, “He studied Uighur studies when he was at university.”

Educational opportunities for Uighur in Urumqi seem to be generally improving. According to one local newspaper, *Xinjiang Chen Bao*, eight cities in Xinjiang, including Urumqi, now have a new special middle school that allows poor children—children of farmers, children from the countryside—to move to the city and live there as students. Poor children can live and study at these special middle schools for free, while children whose parents are financially better off have to pay a nominal student fee. This gives poor children an opportunity to go to a better school, as most schools in the countryside are not as well equipped as schools in the cities.

In Urumqi, while some Uighur go to schools where the majority of the teachers and students are Han, it seems that most schools are segregated by race. Han students and teachers with whom I spoke confirmed this.

While many Uighur in Urumqi say that learning Mandarin is essential, they face the obstacle of government policies designed to protect minority culture and languages. In Xinjiang schools where the majority of students are Uighur, many classes are taught in the Uighur language. This limits the students’ opportunities to learn Mandarin. Nonetheless, even in Uighur-majority cities like Kashgar and Turpan, Uighur are taught some Mandarin in school. Whether they actually learn the language is a different story.

Once, I was being driven across town by a Uighur taxi driver who insisted that he was able to work at such a comparatively good job because he spoke Mandarin. His Mandarin was quite good. He also held reasonably positive views about China, the benefit of the Han influx into his home province, and the need for Uighur to learn the language of the Han.

I said to him, “Your Mandarin is very good. Where did you learn it?”

“In school,” said the driver. “All Uighur learn Mandarin now, at least in Urumqi and other bigger cities. I think in Kashgar and Turpan that’s also the case.”

“Did you learn English in school?” I asked.

“Not when I was in school,” said the driver, “because back then English wasn’t considered as important. But now, as Urumqi develops, I think more students, Uighur and Han, are learning English.”

“Did you learn Uighur in school?” I asked.

The driver smiled. “We learn the Uighur language at home,” he said. “We naturally speak it. But yes, we also learn Uighur in school. We have a few Uighur subjects in school, where we learn Uighur language and literature.”

“Were your teachers Han?”

“Yes, mostly. But some of them were Uighur. And our Uighur subject teachers were always Uighur.”

“Did Han children take Uighur subjects?”

“No,” said the driver, smiling. “They have no reason to. We Uighur would take Han courses, subjects like Mandarin and Chinese history with Han teachers and other Han students, but then in Uighur subjects it would be just Uighur students and Uighur teachers. I think it’s still that way in many schools, but now more and more Uighur treat their language like the Han treat their local dialects, and fewer Uighur students care about learning it formally.”

For many Uighur, though, learning Mandarin is not a conscious choice, but what they view as an imposed necessity. Once, in the impoverished outskirts of Urumqi, I met three young, unemployed Uighur men, all in their early twenties, who explained their situation to me as follows.

“Of course we speak Mandarin,” said one when asked. “We live in China. What choice do we have?”

“Every Uighur speaks Mandarin,” said another. “Every Uighur learns it in school. But I didn’t learn it until I was in the fourth grade.”

“I learned in the sixth grade,” offered the first man. “But I didn’t start going to school until then. My parents were busy running their rug shop. We had four children in our house, but nobody cared whether I went to school or not, so I didn’t. Not until I was ten. I was the youngest in my family, but I still went to school the earliest and so I have the most education. My brother and sisters didn’t go to school until they were much older. My brother went for only two years and then quit to help my parents in their shop. He and my sisters don’t

speak Mandarin as well as I do, but they still can speak it. Every Uighur can.”

“I learned Mandarin in the second grade,” said the third Uighur, who looked a little younger than his friends. “That’s when I started school. But my Mandarin teacher was Uighur, and I don’t think his Mandarin was very good.” He made a spitting gesture. “Han learn Mandarin from Han and learn it in their homes. They can all speak the language perfectly because it’s their language. But Uighur learn from other Uighur, who had to learn it to survive, just as we have to learn it to survive. But what if Han had to learn Uighur? How would they survive?”

“Uighur must be smarter than Han,” said the first man. “They must work harder, too, because we have to learn the Han language and Han ways if we want to survive in Han society.”

“Do you?” I asked.

“Yes, of course,” he replied. His friends nodded in agreement. “But the problem is that most Uighur don’t want to learn Mandarin. They learn because they have to. But we don’t like speaking Mandarin, and we don’t like Han ways. We don’t like Han food or Han culture.”

Starting school at a later age than Han children is normal for many of Urumqi’s Uighur children. I also frequently saw children, sometimes in their early teens, wandering the city streets during school hours. According to both Han and Uighur in Urumqi, many young Uighur do not attend school, and neither their parents nor the authorities do anything about it.

Once, near Ren Min Square, I decided to confront a group of three dirty-looking Uighur boys who had been snickering at me behind my back.

“What’s funny?” I demanded, although I was smiling.

The boys kept laughing but immediately started backing away. One of them said, “Hello.”

“Oh,” I said in Mandarin, “Did you learn English in school?”

The boys stopped retreating. “Yes,” said the bravest of the bunch, still speaking in English. His friends laughed gleefully.

“What about Chinese?” I asked in English. When he didn’t understand I repeated the question in Mandarin.

“Yes,” said the boy. His friends said something in Uighur. Then, to my surprise, the boy made a thumbs-down gesture.

Continuing the conversation in Mandarin, I said, “What, you don’t like Chinese?” The boy shook his head but said nothing. “How old are you?” I asked.

“Nine,” said the boy. I assumed his friends were the same age.

“Do you all go to school together?” I asked. They nodded. “Do you like it?” I asked. They nodded again.

“What about your teachers?” I asked.

“They are good,” said another boy.

“Are they Han?” I asked.

“Uighur,” said one of the children. “And Han,” said another. What I think they were trying to tell me was they had more than one teacher and that their teachers were both Han and Uighur.

“In class, what language do you speak?” I asked, but the kids didn’t seem to understand. Since they told me their classmates were all Uighur, I assume that their teachers spoke mostly in Uighur. While it was obvious that they had learned some Mandarin, it was also obvious that their Mandarin was still at a rudimentary level and that their English was limited to a few basic words.

The children told me that they had been in school only since age seven, which means that they had started school about two years later than the average Han child who goes to kindergarten. It also occurred to me as I spoke with them that it was 11:00 a.m. on a Tuesday and that they were probably skipping class, but when I asked them whether they should be at school, they just laughed.

BEIJING

Beijing has a few schools and universities that cater to minority students and specialize in minority studies. Most of these schools are located in Beijing’s ethnic enclaves, most famously the Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue (Central Minority University) in the Wei Gong Cun Uighur enclave of Haidian.

According to most of the Han students I talked to (and one Uighur selling goat meat from a tiny restaurant stall outside the campus), Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue has many Uighur students. However,

these claims to the contrary, only once in all my visits to the area did I see any Uighur on or even around the campus, and on that occasion I saw only two young Uighur men.

An older Han professor of mathematics at the university explained, “Our university offers scholarships to minorities. It’s a chance for minorities to come and study at a minority university. But minorities can go to study wherever they want. It’s just that some like to study at a minority university.” When asked who attends the Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue, he proudly said, “We have Hui students. We used to have a couple of Tibetans. There are some Mongolians and a few Dai and Uighur. But the truth is, most of our students are Han.”

When I asked what students study, he replied, “They can major in whatever they want. Some study engineering. Others learn English. Some learn art and pottery. This is a normal university. It simply has the name “Minority University” because it’s a place where minorities can come to study. But minority studies aren’t the primary focus of our university. The primary focus is learning. Students can learn whatever they want. But it’s a good opportunity for Han students to come and study in a colorful and interesting environment since there are some minority students here.”

According to the professor, all classes at the university were taught in Mandarin. “But that’s not a problem, since minority students coming here already speak Mandarin,” he said. “It’s necessary if they want to come here. There is a test, and if the minority students can’t speak Mandarin or they haven’t done well in school, then they will not be admitted.”

“Many minority students come from poor backgrounds,” I said. “What if they didn’t learn enough to pass the test?”

“The opportunity is there,” answered the professor, “if the minority students want to take it. In China, if you are a minority, you have many chances. The government will help you to improve yourself and develop. China protects its minorities and gives them as many chances as the Han, maybe even more. You know, many Han come from poor areas, too, and places where they speak a local dialect, and they must also learn Mandarin. So I think it’s a fair system.”

Most local dialects in China are, however, dialects of Mandarin and not as different a language as Uighur is from Mandarin. Also, all

Han, regardless of their local dialect, learn to read and write using the same set of characters, while Uighur is written in Arabic script.

The professor went on to boast that most students graduating from the Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue went on to find good jobs, although he offered no evidence to support his claim. Han students around the university campus, despite the mathematics professor's pride in it, seemed to look down on their own university.

"This is a university for people who can't get into a better university," said one nineteen-year-old Han woman who was studying business. Another Han woman said, "The facilities here are very poor. There aren't many computers. The classrooms are all very old."

A Han man who wanted to become a doctor said, "This is supposed to be a university for minorities, and there are some here, but mostly it's just a campus for people who didn't make good marks or test well in high school."

Beijing also has some minority primary and secondary schools; however, many of these schools do not have minority faculty or specialize in subjects such as minority languages or history. Niu Jie Min Zu Xiao Xue (Cow Street Minority Elementary School), located in the Niu Jie enclave a few blocks from the Niu Jie Mosque, is, according to its director, one of a few such Beijing minority elementary schools. Most of the teachers, like the director, are middle-aged Han women. There are some Hui women teachers, but they are indistinguishable from Han, as they do not wear anything to indicate their minority status while teaching.

The school's nearly one thousand students are about a fifty-fifty mix of Han and Hui children from the Niu Jie area. While the director claimed that there had been Uighur students in the past, at the time I visited there were none.

I was taken on a tour of the school, which, as far as I could tell, was no different in its curriculum, student behavior, or even architecture from other schools I had worked at or visited in China. All classes were taught in Mandarin. While students did not wear uniforms (the school, as the director explained, was not a wealthy one), they did wear red kerchiefs around their necks to promote a uniform look. Monday mornings began with a flag-raising ceremony and the singing of the Chinese national anthem. Niu Jie Min Zu Xiao Xue does not

observe any holidays that are not federalized, Ramadan included. Students do not pray during school hours. Nothing having to do with religion is taught.

I asked the director what, aside from having Hui students, made Niu Jie Min Zu Xiao Xue a “minority school.” She laughed but could not offer any explanation beyond: “Some of our Muslim students don’t eat pork when it’s served for lunch in our cafeteria. They either bring their own food or just eat vegetables and rice that day.”

I was asked not to photograph the students, faculty, or the interior of the school.

SHANGHAI

While there are no minority schools in Shanghai, and very few Uighur children, most Uighur in Shanghai maintained that their children could get a better education there than in Xinjiang.

“My children are with their grandparents in Kashgar,” explained one thirty-five-year-old Uighur shop owner. “Someday I’d like for them to come here, so they’ll have more opportunities in life. The schools are better here. In Xinjiang, even in Urumqi, the schools are bad. If you are Uighur, it’s very difficult to get a good education.”

“You seem to have a good education,” I said.

“No,” replied the man, “I graduated from high school but I don’t have a very good education. I can speak Mandarin. My parents sent me to Urumqi to study. But in Urumqi, all my teachers were Uighur. I learned Mandarin from a Uighur teacher. The Uighur teachers aren’t as educated as the Han teachers. The problem is that being Uighur in a classroom of Han students with a Han teacher is also very difficult. You’ll either be ignored or be looked down on. But I still want my children to go to a Han school, especially here in Shanghai. The teachers here are very good, so they’ll get a good education and have more chances in the future than I did.”

While many Shanghai Uighur claimed that they wanted their children to grow up in Shanghai and to study at a Han school where they would get a better education and learn to speak proper Mandarin, some did not share this view. One twenty-eight-year-old waiter explained, “I want to raise my children in Xinjiang so they can understand their

culture. Here they'd have to go to a Shanghai school. They wouldn't be taught in Uighur; they'd learn nothing of their own race, and the teachers and students would look down on them."

Employment and Economic Development

The majority of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai believed that the Han have limited their opportunities for legitimate employment. Eighty-eight percent of the Uighur in Urumqi and 81 percent of the Uighur in Shanghai felt that Han had taken the best jobs. However, only half of the male Uighur professionals in Urumqi and Shanghai felt that Han discriminated against Uighur when it came to employment.

Beijing, again, was the exception. There, only 16 percent of the Uighur I interviewed felt that Han discriminated against Uighur when it came to employment. One possible explanation for this is the fact that, to a much greater degree than Uighur in other Han-dominated cities, Beijing's Uighur tend to retain legitimate employment.

While Han interviewees held the opinion that there was no discrimination in employment, they did believe that because most Uighur were uneducated and spoke Mandarin poorly, they were unable to get good jobs. Many of the Han with whom I spoke believed that the fault lay with the Uighur, who were too lazy to study and unwilling to work hard.

HAN PRESENCE IN XINJIANG

In 1949, when the Communist Party came to power in China, only 6 percent of Xinjiang's population was Han. As part of a program to ensure the stability of Xinjiang, the Chinese government has encouraged Han migration into Xinjiang. Han now make up 41 percent of Xinjiang's population. As Han have flooded into Xinjiang, they have taken the best jobs, and the economic disparity between them and Uighur has fueled resentment.

Most of the Uighur I interviewed had a negative opinion of the Han influx into Xinjiang. Han taking the best jobs, Han migrants committing crime, and Han disrespecting Xinjiang's peoples and their

culture, customs, and religion were the reasons most often cited by Uighur to justify their position that the Han influx into Xinjiang had not helped the Uighur.

Ninety-two percent of Shanghai's Uighur believed that the Han presence in Xinjiang was not beneficial. However, half of the single women believed that the Han were helping to develop Xinjiang. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that some young Uighur women in Shanghai attend predominantly Han schools, where they are exposed to Han ideas.

Of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi, 76 percent believed that the Han influx into the region was not beneficial. All of the single, male Uighur nonprofessionals felt this way; all of the male professionals, however, believed that the Han were helping to develop Xinjiang. Some of the young single women also felt this way. As one twenty-two-year-old, who was wearing a Western dress, lipstick, and earrings, told me, "Now, Urumqi is much more developed than before. I think it's good. Now you can buy better clothing here and live in a better house. If you get sick, there is better medicine than before."

Beijing Uighur once again were the exception. Sixty-four percent of the Beijing Uighur I interviewed believed that the Han presence in Xinjiang was helping to develop the region.

By comparison, 98 percent of the Han I interviewed said that the Han influx into Xinjiang had benefited the region and that without Han influence, Xinjiang would not improve and develop. They also said that the influx of Han into Xinjiang had benefited the generally "ungrateful Uighur."

Han living outside Xinjiang often expressed the opinion that the region would continue to develop slowly. As one Shanghai Han bank teller who was in his thirties explained, "Xinjiang is still developing. And there aren't many resources there. I think Xinjiang's resources are too few, since it's a desert."

I said, "I've heard Xinjiang has lots of oil and cotton and coal . . ."

"Xinjiang has these things," the teller cut in, "but is still not so good." He paused to gather his thoughts. "Xinjiang is much undeveloped. A hundred years ago, Xinjiang was like this. If you go again a hundred years in the future, maybe nothing will have changed. The

people there can't develop the resources. Xinjiang is just a desert, and desert people don't know about development."

"Aren't more and more Han moving to Xinjiang?"

"Yes, that's happening, but that doesn't mean that Xinjiang will develop quickly. There aren't so many Han in Xinjiang now. Even those that are there may not be able to help gather resources. Xinjiang is still a desert and has too few resources. I think it will take a very long time to develop."

According to other Han, Xinjiang's development is being retarded because the Uighur are lazy. A Han office manager in Urumqi, when asked whether she thought that Uighur were lazy, responded, "That's a difficult question to answer because Uighur have a different culture. But I think a lot fewer Uighur are working as hard as they could to get ahead in life."

Of the Uighur who did believe that the Han presence in Xinjiang had benefited the region, the following comments by a married shopkeeper in his midforties were typical: "China is getting better," he told me. "It's developing. The government isn't perfect, but no government is perfect. But things are better now in China than before, especially in Shanghai. I grew up in the countryside of Xinjiang [near Turpan]. Now even there it's so much better than before. So I think China is improving."

"Is the improvement in the Xinjiang countryside due to Han moving into the region?" I asked.

"Maybe somewhat," said the man. "It certainly helps create jobs, but it's also because of positive policies from local and national government. But also it's because things are getting better everywhere, so of course things in Xinjiang get better."

I said, "I've heard many Xinjiang people complain that the Han who came took the best jobs."

"Maybe some of them, yes," agreed the Uighur. "But it still creates jobs. Now more Uighur farmers can sell their crops, and more restaurants have more business. Xinjiang will need more taxi drivers. Also, I think as the Han move there and build companies, eventually they will hire Uighur and need Uighur to translate and help with communication."

“So you think China is improving Xinjiang?”

“Yes,” answered the Uighur. He seemed proud of his country.

“Do you feel that Xinjiang is part of China?”

“Yes,” answered the man. He smiled and added, “Regardless of history, now Xinjiang is part of China. I am Uighur, but China is my country. And even though I’m from Xinjiang, I’m still Chinese.”

The Uighur I met who have benefited or believe themselves to have benefited from the Han presence in Xinjiang speak Mandarin quite well. Uighur who hold better jobs in Urumqi generally believe that learning Mandarin and adapting to Han culture is the smart thing for all Uighur to do. This is not to say that they believe Uighur identity must be sacrificed to do so, but rather that Uighur should learn to be part of both cultures.

“Urumqi is developing,” said one Uighur man, a married thirty-eight-year-old working in a low-level local government position. “This development is good, but only for Uighur who educate themselves. Uighur have a responsibility to develop with Xinjiang. They have a responsibility to educate themselves and learn the ways of the Han.”

“What about Uighur culture?” I asked.

“Uighur culture must be maintained,” said the man firmly. “But Uighur can learn Mandarin without forgetting their own language. Uighur can understand and celebrate Han holidays without sacrificing their own holidays. But if Uighur fail to do this, Uighur will fail to develop. Xinjiang is part of China. That is a reality. That is not going to change. Han will move here, and the best thing for Uighur to do is benefit from this. But it’s difficult to benefit from this without speaking the Han language and understanding them.”

HAN MIGRANTS IN URUMQI

Urumqi has experienced a large influx of Han. Most Han in Urumqi have moved there for jobs, and are doing well. My barber, a married Han in his early thirties, had lived in Urumqi all his life, but his parents, his wife, and the rest of the staff at the hair salon were migrants. His views, and the views of his staff, were typical of Han migrants to Urumqi.

He told me, “There aren’t many hair salons like this in Urumqi. Most Uighur cut hair outside or in little shops. But Han are used to having their hair cut in nice places like this.” He motioned to his wife, a pretty Han woman helping a customer highlight her hair, then to the rest of the staff. “She brought them here from Gansu,” he explained. “It’s a good opportunity for them. Gansu is a poor province, but here in Urumqi people are wealthier, so more people can afford to come get their hair cut.”

“People in Urumqi are wealthy?” I asked.

The barber nodded. “Yes, at least most people are.”

“Do you mean most Han?”

“Not necessarily. Now, as Urumqi develops, opportunities are opening for everyone living here, not just Han. Uighur selling things have more customers, and more and more Uighur are becoming businessmen and working for good companies. So I think everyone in Urumqi is becoming wealthier.”

He thought for a moment and said, “You know, when I was growing up, Urumqi wasn’t so developed. My parents moved here to work, and I went to a school where most of the students were Uighur. The classes were taught in Mandarin, but I still had to learn some Uighur to survive. Back then, all the Han and Hui living here had to. But now everyone can speak Mandarin. Even the older Uighur, the uneducated Uighur, they still can speak enough to sell their things and do business. And the young Uighur, they all want to learn Mandarin so they can become more developed and have a better job and a better life.”

“Do you think Uighur resent having to learn Mandarin in order to have a better life?” I asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe some of the older Uighur do because they are stuck in their ways or too ignorant to know what’s best for them. But I don’t think the young Uighur mind. They just do what they must to have a good life. Besides, I think most Uighur are happy that Urumqi is developing. I just read in the newspaper that the Chinese government is investing even more money here and in Xinjiang. This is a good thing for everyone.”

A staff member was staring at my hair. I asked, “Do you get lots of foreign customers here?”

“Not so many,” replied the barber.

“How about Uighur customers?”

“Yes, sometimes. There are some Uighur girls who come here to get their hair dyed or straightened.” He laughed and added, “Now everyone wants yellow hair.”

“What about crime?” I asked. “Is crime becoming a problem as Urumqi develops?”

“I don’t think so. Maybe in other cities in Xinjiang crime is a problem, but not in Urumqi. Urumqi is very safe, especially since most people here are doing fine. Not everyone is wealthy, but most people aren’t poor. Now, in other cities where the people are poorer and less educated, I think crime might be a problem.”

“Other cities in Xinjiang?”

The barber nodded. “Yes,” he said, “because most Uighur start out poorer and less educated. China has not yet developed all of Xinjiang, so many Uighur are still poor and don’t have any opportunities to change that. So, yes, maybe in cities outside Urumqi crime is a problem, but I don’t know for sure.”

“Do you think that as those cities develop, crime will become less of a problem?”

“It should. Because I think most Uighur want to develop, but on their own they just don’t have the ability. The Han are more developed; they have more experience with development and more investment capital to help the Uighur and Xinjiang develop. I think that in general Uighur know this and appreciate this. Certainly the younger, more well-off ones do.”

Other Han migrants in Urumqi, like a middle-aged married couple whom I happened to sit next to at a crowded restaurant, also said that Han influence is necessary for Xinjiang and Uighur development.

“We’re from Xining,” the husband explained once he realized that I spoke Mandarin. “But we’ve been living here almost ten years. Urumqi has developed a lot in that time. It’s almost like a Chinese city now.”

“What do you mean by that?” I asked. “A Chinese city?”

The husband laughed. His wife said, “Now there are better [Chinese] restaurants here, and better schools and hospitals and shops . . .”

“And KFC,” the man offered.

“Before, Urumqi was more like a big desert village,” his wife continued. “But now we’ve changed it into a modern city with modern facilities.”

“We?” I asked. “Do you mean Han?”

“Of course,” the man said proudly. “Without Han influence, how could Xinjiang develop?”

I said, “Do you think the Uighur agree with that? It seems that some Uighur don’t appreciate the Han being here.”

“Yes they do!” the woman said firmly. “The Uighur are much better off now than before, and they appreciate it. After all, the Uighur are still Chinese. If Xinjiang isn’t part of China, then what is it?”

But the man was shaking his head. “No, some Uighur don’t want Han help,” he said thoughtfully. “That problem . . . How can I put this . . . The Uighur are a little like children. Children don’t always know what is best for them. Maybe now they don’t want Han assistance in the development of Xinjiang, but later they will.”

“Especially now, more and more young Uighur seem content to modernize,” agreed the woman.

Despite the widely held belief among Han that the Han influx into Xinjiang has benefited Uighur, many Uighur view migrant Han as problematically as most Han view migrant Uighur. Once, an older Uighur watermelon vendor told me, “China, the Han, they think they own all the land. They think they can do as they please. They think they invented everything. They come to Xinjiang and disrespect the local people. Here, there have been many peoples for years . . . Xinjiang peoples . . . Tajiks, Uzbeks, Uighur . . . the Han don’t care. They think Xinjiang is their place. And they don’t respect it.”

“What do you mean by that?” I inquired. “They don’t respect it?”

Just then a young Han couple approached his cart. He sold them each a slice of watermelon for four kuai (about fifty cents in U.S. currency) apiece, despite the young woman’s vain attempt at bargaining. I noticed that he sold them the watermelon at a price even higher than he’d originally charged me, but I said nothing. When the couple had walked off, the Uighur continued.

“You know, Xinjiang isn’t as safe for us Uighur as it once was,” he said. “Now many Han come here and commit crimes. They sell drugs; they want prostitutes. They would rob from us if they have the chance.”

“Really,” I said, “It seems to me that the Han coming here are pretty rich.”

“Yes, many are. But rich people want drugs and prostitutes, so now even Uighur and other local peoples’ women are becoming prostitutes. It makes me sick.”

“I’ve heard that in Shanghai, it’s Uighur who sell hashish,” I said.

He glared at me. “No way,” he said forcefully.

“It’s true,” I said. “Many people say that Uighur in Shanghai sell hashish.”

He thought for a moment before saying, “But that’s because of their situation. They don’t have much money . . . maybe they have some hashish with them or get some from their family or friends back home. But it isn’t because they want to sell drugs. We Uighur just don’t have as many opportunities. I hear that in Shanghai it’s very hard for Uighur to find work. Even here it’s becoming harder. Han come here and take our jobs. Our apartments are now more expensive. Our land is disappearing. And now there are prostitutes and drugs in Xinjiang. This is what the Han call development, but for us this is . . .” He stopped abruptly as two Han police officers strolled past.

On another occasion, two single Uighur men in their late twenties, when asked their opinion of Xinjiang’s development, expressed discontentment with Han migration into Urumqi.

“I suppose it [development in Xinjiang] is good,” the first man said slowly. “But we don’t like all the Han coming here.”

“Right,” agreed his friend. “We don’t like the way they watch us and try to take over our businesses.”

“You know, now we all have to learn their language,” the first Uighur said. “We have no choice. And their men try to take our women . . .” He glanced around nervously. Although it was late at night, we were still on a fairly well-traveled street in the Han section of town. He stopped talking and shook his head.

According to one twenty-five-year-old Uighur who was selling pornographic video compact discs (VCDs) from a portable table, the Han influx into Urumqi had worsened his home city. He came from a neighborhood on Urumqi’s outskirts. It was a poor, undeveloped neighborhood full of old buildings. I had never seen Han in that area, unless they were passing through in a taxi or private car.

I asked, “Is Urumqi more developed than before?”

“No,” answered the man. “I’ve been in Urumqi all my life, and it hasn’t gotten any better. If anything, it’s now worse.”

“Why’s that?” I asked.

He just shook his head, then tapped a VCD with an Asian woman on the front. I said, “I was here in 2000, and it seems to me as though Urumqi is more modern than before.”

“There are taller buildings,” said the man, “and more expensive shops for Han to buy their clothing in, but Urumqi hasn’t developed. It’s still as it was in 2000.” He tapped the same VCD again and said, “Japanese. Very good.”

“I don’t have any money on me,” I said.

“Cheap!” barked the Uighur.

“Are you here every day?” I asked.

“Yes, every day,” replied the Uighur. The truth is, I had never seen him or his table of VCDs before, but I usually crossed the intersection at other points.

I asked, “Do you have another job?”

The Uighur smiled. “This is my work.”

“No, you know what I mean, a real job.”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“No good jobs,” he said firmly. He made an uncouth motion with his arms.

“Why?” I asked. Just then a Han man passed by, and the Uighur pointed at him and smiled. “Because of the Han?” I asked.

“Aiiii,” the Uighur said excitedly, as if I was finally getting the picture. “There aren’t any good jobs in Urumqi if you aren’t Han.” He made the motion again, slapping his forearm with his free hand. He said, “You know, there aren’t so many opportunities for Uighur in Urumqi.”

“Why not? You speak Mandarin.”

“No,” said the Uighur firmly. “That’s not enough. Of course I speak Mandarin—I live in Urumqi. All Uighur speak Mandarin. But that doesn’t mean I can find a good job or that I want to work for the Han even if they would hire me, which they would not. They’ve come to Xinjiang and made it their own, and we Uighur have been pushed aside in our own homeland.”

Most Uighur nonprofessionals in Urumqi, perhaps resenting the wealthier Han moving to their city, hold similar views that Han migration into the region has brought problems typically associated with migrants, including an increase in racial tensions, crime, drug trafficking, and prostitution. Uighur professionals and some married male Uighur nonprofessionals who have what could be considered good jobs believe that the advantages of the Han influx into Xinjiang and the development it has caused outweigh the drawbacks.

In Urumqi, one middle-aged Uighur man told me, “I think that the people here get along. That and, as Urumqi develops, more people have more money. You know, for a few years there, it seemed like Uighur weren’t making money and developing with Urumqi, but now that has changed. Now that Uighur are learning Mandarin and finding better jobs, the Han attitude toward Uighur is changing . . . Don’t you see Han eating at Uighur restaurants and buying things from them?” He laughed and said, “Now even Han restaurants in Urumqi serve Uighur food. Since Urumqi is developing, most Uighur are getting richer. They aren’t getting as rich as Han, not all of them, but some of us are. Like me, I’m a taxi driver. I work from eight in the evening until three every morning. I make the same salary as other Han taxi drivers, maybe even more because Uighur are more willing to be my customers.”

There were other legitimately employed Uighur in Urumqi who shared this man’s view that Urumqi’s development has, in fact, benefited Uighur. However, the majority of Uighur working in the food sales or service industry, while agreeing that Urumqi was developing, believed this was due to the natural process of modernization and not to Han migration into Xinjiang. Not surprisingly, almost all of the Uighur who lacked legitimate employment complained that the Han influx into Xinjiang had limited Uighur opportunities for economic gain.

While the majority of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi were not happy with the Han influx into Xinjiang, most Uighur, regardless of age, sex, or background, seem to have accepted the fact that Xinjiang is a part of China and that this is not likely to change. This also appears to be the view of Xinjiang Uighur who do not live in Urumqi.

In Kashgar, one married Uighur man who looked to be about forty explained, “That [Xinjiang is a part of China] can’t be changed. You

know, in Urumqi, Uighur are the minority. They don't have rights. They don't have influence, but they can still benefit from modernization. Many do not, but Urumqi is different from the rest of Xinjiang. The development in Urumqi may mostly be benefiting only the Han, but that's because, in Urumqi, Uighur are the minority. But in Kashgar, there aren't many Han. Kashgar is a Uighur city. Here, we can keep our culture, and even the fact that Kashgar is developing can't change that. Besides, Kashgar isn't developing only because of China." He laughed and added: "Now everywhere is developing, the whole world is developing."

Kashgar, located nearly fifteen hundred kilometers west of Urumqi, is a city of two hundred thousand. While 89 percent of Kashgar's population is Uighur, as in Urumqi the higher-paying, more stable jobs seem to be held, for the most part, by Han. While most Uighur in Kashgar, like Uighur elsewhere in China, are vendors and welcome business from anyone, during the time I spent in the city, I had the distinct feeling that they resent and dislike Han and are more blatant about this resentment than in other Chinese cities where Uighur constitute the minority. Han in the bazaar or walking Kashgar's streets were glared at by local Uighur, who often muttered angrily to themselves or to each other as they passed.

Once, in the bazaar, I heard a Uighur vendor attempt to call over a Han woman by yelling "Hey, *xiaojie!*" "Xiaojie" is the Mandarin word for "miss," but it can also mean "prostitute." Since "xiaojie" means "prostitute" only in certain situations and since most of Kashgar's Uighur speak Mandarin poorly, it is possible that the Uighur simply was politely addressing the Han woman. But from the way he and his Uighur friend smirked when he said it, my impression was that this was meant to be an insult.

HUI IN URUMQI

There is a large Hui population living in Urumqi, although the exact number would be difficult to tell because they are physically indistinguishable from Han. The Hui dress the same as the Han. The women wear modern clothes. The young wear whatever is in fashion—in 2004, sports and hip-hop clothes. In Urumqi, Hui also seem to be in an economic bracket similar to that occupied by Han, as suggested by

the name brands (Nike, Adidas, and so on) that many of the young people wear and by the Han restaurants they frequent.

The Hui are Muslim, although observance of Islamic doctrine seems even more lax among the Hui than it is among the Uighur. When I peeked inside a local Hui mosque on Friday afternoons, I usually saw about ten older Hui men praying. According to the groundskeeper, this was a usual crowd—significantly smaller than the number of Uighur attending services on Fridays.

Young Hui in Urumqi know they are Hui and seem proud of it, as though it makes them special when compared to ordinary Han. Yet, aside from perhaps not eating pork—which most Hui with whom I talked said they refrained from doing—they do not seem to observe Islamic doctrine. They do not worship at mosques or celebrate Muslim holidays. They drink alcohol and have greater aspirations to go to Beijing than to make the *hajj* to Mecca. The ones I spoke with, like most Han, were not circumcised. By comparison, young Uighur in Urumqi, many of whom still go to Muslim services, tend to refrain from drinking alcohol and eating pork, would like to go to Mecca, and are all circumcised. Young Uighur men and women, even if they were not wearing any head coverings, also tended to dress in more conservative clothes, with little to distinguish their fashion from that of older Uighur.

Hui, like Han, seem to feel that migration into Xinjiang has benefited the region and its peoples, including Uighur. Hui, like Han, seem to have limited interaction with Uighur. They stick to the Han parts of town, eat at Han restaurants, and shop at Han, as opposed to Uighur markets.

As far as I could tell, the biggest distinction between Han and Hui living in Urumqi is that most Hui consider themselves Xinjiang people. They view Xinjiang as their homeland. Many were born in Xinjiang, but even those who had recently migrated to the region—usually to work—claimed Xinjiang as their home. Transplanted Han always asserted that they were from a different province, almost as a point of pride that they were, indeed, not from Xinjiang. From what I could gather, the Hui felt an affiliation with Xinjiang since it has historically been China's Muslim region, although many of those with whom I

spoke maintained that Xi'an, with its large population of Hui, was China's true Muslim homeland.

Social Inequality

To gain an understanding of Uighur and Han views regarding social issues, I asked my respondents questions about China's family planning policies, discrimination in housing, and the quality of medical care.

FAMILY PLANNING

Of all the issues that I raised in my interviews, family planning was the only one on which the majority of Uighur and Han respondents were in general agreement. Most of the Uighur I interviewed believed that China's family planning laws, which limit the number of children families may have, were unfair and anti-Islamic. Even in Beijing, 60 percent of Uighur viewed China's family planning policy negatively. In Shanghai, 85 percent of Uighur felt that China's family planning laws were unfair, as did every Uighur I talked with in Urumqi, including all the women I interviewed.

It is not only Uighur who oppose Chinese family planning laws. Many Han, both men and women, expressed the desire to have more than one child. There were some male Han professionals who believed that Chinese family planning laws are necessary to control China's population growth. However, most Han I interviewed expressed the view that they, the Uighur, and other Chinese minorities should be free to choose how many children they want to have.

HOUSING

Eighty-seven percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai believed that Uighur suffered discrimination from Han when it came to housing. Generally, Uighur felt that they could not afford to pay the high rental fees for the better apartments and that landlords of better flats, who were almost always Han, were hesitant to rent to Uighur. Furthermore, 88 percent of the Uighur in Urumqi and 85 percent of the Uighur in Shanghai felt that the Han had taken

the best places to live. Two-thirds of the male Uighur professionals I interviewed also felt this way.

In Beijing, however, only 8 percent of the Uighur felt that Han discriminated against Uighur when it came to housing. In Beijing, many Uighur do not reside in Uighur enclaves but rather live in otherwise all-Han apartment buildings.

Not surprisingly, only 2 percent of Han I interviewed believed that Uighur are discriminated against when it comes to housing. However, many Han landlords I spoke with, even in Urumqi, said they would not rent to Uighur if they could help it, believing Uighur make “poor” or “unreliable” tenants or that they “intimidate” Han occupants.

MEDICAL CARE

Ninety-nine percent of the Han I interviewed believed that Chinese minorities receive the same medical care as Han and that Han doctors do not discriminate against Uighur. However, some Han professionals, particularly in Urumqi, believed that Uighur may not be able to afford the same quality of medical treatment that Han would be likely to receive.

Eighty-eight percent of the Uighur in Urumqi felt that Han received better health care than Uighur, as did 85 percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Shanghai. One possible explanation for this perception is that Uighur who do not speak Mandarin or speak it poorly cannot effectively communicate with doctors, who are almost always Han. However, the majority of the Uighur I interviewed believed that Han doctors simply do not treat Uighur patients as well as Han. In Beijing, by contrast, only 12 percent of Uighur interviewees felt that Uighur were discriminated against when it came to the quality of health care.

Islamic Religious Practice and Participation

Ninety-nine percent of Han interviewees believed that Chinese minorities, including the Uighur, are free to practice their religion as long as they do not congregate to discuss separatism. However, Han generally seemed to consider belief in Islam to be primitive and an

indicator of how developed, or willing to develop, a people were. As one Han woman, a nurse who was in her forties, told me, “The Uighur are more primitive. Their culture is a religious one, which prevents some of them from developing as quickly as other minorities. In a way, they are much like the Tibetans. They come from agrarian communities; they are superstitious and worship imaginary things.”

A retired Han history teacher also believed that the Uighur were being held back by their religious beliefs. When asked to describe the differences and similarities among Chinese Muslim minorities, he said, “Actually they are all very similar. They all believe in Islam, so they mostly wear Muslim hats and do not eat pork. Most Muslims make their money selling food, although the Hui don’t always. They [the Hui] have other jobs. I know a Hui man who is a real estate agent. Him, you wouldn’t know he is Hui, but he still doesn’t eat pork. But he doesn’t wear a hat and he doesn’t go to pray except sometimes. You see, the Uighur—they still try to keep their old ways, and this holds them back. But the Hui, they are more like the Han and therefore more developed. They stick to their Muslim beliefs, but not so strongly as to hinder their progress. Many Hui do not pray every day or even pray at all.”

Of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai, 82 percent responded negatively when asked about religious freedom in China. This negative view was uniformly held by men and women of all ages, single and married, professional and nonprofessional alike.

The Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi generally did not believe that Uighur who went to services at a mosque were being watched, possibly because mosque attendance is large. In Shanghai, however, while the Uighur I interviewed felt they were free in theory to practice their religion, they were uncomfortable about going to a mosque since it could be under police surveillance. According to some Uighur, there was a mosque in Shanghai near the Uighur neighborhood, but despite my best efforts over a three-month period I was unable to find it, and local Uighur were unwilling to take me there.

The results from Beijing interviews, as usual, differed from those in Shanghai and Urumqi, although even there 28 percent of the Uighur felt uncomfortable with the Han government’s religious policies.

However, none of the Beijing Uighur claimed to be uncomfortable about going to a mosque to pray.

While all the Beijing Uighur I interviewed claimed that they prayed, most admitted they never went to a mosque. Also, while there was some discrepancy among their answers to questions regarding the importance of fasting during Ramadan, even those who answered that it was important generally did not fast. During the month of Ramadan, Uighur in Beijing continued to work their stalls, and, on occasion, I would see them snacking.

“It’s Ramadan,” I once said to a Uighur goat meat seller who was eating.

The Uighur laughed, perhaps somewhat embarrassed. “I need to do business,” he explained. “If we don’t come to work and open the stall, we lose too much money. China is a modern society. It doesn’t have Ramadan. We Uighur keep it alive in our hearts and minds, but we mustn’t let that get in the way of doing business.”

“What about the Friday Sabbath?” I asked, “I’ve seen you here on Friday afternoons working. Do you go to pray?”

Again the Uighur laughed. “We don’t need to go pray,” he said. “We need to do good business. Friday afternoon is a busy time here. Many customers come to buy meat on their way home. So we have no time to go to a mosque. Besides, there are no mosques close to here. There aren’t many mosques in Beijing, and most of the mosques are not Uighur, so I wouldn’t want to go to them anyway. But we pray. We pray here, in our stall.”

I asked, “Do you get on your knees when you pray?”

“Not if it’s busy,” the Uighur said smiling. “But we pray in our hearts. It’s enough.”

However, according to another older Uighur man working at another food stall, some Uighur do fast during Ramadan.

“We keep our stall open to make money,” he told me, “but we still observe the Muslim holidays. We don’t eat while the sun is up. And we pray, here in our stall, when we have the opportunity.”

Uighur living and working in Uighur areas of Beijing, while economically worse off than Uighur living and working in Han areas, generally do attend religious services and observe Ramadan. Most of

the Uighur residing in the Niu Jie and Wei Gong Cun areas did not work during the day during the month of Ramadan. However, there were exceptions. I once came upon an older Uighur man selling pastries from a wooden cart during the holiday. He was not far from the Niu Jie Mosque, and it was a Friday afternoon. Services had let out about an hour earlier.

“Did you go to pray?” I asked while buying a chunk of his, in my opinion, overpriced sweets.

“Yes,” he answered, “but not in the mosque. I prayed on the street.” When I asked him to clarify, he explained, “Many Uighur pray out here on the street. Some of us are too busy because we have to work. And some Uighur simply don’t feel comfortable going to the mosque.”

“Why not?” I asked.

The Uighur shook his head. He looked very uncomfortable. “Too many people,” he said carefully, “or maybe some other reason. For whatever reason, we don’t go to the mosque, but we can hear the call to prayer because of the mosque’s PA. So we kneel,” he indicated his prayer rug, neatly tucked inside his cart, “and pray.”

Most of the Uighur restaurants on Niu Jie and in Wei Gong Cun were closed during the month of Ramadan. There was, however, a small restaurant stall near the minority university that was always open, even during the daytime. The two middle-aged Uighur men working inside were from Kashgar. They had moved to Beijing within the last seven years.

According to one of the men, “It’s fine for us to sell food during Ramadan, we just can’t eat it. So Ramadan is a difficult time for us, since we have to work and be hungry. But it’s no problem. Besides, there isn’t much business in this area. Even with all our competition closed, not many students come to our restaurant.” The Uighur men said they prayed daily. They said there was no mosque nearby, so they prayed at home or, if necessary, while at work.

While many Uighur who attended Friday services at the Niu Jie Mosque did not appear economically well off, here again there were exceptions. Some attendees were well dressed, often in Chinese brand-name suits, and twice during Ramadan, I saw groups of middle-aged Uighur men leaving in private cars. These particular Uighur, however,

did not reside in the Niu Jie area and said that they did not frequently attend services at the Niu Jie Mosque (or any mosque for that matter) but were making an exception for Ramadan.

One wealthy middle-aged Uighur man told me, “We are attending services because our family is visiting.” Most of these Uighur wore nothing on their heads. I asked one of the better-dressed men about this as he climbed into the driver’s seat of a black sedan. He was obviously in a hurry and not interested in chatting with me, but he did say, “We wear hats when praying, in the mosque. But at other times it isn’t necessary. Hats are part of the old ways. It’s a tradition, but it isn’t necessary outside the mosque.”

Many Uighur are hesitant or unwilling to discuss religion with outsiders.

“That [religion] is a private expression,” explained one thirty-six-year-old Uighur restaurant owner in Shanghai. “Besides, as I said, it isn’t practical to be too religious in a modern world. We all have to accept our situation and adapt.”

“Does the government suppress Islam?” I asked.

“Not overtly,” replied the man. “But, yes, the people of China—the Han—are taught that religious belief is ignorance. And now, more than before, that Muslims are terrorists.” He sighed and said, “Being a minority, being religious, especially Muslim, doesn’t improve your situation in China. It only makes things more difficult. The Hui know this, and they have learned to hide it or forget it [their religion]. But the Uighur are a proud people and can’t forget who they are simply because of these ideas.”

“Are you religious?” I asked a thirty-four-year-old Uighur who worked as an office assistant in Urumqi.

“No,” said the man. “But I believe in God and I speak to him in my own way. You know, now in Urumqi it’s not so easy to be religious. More and more, the Uighur are less religious than before. But that doesn’t mean we don’t believe.”

“Why are Uighur less religious?” I asked.

“Because of modernization,” said the man. He laughed and said, “It’s difficult to find time to pray when you have to be at work.”

A Han businessman who works in Urumqi told me, “Most Uighur are like Han now. They come and pray when they have the time, but

they are more interested in selling their things and trying to make money. Most Uighur don't really have the time to pray."

In Urumqi, many Uighur discos and nightclubs are closed during Ramadan, although, aside from that, business goes on for the most part as usual. Uighur food, bread, and fruit stalls are still open daily for business, and the Uighur men who loiter in front of the Bank of China offering tourists the opportunity to change money are still out and about.

"We need to make money," explained a Uighur goat meat seller. "Business depends on Han, not just other Uighur, so Muslim holidays can't interfere with work. This doesn't mean that Uighur don't pray more during Ramadan, and many will fast even when they have to work. But I think that most working Uighur won't fast or pray much during this time."

A Uighur carpet shop owner originally from Kashgar told a similar story but also said, "In the countryside of Xinjiang, Uighur will observe Ramadan more strictly. There, people won't work. They'll fast and pray when they are supposed to. Even if Uighur did want to work, no other Uighur would be their customer during that time. But in Urumqi, and now more and more in Kashgar, Uighur don't have a choice. Maybe it's a good thing because it means that Uighur will have more money and more opportunities to do what they want. My parents don't mind, but my grandparents do. But these are old traditions and old ways. We are modern Uighur. Modern Uighur are still Muslim; we still believe in our hearts. But we can't afford not to work because of our religion."

Most Han, regardless of age or background, view religion as superstition and those who adhere to religious practices as primitive, if not ignorant. According to one older Shanghai Uighur man and his son, who was in his twenties, Uighur realize that the Han look down on religious worship, and, as a result, many Uighur no longer pray. "Even in Xinjiang nowadays there are many Uighur who don't pray," explained the father. "They are embarrassed of their religion. They are afraid that if they pray, other people will think they are ignorant."

"Other Han people," I clarified. Both men nodded. According to the father, while he sometimes went to the mosque in Shanghai, his son prayed only at home, and not often. In response, I asked, "How do you preserve your culture here in Shanghai?"

The men nodded, smiling. “Our Uighur culture is preserved,” said the older man. “We speak Uighur with each other and eat Uighur food.” He slapped his son’s shoulder and said, “Uighur men date and marry Uighur women. But we’re in Shanghai, not Xinjiang. Shanghai isn’t a Uighur place, so things must change some. But most Uighur who come to Shanghai stay Uighur.”

The younger man said, “The Uighur who change in Shanghai would have changed in Xinjiang, as well. China is a developing nation, and they [Uighur] want to benefit from that development. So some Uighur become like the Han. They speak Mandarin, and they don’t mind if their children don’t speak Uighur. They don’t pray, they eat Han food and watch Han television shows. They become the same as the Han.”

“Do they do that to get ahead?” I asked.

“Of course,” said the older man, “but it isn’t necessary. Learning Mandarin is important—all Uighur must learn Mandarin—but you can still remain Uighur. But some Uighur, especially now in Xinjiang, they want to be Chinese. They change.”

“Maybe you’re from Kashgar,” his son chimed in, “and you want to work in a company there or move to Urumqi to work at a hotel. Many Uighur think that if you become Chinese, then you’ll have more chances to do these sorts of things.”

“Would you?” I asked.

The men shrugged. The older man said, “Maybe for some Uighur, but they can’t change their face. Uighur are still Uighur, and Han are still Han. Even the Uighur who want to be Han, they may act and think like the Han, but to the Han they will always be Uighur.”

“Do you think that Uighur have fewer opportunities than Han?” I asked.

“Yes and no,” said the older man. “Even here in Shanghai, even though most Uighur came here to get ahead in life, it’s very difficult.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

The older man said, “It’s hard to find a good job. It’s hard to get a good education . . .”

“But it’s hard on the Han too,” the man’s son cut in.

“But not as hard,” said the older man. His son nodded in agreement. “If you’re Uighur,” continued the older man, “you’re already looked down on. The Han assume you are a criminal or are uneducated.”

MOSQUE ATTENDANCE

In Xinjiang, Uighur and Hui tend to pray at separate mosques. Uighur services are typically conducted in Uighur and Arabic, while Hui services are conducted in Mandarin and Arabic. Outside Xinjiang, most mosques are Hui. However, some Uighur still go to these mosques to attend services and pray. In Dunhuang, a small city in Gansu—the desert province bordering Xinjiang—Hui and Uighur pray at the same mosque. This is probably because Dunhuang has only one mosque, and there is a relatively small population of Uighur in the area. According to the mosque’s caretaker, a middle-aged Hui man, the mosque was recently reconstructed with local government funding.

“Friday draws our biggest crowd,” he explained, “usually about forty to fifty Hui and a few Uighur, although people do come to pray at different times throughout the week.”

“Do Uighur and Hui get along?” I asked.

The caretaker smiled and replied, “The Uighur here do business. They sell their foodstuffs and try to make money. But they do come to pray. Hui and Uighur get along because we are all Muslim, although I have heard that in Xinjiang, Hui and Uighur go to separate mosques. I think this is because they have different cultures and languages, so it’s easier for them to be apart.”

Most mosques throughout China’s northwest, and almost all mosques in Xinjiang, are constructed in a traditional Afghani or Arabian style. From an architectural standpoint, Hui mosques in Yunnan and the Great Mosque in Xi’an, where Hui constitute a large portion of the population, could be mistaken for Buddhist or Taoist temples, as could the Niu Jie Mosque in Beijing. Uighur in Urumqi are proud of the way their mosques look, that is, they feel their mosques look Islamic in comparison to Hui mosques built in the style of traditional Chinese temples.

While some Shanghai Uighur claim that there is a mosque in the city, most seem not to know any details about it, including its location. The Shanghai Han with whom I spoke said that there are no mosques in Shanghai.

According to both the Han and the Uighur I interviewed, there are no mosques in Shenzhen either. A Hui waiter at a noodle shop told

me that there used to be a Hui mosque but that it was closed when the street it was on was reconstructed to accommodate Shenzhen's ever-increasing traffic.

The Id Ka Mosque—Kashgar's main mosque in the center of town—and the market that surrounded it also were closed because of construction. A large metal fence blocked off the formerly bustling Uighur bazaar, most of which had been turned to rubble. The mosque itself appeared untouched. Within the fence's perimeter there wasn't a person in sight. According to local Han, the mosque was still open for prayers, but local Uighur insisted it was closed, and they were unsure as to when it would reopen. Both Uighur and Han said the area was being refurbished to look better for Kashgar's tourists, but it is possible the mosque and market had been shut down by the local government to disperse the Uighur who used to gather there more than at any other place in the city. There were several other functioning mosques located in the city, and a small one in a newly opened bazaar on the outskirts of the city.

Niu Jie Mosque in Beijing. The Niu Jie Mosque is Beijing's most famous mosque and the one most frequented by the city's Muslim population. The Niu Jie Mosque is built in the Chinese style. There are no domes or minarets. The roofs slope up at the eaves in the traditional style of the Ming dynasty. Originally built in the ninth century, the mosque's current architecture is a reflection of enlargements and refurbishments made throughout the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. There are a number of relics and artifacts inside, many of which are Han and have no relation to Islam. According to one of the mosque's groundskeepers, an older Han woman, the mosque was completely renovated in 1979.

"It's a beautiful mosque," she said proudly.

"The clerics here are all Hui," she explained, "and so are most of the worshippers, although there are some Uighur who show up. Friday afternoon is the only busy time. Many Hui and a few Uighur come then. Aside from that, the mosque is never busy. A few old people come in from time to time—sometimes five times a day—but that's it. Most worshippers come only on Friday afternoons. Any Mus-

lim can come, but the clerics and most of the worshippers are Hui, and services are entirely in Mandarin.”

“Why do you think more Uighur don’t come?”

“I don’t know,” answered the woman. “There aren’t many Uighur on this street, but I don’t think that’s the reason. Honestly, I think the Uighur are less interested in practicing their religion than the Hui are. Only a few Uighur come here. Even old Uighur don’t come. You know, China has five Muslim minorities, but it’s the Uighur who practice the least.”

“Why do you think that?”

“Everyone knows that. The Uighur . . . how can I say this . . . they aren’t part of any society but their own Uighur society. They aren’t interested in much, not even their own religion.”

When I asked a thirty-one-year-old Uighur working in one of Beijing’s Uighur food stalls his opinion of the Niu Jie Mosque, he replied, “I’ve been to the mosque there to look, but only a couple of times. It’s an interesting mosque, although it doesn’t really look like a mosque. But I never go there now. It’s also a little far, and I have no time.”

I asked, “Where do you go to pray?”

The Uighur looked a little embarrassed. “Maybe here,” he said, although his response sounded more like a question.

Urumqi’s Mosques. Urumqi has several mosques throughout the city, all located in or around Uighur areas. The city’s most famous mosque is the Hantangri Mosque. The third floor of Hantangri is the mosque itself. From outside, the building looks reasonably well cared for. There is a sign in English, Chinese, and Uighur explaining the history and upkeep of the building. The last sentence of the sign in English reads, “Since our mosque insists on legal management of religious affairs, we have made the positive contribution to our country, it is cited by the governments at all levels for many times.”

The inside of the mosque is a solitary room with worn Uighur carpets on the floor and some geometric patterns etched in the walls. Except on Fridays, I never saw more than five men praying inside. When I tried to talk to worshippers as they left, I was frequently ignored. This was typical of my experience with all the mosques I visited in

Urumqi. Worshippers generally seemed uninterested or unwilling to talk with me beyond letting me know that I was not allowed inside. At one of the mosques near the Er Dao Qiao Market, a Han uniformed security guard emerged from the adjacent office when he saw me wandering outside and followed me around the premises. He, like the majority of Uighur worshippers, was not friendly.

In the small Uighur market that surrounds the Hantangri Mosque was a young Uighur goat meat seller from whom I had purchased goat meat pastries on several occasions. His Mandarin was poor, but he had always been affable and happy to chat with me. But when I told him I had just come from the mosque, his attitude toward me seemed to change.

“It’s very beautiful,” I said. The Uighur nodded and smiled. I asked, “Do you go there to pray?”

“Yes,” he said. “All Uighur do.”

“Is there a certain time or day when most people go to pray?”

The Uighur shook his head, then glared at me and in a shaky voice demanded, “Do you have anything else you want to talk about?”

Not wanting to offend him I said, “I’m sorry. I just think it’s interesting.” The Uighur shook his head again and began kneading the bread for his pastries, deliberately ignoring me.

I encountered similar attitudes when asking other Uighur in that marketplace about the mosque. Most were completely unwilling to discuss it and seemed genuinely upset that I wanted to.

The few Han passing through the market, on the other hand, seemed happy to discuss the mosque and its worshippers. According to one, a middle-aged businessman stopping to buy some bread on his way home, Uighur can freely pray at the mosque as long as it is not formally organized.

“The government doesn’t care how Uighur pray,” he explained, “as long as they aren’t doing it in too big a group. It’s when they start having big meetings and have many Uighur all together at once that the government starts to worry, and with good reason. Because when religious groups meet and start to organize, that’s when they may discuss revolting or separating.”

I asked, “Do you think Uighur ever meet for mass prayer?”

“No,” answered the man, “I think not. Again, it’s fine for them to go and pray individually, and since that’s what most Uighur do anyway, this isn’t a problem. But if they were to start trying to meet in big groups in the mosque, I don’t think the government would allow that.”

A Han woman in her early thirties suggested, “Uighur don’t care to meet and discuss separating anyway. They don’t care about these things. Most Uighur just want to live a normal life.” When I asked her what a normal life was, she replied, “You know, sell their things, get some money, maybe get married.”

In spite of what I had been repeatedly told by Han about the government’s being uncomfortable when large groups of Uighur gathered, Friday prayers drew large crowds: not at the Hantangri Mosque, but at the Bai Da Mosque in the Er Dao Qiao Market area. Here, between two and four in the afternoon, hordes of Uighur gather both inside and outside the mosque, jamming the already busy market street in front of the mosque and making it almost impossible to walk. Many of those selling goods—mostly inexpensive clothing and handwoven rugs from makeshift sidewalk stalls—periodically kneel to pray in the direction of the Bai Da Mosque. Only male worshippers were allowed inside the mosque, but women in veils and head scarves—about ten percent of the crowd—prayed in the street while listening to the service, which was broadcast over the mosque’s public address system.

Services are held in Arabic and Uighur. According to a Uighur man outside the mosque, most Uighur do not speak Arabic, so the Koran must be translated for them. He also told me Hui do not come to pray at the Bai Da Mosque, although Islam does not discriminate and they would be welcome.

There was no police presence at the mosque except for two middle-aged uniformed security guards. One of the guards was Uighur. The other was Han. The Han security guard was the only Han or Hui person I saw within a few kilometers of the Bai Da Mosque on Friday afternoons. He told me that he was there to help direct traffic, since the area became so crowded on Friday afternoons.

In sharp contrast to the large crowds in and around the Bai Da Mosque, the more isolated Kuan Xiang Mosque did not appear to be

holding services or even to be open, for that matter. Located off a side street where chickens are killed and butchered in Uighur-owned shops, the Kuan Xiang Mosque is almost halfway between the Hantangri Mosque and the Er Dao Qiao Market area. The mosque itself was dark inside and didn't appear to be open. Outside, four Uighur men, two of whom were noticeably old, stood before the entrance and prayed. They seemed to be alone and without a cleric to lead them. In the hallway leading into the Kuan Xiang courtyard is a sign written in Chinese that reads, "The Koran says that good Muslims love their country." When asked about the sign, one of the older Uighur said, "You can't understand the Koran unless you understand Arabic. It's impossible to translate into Chinese."

National Identity

I addressed the issue of Uighur identification with China's national identity by asking my interviewees questions about Han entertainment, fashion, and food; China's national holidays; the role of China in the world; the upcoming 2008 summer Olympic Games in Beijing; and travel within China.

ENTERTAINMENT

In Urumqi, none of the Uighur I interviewed said that they watched Han TV shows or movies, and only one of the Uighur I interviewed in Shanghai watched Mandarin-language entertainment. This could be explained in part by the fact that most Uighur speak and understand Mandarin at only a rudimentary level. However, the Uighur in Urumqi and Shanghai also claimed that they did not enjoy listening to Han music or watching Mandarin-language VCDs even when they had Uighur subtitles.

Beijing, however, was a different story. There, 92 percent of the Uighur I interviewed said that they watched Mandarin-language entertainment or enjoyed listening to Han music. This is probably due to the fact that Beijing has more second-generation Uighur, who, having grown up in China's capital city, speak Mandarin better than their Shanghai or Urumqi counterparts.

Most Uighur in Urumqi and Shanghai said that they preferred viewing VCDs and DVDs to watching TV. Two young Uighur women who appeared to be in their early twenties noted the recent availability of VCDs as a positive aspect of Urumqi's development. "Now you can get VCDs," said one of the women. Both women laughed.

"We like watching movies," said the other.

"Chinese movies?" I asked.

"No," said the first. "We watch Turkish movies."

"And Hollywood movies," offered her friend. She blushed and said, "Tom Cruise."

"Why not Chinese movies?"

"I think they're very stupid," said the first one. She made some kung fu motions and sounds. Both women laughed and rolled their eyes.

TV broadcasts of sporting events are one exception to the general rule that Uighur do not watch Mandarin-language programming. This seems to be particularly true for Uighur men under fifty, and especially for soccer games. The 2004 European Cup Soccer Championship brought many young Uighur men into what are ordinarily Han bars in Urumqi to watch the matches, even though most matches began between two and four in the morning. This could be an indication of how few Uighur homes have televisions, although most Uighur I asked claimed that they liked to watch the games in public with their friends because it was more exciting.

There are local TV stations in Urumqi that show programs in Uighur, although most broadcasts are in Mandarin. There is also a nightly Uighur-language news broadcast that, according to many Uighur, espouses the Communist Party line. Uighur programming often has Mandarin subtitles. The majority of Uighur programs are popular Han TV shows that have been dubbed into Uighur.

Outside of Xinjiang, there is a complete absence of Uighur programming. Ironically, there is a nationally broadcast TV show called *Xinjiang Gu Niang* [Xinjiang Woman] that, despite the subject matter and the fact that most actors are Uighur, is broadcast in Mandarin and is more popular with young Han women than any other group. Indeed most Uighur, who tend to favor watching VCDs over local TV shows, have never even heard of *Xinjiang Gu Niang*, much less watched it.

About once a month, a Beijing TV station showcased one of China's national minorities on one of its programs. One show about the Uighur described them as a "lively and peaceful minority." Most of the show featured a handsome young Han man in Xinjiang, lying on Uighur carpets, eating Uighur food, wandering through the Grape Valley in Turpan, and watching Uighur dance traditional dances. The show was entirely in Mandarin, and, while Uighur were shown smiling as they sold their goods and performed their dances, very rarely in the hour-long program did Uighur actually speak to the camera. When they did, they spoke in Mandarin with accompanying subtitles in Chinese characters. Most Beijing Uighur, when asked, thought it was good when Xinjiang and the Uighur were showcased in Mandarin TV programs.

In Urumqi, Han bands often learn Uighur songs and perform at Uighur bars. Most of these are Uighur-owned and Uighur-operated and have an almost entirely Uighur staff and clientele, although there are usually a few token Han waiters and customers. The musicians performing Uighur songs at these bars, however, are almost always Han.

There is also a disco in Urumqi that has a Uighur clientele but whose owner is Han. The staff is all male and almost entirely Han. However this does not dissuade Uighur from coming—and coming in droves—every night of the week. Between 11:30 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., the disco is packed.

The DJ is a Uighur woman, and all announcements are made in the Uighur language. She plays Uighur popular music, with a few Russian and Indian songs mixed in. I never heard any Han songs played. Toward the end of the night, an occasional American pop song is played—Britney Spears or the Backstreet Boys. After every fourth or fifth song, the dance floor clears, and a Uighur dance team—sometimes two men and two women, sometimes three women, all dressed in traditional Uighur outfits—performs traditional dances. Although the music is traditional, a computerized dance beat is almost always mixed beneath it. And even though the Uighur women hold candles during some of the dances, modern strobe lights still flash to illuminate and intensify the performance.

The disco's clientele on any given night is entirely Uighur. Most of the patrons are in their mid- to late twenties, although there are some

older people and a few families who bring their teenage children. Some of the older women wear head scarves and long sleeves, although most female patrons, regardless of age, dress in jeans or skirts. The women in this disco do not dress as revealingly—or formally, for that matter—as Han women typically do in Han discos.

Most of the dancing, despite the modern music, has an air of traditionalism. Uighur spread their arms like wings and circle each other with pride. During slow songs, men and women dance together. Women also dance with other women, and sometimes men dance with men. The women who wear head scarves usually dance with other women. Occasionally they dance with men, probably their husbands. However, when these women dance with a man, they dance without touching.

According to the disco's owner, "Han don't usually come here because they don't like Uighur music. Maybe they think it's interesting at first, but they prefer modern Han music. I opened this place because I had been in other Uighur discos and knew they could make money. Uighur don't mind who runs their disco, they just want a place to go play."

Despite the owner's comment, Uighur patrons of the disco did not seem to care for the Han staff. They treated them with cold indifference, talking to them only when ordering something and even then speaking the bare minimum words in Mandarin. They didn't seem to mind that I was there, but they virtually ignored me. Still, I did not get unfriendly looks the way the Han waiters and security guards did.

FASHION

When asked their views regarding dress, 97 percent of the Han I interviewed expressed a preference for modern Chinese fashions—that is, Western-style clothing—over traditional or other forms of dress.

Eighty-three percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai responded negatively when asked questions concerning Western dress. In Beijing, however, 80 percent of the Uighur I interviewed said they preferred wearing Western dress to traditional Uighur clothing. None of the Uighur women I interviewed in Urumqi thought highly of modern Chinese fashions, and only 19 percent of

the men said they preferred wearing Western dress to traditional Uighur clothing. This was also basically the case in Shanghai, where none of the women thought highly of Chinese fashions, and only 26 percent of the men said they preferred wearing Western dress to traditional Uighur clothing.

Expressed attitudes aside, most Uighur men in China, regardless of age or background, seemed to dress about the same as Han men, with little to distinguish their clothes other than the Uighur hats some of the men wear. Uighur women also dress similarly to their Han counterparts, except in Urumqi, where many, usually older women, wear traditional Uighur dress, including head scarves and veils.

FOOD

Han love their food, and almost every Han I interviewed, regardless of age, gender, or background, thought highly of Chinese (Han) cuisine. Indeed, 92 percent of the Han I interviewed expressed the belief that Chinese food is the best food in the world. This opinion is not surprising and is typical of the experience I had as an English teacher at various Chinese schools and universities in Suzhou and Shanghai, where I taught Han students from several different provinces. Whenever I asked my students, “What is your favorite food?” they invariably answered, “Chinese food.” When I then asked, “Why?” hoping to elicit a creative response about its taste, and so on, they invariably answered, “Because I’m Chinese.” My students, no matter their age or background, were adamant about liking Chinese food best because they were Chinese. This is a very simple example, but it is indicative of the cultural bonds that Han Chinese share.

Ninety-eight percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai disliked Han food. In Urumqi, all of the Uighur I interviewed, regardless of age, background, or sex, disliked Han food. This was also the case in Shanghai, where all but one of the Uighur I interviewed disliked Han food. Even in Beijing, where Uighur tend to maintain more positive views regarding Han culture, 80 percent of the Uighur I interviewed did not care for Han food. Uighur professionals, who tend to hold views similar to Han in other areas, also expressed the views that Han food is “not tasty” and “too oily” and that Uighur cuisine is superior.

Once, on Shanghai's Guandong Lu, I asked two adult Uighur restaurant workers whether they ever ate Han food. Both shook their heads.

"We Uighur like Uighur food," said the younger one firmly. The older man said, "Han food . . ." then made a spitting gesture.

"What about other Han things?" I asked. "Like movies and music?"

"We like Uighur things," said the younger Uighur.

The older fellow motioned to his radio, proudly playing traditional Uighur music, and nodded as if to say, "Do we understand each other?"

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Of the Han I interviewed, 99 percent said they observed and enjoyed Chinese holidays. By comparison, almost all of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai, regardless of age, sex, or background, showed no interest in Chinese holidays. Only 6 percent of Urumqi's Uighur said they observed Chinese holidays. Many Uighur in Urumqi did not even know, much less care, when Chinese holidays were occurring. This was also the case in Shanghai, where only 8 percent of the Uighur I interviewed said they observed Chinese holidays.

In Beijing, however, 92 percent of the Uighur I interviewed said they observed Chinese holidays. For China's Midautumn Festival, some Beijing Uighur restaurant owners even bought their Uighur employees boxes of moon cakes—a Han tradition during the holiday.

While most Han return home for the festival, which is celebrated with food and family much like the American Thanksgiving, the Uighur I interviewed opted not to travel during that time because it was too expensive to go to Xinjiang or it was too far.

For the vast majority of Uighur, especially the unemployed, the response to China's National Day was apathy. Most Uighur knew it was happening—it would be almost impossible not to with all the advertising—but no one seemed to care. Almost every Uighur to whom I mentioned National Day just nodded, much as if someone in the United States were reminding me that it was Secretary's Day and I didn't have a secretary. The holiday held no meaning for them other than the fact it was occurring.

Most Han believed that Uighur were celebrating National Day. According to one Shanghai university student, "All Chinese minorities celebrate National Day. It's a national holiday. Uighur celebrate too.

Some go home to see their family or maybe have a big dinner that night with all their friends. Some go to see the fireworks, but everyone will do something special.”

However, one Han haircut equipment supply store owner understood the general Uighur lack of enthusiasm for the holiday. “National Day is a Han holiday,” he said, “so why should the Uighur care? They don’t care about anything, so why would they care about a holiday that has nothing to do with them.”

One of his employees, a woman in her midtwenties, voiced the opposite, more typically Han opinion. “I think the Uighur should care,” she said, “because even if they are Uighur, they are still Chinese. In fact, all minorities are first Chinese, then their minority. National Day isn’t about the Han, it’s about China. If it weren’t for China, where would the Uighur live?”

ROLE OF CHINA IN THE WORLD

In Urumqi, 71 percent of the Uighur I interviewed showed no interest in the return of Taiwan to China or in China’s future development. Similarly, in Shanghai, 58 percent of the Uighur I interviewed expressed no interest in the return of Taiwan to China or in China’s future on the world stage. Beijing’s Uighur were generally more interested in China’s future and more positive in their beliefs. Eighty-eight percent of those I interviewed thought China would one day be a great power.

Likewise, 92 percent of the Han I interviewed were interested in China’s future, and many expressed the belief that China would overtake the United States and become the world’s foremost superpower. Also, all of the Han interviewees thought Taiwan should return to China.

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS

Ninety-eight percent of the Han I interviewed, regardless of age, sex, or background, were excited about Beijing’s hosting of the 2008 Olympics. They were hopeful that China would perform well in them, although they retained realistic expectations. The following discussion with a Han construction foreman in Shenzhen, who was in his forties, is typical of conversations I had with Han of all backgrounds throughout China.

“What do you think of the Chinese Olympics?” I asked.

“Very good,” replied the man, giving the thumbs-up.

“Will you go to Beijing?”

“I would like to, but probably no. I think Beijing then will be very crowded and too expensive.”

“How do you think China will do?”

“Mmmm, I think China will try hard, and that will give us face. But China can’t win. We are still developing. I don’t think China can beat the developed countries.”

“You’ll beat them at Ping-Pong,” I said.

The man laughed. “And maybe volleyball and kung fu,” he added.

Most of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai expressed no interest whatsoever in the games. Only 6 percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi expressed interest in the upcoming Olympics in Beijing and in the performance of Chinese athletes. In Shanghai, only 12 percent of the Uighur expressed any interest. Uighur who had no interest in the Olympics, not surprisingly, didn’t seem to care which country was going to win the most medals.

In Beijing, all of the Uighur I interviewed expressed interest in the Olympics and said that they hoped the Chinese athletes would do well. This could possibly be explained by the fact that they live in the city hosting the 2008 Olympics, and therefore the Olympics will have more of an impact on their lives. One Wei Gong Cun Uighur noodle shop owner said, “The Olympics will bring many people to Beijing. It will be very crowded and exciting. And, it will be good for business.” One licensed goat meat vendor, when asked, “How about the upcoming Olympics?” replied, “Yes, it’s very exciting. I’m sure Beijing will be very crowded and busy.”

Most Uighur and Han did not think Chinese minorities, particularly the Uighur, would be represented on China’s Olympic team. A former student of mine, a twenty-year-old woman, and her cousin, who appeared to be in her early twenties, discussed this with me.

“What do you think about the upcoming Olympics?” I asked.

“In Beijing?” she said. “Oh, very good.”

“Go China!” cheered her friend.

“I think the Olympics will help China’s economy, and I think it will help China’s relations with other countries.”

“In the future,” said her friend, “China, number one!”

“Will any Xinjiang people compete?” I asked.

“No,” my former student said. “They have no chance to, because they have no chance to train and learn about sports. Xinjiang people, Tibetans . . . their provinces are still too undeveloped to really prepare for such an event.”

“Also, those minority groups only make up a very small part of China’s population,” offered her friend. “So even if our Olympic team is all Han, I think that is still representative of China.”

TRAVEL

Ninety-four percent of the Han I interviewed expressed interest in traveling within China, particularly to Beijing and Guilin. Some Han interviewees expressed interest in traveling outside China, but the majority said they would prefer to travel within China rather than go abroad.

Only 9 percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi expressed an interest in traveling within China, although almost all of them were interested in traveling outside of China. In Shanghai, only 15 percent of the Uighur expressed an interest in traveling within China, although almost all the Uighur I interviewed said they would like to travel outside of China. In Beijing, all the Uighur I interviewed were interested in traveling within China and many had either been to the Great Wall and other Beijing places of interest or expressed interest in visiting them.

May 1 is China’s Laodong (International Labor Day) holiday, and a large percentage of the country’s population takes one week off to travel. According to Chinese government estimates, ten million people traveled during the 2004 May holiday, but while Urumqi’s streets filled with Han tourists, it seemed that Urumqi’s Uighur weren’t going anywhere. Most of them conducted business as usual since, as usual, few Han ventured into their area, except for the occasional photo-taking tourist, snapping pictures of unwilling Uighur in their traditional Muslim hats or headdresses. When asked, “Why aren’t you traveling?” the Uighur I spoke with acted completely uninterested, regardless of their age or income bracket.

“Now is when all the Han travel,” said one, “it’s too crowded, and too expensive. Everywhere is a mess.”

“I would rather stay here and do business,” said another, an ice-cream vendor at Er Dao Qiao Market.

Two young women I spoke with in Urumqi were the exception to the general Uighur lack of interest in participating in China’s May travel holiday. Both were in their early twenties, yet dressed conservatively in head scarves and clothes that covered their arms and legs, despite the rising May temperatures.

“I would like to travel now,” said one, as her friend nodded in agreement. “I would like to go to Beijing, or maybe Guilin. I think Guilin must be very beautiful. But now I have no opportunity. I have no money and no time.”

Another Urumqi Uighur, a forty-six-year-old shopkeeper, also expressed a wish to travel during the May holiday but could not because of his job schedule.

“I’d like to go to Shanghai,” he said, “and visit my Uighur friends there.”

“What if your friends weren’t there?” I asked. “Would you still want to go?”

“Of course,” said the man. “I would still like to see Shanghai. I hear it’s a very modern, very developed city and that it’s very beautiful.”

Most Uighur I spoke with, however, would not have described Shanghai—or any Chinese city, for that matter—in those terms. To most Uighur, the desert and the mountains were beautiful—not the concrete blocks and endless construction typical of most Chinese cities.

Han-Uighur Relations

HAN-UIGHUR RELATIONS are colored by racist attitudes. Many of the Han with whom I spoke believed that the Uighur are a “fierce” and “unreasonable” people. They have a “primitive mentality” and are “apathetic to development.” Han-Uighur relations are also affected by the Han perception that Uighur are thieves. According to one Han dentist, “Wherever they [the Uighur] are, they cause trouble. They steal, they sell drugs—mostly they steal. I think that even if the Uighur had good jobs, they would still steal.”

Except for Uighur in professional occupations, second- and third-generation Uighur who reside in Beijing but do not live within an ethnic enclave, and those derisively referred to as “Chinese Uighur,” most of the Uighur I interviewed responded negatively when asked how they felt about Han-Uighur relations.

Of the Uighur I interviewed in Shanghai and Urumqi, 82 percent believed that Han-Uighur relations were poor. In Beijing, by comparison, 72 percent felt that Han-Uighur relations were either already good or continuously improving. Since most Beijing Uighur are legitimately employed, it is possible that they are less subject to Han racism and therefore more likely than other Uighur to feel that interracial relations are good.

Most Uighur outside the professions, particularly those without legitimate employment, resented the Han and the racist treatment they felt Uighur received because of their minority status. The notable exception to this attitude was in Beijing, where Uighur restaurant workers and food vendors claimed to hold no ill feelings toward the Han.

While most Uighur professionals had more positive views of Han-Uighur relations, some among them did not trust the Han. They believed that the racist attitudes Uighur encounter when dealing with the Han, both on personal and governmental policy levels, were responsible for holding the Uighur back. As one thirty-seven-year-old male Uighur professional, the manager of an import-export firm in Shanghai, explained, “I’m not angry [at the Han], but I am aware. I think the situation is regrettable. I think it’s difficult for Uighur to excel in a Han society that is racist toward its non-Han members. I think it’s too bad that Han government policies, including hiring practices and education policies, hold Uighur back. And I think it’s too bad that many Uighur lash back by committing crimes, giving Uighur an even worse name and causing more Han to view us with disdain, in turn causing the Uighur to hate the Han even more. It’s a terrible cycle, and one that will not be broken. Xinjiang will not be freed—I realize this is the case. But if the Han will not free Xinjiang, they should do what needs to be done to draw the Uighur into their society, instead of angering them by suppressing them and then tarring them with political campaigns when a small fraction of them rebels with crime. Do you know how hard it is for Uighur to rent an apartment, much less get a job? Han fear us. Yet it’s that very fear that drives so many Uighur to hate. The criminal is filled with hate. Hate for their situation and hate for their victims.”

While some Uighur cope with their minority status by turning to crime, and others by attempting to assimilate into the dominant society, the Uighur professionals I interviewed believe that neither is a viable solution to the problems Uighur face. Furthermore, they believe that Uighur must take responsibility for their own future and that the way to do this is by maintaining Uighur identity while doing what is necessary to progress in Han society.

“We Uighur must make the changes,” insisted one Uighur professional, a high school teacher, who was in his late thirties. “No one will

help us, so we must do it on our own. We must become educated and work hard—even harder than the Han. Yet we must not forget that we are Uighur when we start to achieve. Too many Uighur are willing to give up their identity, their religion, everything they are that makes them Uighur, to have a better life. This isn't necessary. How can you have a better life if you forget who you are?"

"Chinese Uighur?" I asked.

The man nodded and smiled. "It's a tempting offer," he said. "I think that for many it isn't even a deliberate choice. They just become that way because it's the path of least resistance. But these Uighur who give up their views, hide their Uighur eyes, and try to be Han, embarrassed by their very identity—it makes me disgusted."

"Are you religious?" I asked.

"I am, but I must be realistic and sometimes make compromises. But this doesn't make me less Uighur. The Uighur originally are not very religious. We are Muslim in our hearts, just as we are Uighur. But we live in a modern world, and I can't always afford to be as orthodox in my practice of Islam as perhaps I should be. I believe that the Chinese government is using our Uighur identity to hold us back. They encourage us to worship, to be more Muslim, knowing it will make them look good to the outside world; yet it holds us back at the same time. If we Uighur are praying when we could be doing business, doesn't it make the Han government look tolerant and encouraging of our religion? Yet doesn't it stop us from doing business and advancing? And doesn't it, more than anything, cause the Han to look down on us even more because they are too ignorant to understand the benefits of religion?"

Ninety percent of the Han I interviewed expressed the belief that Han-Uighur relations are good, and many Han interviewees, more so in Urumqi than in other cities, thought that they were improving. Those who thought that Han-Uighur relations were poor believed that the Uighur were to blame for all of the interracial problems. As an older married Han male jeweler who had grown up in Urumqi explained, "Relations are poor, but it's not the fault of the Han. You know, the Han have developed Urumqi, but the Uighur don't care. They don't have rules to govern their culture the way we do. They

have no principles. They think they can do whatever they want. They don't appear to reason—they make no sense.”

“What do you mean by that?” I asked. “That they make no sense?”

“Their Uighur minds are more primitive. You know, the Uighur originally came from Turkey, and at one time were a great race. But now they have fallen behind. They don't do anything. They don't know how to develop in the city. They don't care about developing the city. They don't care that the Han have developed the city. They just want to sell their goat meat or whatever and ignore the outside world. Their problem is they just don't care. They don't care to be modern. They don't seem to care about anything. They are an apathetic people. Urumqi is developing all around them. Maybe they don't want to be part of that. Maybe they hate the Han because of our history. But most Uighur know they will never have their own country. Xinjiang is part of China, and most Uighur accept this. So why can't they act more Chinese?”

“You mean more like the Han?”

“Not necessarily. Just more developed. The Uighur should be more interested in developing and more interested in their city. You know, it shouldn't be up to only the Han to help Urumqi grow. But the Uighur have such a primitive mentality and are so apathetic to development, that it has to be.”

Friends

There seems to be little friendship among the Han and Uighur. Ninety-five percent of the Han I interviewed claimed they did not have any Uighur friends, and 88 percent of the Uighur in Urumqi and Shanghai claimed they did not have any Han friends. Only 6 percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi said that they had Han friends. This was the case even for Uighur professionals. In Shanghai and Beijing, perhaps because they are cities with much smaller Uighur populations, more Uighur claim to have Han friends. But even in Shanghai, the numbers were still unimpressive. There, only 19 percent of the Uighur I interviewed said they had Han friends. But in Beijing, 76

percent of the Uighur I interviewed claimed they had Han friends. One possible explanation for this is Beijing's population of second-generation Uighur who, having grown up in the city, speak better Mandarin and have had more opportunities to make friends with local Han.

Han and Uighur Dating

Of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai, 95 percent said that they frowned upon interracial dating and would not approve of their child dating a Han. Most Uighur claimed that the two races are too culturally different to have successful long-term romantic relationships. Some Uighur also expressed the belief that Han men mistreated their partners. None of the married Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi wanted their children to date or marry a Han. All but one of the single Uighur were opposed to Uighur-Han dating and marriage. In Shanghai, 92 percent of the Uighur were opposed to Uighur-Han dating and intermarriage. Uighur men in Shanghai, for the most part, claim not to be attracted to Han women, although some expressed interest in foreign actresses, particularly those from Russia and Turkey. None of the eligible Uighur males with whom I spoke were involved with Han women. Most expressed disinterest in Han women, claiming that they could not understand Uighur culture. One young adult Uighur man thought Han women were "too skinny." In Beijing, only 20 percent of the Uighur said they were opposed to Uighur-Han dating and marriage, and none of the women I interviewed objected.

Ninety percent of the Han I interviewed said that they were opposed to interracial dating and felt strongly that they would not want a child of theirs to date, much less marry, a Uighur. Among the Han, Uighur men have a reputation for mistreating women. A twenty-two-year-old Han travel agent in Urumqi explained why she would not date a Uighur: "You know, many Uighur men are very fierce. Maybe they beat their women or don't treat them very well." A married Han kitchen appliance repairman in Shanghai had similar reasons for not wanting his daughter to date a Uighur man. "The Uighur are poor,"

he said, “and don’t treat their women well. I think they also believe in a strange religion and have strange traditions.”

Most people in China tend to date within their own race. Han usually marry Han, Uighur usually marry Uighur. Both Han and Uighur tend to believe that it is easier to date someone of their own cultural background and would prefer that their children marry someone of their own race. Even Han and Uighur who expressed the belief that interracial dating was perfectly fine and said that they would not think less of anyone who chose to date or even marry outside their race, included the caveat “as long as they were not in my family.”

In Urumqi, where there is more interaction between Han and Uighur, there is some interracial dating. The few mixed couples I encountered were usually made up of a Uighur man and a Han woman. A twenty-three-year-old Han waitress working in a Hui restaurant told me about her Uighur boyfriend.

“How did you meet?” I asked.

“At a Uighur disco. He asked me to dance, and the rest is history.”

The disco she was talking about was near the Er Dao Qiao Market. It played all kinds of music—Uighur, Arabic, American—and hosted a clientele of mostly Uighur but also Kazaks, Uzbeks, Russians, and the occasional Han.

I said, “I’ve heard Er Dao Qiao isn’t very safe at night.”

“Yeah, it can be a little dangerous. People there are poorer. So maybe if you’re there late at night you’ll have some problems.”

“Like what?”

“Just . . .” the waitress bit her finger, then said, “You know, some of the people here don’t have much money and don’t have much education. So they sell drugs or steal from people . . . but I don’t know. I’ve never had any problems. But my boyfriend told me to be careful.”

“Of other Uighur?” I asked. The waitress nodded.

“What does your boyfriend do?”

“He works in a restaurant. It’s family-owned. I think his brother and cousins work there, too.”

I found out that they had been dating about six months, were both high school graduates, and spoke Mandarin when they were together. But the real question on my mind was, “Do you or he receive any flak for being in a mixed relationship?”

“Not really,” replied the waitress. “His parents and friends are very accepting.”

“What about your parents?”

The waitress blushed. “My mom knows, but my father doesn’t. He’s very traditional. I don’t think he could accept it.”

“But your mom can?”

“Yes. She’s very open-minded. She doesn’t care who I date, as long as he treats me nice.”

“What about marriage?”

The waitress laughed. “We’re still young,” she said. “But maybe we will.”

Some young Han in Urumqi thought that dating Uighur was fine. Many, however, expressed the belief that their parents would not easily accept it. Most Han also believed that Han parents would have a harder time accepting their daughter’s choice to date a Uighur than a similar decision by their son. One twenty-one-year-old Han receptionist, when asked whether Han parents could accept their son’s dating a Uighur, replied, “If the Uighur girl was pretty and could speak good Mandarin, I don’t think anyone would mind.”

“What about your parents?” I asked.

“What, if I dated a Uighur boy?” the receptionist asked. She shook her head. “They’d never accept it,” she said.

“Why not?” I inquired.

“They just couldn’t. I think for girls and boys it’s different. Most Han parents wouldn’t mind if their son dates or even marries a Uighur girl, as long as she can speak good Mandarin. But for girls, I don’t think parents could accept it if they date someone who isn’t Han. Parents always want their girls to be safe.”

A Han couple, both doctors from Hebei who had been living with their daughter in Urumqi for eight years, said that they would not want their daughter to date a Uighur man but that if they had a son they would accept his dating a Uighur woman.

I asked them, “What if your daughter wanted to date a Uighur?”

“That would never happen,” said the man firmly. “Culturally, we are too different. Besides, our daughter is only fifteen. She won’t be dating for at least ten years.”

The woman said, “Actually, if we had a son, I’d let him date a Uighur girl because I think Uighur women probably make good wives. They are very compliant, because they are Muslim. But for a girl to date a Uighur man would be terrible. For one thing, most Uighur men are poor, and they have no manners.”

Uighur parents, conversely, are more likely to accept a decision by a daughter to date outside their race than such a choice by a son. As one Urumqi Uighur noodle shop owner who was in his forties explained, “If my daughter wants to marry a Han man, that’s fine, as long as he’s well-off and treats her well.”

“You mean wealthy?” I asked.

“Not too wealthy,” he answered, “Otherwise he may think he can run around on her. But of course I want the man who marries my daughter to be able to provide her with a nice home and a good life. And as long as he can accept that she is Uighur and can respect her Muslim beliefs, I think it would be fine for her to marry a Han. But my son, he should marry a Uighur because it’s up to him to keep the family name alive.”

Most Uighur parents would prefer that their son marry a Uighur to ensure that future generations of their family remain Uighur. This is true even among migrant Uighur in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen.

For all the discussion of interracial dating, as previously noted, the majority of Han and Uighur I interviewed expressed disapproval of mixed relationships. Two Uighur shop clerks in Urumqi, who appeared to be in their twenties, told me, “Many Uighur men can’t stand to see Uighur women with a foreigner.”

“What if a Uighur girl dates a Han man?” I asked.

Both shook their head. “No,” said the first man. The second nodded and looked annoyed.

“What if a Han girl dates a Uighur man?”

“Dates,” said the first Uighur, “no problem. But marriage would be impossible.”

“Not impossible,” offered his friend. “But I think these marriages are cruel to the man’s family. And I don’t think that these marriages can last. Culturally, Uighur are too different from Han.”

I said, "The culture is different?"

"Right," said the first Uighur. "The ideas, the food . . ." he made an unhappy face, "everything."

According to a Uighur concierge at a hotel in Urumqi, "Chinese Uighur" often date outside their own race. He went on to say that other Uighur look down on Chinese Uighur and that "Chinese Uighur look down on other Uighur who are not developing with Xinjiang. Poor people hate rich people, rich people hate poor people. People from different backgrounds and educations simply don't get along."

"What about Han and Chinese Uighur?" I asked. "Do they get along?"

"Yes, I think so," answered the man.

When I asked him whether he would ever consider marrying a Han, he thought a moment and then said, "I am Uighur. I speak Uighur, I grew up in Kashgar. I don't eat pork, and when I marry I will marry a Uighur woman and have a Uighur wedding."

One fifty-year-old Uighur government worker, when asked about the possibility of his daughter's marrying a Han man, said, "I don't think that would happen. Culturally we are too different. They could never understand each other."

"But you work with Han and understand them?"

"That's business. Love, family . . . these are different things." He thought a minute, then said, "Which is not to say I'd oppose my daughter's marrying a Han. If she is happy, I will be happy. But I just don't think that will happen. Culture is very important. Without it, we are all nothing."

"So you keep your Uighur culture alive?"

"Absolutely," said the man, almost sounding offended.

Another Uighur, whose twelve-year-old son attends a mostly Han school with Han teachers, when asked whether his son might date a Han woman, responded, "No, I wouldn't accept that because it's our responsibility as Uighur to maintain our Uighur culture. What will their children be like if they're raised by parents of different cultures? Will they forget that they are Uighur and just be Han with [he used a Uighur word I could not understand but from the context believed was "round"] eyes? Will they speak only in Mandarin and not be able to communicate with their great-grandparents? My parents don't

speak Mandarin, and they're too old to learn. Han don't learn our language and don't understand our ways. I wouldn't want my son to marry a Han girl."

"What about a Russian or Kazak girl?" I asked.

The man smiled thinly. "It would be better," he said, "because culturally we're more similar. But no, it wouldn't be my first choice."

Criminal Stigmatization

Ninety-nine percent of the Han I interviewed believed Uighur crime to be a problem. This was the case even in Beijing, where most Uighur are legitimately employed and where I never personally observed any evidence of Uighur crime. It was also the case in Shenzhen, where the Uighur population is very small.

Most Han were very opinionated about Xinjiang and the Uighur, even though they had never been to Xinjiang and had never had more contact with Uighur than passing them on the street. In every city that I visited, I heard Han of all backgrounds refer to the "Uighur problem." There seems to be no difference in the opinions of Han men and women concerning the Uighur. Both are usually quick to say that Uighur are criminals and uninterested in assimilating into Han society. They generally view Uighur with distrust, and think that they are too lazy, too stupid, or just unwilling to make the effort to develop. Han frequently referred to Uighur as "fierce," "recalcitrant," and "unreasonable." "Uighur are thieves" is a sentiment I frequently heard in every city I visited in China.

Among Han, Xinjiang has a reputation for being dangerous and primitive because of its Uighur population. When I told a twenty-three-year-old engineering student at Shanghai Jiao Tong University that I was going to Xinjiang, he told me to be careful.

"Xinjiang is very chaotic," he said. "It can be really dangerous."

"You've never been there. How do you know? Did you see something on the news?" I asked.

"No, no, no! It's that many Xinjiang people—Uighur—come to Shanghai and commit many crimes. They steal things. In fact, I think many crimes in Shanghai are committed by Xinjiang people."

“You think that Xinjiang is dangerous?”

“I think it must be,” he replied. “You know, Xinjiang is undeveloped. They still don’t have much technology there. Many people don’t go to school, or have never been in a car . . .”

“Xinjiang people don’t bathe,” interjected the young Han woman working behind the bar where we were sitting.

“They don’t?” I asked.

“No, because Xinjiang has no water.”

Later the woman also said, “Many Xinjiang people [Uighur] are violent. In Xinjiang, more people get kidnapped, and sometimes even killed, than in other parts of China.”

When I asked a sociology professor at Beijing University of Technology about the Uighur, he responded by talking about crime: “Most minorities don’t commit crimes because they’re content with their developing position in society. That and they’re afraid of getting caught. The Hui are basically good, and they don’t commit crimes. But some Uighur aren’t content with their position. Many are poor, and some just don’t care about society. Some have no ethics—I think it must be the parents’ fault. I hear that many Uighur parents don’t take care of their children. They don’t watch them or raise them right. Maybe they’re too busy, I don’t know. I think that Uighur have a bad reputation for being criminals because they are not as developed as other Muslim minorities. But that’s the fault of the Uighur. It seems that they don’t want to develop. Some Uighur even hate society and have tried to break free from it. I think that’s why some Uighur commit crimes. It’s not because they’re poor—there are many poor people. Hui, Han—they all have poor people. But Uighur commit crimes. I think it may be because they’re mad at society. Some Uighur still think Xinjiang should be a Uighur country. But Xinjiang has always been part of China. The other minorities living there accept this. They’re proud of it, but some Uighur aren’t.” The man cracked a smile and added, “Besides, if Xinjiang wasn’t part of China, where would all the Hui and Han who live there go?”

“Don’t some Uighur believe that Xinjiang should be independent?” I asked.

“Even so,” said the professor, “that won’t change the situation. Xinjiang is part of China, and the truth is, because of that Xinjiang is now

more developed. And because they're Chinese, Uighur and other Xinjiang people have the chance to move here and to other cities. The problem is that some Uighur move here and commit crimes. You know, many people move here and don't find good jobs right away or make a lot of money. But it's Uighur who commit crimes—not all of them, but some, which makes me think that it's because they are angry.”

“Why do you think some Uighur are mad?”

The professor shrugged. “You know,” he answered slowly, “That’s a tricky question. I’ve heard Uighur complain that they don’t feel that they can practice their religion as freely or as often as they’d like, but that’s the result of development. It isn’t that Uighur don’t have access to mosques. But the truth is, in modern society, there isn’t enough time to pray.” He laughed and said, “Imagine, what if everyone was praying five times a day? How could anyone get any work done? Society wouldn’t move forward. Maybe some of the Uighur don’t want society to move forward, I don’t know. But it doesn’t excuse criminal behavior, and it doesn’t stop them from having a bad reputation.”

A systems analyst who was in his midforties was the only Han I interviewed in Shanghai who had actually been to Xinjiang, albeit ten years earlier. He was also the only Han I met who believed that China’s policy of populating Xinjiang with Han was a bad idea.

“It isn’t possible to solve the Uighur problem that way,” the man explained. “Sending Han into the region helps the region develop, but it doesn’t help the Uighur develop. It just pushes them into their own neighborhoods and causes resentment. If it weren’t for Xinjiang’s resources and size, China might be better off without it.” When asked about the Uighur, he said, “The Uighur are a primitive, fierce people. They can’t easily be controlled, and they have no desire to change. Most Uighur in Shanghai are thieves. Punishing Uighur does no good because most have nothing to lose, or they just don’t care. You know, most Han feel that they’ve lost face if they get caught committing a crime, but the Uighur don’t care.”

“Do you think that most Uighur in Xinjiang are thieves?”

“No, not like here. But in Urumqi, yes, I think many Uighur are thieves. But in Kashgar, or other places in Xinjiang, maybe not. And that’s why I think that sending Han into the region isn’t necessarily

the best solution. Because it seems that if the Uighur are just left alone, while they won't develop, they also won't cause problems. In places in Xinjiang where the population is still all Uighur, I don't think the Uighur are thieves. Maybe they don't feel as poor because everyone is poor—there aren't any rich Han there to make them feel inadequate. But here [in Shanghai] Uighur feel poor. They can't adapt to this way of life. It would be better if they stayed in Xinjiang, but the problem is that as more Han move to Xinjiang, more Uighur come here."

A Han policewoman working Shanghai's Uighur neighborhood shared the opinion that Uighur in Uighur cities like Kashgar were less likely to be thieves since Uighur tend to steal from Han and not from other Uighur. "Han-Uighur relations are a complicated issue," she explained. "There's a lot of history there, and for many Uighur, who have more primitive mentalities, there will always be resentment. So yes, Uighur prefer to rob Han, because they don't like them. Many Uighur are unreasonable and selfish. They don't care for society, and I don't know whether they care or not for each other."

A Han Shanghai University civil engineering professor, the brother-in-law of a police officer, believed that many Uighur crimes were race-related. "The Uighur don't like the Han; they don't trust them," he explained. "This is the result of history, but it's also because most Uighur are unreasonable people. The Uighur don't understand history, so many can't understand that Xinjiang has always been a part of China. Han bring hospitals and schools to Xinjiang and build them better roads. Xinjiang is so much better now than before, and it's because of Han influence. I think that the Uighur are unreasonable because they don't want things to get better. They prefer to live as they've always lived."

"Some Uighur come to Shanghai," I said, "looking to improve their situation."

"Improve their situation, yes," answered the professor. "And some do, and still maintain their old ways. This is fine. But many refuse to join society. They are selfish and look only to improve themselves. But how can they improve if society doesn't improve, too? You know, many Uighur hurt society. Many Uighur come here to be thieves or to sell drugs. Many Uighur here are thieves. In fact, my sister's husband

is a police officer. He says many, many thefts in Shanghai are committed by Uighur.”

“Do they steal from each other?” I asked.

“No,” replied the professor, as if I was daft for asking. “They steal from Han. They try to take their wallets or watches or mobile phones. So I say the Uighur don’t care for society. And if they don’t care for society, they don’t care for themselves.”

“Why do you think Uighur steal from Han and not from each other?”

“Because they don’t like Han. Because they don’t want society to develop and because they don’t want to develop.”

“You don’t think it’s because Han have more?”

The professor shook his head. “Maybe sometimes,” he said, “but most Uighur here already have mobile phones and watches. You know, most Uighur who come to Shanghai come from good homes in Xinjiang. Poor Uighur can’t afford to come here, so it’s usually comparatively well-off Uighur moving to Shanghai. Many of them even have reasonable educations since they studied in Han schools. So I don’t think they’re committing crimes [against the Han] because they have no other opportunities. They could find jobs, but they choose not to. Many other professors at my university think Uighur crime is the result of their laziness, but I think they still have to work hard to steal. I don’t think Uighur are lazy, I think they’re simply unmotivated to earn in a way that helps Chinese society develop. I think they prefer to make their money harming society, which is why I think Uighur are completely unreasonable. They will never truly develop, and the Uighur problem will never go completely away.”

Institutionalized Racism

In Beijing, only 8 percent of the Uighur I interviewed believed Chinese (Han) police unfairly pick on Uighur, but 93 percent of the Uighur who did not reside in Beijing had the opposite opinion. This was particularly true in Shanghai, where all the Uighur I interviewed expressed the belief that Chinese police treat Uighur unfairly.

Ninety-one percent of the Uighur I interviewed in Urumqi and 96 percent of those I interviewed in Shanghai said that Han police harass Uighur because they assume that Uighur are criminals. However, some male Uighur professionals said they felt that the police treated everyone equally regardless of race and that the perception that Uighur were being “picked on” by Han police was because Uighur who committed crimes received more press coverage. By comparison, 99 percent of the Han I interviewed believed that the Chinese police treat all races within China equally and that minorities are not discriminated against.

Typical of Uighur views regarding police harassment were the comments of a young man in Shenzhen who offered to sell me some pirated VCDs.

“Aren’t you worried about the police?” I asked.

He shrugged and replied, “*Mei ban fa*,” which basically translates to “There’s no solution.”

“Do you feel that the police watch you more because you’re Uighur?”

“Maybe some of the Han police do. They think it is us Uighur who commit the crimes.” He snickered and added, “Maybe they’re right.”

When discussing Uighur crime, one married thirty-six-year-old Uighur woman selling noodles at her husband’s stall believed Uighur police would treat Uighur suspects as unfairly as Han police would. “There are Uighur thieves,” she said, “and I think since Uighur are sometimes poorer than Han, maybe they tend to steal from them. Also, most Han look down on us Uighur. So maybe Han who have been robbed but aren’t sure who robbed them blame Uighur, and the police will believe them because the police here are Han or Chinese Uighur.”

“Chinese Uighur?” I asked.

“You know, Uighur who don’t even know they’re Uighur except because of their eyes and hair and what their parents told them. Uighur who speak Mandarin better than their own language and want to be like the Han.” She thought for a moment, and said, “They sell out their own culture to get ahead. Maybe it’s the only way, but they’re not real Uighur, and that’s worse than not having money.”

“Do Chinese Uighur believe in Islam?” I asked.

“Yes, in their hearts they may,” said the woman, “but they don’t go to worship. They don’t want to be seen at the mosque because they know that Han will look down on them. Just like Chinese Uighur may eat pork if they’re in a Han restaurant, or they’ll go to a restaurant and eat food not knowing if it has been cooked in a pot that was used to cook pork. The Han think that religion is for ignorant people, but they are the ones who are ignorant about God. No wonder they have no ethics. They have nothing to guide them. They care only for money.” She paused before adding, “Just like Chinese Uighur.”

Police Crackdowns Targeting Uighur

According to Han police, there have been some campaigns designed to reduce Uighur crime—or the potential threat of it—in Beijing, Shanghai and Urumqi. The campaigns in Beijing and Shanghai were focused primarily on identifying undesirable Uighur—those with no legitimate employment—and sending them home to Xinjiang. In Beijing’s Uighur neighborhoods, particularly Haidian’s Wei Gong Cun area, many Uighur are legitimately employed, and I saw very few police. Conversely, the Uighur enclave in Shanghai still has a large unemployed population and appeared to be the most heavily policed Uighur neighborhood of any Chinese city that I lived in.

In Urumqi, police crackdowns were aimed at unlicensed street vendors rather than thieves and hashish dealers. I observed that when an important government representative was in town or during a holiday, the city’s police presence would increase, and those Uighur vending without permission (typically because they had not paid the appropriate tax) were targeted. These campaigns were less intense than those in Beijing or Shanghai and seemed more like temporary fixes to minor problems rather than serious attempts to reduce crime.

BEIJING

According to one Beijing police officer, the police are tougher on migrants in Beijing than they are in other Chinese cities because it is

China's capital. Routine checks of known migrant neighborhoods, particularly Haidian's Uighur district, for proof of residency are commonplace. As he explained, "A few years ago, there were many Uighur migrants without jobs or even identification living in Wei Gong Cun. The police initiated a citywide check of all migrants in Beijing. If they didn't have their *shen fen zheng* [national identity card], they were told to get one or go home. If they couldn't get their *shen fen zheng* or prove that they lived in Beijing and could pay their bills, they were told to go home. If they didn't have legitimate employment, they were told to go home. As a result, many migrants were sent back to their hometowns. Many of them were Uighur, especially in the Wei Gong Cun area. It was for the best. You know, many migrants come to Beijing looking for work, but it's not so easy to find a job here. When they can't find a job, some of those people loiter or steal things. Beijing's government doesn't want this kind of thing happening in their capital city. It looks bad to visitors and is dangerous to the local people."

I asked, "How did you know who was a migrant and who wasn't?"

The police officer laughed. "That's pretty easy," he said. "Most of the time we can tell who's local and who's not. We can tell by how they dress, talk, and act. With Uighur, it's even easier because we know they're not from Beijing."

"Were all Uighur checked for their identification cards?"

"Mostly, but it's not as though Uighur were singled out. We checked out all migrants. It's just more readily apparent that Uighur are migrants because they look different."

According to another older Han police officer patrolling Haidian, it is illegal not to inform the police if you are a nonresident living in Beijing. "Many migrants move here and never tell anyone," he said, "but this is actually against the law. It's difficult for us to know who has done this, so we're forced to make checks every now and then of certain places. Sometimes police will know the neighborhood they've been working in and know if there are unfamiliar people there. When they see such strangers, they talk to them and ask to see what they're doing there, where they're working, and where they live. But we shouldn't have to do this. It's the responsibility of the migrants to let us know these things when they arrive in Beijing."

The officer thought for a moment, and then added, “If you move to a new city, you’re expected to come to talk to us [the police] and get your *zhan zhu zheng* [temporary residency permit] so we know who’s in our city. It doesn’t cost much, and it’s a simple form to fill out. We ask where you live and what you’re doing. All police do this in every Chinese city. It’s so we can keep track of how many migrants are here, how many migrants are students or working . . . Police just want to know who lives in the area and what they’re doing. It’s for the protection of everyone. It keeps Beijing safe.”

I asked, “Does it cost money to get a national identity card?”

“It costs a little money, usually about fifty or sixty kuai, I’m not exactly sure. But it’s certainly less than a hundred kuai [about 12.5 U.S. dollars].”

“Does everyone have to have one?”

“Everyone should have one. When you’re seventeen or so is usually the age when people get one, because once you’re eighteen, you’re an adult in China.” He paused a moment, then added, “Everyone has one.”

The officer went on to explain that to get your identity card you must go to the police station in your hometown and that if you lose your card, you simply report it lost, pay a reissuing fee, and it will be replaced. Every ten years, the identity cards expire, and citizens are expected to renew their cards for a nominal fee.

“I think ten kuai or so,” he said.

“How is it that some migrants don’t have their *shen fen zhen*?”

The officer shrugged. “Maybe they lost it or never got one in the first place or maybe some moved from their hometown when they were young before they got their *shen fen zhen* and haven’t returned since. Many migrants here are young adult males who’ve been in Beijing since they were seventeen, or even before then. Also, if they’ve committed a crime before, they might not carry or bring their *shen fen zhen* because that way it would be harder for us [the police] to track them.”

According to a middle-aged Han motor scooter salesman, “At one time there were many Uighur living in Wei Gong Cun, but now there are very few. The local government has been cleaning up Beijing, especially with the Olympics coming. I hear that many Uighur have been sent home to Xinjiang.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“Well, I hear that the police, when they catch a Uighur without a job, send him back to Xinjiang.”

“Do they put them on a train?” I asked. The man laughed. “Seriously,” I said, “how do they send them home? And how do they stop them from coming back again?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “I think the police just threaten them, and then go away. Maybe later they come back and if the Uighur is still there—the one they told to go home—they give him some sort of fine. Or maybe put him in jail or force him to go to the train station. But I don’t really know about these things. You know, most Uighur who come here can’t find jobs because they’re uneducated and unskilled. So it’s not really their fault, but the police, the locals—no one wants them hanging around because they may cause trouble.”

A forty-four-year-old Han piano teacher residing in Beijing’s Haidian suburb, when asked about the distinct absence of Uighur in an area known as a Uighur neighborhood, almost laughed. “At one time there were more Uighur here,” she explained, “I think most of them moved to this area because it was where other minorities were. Many Dai and Mongolians come here because of the university. The students want to eat their own style of food, so people from their home [areas] come here to open restaurants. And Han want to try minority food because we find it interesting. So many Uighur came here to try and make money off of this, much more so than other minorities—maybe because there are more of them, I’m not sure. But many of them didn’t have jobs, and the police sent them home. Many of the restaurants weren’t successful because this area isn’t very rich, and most students can’t afford to eat at restaurants all the time. There’s also a lot of competition from Hui and Han. In fact, I think most Han prefer to eat at Hui and Han Xinjiang restaurants because they think they’re cleaner and have more of the dishes they like.”

A Han taxi driver in his forties explained that Uighur in Beijing have a bad reputation: “Many sell drugs. The truth is, they’re just trouble. Even the Uighur who aren’t committing crimes are still poor. And, you know, Uighur keep to their own culture. They need to eat at their own restaurants, but Han will eat at Uighur restaurants. Uighur re-

fuse to speak Mandarin. The truth is, they can all speak it—certainly the Uighur who come to Beijing—but they don't want to. They just aren't very reasonable. I think the main problem is their religion. It makes them want to keep to themselves, to their own culture, but their culture is primitive and very exclusive. I've occasionally seen Uighur around Tiananmen. You have to be careful there. Uighur there will try to pick your pocket. They know that most people there are tourists, and they prey upon them."

"Have you ever had a Uighur customer?" I asked.

"No," said the driver, "but I have a colleague who refuses to take Uighur—not like he ever gets asked, but if he did, he would say no. Why? Because once he took a Uighur—the Uighur wasn't sure where he was going. He told him to drive him up the street, then said to stop, and got out without paying. He didn't want to pay because he'd gone in the wrong direction. But it wasn't the driver's fault. All he did was take him where he wanted to go. Now you tell me, is that reasonable? You can't take a taxi without paying, even if you told the driver to take you in the wrong direction."

"Let me ask you a question," I said. The driver looked interested. "You say Uighur are being sent home for not having a job. It seems to me that there are plenty of other unskilled, uneducated people who aren't Uighur living in Beijing without jobs. Do you think the Uighur are being singled out?"

The driver smiled. "You're very clever," he said. He sighed deeply. "The Uighur are a different kind of problem because they are a minority. You know, the government tries to help them. You know, many Han do come to Beijing, and some of them can't find jobs and perhaps become undesirables. But the truth is, Uighur aren't making these efforts. Also, I think most Han who come here can find jobs."

"Why do you think Uighur can't find jobs?"

"Because they don't make the effort," exclaimed the driver. "They don't want to speak the language; they don't want to learn or to know anything about Han culture or to interact with the majority society. Again, I think the main problem is their religion. I think it gets in the way of their joining society. And in some ways, it makes society look down on them."

“Why’s that?” I asked.

“It just seems very primitive,” replied the driver. “And many people think it’s strange that, for example, they don’t eat pork or they act the way they do. The Uighur do act strangely, and I think that makes people not like them so much. In fact, that could be one of the reasons why they can’t find jobs. They’re just too different, and people just don’t like that.”

“Do you think that’s why the police are sending them home?” I asked.

“The cops are there to protect the people who live in Beijing and to make sure it looks good to visitors. Uighur do sell drugs and do steal things, but even the ones who don’t may turn to crime. And even those who don’t, they still don’t make the city look good because they are unemployed and unreasonable.”

“What about the Uighur who are employed?” I asked.

“What,” said the driver almost jokingly, “the ones selling food?” I nodded. “I don’t think the police would have a problem with them. Maybe they won’t participate in majority society—maybe they won’t eat at our restaurants or be friends with Han—but at least they aren’t hurting anything. I think for those who really do run a restaurant, it should be no problem. The problem is, too few Uighur are in that position.”

SHANGHAI

The last time I had been on Guandong Lu, in August 2003, a large portion of the road was a bustling Uighur enclave. But when I arrived in Shanghai in March 2004, Guandong Lu was just like any other back street off Shanghai’s waterfront. There wasn’t a Uighur, much less a Uighur business in sight. Han-run and presumably Han-owned businesses had replaced Uighur businesses. Beifang Shuijiao, a Han dumpling house, was where a Uighur noodle shop used to be. A C-Store, the Chinese equivalent of the U.S. 7-11 convenience store, was now where a Uighur fruit stall once had been. Uighur barbershops were now Han haircut shops, mobile phone stands, or tea stalls. Even those selling skewers of barbecued goat meat were now Han. The Han-owned and Han-operated Suzhou Yang Rou Guan (Suzhou Goat

Meat Restaurant) now occupied the corner where a Uighur restaurant once had stood.

During the month of March, I saw few Uighur on Guandong Lu, and the only ones I saw with any regularity were two goat meat vendors selling skewers from a portable charcoal grill they set up under an umbrella. According to them, even though they were mobile and had no shop, they were the only remaining Uighur legitimate business proprietors on the street. One of the men looked to be about forty. He was going bald, and every time I saw him he was smoking a cigarette. The other was younger; later I'd find out he was twenty-seven. Both were dressed like Han men of their age: slacks, dark shoes, and button-down shirts.

Once I said to them, "There used to be a lot of Uighur here on Guandong Lu. What happened to them?"

"They've moved to Yunnan Lu," answered the younger Uighur.

"Why?" I asked.

"It's different here now." The older man said nothing; he just pointed. I followed the direction of his finger to the uniformed police officer standing across the street.

"Police?" I whispered.

Both Uighur exchanged nervous glances. Finally the younger Uighur sighed and said, "Because the police watch us. And other Uighur have been sent home to Xinjiang. So now many Uighur have moved to Yunnan Lu."

The older Uighur joked, "You can go there to buy your goat meat."

Uighur had moved to Yunnan Lu following what was rumored to be an early 2004 citywide crackdown on crime. While Uighur complained of an increased police presence in their neighborhoods, and some local Han told me that the police had been targeting Uighur, I could not find any 2004 Shanghai newspaper articles corroborating this rumor.

According to a forty-two-year-old Han shop owner on Guandong Lu, "The campaign seemed to target Uighur around the Waitan [waterfront]. Many Uighur here are thieves, and the police know this. They come from Xinjiang and have no money. They don't work. Most of them don't have jobs or shops. They just stand around all day waiting

for someone to rob.” The shop owner said that most Uighur theft in Shanghai is of the pickpocket variety, although he felt that in Xinjiang, Han would be at risk for violent crimes. “The Uighur don’t like us Han,” he explained. “Even an American is safer in Xinjiang than a Han.”

When asked why he thought that the Uighur dislike the Han, the shopkeeper replied, “Because they’re *yeman* [primitive, or recalcitrant] and *bujiangli* [unreasonable].” I heard Han of every age and background use these two words to describe the Uighur in every city I went to.

Most Han working on Guandong Lu told a similar story about police targeting Uighur pickpockets on the street. One Han, a fifty-one-year-old mobile phone salesman, had a different explanation for the early 2004 Uighur exodus from Guandong Lu. He suggested that it had been brought about not by the police, but rather by real estate developers assisted by the Shanghai government. While he was the only Han or Uighur to offer such an explanation, it did seem to explain why Uighur shops and restaurants on Guandong Lu had been replaced by Han businesses. It reminded me of what had happened to downtown Washington, DC’s Northwest 14th Street. Once notorious for prostitution and drugs, the street was transformed into a business district when most of the property was bought up by real estate developers.

According to the salesman, “The Shanghai government put many of the buildings and the lots on this block up for sale, maybe because too many of the buildings here were run down or unsafe. Real estate companies bought the property—I think they had some relationship with the local government; usually that’s the case. Most shops here were being rented, so most of the poorer shop owners couldn’t afford to stay here. The property value here is now very high. When the real estate companies or government—I’m not exactly sure which—sold the property back to local businesses, the Uighur couldn’t afford to buy anything. So they moved to Yunnan Lu to open shops, because there they can still rent.”

Perhaps Uighur were still unable to afford rent, as there were no new Uighur shops or restaurants open on Guandong Lu, but nevertheless, in the summer of 2004, Uighur had returned to the street. According to several Han business owners I spoke with, all the Uighur were

doing was loitering. I observed that the Uighur on Guandong Lu were simply hanging out for hours at a time, offering hashish to foreigners and possibly looking for other criminal opportunities. One young Uighur man even joked, “The heat keeps the police inside.”

Contrary to his statement, there seemed to be an increased police presence during the summer months. According to a local Han police officer, a middle-aged man patrolling the corner of Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu, controlling Uighur crime was more difficult during the summer months than at other times of the year.

“Uighur don’t mind the heat, since they’re from the desert,” said the officer. “They can hang around all day without being too tired.” He laughed and said, “The heat makes us tired, but for Uighur it’s no problem.” (Most Uighur I interviewed complained about Shanghai’s summer weather, particularly the humidity.)

“In the summer, there are more tourists in Shanghai, especially Han tourists, so Uighur have more opportunities for crime,” said the police officer.

I asked, “Do you think that Uighur target Han tourists?”

“The truth is, Uighur will prey on anyone they have a chance to.” He looked around and shook his head with disgust. “They’re not law-abiding people. Mostly they’re thieves. They steal from Han tourists, people passing back from the waterfront or from Ren Min Square; but I think that’s because Han tourists have more than them.”

Another police officer working the Uighur enclave offered a somewhat different explanation of why Uighur property crime is directed mostly at Han.

“We don’t get reports of foreigners being robbed,” he said, “although I’m sure it sometimes happens. But generally the Uighur rob from the Han. Part of this could be that the foreign tourists don’t pass through here or that they mostly take taxis. But it’s also possible that Uighur won’t dare steal from foreigners because they think they would get in more trouble if they got caught.”

“Would they?” I asked.

The officer replied, “It depends.”

I asked a number of police officers working the Shanghai Uighur enclave, “What happens to Uighur who get caught stealing?” Almost

all of them answered, “It depends.” As one officer explained, “Uighur mostly steal things out of people’s pockets and purses. Usually we can’t get the items back because Uighur work in groups, and by the time the original culprit is caught, his accomplices have escaped. But sometimes we put pressure on the criminal, and he tells us who his partners are.”

“Then what happens?” I asked. “Do they go to jail?”

“Yes,” said the officer, “or they get a fine, although usually they can’t afford to pay it.” He sighed and said, “Usually they just get sent home to Xinjiang and officially forbidden to come back to Shanghai. But some will come back anyway. Besides, if they’re thieves in Shanghai they will likely be thieves in Xinjiang too, although there they’ll have less opportunity because the population there is mostly Uighur.”

When I asked another police officer about Uighur hashish sales, he answered, “This is a complicated problem because smoking hashish is part of Uighur culture, so it makes it harder to stop.” Both selling and buying drugs are crimes in China. According to the Han police I interviewed, those caught purchasing drugs are arrested and prosecuted regardless of their race, citizenship, or social status. However, according to Uighur hashish dealers in Shanghai, this is not always the case.

“The police don’t care who is buying the hashish,” explained one young adult Uighur man on Guandong Lu. “They’re only after us Uighur, especially since we sell mostly to foreigners. The police don’t want to trouble themselves by arresting a foreigner. Once, my cousin was selling hashish to a foreigner and the police snuck up on them. They just told the foreigner to go away. But my cousin—the police arrested him and took all his hashish and his money since they said his money was from selling hashish.”

“What happened to your cousin?” I asked.

“I’m not sure,” answered the man. “I think he was sent home to Xinjiang. But I’m not sure. We weren’t very close, so I haven’t been in touch with him. But, you know, the police are always trying to catch us selling hashish. I think they must know that we do that. But it’s not their business. We don’t even usually sell it to Han. The police say hashish is a Uighur problem, but it’s not a problem. It’s a problem only because the police don’t like Uighur.”

“Why do you think the police don’t like Uighur?” I asked.

“The Han don’t like us. They like our food, but that’s it. They think we’re primitive and dirty and lazy. They think we don’t want to be part of their society, so that makes us thoughtless. But we don’t want to be part of their society. You know, many Han look down on us because of our religion. We Uighur are Muslim. The Han think that makes us ignorant, but it is they who are ignorant for not having anything to believe in.”

I asked another young Uighur man who admitted that he both sold hashish and robbed Han tourists, “If you get caught selling hashish how do you think you’d be punished?”

“I don’t know,” said the Uighur. “Maybe I’d go to prison. I’ve also heard of some Uighur being sent back to Xinjiang and then they’re never allowed to leave again, although they still do.”

“What do you think the punishment would be for property theft?” I asked.

“This, I think the police treat more strongly, because this crime is usually committed against Han. You know, the police view hashish as a foreign problem since it’s usually foreigners who buy it. But most Uighur steal from rich Han, so there has to be some payback. They try to make an example out of Uighur who are caught stealing. They surely will go to prison. And in prison, they’ll be very unfortunate because their family probably won’t have the money to take care of them while they’re in jail.”

The other admitted Uighur criminals with whom I spoke in Shanghai, however, seemed equally afraid of getting caught for drug trafficking or for property theft. In fact, all of the Shanghai Uighur I interviewed, at the least, seemed to be wary of police. By comparison, Shanghai Han did not seem frightened of or bothered by the police. A middle-aged male Han office worker told me, “The police only bother people who commit crimes. If you’re innocent, then you have no problem.”

URUMQI

June 24, 2004, was the first day in the two months I had spent in Urumqi that the police seemed to crack down on unlicensed street

vendors. Ordinarily bustling makeshift Uighur market places were now vacant except for normal pedestrian traffic, and there was a traffic police presence both in front of the Hantangri Mosque and in the Er Dao Qiao Market area. Unlike Urumqi's regular uniformed police officers, who are almost all Han, many of Urumqi's traffic police are Uighur. On this particular day, however—and on most days that the police were obviously cracking down—most of the traffic police patrolling Uighur market areas were Han.

While the police simply told me that they were “stopping illegal activity,” most Han with whom I spoke attributed the crackdown to the beginning of summer and the expected influx of tourists that Xinjiang gets during this season.

One Uighur, a forty-three-year-old shop owner who worked in front of the Hantangri Mosque, was pleased with the police presence. “It eliminates the competition,” he said. “Other people come here and sell their almonds and dates from their carts . . . Their products aren't as fresh or clean as mine, but since they stand outside and yell at people as they walk by, they can take away my customers. I'm glad the police are preventing these hooligans from selling their inferior products and hurting my business.”

According to both Uighur and Han, such police crackdowns take place in Urumqi sporadically throughout the year, usually before a holiday, the start of the summer tourist season, or when a government official is visiting the city. While legitimate Uighur business owners seem pleased by such campaigns because they reduce their competition, generally neither Han nor Uighur view selling goods without a license as a crime but rather as tax evasion.

Once, standing on one of the market streets outside the Hantangri Mosque, I saw a number of Uighur running. Most were pushing wooden carts stacked high with their goods: bananas, watermelons, nang bread. They dashed down the side streets where cars could not travel. The vendors lining the alleys were smiling and seemed to be cheering them on. A moment later, what looked like a police car pulled up, and two Han men in police uniforms climbed out. They walked slowly down the alley after the Uighur, obviously not trying very hard to catch them.

I turned to a young, well-dressed Han woman standing nearby and asked, “What happened?”

“It’s the *dao lu guan li*,” she said, which roughly translates to “street-watching police.” “These Uighur are selling their goods illegally,” she went on, “because if you want to sell here, you have to pay a tax. But these Uighur didn’t pay the tax, so they ran away when the *dao lu guan li* came.”

“What would happen if they got caught?”

“I don’t know. I think they’d have to pay a fine, or maybe their goods would be confiscated.”

“What if they couldn’t pay the fine?”

“I don’t know. But I think they could. You know, they probably have enough money to pay the tax, they just don’t want to because they think they won’t get caught because they’re mobile.”

“Do you think they’re criminals?”

“Not criminals. They just don’t want to pay the tax.”

In all fairness, I had seen similar activity in other Chinese cities, but it was usually Han VCD or watch sellers who were running from the police.

Crime Directed against Uighur

Of the Uighur interviewed in Urumqi and Shanghai, 87 percent expressed the belief that crime was a problem. The concern, however, was with Han crime, often directed at Uighur, and not with Uighur-on-Uighur crime.

All of the Uighur women and 69 percent of the men I interviewed in Urumqi thought that crime was a problem in the city. The source of the concern, though, was Han—not Uighur—criminals. Urumqi Uighur expressed no concern that they would be victims of Uighur crime. All of the Uighur I interviewed in Shanghai thought that crime was a problem. As in Urumqi, their concern was with Han criminals. None of the Shanghai Uighur I interviewed believed Uighur-on-Uighur crime was a problem. Many explained this by saying that Uighur in Shanghai’s ethnic enclave tend to know each other and that Uighur

criminals prefer to commit crimes against Han, who are generally richer and make better targets. In Beijing, only 8 percent of the Uighur I interviewed believed crime to be a problem, and, as in Shanghai and Urumqi, none of them believed they would be the victims of a Uighur-committed crime.

Uighur who did not think crime was a problem believed that most people in China wouldn't dare to commit a crime, because they are afraid of the police. They also generally felt that improving economic conditions in China made it unnecessary for anyone to commit crimes. As one elderly Uighur man in Urumqi explained, "Everyone here is getting richer, so no one needs to commit crimes to get money."

"What about before," I asked, "Did Uighur commit crimes because they had less money?"

"Yes, I think so, and maybe today that's still somewhat the case, but I think in general most Uighur won't dare to commit crimes. That, and they don't need to." He thought for a moment, and then added, "But really, Urumqi is a safe place. Crime isn't a problem here."

Uighur who were engaged in criminal activity generally explained that it was the only way for them to make a decent living. A conversation I had with two men who had offered to sell me hashish on Shanghai's Guandong Lu is typical.

"Isn't selling hashish illegal?" I asked.

The older man laughed. "That's different," he said. "Selling hashish isn't stealing. Uighur smoke, foreigners smoke, why shouldn't we sell it? Besides, it's not easy to make a living in Shanghai. It's an expensive city, and this helps to make some extra money."

"Would you steal from someone?" I asked.

Both men answered no.

"You sell hashish to make extra money?" I asked. Both men nodded.

"What kind of work do you do?" I asked.

The men smiled shyly but said nothing. Finally the younger man said, "We don't work. My friend here is retired."

"You're young and strong," I said, "Can't you find a job?"

"I can work at a friend's restaurant, but they can't pay me very much, and they don't have many customers, so they don't really need me. So no, I don't have a job."

“Why don’t you look for another job? Shanghai must be full of opportunity.”

“Not for Uighur,” the older man said firmly.

The younger one said, “To get a good job in Shanghai you need a good education.”

“Did you get a good education?”

“I studied at a Uighur school in Yilin. Then, when I was older, my father sent me to a high school in Lanzhou. It was somewhat more expensive because I lived away from home, but it gave me the chance to learn Mandarin. But knowing Mandarin isn’t enough. I don’t have any special skill or university degree. So, for me, it’s impossible to find a job in Shanghai.”

“What about in Xinjiang?” I asked.

“We don’t want to live in Xinjiang,” answered the older man. “We want to be in Shanghai, where it’s more developed.”

“Can you enjoy living in Shanghai without a good job?”

Both men laughed. “We can still enjoy it,” replied the older man. “Now Shanghai is our home.”

“Many Han get jobs—not good jobs, but ordinary jobs working as clerks or waiters or whatever. Can you get a job like that?”

“Too little money,” said the younger man.

The older one added, “Jobs like that are for local people. They don’t want to hire Uighur. Customers would think it strange.”

“Do a lot of Uighur who come here find themselves in the same situation, unable to find a good job?”

“Yes,” said the younger man. “The truth is, most of my friends are unemployed.”

“Do they sell hashish too?”

“Yes.”

“Do they ever commit any other crimes?” I asked. “Like stealing or robbing from people?”

Both men looked embarrassed. Finally the older man said, “Every culture has good and bad. There are Uighur thieves, but there are Han thieves, too. But even among Uighur thieves, there is some honor.”

The younger one added, “Most Uighur won’t steal from other Uighur, and they won’t rob the poor.”

“Not all Uighur are thieves,” said the older man, still smiling. “The Han might want to believe that, but they are ignorant of our ways.”

All of the Uighur who admitted to being involved in criminal activity adamantly maintained that they would not steal from other Uighur. Some also added that they would not knowingly steal from Hui because Hui were also Muslim.



Modern buildings surrounding Ren Min Square in the Han section of Urumqi.



Shoppers in a prosperous Han section of Urumqi.



Dilapidated buildings clustered around one of Urumqi's less-frequented mosques in a Uighur section of the city.



Urumqi's Hantangri Mosque. Built in 1864, it is the city's largest. The ground floor is a Uighur shopping bazaar.



A Uighur food market in Urumqi.



A Uighur woman selling *nang* bread.



Uighur men congregating around a beverage stand after Friday prayer services.



The barren landscape of Xinjiang's Taklamakan Desert, known as the Sea of Death.



The entrance to the Imin pagoda and mosque in Turpan. Built in 1778, the 141-foot-high pagoda is a popular tourist site.



A Uighur raisin seller in Xinjiang's Grape Valley. Located eight miles east of Turpan, the valley's vineyards produce some of China's best-known wines.



Older, run-down buildings in a Uighur section of Kashgar.



A Uighur cobbler working in a street stall in Kashgar.



A silk stall displaying traditional Uighur patterns in the new market built on the outskirts of Kashgar.



Sacks of Uighur tobacco on a Kashgar street. Many Uighur roll their own cigarettes.



The campus of the Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue (Central Minority University) in the Wei Gong Cun suburb of Beijing. Very few minority students attend the university—most students are Han.



Mural on Beijing's Niu Jie (Cow Street) showing how the Han like to depict China's national minorities. The seated man playing a traditional stringed instrument and the woman dancing with a *dap* (a hand-held drum that looks like a tambourine) represent the Uighur.



A sign for a Muslim supermarket on Beijing's Niu Jie. The market specializes in Muslim products but caters to Han as well as Hui and Uighur.



The inner courtyard of the Niu Jie Mosque. Originally built in 1362 in the style of a traditional Chinese temple, the mosque was renovated in 1978.



Uighur vendors outside the entrance to the Niu Jie Mosque on a Friday afternoon.



A Uighur man buying a piece of honey cake (a traditional Uighur delicacy) from a street vendor.



A Uighur goat meat seller in front of his shop in Beijing.



A Uighur selling goat meat from a cart at a Beijing night market.

4

Migration

Overcoming Blocked Mobility

MANY OF THE UIGHUR I interviewed have chosen to cope with their minority status by migrating to China's major cities in search of "better opportunities," which they define as financial opportunities that will enable them to enjoy a higher standard of living. Most Uighur migrants pursue legitimate opportunities, but some engage in criminal activities, thereby reinforcing Han views of the Uighur as a primitive, criminally minded minority.

Legitimate Opportunities

The majority of migrant Uighur are young to middle-aged men, often having no more than a high school education. According to both Han and Uighur, this greatly limits their opportunities for gainful employment. Most legitimately employed Uighur work in Uighur-owned and Uighur-operated Xinjiang restaurants or sell Uighur food products from stalls or mobile carts, although many who sell from carts do so without a license.

There are some Uighur professionals. According to one forty-six-year-old Beijing Uighur employed by a company that imports products

from Xinjiang, “Not many Uighur have this type of professional job. Even for Uighur who can speak Mandarin, it’s not as easy for a Uighur to make contacts and gain the trust of Han businessmen. Most Uighur work in the food business. They either grow food or sell food. If they’re successful, they open restaurants. Some Uighur in Xinjiang sell clothes or leather or gold or jade, but that’s only in Xinjiang. In the rest of China, Uighur sell food.”

Most of the Uighur who hold white-collar jobs seem to be teachers. There are also Uighur who, because of their Xinjiang connections and ability to speak Mandarin, work in the import and export of Xinjiang products such as tea, dried fruits and nuts, silk, jade, and gold.

BEIJING

Most Beijing Uighur speak reasonable, if not entirely proper, Mandarin, especially those residing and working outside Uighur enclaves. Almost all of the Beijing Uighur with whom I spoke said that they liked living in Beijing because it is an exciting and modern city. Beijing also has second-generation Uighur who were born and raised in the city and who view themselves as locals.

Compared to Uighur in other Chinese cities, most Uighur in Beijing retain legitimate employment. Also unlike Uighur in other Chinese cities, Beijing Uighur do not seem to be confined to a single area. In addition to the two Uighur areas in Beijing (Niu Jie and Haidian’s Wei Gong Cun), I saw Uighur working in other Beijing neighborhoods.

Most Beijing Uighur work in food services, not only in the Uighur enclaves but also in other areas of the city. In Donganmen Wai Da Jie near the city center, I observed that two Uighur families had opened competing stalls selling Xinjiang food in an otherwise all-Han food market. Patrons of the market were all Han, except for the occasional foreigner. When I asked them why other Uighur didn’t compete with them in such a busy and profitable food market, one forty-year-old man responded, “It’s more difficult to get a stall here. Donganmen is regulated by the street police. You have to rent the space. There aren’t many spaces available, and it’s too expensive for most Uighur. Also, there are laws here about cleanliness and when you can sell food. The market is open only at night.”

When asked whether they did good business, the Uighur said, “Yes, Han like Xinjiang food. But we Uighur don’t like Han food. It has too little taste and is too oily.”

On Xiaochi Jie, another busy street of food stalls similar to Donganmen, there are also two Uighur-run stalls selling Xinjiang food. Both stalls have signs with Arabic script. Young Uighur men in traditional hats call out “goat meat” and “Xinjiang food” in Mandarin to attract customers. Most of the food stalls on Xiaochi Jie, like the ones on Donganmen, are Han-owned and have an all-Han clientele.

According to one thirty-four-year-old Uighur working at one of the stalls on Xiaochi Jie, Uighur in Beijing make good money. “We come here for the opportunities,” he said, “and they are plentiful. Most Uighur here are doing well. Maybe the ones in Haidian are not as well off. I think many of them there must be poorer but I’m not sure. I’ve been there only once, and it was a long time ago. It’s very far away, and I don’t think it would be a good place to sell Uighur food to Han.”

Beijing Uighur not working at a food stall or restaurant usually work by themselves, selling some specialty item. A middle-aged Uighur selling honey cake from a pushcart on Niu Jie explained, “I go to a few places in Beijing selling it, but mostly I stay here on Niu Jie. Here is where I do better business because the mosque is nearby. Hui and other Uighur like to buy it, especially Uighur who miss their home and can’t get Xinjiang food here.”

“What about the Han?” I asked. “Do they buy from you?”

The Uighur smiled. “The Han . . .” he said. His smile grew wider and he made a “so-so” gesture with his hands. “Some buy from me because they think it’s interesting. But most of my customers are Muslim.”

“What happens if you run out of honey cake?”

“I’ll get some more. This is my job. If I didn’t do this, what would I do?”

“Do you make it yourself?”

“No, my family sends it to me by airplane from Xinjiang.”

I was surprised by this and asked, “Is that expensive?”

“No, it’s how I do business. It’s worth it. Besides, mailing this isn’t expensive, like sending a person.”

The chunk of honey cake that I purchased from him weighed a little more than half a kilo and cost me twenty-eight kuai (about 3.5 U.S. dollars). According to Han in the know, the average salary for unskilled, uneducated workers in Beijing restaurants and shops was about thirty kuai a day. If this Uighur man sold even one kilo of his confection each day, he probably was doing better than many of the locally employed unskilled residents of Beijing.

Food products are not the only things sold by Uighur in Beijing. On two occasions, I saw Uighur roaming Tiananmen Square selling cow skulls and jewelry fashioned from cow bones. Tiananmen Square, being an important tourist destination, is heavily patrolled by the police; yet the Uighur selling there seemed unintimidated, making me think they had paid the necessary tax and were legal vendors. In the Wanfujing area, a few streets of upscale stores and hotels not far from Tiananmen Square, I saw a Uighur in a traditional costume selling crystals and semiprecious stones. He claimed that the stones came from Xinjiang. He also claimed that he had paid his tax to sell them.

“It’s one more way to make money,” he explained. “I have the stones, and they’re useless to me, unless I can sell them. Most of my customers are Han because they believe crystals have some sort of power either to protect them or to make them strong. But the truth is, most people don’t believe that. I think they just think they’re pretty. I’ve also sold to foreigners.” He laughed and added, “I prefer to sell to foreigners because they bargain less.”

SHANGHAI

Shanghai Uighur, like other migrant Uighur, claim to have moved in search of better financial opportunities. However, most of the Uighur I interviewed could not describe any clearly defined personal opportunities they had pursued, much less actualized, in Shanghai.

The majority of the Uighur in Shanghai are young to middle-aged men. Most of them seem to be unemployed. Many claim to have come to Shanghai with the intention of obtaining a legitimate job, although one young man did say that there are more opportunities for selling hashish and for pickpocketing in Shanghai than in Xinjiang.

Most Shanghai Uighur who are under thirty-five are single. Most middle-aged and older Uighur men are married to Uighur women.

Almost all of the Uighur women in Shanghai, a small fraction of the city's Uighur population, had followed their husbands there. Most Uighur living in Shanghai, even the older, married ones, seem to be childless. When asked about this, many cited expense, convenience, and not wanting the added responsibility as reasons. I never saw any Uighur children in Shanghai, although some interviewees did claim to be parents. According to the Han teachers, parents, and children I spoke to in Shanghai, there are no Uighur students at any of the schools located near the Uighur enclaves.

Most Shanghai Uighur claim to go home to Xinjiang, usually by train to Urumqi and then by bus to their hometowns, at least once a year. Most Shanghai Uighur seem conflicted as to where they prefer to live. "I miss Xinjiang," said one unemployed twenty-five-year-old Uighur man, "because I like the culture there. In Xinjiang, there are many Uighur, so I feel more comfortable. It's easier to eat what I like and do the things I want to do. But Shanghai is a big, developed city—in many ways Shanghai is better than Xinjiang." According to the man's sister-in-law, "Shanghai is better than Xinjiang. It's a bigger, richer city. There is more here than in Xinjiang. But I still miss my home. I miss my family, and I miss Xinjiang's Uighur culture."

Migrant Uighur tend to rely on their social networks. This is particularly true in Shanghai, where most Uighur know each other, probably as a result of their living in the same tiny enclave. Many are from Kashgar. When asked why they moved to Shanghai, most Uighur with some sort of legal employment said they had come to work at a family member's or friend's restaurant or had come with their family or friend to open a restaurant or food stall. According to one forty-three-year-old licensed goat meat vendor and his twenty-four-year-old assistant, they moved from Kashgar to open a stall in Shanghai because there was less competition.

"Why did you move to Shanghai?" I asked.

"To work," said the younger Uighur.

"Could you work in Kashgar?"

"Yes, but you can get more money here." The older Uighur bellowed something cheerfully in Uighur, and the younger one translated for me. "In Xinjiang, everyone is selling goat meat skewers," he chuckled. "Here there's less competition."

“You moved here to get away from Uighur competition?” I said. Both Uighur smiled and nodded. “What about Beijing?” I asked.

“I already had family here,” said the younger Uighur.

The older man said, “Beijing is too cold, and there are too many Uighur.”

“But I’d like to go to Beijing,” offered the younger man. His older comrade said nothing.

URUMQI

While most Uighur in Urumqi are locals, many have moved there from other parts of Xinjiang. Uighur who have migrated to Urumqi believe that the city holds better opportunities for them because it is more modern and developed than any other city in Xinjiang. Uighur who come to Urumqi from other parts of Xinjiang say they miss their hometowns and usually return there for holidays.

The Uighur in Urumqi are generally very proud of their race and culture, and this pride is exhibited in a number of ways. Many Uighur men walk with an air of dignity. Uighur women also convey an air of self-esteem. In Urumqi’s Uighur discos, some Uighur women dance to traditional Uighur music with such obvious pride that several of the Han patrons I spoke with, while admiring their looks, described them as “untouchable.”

Urumqi Uighur usually even sell their goods for slightly higher prices than Han vendors, insisting that they are of a better quality. Bananas from Han vendors, for example, cost about five kuai a pound, but from Uighur vendors they cost six kuai or more. Vendors of traditional Uighur goods and foods frequently asked me whether I could buy their products in the United States and seemed pleased when I answered no.

Uighur in Urumqi basically stick to their own neighborhoods. According to one middle-aged truck driver—a rarity in Urumqi—most Urumqi Uighur don’t know how to drive or don’t know Urumqi well enough to be a driver since they stick to their own Uighur neighborhoods. “I know Uighur here who have lived in Urumqi all their lives and have never been past Ren Min Square,” said the driver. “Uighur here stay in their own neighborhoods. Many of them don’t even know

their way around Urumqi outside of Er Dao Qiao or wherever they've been living."

Just as Uighur do not often go into the Han areas of Urumqi, Han tend to stay out of the Uighur areas. According to a forty-year-old Uighur restaurant worker in the market behind the Hantangri Mosque, "Han do come here, but not so many. They come here for lunch or to buy things. But Han don't live around here. And most of the people here are Uighur. After all," she gestured to the mosque in the background, "this is a Uighur neighborhood."

On the wall between her restaurant and the next is a sign, posted by the Chinese government. The sign roughly translates to "Han cannot live without minorities. Minority peoples cannot live without Han. We must all take care of each other and live together harmoniously."

I pointed to the sign and asked, "Who put that up?"

"Government people," she answered. "It's been there for about a year."

"Do you agree with it?" I asked. She shrugged her shoulders and went back to wiping the table.

"Do Uighur and Han keep apart?" I inquired.

"Well, no," she replied. "We all live in Urumqi. So naturally we will interact . . . Han like to eat Uighur food, so they are always coming here to eat. But generally we Uighur don't need anything from the Han, so really it's they who come to us."

"I haven't seen many Han at Er Dao Qiao Market," I said.

"No," the woman agreed, "Han don't usually go there. Maybe for them it is too far, or they are afraid they will get ripped off."

"Ripped off? Do you mean get robbed?"

"Maybe," the woman said thoughtfully, "at night. But I mean they'll get a higher price because they aren't Uighur."

I jokingly asked, "Do I get a higher price because I'm not Uighur?"

The woman laughed. "No," she said quickly, "not here. But maybe when you buy almonds or fruit from Uighur. I know that they overcharge the Han. But the Han have more money, so I think it's fair."

While Han tend to buy products from Uighur, Uighur rarely are customers of Han merchants. Han can often be seen buying nang bread, dates, and almonds from Uighur vendors or eating Uighur food

at Uighur-owned restaurants. I have seen Han eating Uighur dishes in Han restaurants, as most establishments in Urumqi serve some Uighur cuisine. But Uighur seldom eat at Han restaurants, buy products from Han vendors, or shop in Han-owned stores.

When I asked a Han secretary about this, she said, “Uighur don’t buy from Han because they can get cheaper prices from fellow Uighur. You know, most Uighur overcharge us Han. They don’t give us a fair price, but we have no choice if we want to buy their products. Besides, most Han in Urumqi are making pretty good money, so they can afford to buy the Uighur products.” Other Han I spoke with, regardless of background, age, or profession told a similar story.

When I asked Uighur why they didn’t buy products from Han, most of them said that they had no use for Han products and that they were too expensive, although a few Uighur professionals said that they did buy some Han products.

While Uighur-Han separation is the general rule, there are Uighur and Han who interact on a regular basis and seem to have reasonable relations. There is a small market street between Ren Min Square and the Er Dao Qiao Market where Uighur and Han sell food and fresh vegetables. The market is overwhelmingly Uighur, but there is enough of a Han presence to be noticeable. There, Uighur stalls and tiny restaurants stand side by side with Han establishments, and their customers are both Han and Uighur. Once, when a Uighur woman wearing a head scarf approached a Han woman vegetable seller, the seller told her (in Mandarin), “Your husband already bought vegetables.”

“Really?” replied the Uighur woman, also speaking Mandarin. “So what am I supposed to do?” Both ladies laughed. It was obvious that they were, if not friends, good acquaintances. Just as it was apparent that many of those Uighur and Han, working, eating, and shopping next to each other, got along well together. Han shopkeepers went to Uighur shopkeepers for change or stood outside their shops and made small talk to pass the time. Han bought goat meat pastries from Uighur, and Uighur bought vegetables from Han. All conversations and transactions took place in Mandarin. Most of the Uighur there could speak it quite well. While this area is not typical of Urumqi, perhaps it is indicative of what is to come for the city.

In general, Uighur in Urumqi seem to respect the elderly, regardless of race or economic background. On one occasion when I was eating noodles at one of the many Uighur-owned outdoor tables behind the Hantangri Mosque, I saw an older Han man hobble by. He was carrying a near-empty teacup in his hand. As he passed, a Uighur woman cleaning one of the tables called to him, “Do you want some tea?” Her Mandarin accent was poor, and the old man didn’t seem to understand her. “Do you want some tea?” she offered again. She held up a teakettle and motioned for him to come get some.

“No thank you,” replied the old man. He continued past the tables.

After he was gone, I smiled at the woman, who knew me from prior visits, and said, “That was nice of you.”

She smiled back. “Of course,” she said. “He’s very old.”

“He’s Han?” I asked. She nodded. “Are you always so nice to Han people?” I asked.

The woman almost laughed. She was about thirty-five and, like most middle-aged Uighur women in Urumqi, dressed in a conservative dark-colored dress that covered her legs and arms, despite the midday heat. She was not, however, wearing a head scarf. Apparently her husband owned the little restaurant at which she worked.

“I’m always nice to old people,” she answered. “I think old people are really pitiful. They have had a hard life and now can barely take care of themselves. I don’t care that he’s Han. He’s old, so I offered him tea.”

There are noticeably more beggars on the streets in Urumqi than in other Chinese cities, and the beggars are all Uighur. Many of them are deformed or missing limbs. A number of them are women, and almost all of them wear veils. The beggars seem to cluster around the Uighur market and surrounding streets, and from what I observed, never stray into the richer Han part of town. However, any passerby is a potential patron, and I saw a boy with one leg scampering like a crab after a well-dressed Han woman. Most beggars congregate outside the mosques, particularly on Friday afternoons when services let out. According to a thirty-year-old Uighur clothing stall owner, “Part of Islam is giving to charity. The beggars know this and, because they, too, are Muslim, begging in front of the mosque is the best place for them to make money.”

Han seem to hold better jobs than Uighur in Xinjiang's capital city. I saw no Uighur working at the banks and very few working at the nicer hotels. I also observed that most teachers at public schools and universities are Han, as are most police, taxi drivers, servers at expensive restaurants, and clerks in upscale retail stores.

At the Urumqi hospitals, most doctors and nurses are Han, but there are some Uighur doctors and nurses. They all speak good Mandarin, but Uighur doctors and nurses tend to care mostly for Uighur patients, while Han practitioners care for Han patients. At Urumqi's most modern hospital, Tian Shan Yi Yuan, situated off Ren Min Square, I never once saw any Uighur doctors, nurses, or patients.

Airline personnel told me that all flight attendants and pilots for China Xinjiang Airlines are Han and that all in-flight announcements are made in Mandarin and English, but not Uighur. The airline personnel told me that this is just as well, since less than 2 percent of the passengers flying the Urumqi-Kashgar route are Uighur. At the Urumqi and Kashgar airports, the security and ticket counter staff as well as the baggage handlers were also Han.

In Turpan, a two-hour drive from Urumqi, Uighur make up about 70 percent of the 250,000 residents. However, all the hotel employees I saw and all the ticket sellers at Turpan's tourist sites, including the famed Grape Valley, were Han.

The employees at Urumqi's finer hotels are almost entirely Han and almost entirely young women, including the housekeepers, waitresses, reception clerks, and managers. According to one hotel personnel manager, a middle-aged Han woman, it is difficult to hire Uighur. "It's not that we're opposed to it," said the manager. "The problem is that most Uighur who come to us looking for a job don't speak Mandarin or speak it very poorly. So poorly, in fact, that I'm afraid if a customer wants something, they won't be able to understand them. Really, most Uighur have problems finding jobs because they lack education. But those who come from richer homes and those who work a little harder have more opportunities."

She thought for a moment, then said, "In every society, minorities have a harder time getting ahead, even if there are programs in place to help them. In Urumqi, it's up to the individual Uighur. If he works hard and learns Mandarin—which is absolutely essential if you want

to have any sort of decent job in Urumqi—then he can have a good life. But the problem is that many Uighur are lazy.”

“Do those who come from poorer homes have less opportunity?” I asked.

“Well, for some that’s a problem. Most Uighur are poor, or poorer when compared to Han. It’s because Xinjiang is a less-developed region. So the schools here aren’t as good. But that’s changing. Now Uighur have the opportunity to learn Mandarin at school. But many choose not to, or don’t learn it well. I realize that it must be more difficult for them, since Mandarin isn’t their first language. However, that won’t influence our hiring practices. Xinjiang is developing. Some Uighur choose to work hard and develop with it, others choose not to. But naturally, those who choose not to will be left out of the development.”

Most legitimately employed Uighur in Urumqi sell some sort of product, usually Uighur, although many sell fruit and vegetables. Urumqi also has its share of Uighur professionals, although the percentage is very small. Most Uighur professionals in Urumqi, while proud of their Uighur heritage, speak proper Mandarin.

Once, on one of the many market streets spinning off from Er Dao Qiao, where an aging Uighur was selling spiced tea and skewers of barbecued goat stomach, I sat on one of several rickety wood benches and chatted with a forty-seven-year-old Uighur translator. He was dressed like an ordinary Uighur or Han, except for the Muslim hat on his balding head. His spoken Mandarin was much better than that of other Uighur I had met in Urumqi, and he was very proud that he had what he considered a high-paying professional job.

I asked, “Where did you learn Mandarin?”

“In Lanzhou,” replied the man. “I am a translator.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I translate between Han and Uighur.” The man paused before adding, “For business.”

I said, “That’s interesting. Do you work for a Chinese company?” The man nodded. “You translate Mandarin into Uighur and Uighur into Mandarin?” I asked.

“Yes,” said the man proudly. “That’s why my Mandarin is very good.”

I laughed, and so did he. I asked, “Do most Uighur speak Mandarin?”

“No. Maybe a little, but not much. And in the countryside, no one can speak Mandarin.” He stared at his bowl for a moment, then said “Mei ban fa,” Mandarin for “There is no solution.”

“Now more and more Han are moving to Xinjiang,” I said.

“Yes, but Uighur aren’t learning Mandarin. They keep to themselves.” He made a broad sweeping motion, indicating the market streets. There wasn’t a Han in sight. “I learned Mandarin to get a good job,” the man continued. “But most Uighur don’t have such opportunities. So they don’t bother.”

“Don’t they learn in school?”

“In Xinjiang?” demanded the Uighur. He laughed loudly and pounded the table with his fist. The noise drew attention to us, and I smiled, embarrassed.

“I learned Mandarin in Lanzhou,” said the Uighur.

“In university?”

“In middle school,” he replied. “I never went to high school.”

“You never went to high school?” I asked in disbelief. “How is it you have such a good job?”

“Because I speak Mandarin,” said the man firmly. “Not many Uighur do.” He patted his chest. “Translator,” he said, smiling. I nodded and returned the smile.

“Do you have a good salary?” I asked.

“It’s good,” said the man. “I make about a thousand kuai a month (about 125 U.S. dollars).” He glanced about, then said, “Most people here make about five or six hundred. In the countryside it’s even less—maybe only three or four hundred a month, and some people don’t even make that much.”

“Uighur?” I asked.

“Of course,” he said. “Han make more money, but they come from far away and usually have better education.”

“Do you think the Han benefit Xinjiang?”

“Benefit, I don’t know. But the Han are here and will continue to come here, and that is reality.” He thought for a long moment before saying, “The Han are benefiting Xinjiang, but not all of the Uighur are benefiting because of it.” He thought for another moment, then said, “I did, but I speak Mandarin.”

I nodded and said, “That’s interesting.”

“I come from the countryside,” he went on. “I am from outside Hotan. There, it’s different. There aren’t so many opportunities. There, speaking Mandarin doesn’t help me. There, the population is almost all Uighur. But here is a modern city. It’s developing and changing. Soon, young people will need to learn Mandarin because they’ll want to find good jobs. Unless . . .” He gestured toward the market street, “Unless they chose to keep to themselves. Which is fine, but they’ll never have a lot of money that way.”

SHENZHEN

In Shenzhen, as in other Chinese cities, most Uighur said that they had moved there in search of better economic opportunities and, as in other cities, often had followed family or friends eastward. Like most other migrant Uighur populations, Shenzhen’s Uighur are primarily young to middle-aged men.

According to one twenty-four-year-old waiter, “Xinjiang has become better than before, but it’s still not as rich as China’s east coast. But here in Shenzhen, it’s possible to find a high-paying job and have a better life. In Xinjiang, outside of Urumqi, that’s not possible. Outside of Urumqi, the cities and towns in Xinjiang are very poor. Even in Urumqi it’s difficult, especially for Uighur. Now most people in Urumqi are Han. Most bosses are Han, and Han bosses hire only Han employees.” He laughed and said, “Of course the bosses out here are all Han too. But many, like us [Uighur], are also not local people. Still, Han prefer to hire Han.”

Most Uighur in Shenzhen claimed not to have found the opportunities they were looking for. Most Uighur there are poor and work in restaurants or sell foodstuffs on the street. There are some Han-owned but Uighur-operated Xinjiang restaurants (which still serve pork dishes) in the city, especially in the Nanyuan Lu shopping area. Occasionally I saw Uighur men selling jade or honey cake on street corners at night.

One thirty-two-year-old restaurant worker, when asked whether he had found the opportunities he was looking for in Shenzhen, replied, “No, the truth is, there aren’t much better opportunities here

than in Xinjiang. Maybe my apartment is a little nicer than my house in Turpan.”

Shenzhen’s Uighur generally spoke the poorest Mandarin of any Uighur I encountered in China, including those in majority Uighur cities like Kashgar and Turpan. This may be because Shenzhen’s Han population uses Cantonese as their main language of communication. However, Uighur in Shenzhen do not seem to speak or understand Cantonese.

Criminal Activities

Some Uighur, as migrants in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen as well as in Urumqi, where the Uighur are the minority population, turn to crime as a way to make money. This is particularly true in Shanghai, where, during the summer, Guandong Lu and the surrounding neighborhood were teeming with Uighur—almost all young to middle-aged adult men—looking to sell hashish. I also saw incidences of petty theft in Shanghai and Urumqi and heard about Uighur theft and drug trafficking from Han everywhere I went.

Uighur crime generally seems to be limited to petty theft (pickpocketing, purse snatching), drug sales, sales of illegal goods (pornographic VCDs, stolen merchandise), and selling legal goods without a license.

BEIJING

According to Han police, Uighur crime is not a big problem in Beijing, since most Beijing Uighur are legitimately employed. The Uighur enclaves of Niu Jie and Haidian’s Wei Gong Cun are much less frequently patrolled by local police than is Sanlitun, an upscale foreign bar and restaurant district a few kilometers away from Tiananmen Square and Beijing’s center.

“There is no need to patrol those areas,” explained one friendly Sanlitun police officer when I asked him about the comparatively limited police presence in Uighur areas. “They are safe. Here [Sanlitun] is also safe, but because at night people get drunk, and sometimes there are prostitutes and traffic problems, there are more police here.”

In Beijing, unlike in Shanghai and Urumqi, I never met any self-admitted Uighur criminals, saw any evidence of Uighur crime, or was approached to buy hashish or illegal goods. Still, there are those Han in Beijing who maintain that Uighur crime is a problem in their city.

SHANGHAI

Despite the widely held view that Shanghai, being a developed city, offers more opportunities, most Uighur in Shanghai are unemployed. Some find work in a friend's or a relative's restaurant, but many never obtain any legitimate employment. Even knowing that they have no prospects for work in Shanghai, many young Uighur men, often accompanied by their families, still move to the city. As one unemployed thirty-three-year-old Uighur man explained, "I knew I couldn't find a job in Shanghai. But I still came here, because there are more opportunities in Shanghai, because it is a richer, more developed city, much more so than anywhere in Xinjiang. I came here and then sent for my wife and daughter."

When I rephrased the question and asked why he came to Shanghai, knowing that he would not be able to find a job, and why he stayed even after concluding that such was the case, he answered, "Because of the opportunities."

This particular man, like so many others in Shanghai, spent his day loitering on Guandong Lu, offering hashish to foreigners who passed through the neighborhood.

Shanghai Hashish Sales. Shanghai Uighur hashish dealers work mostly in groups, although the groups were not always obvious. Sometimes it seemed as if they were all part of one large group, since they all clearly knew each other and exchanged words constantly. I could pass the many haircut shops and the stores selling barber equipment and hair-care products undisturbed until I crossed Guandong Lu's intersection with Yunnan Lu. This is where the Uighur area begins, and for the next block leading toward the waterfront, Uighur mill about, watching the street traffic and calling "hello" and "hashish." The staff from the few remaining Uighur establishments on Guandong Lu, all small restaurants and food stalls, sometimes came rushing out to offer me hashish; although more often than not they waited until I was

buying food from them. This is not to say that all Uighur in the area were selling hashish; some of the establishment owners clearly did not approve of the practice. In Xinjiang Relish Food, the only Uighur restaurant on Guandong Lu with a sign in English—although I never saw any foreigners eating there—the young waiters were very quiet about offering me hashish, claiming that their boss, an older Uighur woman, would not like it.

On Guandong Lu, it was this way every day of the week from ten in the morning to eight at night, when the mostly pedestrian street traffic subsided. However, even as early as six a.m. or as late as midnight, especially on weekend nights, one could be accosted by at least one or two Uighur eager to sell hashish.

According to one twenty-four-year-old unmarried Uighur man, selling hashish is a profitable business. As he explained, “Hashish comes from my hometown. Usually someone goes on a train to Urumqi to get it and bring it back, usually once every two months or so. Maybe they’ll also bring back other goods, like honey cake or whatever else you can’t buy outside of Xinjiang but maybe can sell here in Shanghai. The hashish isn’t expensive for us to buy, and we can sell it for a lot more than we pay for it. Most people who buy it are foreigners because only they can afford it. And most Han don’t smoke hashish. I think most Han don’t even know what it is. But the police do, especially the police in Xinjiang and on Guandong Lu. They’re told we Uighur have hashish. So we have to be careful. Even some older Uighur who don’t sell hashish and smoke it only in their homes, sometimes they may still get harassed by the police, or talked to, because the police suspect all Uighur.”

“Do most Uighur smoke hashish,” I asked.

“Not most Uighur,” responded the man, “but yes, many do. But this is Uighur culture. Besides, it isn’t like they smoke every day or all the time. Maybe they smoke on some special occasion. It’s not affecting society.” He thought for a moment and added, “Now perhaps selling hashish does. But it’s not Uighur society that’s being affected, since Uighur already have hashish in their society. And as for the Han . . .” He shook his head disapprovingly.

“I used to work in a restaurant,” he went on, “but there was very little money to be made. Sometimes we’d have no customers all day,

but I'd be there from early morning until late at night. I didn't mind,—it's not like I was busy or working very hard. But I wouldn't make much money either. In five minutes, I can make five hundred kuai [approximately 62.5 U.S. dollars] selling one little lump of hashish. Unfortunately I can't sell hashish every day. There aren't enough customers, and there are other Uighur selling it. Most Uighur work together to sell hashish, but even those that don't will still watch out for them and let them know if the police are coming. We are all Uighur, and we try to keep each other safe."

"You sell hashish to make money?" I asked.

"Of course."

"Is that the only reason?"

"Yes. What other reason is there to sell something?"

The legitimately employed Uighur with whom I spoke in Shanghai believe that Uighur hashish sales serve only to reinforce the already poor reputation Uighur have in China. However, they also believe that most Uighur steal or sell hashish not just for economic gain but also as a way to rebel against Han society, which they view as oppressive.

When asked why Uighur in Shanghai sell hashish, one forty-nine-year-old male Uighur restaurant owner said, "It's because their opportunities are limited, and they're upset about it. Uighur crime is a reaction to a poor situation; it's not about financial gain. Think about it—there isn't much money to make selling hashish. There isn't much money to make stealing from people. Yet many Uighur, especially here in Shanghai, are thieves. They didn't come here to be thieves. Many started at restaurants or by selling goat meat or fruit. Many still do that and make a reasonable living. You know, China isn't a rich country. Even many Han live as many Uighur do, especially in Shanghai. So I don't believe Uighur criminals are in it for the money. They could do better doing other things. They are criminals because they are upset. Crime is a crime of the mind, do you understand? Crime is reaction. It's not the intelligent choice, but many Uighur are uneducated or too angry to think clearly."

Another Uighur man who was in his forties suggested that some Uighur sell hashish not only because they are angry at Han society but also to express their Uighur identity. This particular Uighur had a younger, unemployed brother-in-law who spent his days loitering

on Guandong Lu offering hashish to foreigners walking through the neighborhood. “I’m not proud of him [my brother-in-law], but his opportunities are limited,” he explained. “You know, most Uighur smoke hashish. It’s a cultural thing. It’s not a crime. But to sell it, especially the way my brother-in-law does—on the street—that’s anger. Like many Uighur, his crime is a reaction to a poor situation. He doesn’t make much money. It’s not the Han who buy it. It’s the foreigners, and there aren’t many of them. So why sell hashish? If he was in Russia or Tajikistan or even in Kashgar, where everyone else is Uighur, I doubt he’d be selling hashish. But here, in Shanghai, what choice does he have? How can he express his Uighur identity? By working in a restaurant, earning very little money?”

Every hashish dealer with whom I spoke on Guandong Lu openly expressed his dislike for the Han, Han rules, and Han society.

Shanghai Property Theft. Uighur in Shanghai have a reputation for being thieves. Local Han business owners on and around Guandong Lu and Yunnan Lu view Uighur with distrust and suspicion, often even more so than those Han who have little or no contact with Uighur on a daily basis.

“Uighur are all thieves,” said one Han mobile phone saleswoman in her midtwenties. “You have to be very careful around here [Guandong Lu] because the Uighur here will try to take things out of your purse or pocket. I have a friend who lost her wallet one time. A few Uighur were walking next to her, and then she discovered her wallet was taken. When she complained to the police, they told her it happens all the time; this is a very normal thing. Uighur are always stealing from people around here.”

Another young Han woman, a waitress in a restaurant off Yunnan Lu, told a similar story. “Once, my friend and I were walking to the waterfront, and a Uighur man bumped into me. I grabbed my purse, and he didn’t manage to take anything. But then later, when we got to the waterfront, my friend realized his wallet and mobile phone were missing. I think one of the Uighur must have gotten it.”

When I asked whether she had contacted the police, she said, “No, it wouldn’t do any good. The police here can’t stop the Uighur. They

can't watch them all the time. And even if you arrest some Uighur or send them back to Xinjiang, there will be other Uighur in their place. They are too unreasonable, and they are thieves."

There were rumors of a police crackdown in Shanghai's Uighur enclave in early 2004. For a few months afterward, there were fewer Uighur and fewer Uighur-owned businesses on and around Guandong Lu than usual. Most Han workers and business owners, although uncertain about the details, thought that whatever had happened to clean up the once Uighur-dominated block was a good thing.

"Now this neighborhood is safer than before, and cleaner," said one Han convenience store worker in his midforties. "Before, Uighur were always coming into my shop. They were the worst kind of customer. Sometimes they'd walk around for an hour but buy nothing. Or they'd move things and touch things and then decide it was too expensive. I always had to watch them to make sure they weren't stealing anything. But now, fewer Uighur come in here. I still see them walking the street, but they usually don't come in here."

The only evidence of property theft by Uighur that I personally witnessed in Shanghai occurred while I was walking on Xizang Lu, not far from Shanghai's Uighur area late one summer afternoon. I came upon a crowd of people and pushed my way through the mass to see what had happened. Two uniformed police officers and two men who were not in uniform but appeared to be police were arresting a young Uighur man. They had him in handcuffs and were none-too-gently helping him into the back of a marked police car. An angry middle-aged Han couple were talking with one of the police; the man was pointing his finger at the Uighur in the car and yelling "Thief!" and "I'll have you punished for this."

The onlookers were all Han. I asked what had happened. "That Uighur stole that man's wallet," said one woman. A man told me, "This type of thing happens all the time. Many of Shanghai's thieves are Uighur." According to a Han man in his midforties, who had emerged from his shop to watch the commotion, "This is a very normal occurrence. A lot of Uighur live around here. They stand around all day waiting to rob someone. Usually they work in teams so that they can get away faster. The police can't always be watching, so there's nothing

that can be done. Usually they get away with it, but today this man got caught.”

Most Shanghai Uighur are aware of their reputation. One young Uighur waiter, who also sold hashish on Guandong Lu, theorized that Uighur crime is more about rebellion than economic gain, although he insisted that he sold hashish purely for profit. When I asked him about Uighur theft, he initially looked offended.

“Not all Uighur are thieves,” he said firmly. “That’s what the Han believe.”

“Are some Uighur thieves?” I asked again.

He nodded. “Yes,” he said, “some Uighur are poor or have no manners. But not all Uighur are thieves.”

“Do Uighur steal because they’re poor?”

“Yes,” answered the man, “but it’s not just about the money. Think about it: is it worth it just to steal a mobile phone or whatever else they may get? Some sunglasses or a hat?” He laughed. “Uighur steal because they’re upset,” he said. “They are angry at how they’re perceived and how they’re treated by the Han.”

“Does stealing make matters worse?” I asked.

“But I understand why they do it,” he replied. “They aren’t wrong to feel angry and to rebel against the Han. But it isn’t the solution.”

“What is the solution?”

He just smiled thinly and shrugged.

Another Uighur, a thirty-six-year-old married man, admitted to purse snatching. He told me that most Uighur steal from Han rather than from foreigners or other Uighur.” When I asked him why, he responded, “Part of it is opportunity, and we don’t like them.”

URUMQI

The criminal activities that Uighur in Urumqi tend to pursue are petty theft, pickpocketing, selling illegal goods, selling legal goods without a license, and selling drugs. Urumqi Uighur also engage in activities such as overcharging Han customers, underpaying or not paying their bills, and, for young Uighur women, seeking “sugar daddies”—men who will buy them gifts and give them money in return for accompanying them to bars and discos.

I have observed that most Uighur vendors overcharge non-Uighur customers. Uighur say that the higher prices they charge are justified because they have superior products. However, some Uighur did admit that they practiced price-gouging to punish the Han for having what they consider to be a racist, impolite attitude. “The Han are a rude people,” said the twenty-year-old son of a shop owner. “They look down on us. They think they own Urumqi and can act however they want here.”

“They think Uighur are here to serve them,” agreed his twenty-three-year-old brother. “They go into my parents’ shop and boss them around and try to bargain down every price. They have no idea how much something should cost or what a fair price is. They try to bargain down everything, so now my parents and other Uighur give all Han a super-high price, because they’re going to try to bring it down anyway. They say we are unreasonable, but it is they who are unreasonable about everything.”

A Hui taxi driver, a married woman in her midforties, suggested that Uighur were unwilling to abide by the rules of Chinese society and, because of this, often refused to pay for services they received. “We don’t like to take Uighur customers,” she said. “No one at the taxi company does . . . regardless of whether they’re Han or Hui. Uighur don’t pay the full fare. I’ve had many times when I’ve driven a Uighur somewhere and the bill was six kuai [the standard fare in Urumqi proper], and he or she would give me only two or three kuai. And when I’d say, ‘That’s not enough,’ they’d just ignore me and get out of the car.” She made a spitting gesture. “Uighur do this all the time. They think they can do whatever they want. But now I won’t pick up Uighur customers, and most taxi drivers won’t either. If there’s a Han customer and a Uighur customer, we always pick up the Han customer. If there’s just a Uighur customer, I might not pick him up at all.” When I talked to other taxi drivers, most of whom were Han, I heard similar stories of Uighur underpaying their fare.

In Urumqi, young Uighur women have a reputation for seeking Han sugar daddies, particularly men hanging out in discos and night-clubs. While most clubs in Urumqi are distinguished by the race of their clientele, some Han venture into Uighur discos, and some Uighur go to Han bars.

Once, when I was having a beer at a bar off Ren Min Lu, the Han waitress leaned across the bar and said, “Wait until later, lots of pretty Uighur girls will show up.”

“Really?” I said. “Why?”

The waitress smiled and replied, “Looking for boys.”

I glanced around the bar. The staff, the customers—everyone was Han. “Looking for Han boys?” I asked.

“Yes,” said the waitress.

“Huh,” I said. “I didn’t think Uighur were open to dating outside their race.”

“Most Uighur aren’t, but these girls want money,” said the waitress. “They want a rich man, and most Han men here are rich.”

The waitress indicated the various groups of Han businessmen drinking bottles of brand-name scotch and the like. “You know, most of these men are married. They’re a bit older, so they aren’t looking for a wife. They just want a pretty girl to sit with them and give them face. And most Han guys think Uighur girls are very beautiful because they’re all very tall and have big eyes.” The waitress thought for a moment, then added, “Not the old women, and the ones who wear veils—Han guys don’t like them. But the young Uighur women who dress a little sexy and wear makeup—the Han guys all think they’re beautiful. And, if they want, the girls can make money and get gifts from these men.”

According to Xinjiang’s main Mandarin-language newspaper, *Xinjiang Chen Bao*, in April 2004, the Urumqi police were called about 84,000 times, and there were 6,179 reported criminal and public security cases. The newspaper reported that the number of criminal cases in Urumqi was increasing. In April 2004, the Urumqi police received 17 percent more calls than in the prior month. Theft and robbery made up 91 percent of the criminal cases. There was no mention of the race of the perpetrators or the victims or even of the locations of the crimes. The only reason this information appeared in the newspaper was because of the coverage of the proceedings of an Urumqi police meeting that was called to discuss the effects of the Laodong holiday and the influx of travelers that it brought to Xinjiang.

Uighur criminal activity in Urumqi is not as open or obvious as it is in Shanghai, partly because police in Urumqi keep a tight watch on

the city. At least that's what one police officer told me. He was not originally from Urumqi. Police in China are often moved about, serving tours of duty in different provinces. According to him, Urumqi is not a dangerous city; in fact, it's very safe when compared to other Chinese cities. This relative level of safety is due in part to the large police presence there and in part to the comparatively well-off economic status of the majority of the city's population. Most Han in Urumqi have moved there for jobs and are doing well. While most Uighur in Urumqi are not as well off, the police officer said that they, too, are improving their economic situation and that Uighur keep to their own neighborhoods.

"What about Uighur-on-Uighur crime?" I asked.

"There's nothing like that," he said. "Most crime here is simply some drunken businessman misbehaving or acting violently. But the truth is, most Han—and Uighur for that matter—in Urumqi won't dare to commit crimes because they know they'll get caught, and when they get caught they'll be punished."

"What about drugs?"

"Well, there are drugs being sold in the discos, especially the Uighur discos, where the customers are a bit older and from a more diverse background. In the Han discos, this is less of a problem, but in Uighur discos, there are many foreigners—Tajiks and Pakistanis—usually it's the foreigners who are interested in buying and selling drugs."

"Not the Uighur?"

"In the Uighur discos, there are Uighur selling drugs. They may sell Ecstasy, which is popular now, or hashish or heroin. But again, this is a very isolated thing. Some Uighur, older Uighur, smoke hashish. I believe this is a cultural thing. But most Uighur, in Urumqi anyway, are not selling drugs and certainly not selling drugs on the street."

I was offered illegal drugs on the street only once in Urumqi, by an unmarried Uighur man in his midtwenties.

Another two police officers in Urumqi—one officer in his late thirties, the other about fifty—while insisting that Xinjiang's capital is a safe city, did admit that Urumqi has its share of property and drug crimes, most of which, they said, are committed by young Uighur men. "The Uighur are a less developed people," explained the younger, more talkative officer. "In fact, they're probably the least developed of

China's minorities. So, naturally, they are poorer and more ignorant of the rules. Sometimes they don't understand the rules or how they are there to protect them. Or perhaps they just don't care. But because of their economic situation and their lack of development they are more likely to steal things."

"Many Uighur just don't care," said the older man.

"Yes," agreed his partner, "many Uighur who commit crimes have no respect for society. They don't seem to care about anything. Most of them are young and uneducated. Many of them are teenagers whose parents don't look after them or haven't properly taught them to respect the rules of society. If children don't go to school and their parents don't teach them, how can they learn how to behave properly and respect the rules of society?"

"What about Uighur rules?" I asked.

The younger officer said, "They have their religion." The older officer nodded but said nothing.

I asked, "What do Uighur steal when they commit property crimes?"

"Whatever is available," answered the younger officer. "They shoplift or take things out of cars. Some are pickpockets. But generally, they never steal anything really valuable. Most thieves aren't very successful."

"Do Uighur steal from other Uighur?"

"I think so," replied the officer, "but most of our responses are to Han complainants."

The older man said, "Most Uighur probably wouldn't bother calling us if they lost something, especially because whatever was stolen from them would not likely be very valuable and would be almost impossible to get back."

Concerning drug crimes, the younger officer explained, "The Uighur smoke hashish, but they keep it mostly to themselves. It's part of their culture, not Han or Hui culture. Han and Hui don't smoke hashish, so the Uighur keep it to themselves. And I think hashish is more prevalent in Kashgar."

"But even there it's not a big problem," said the older man, "because hashish is illegal in China, and most Uighur won't dare to smoke it or sell it. Also, as China develops, the Uighur are less likely to engage in such primitive and destructive behavior."

Han and Hui with whom I spoke in Urumqi generally believed that because the Uighur are “poorer,” “less developed,” and “have more primitive [religious] beliefs,” they are responsible for a disproportionate amount of the crime, particularly petty theft and drug sales, in the city. They also felt that the Uighur are apathetic to development and therefore more likely to commit crimes.

A Hui hairdresser in her midthirties suggested that Uighur were responsible for the majority of thefts in Urumqi. “You must be careful of your things,” she told me, “because many Uighur here will rob you if they have the chance. They are poor and uneducated, and they have too many children. They don’t mind their children, and since their children are poor and ignorant, many become thieves. Urumqi is a safe city, but there is a lot of theft here, and almost all of it is done by Uighur. Some people think it’s because they’re poor, but I think it’s because they just don’t care. They are a very selfish people. They have no care for anyone . . . not even themselves.”

“Do Uighur steal from other Uighur?” I asked.

“Yes, I think they steal from whomever they can,” she replied. “They have no morals. They pretend to be Muslim, but they have no respect for anyone. Especially the young Uighur. Some of them are learning Mandarin and trying to develop, but most of them just want to be lazy and steal whatever they need or want.”

Some Han felt that with continued development, Uighur crime in Urumqi would become less of a problem. The responses of two Han men I spoke with at the pool of the Hoi Tak Hotel are typical. Both had been raised in Urumqi and considered themselves locals.

I asked them, “What about crime in Xinjiang? Is this a problem?”

The older man looked pensive. Slowly he replied, “There is crime in Xinjiang . . . perhaps more so than in other Chinese provinces. But I don’t think it’s a big problem.”

“Crime in Urumqi is done by Uighur,” said the younger man.

The older man shook his head. “Crime in Urumqi is done by poor people,” he said. “It just so happens that the Uighur in Urumqi are poor.” He looked at me and said, “As Urumqi develops, and the Uighur change their minds, there will be less crime. Even now, there is less crime than before.” He paused then added, “Although you should

be careful at night, especially around Er Dao Qiao Market. Since you are a foreigner, I think it might be dangerous for you.”

“How about you?” I asked.

The older man nodded and smiled. “Yes,” he said, “I think it could be dangerous for anyone.”

“Even Uighur?” I asked.

The older man looked perplexed. “I suppose so,” he finally replied. “But maybe not. Because Uighur know other Uighur have very little—so why would they rob from them?”

The younger man said, “When I was a boy, we used to go to Er Dao Qiao at night. But now we go to Wu Yi Jie instead because it’s safer. That, and there are comparatively nicer things there.”

Wu Yi Jie’s night market featured lots of Uighur food stalls, but the only Uighur I’d seen there were running the stalls. Aside from that, Wu Yi Jie had rows of clothing, gadgets, and electronics—all very cheap and all sold by Han, or possibly Hui, vendors.

“You said Urumqi was becoming safer,” I said.

“It is,” said the older man.

The younger man said, “The news tells us it’s getting safer as it becomes more developed, but I feel that the criminals are more dangerous now.”

“But Uighur and Han relations are better than ever,” insisted the older man. “And that makes it safer.”

“That’s true,” agreed the younger man. “Relations are better. Before, there were some separatist attacks, but now it seems as though most Uighur recognize that Urumqi is improving and that improvement comes from us Han.” He motioned to the pool as if it was evidence for his opinion. The Hoi Tak was opened in Xinjiang in the late 1990s by a Hong Kong group.

I asked, “What kind of crimes do the Uighur commit?”

The older man said, “They steal . . .”

“Drugs,” cut in the younger man. “They sell drugs like Ecstasy and hashish.”

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Everyone knows that,” said the man indignantly.

“Has anyone ever offered you any?” I asked.

“No, but I’ve heard from my friends that it’s true.”

The older man said, “The Uighur are poor, and they have old beliefs. So of course they are more likely to commit crimes. It’s always the ignorant people in society who sell drugs and steal from each other. But as I said, as Urumqi gets better, that will end.”

However, according to two admitted Uighur petty criminals, a twenty-five-year-old unemployed unmarried man and his twenty-two-year-old friend, Urumqi is not getting better. In fact, they maintain that criminal activities are the only opportunities for most Uighur in their situation.

“There aren’t any good jobs for Uighur in Urumqi,” explained the twenty-five-year-old. “Even if you speak good Mandarin, it’s hard for Uighur to find a job. The Han don’t want to hire us, and Uighur will never speak as well as Han because it’s not our first language. But Urumqi is becoming more expensive and more difficult to live in. Han put up expensive apartment buildings, and now more and more Uighur live in tiny homes because they can’t afford anything else. How can we compete when we don’t have the same money or education and we’re looked down on and frowned at? I need money, so I sell VCDs or hashish or Ecstasy. Sometimes I may steal if I have to or have the opportunity to.”

The Uighur looked at his friend and then continued, “But I never hurt anyone. I never do anything really wrong. I sell VCDs and hashish to people who want to buy it—mostly young people, although some Han businessmen like the yellow [pornographic] VCDs. If I steal, I steal from someone rich, someone who can afford to be stolen from.”

“Han?” I asked.

The Uighur smiled and nodded. “Yes,” said the man, “of course. The Han have money, and we don’t like them because they don’t like us.”

Many Uighur who had legitimate jobs believed that Urumqi is generally a safe city. However, Uighur with whom I became friendly almost always advised me to be wary of other Uighur, especially at night. A middle-aged almond vendor gave me this advice: “For Uighur, Urumqi is safe. But for you, especially at night, especially in Uighur areas, it could be a little dangerous. You may get robbed, or someone may try to take the money out of your pocket. You might

also get harassed. This could happen to you if you're Han, and it could happen to you because you're a foreigner. If you're not Uighur, you have to be careful in certain areas at night in Urumqi."

Children Engaging in Criminal Activities. There is an opinion, widely held by Han and Hui in Urumqi, that Uighur children are responsible for much of the petty theft in the city. While I never saw any evidence of this, I often did see unsupervised Uighur children of all ages wandering the city during regular school hours.

Once, while I was buying apricots in a Uighur shop near the Hantangri Mosque early one afternoon, a boy, whom I assumed to be the shopkeeper's ten- or eleven-year-old son, rushed in and offered to exchange my U.S. dollars for Chinese money. The shop owner didn't seem to mind.

"No," I said, "If I want to change money I'll do it at the bank."

"But I'll give you a better rate," said the boy. He spoke Mandarin poorly and with a thick accent.

"It's illegal," I said firmly.

The boy shrugged his shoulders. "Change money," he said again.

"You're so young," I said, "Why are you doing something illegal?"

"Because I want American dollars," said the boy. At that moment, the shop owner patted his head, encouraging him to run along.

After the boy left, I asked the shopkeeper, "Why do you let your son do that?"

"Not my son," the man replied indignantly. "I wouldn't let my sons do that. In my family there are no hooligans. We're hard workers, and we're honest."

"So you don't approve of children trying to change money?"

The Uighur shrugged. "I don't approve," he answered, "but it's not my business. You know, it doesn't affect my business, so I don't mind. But if that boy came in and scared off my customers, then I'd be angry at him."

"Would you do something illegal if it was good for your business?" I asked.

"No," answered the man, "I'm an honest person. But I don't care what other people do, if they're not in my family."

According to one forty-three-year-old divorced Han woman with a thirteen-year-old son, “Xinjiang Uighur can have more children than Han [under China’s population control policy], because they are a minority. And since most Uighur are uneducated and poor, they have many children—sometimes three or four. Since most Uighur parents don’t really care about educating their children, their children don’t go to school until they’re older. Some Uighur children don’t even go to school until they are teenagers. And most Uighur parents don’t look after their children. You see Uighur kids wandering the streets by themselves, don’t you?”

I nodded. I had often seen surprisingly young children, usually in pairs or groups of three or four, walking in both Uighur and Han areas of Urumqi. I saw them at all hours of the day and night, and they were never accompanied by adults.

“Why is this?” I asked.

“Because the Uighur parents want to work and sell their products or whatever,” answered the woman. “All they care about is making money. They don’t care whether their children are in school or not. They don’t care what their children are doing. They just don’t want to have to look after them. So many Uighur children, little children, because their homes are poor and because no one looks after them, become thieves. They steal from other Uighur, and they steal from Han. They steal from whomever they can. And even if they get caught, their parents can’t do anything about it because they need to work and won’t take the time to look after them.”

SHENZHEN

Shenzhen is notorious in China as a crime-ridden city. Like most border towns, it is flooded with migrants who, according to local police, are responsible for most of the crimes, which include property theft, prostitution, and illegal drug sales. “They [migrants] come here from mostly poor parts of China,” explained one local police officer patrolling the Dongmen Shang Ye Jie shopping area. “They come here because things are cheap and because it’s close to Hong Kong. I guess people think there are more opportunities here because of that. Some even come because it’s warm here. The problem is that Shenzhen is

just another city. Things may be cheaper here, but living is more expensive. Being close to Hong Kong means that lots of rich businessmen and foreigners come through here, so hotels and restaurants become more expensive. When poor people leave their hometowns, they leave their support network behind. It's very difficult to make it in a new city. In Shenzhen, it's even harder because most locals here speak Cantonese, and they can tell when you're not a local. In fact, I think that in most places in China, local people will look down on outsiders. Local people don't want to hire outsiders because they don't trust them. Local people don't want to rent to outsiders. So without opportunities, outsiders have to do something to make money or pass the time. Many become criminals."

The Uighur in Shenzhen come from all over Xinjiang and usually come looking for better opportunities. Yet, according to the ones I interviewed, they had not found any. However, most Uighur said that they had no reason to go back to their hometowns. One unemployed middle-aged Uighur claimed he couldn't afford the ticket home. "My home is twenty-five hundred kilometers from here," he said smiling sadly. "If I went home, I'd have nothing. It's too expensive. Yet here I have nothing. But I'm already here, so why waste the money to go back?"

Even though Uighur constitute a very small percentage of Shenzhen's population and have no discernable enclave, Uighur migrants, more so than other migrants, are viewed suspiciously by local Han. According to one forty-year-old Han pharmacist, "The migrants who come here usually don't cause trouble. Most of them come from poor towns and want to live in a big city. They think it's interesting. I understand. Yet some come here and fail. They can't find anything to do or make enough salary to survive here. Shenzhen, like any big city, is more expensive than country towns. People coming from country towns are always surprised by this. They should be more prepared and think about what they're going to find here. However, most migrants find simple jobs and make enough money to survive."

"What about Uighur?" I asked.

"Uighur are a different story. Because Uighur, even in Xinjiang, cause trouble. I think the problem is the Uighur are too primitive-

minded to join society. They simply don't want to develop. Not all of them, but too many of them just don't want to join society, so they steal. It's a difficult problem to resolve."

While Shenzhen Han and Hui, local and transplant, in general maintain that Uighur are thieves, Shenzhen police view them as just migrants with criminal potential. "The Uighur are a backward people," said one police officer I met in, of all places, a Xinjiang restaurant, "but that doesn't mean they're all thieves, as some would say. They're just another group that has come here and found little chance to improve their lot. Uighur women won't become prostitutes because of their religion. I think their religion also stops them from selling certain drugs. Now some Uighur children will steal, but I think this is because their parents don't supervise them. But the Uighur here are no more or less thieves than other migrants who have come here and found nothing."

5

Living under the Heel of the Dragon

The central question of this study was whether Uighur are interested in assimilating into the dominant Han society or whether they have rejected Han societal goals. From the results of the in-depth interviews that I conducted with Uighur and Han respondents, it is apparent that across almost the entire spectrum of subjects that were discussed, the views expressed by Uighur differed greatly from those expressed by Han. When the interview results are supplemented with informal conversations and my observations of Uighur-Han interactions, the differences in the attitudes and perceptions of the Han and the Uighur are striking.

The majority of Uighur have rejected the goals of the dominant Han society. Except for the small number of Uighur in professional occupations, second- and third-generation Uighur who reside in Beijing but do not live in a Uighur ethnic enclave, and those whom some Uighur derisively refer to as “Chinese Uighur,” the only goal that the Uighur and the Han share is that of acquiring personal wealth sufficient to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle.

Islam

The single most important tie that binds the Uighur to one another and forms the foundation on which the Uighur have developed their sense of national identity and shared consciousness is their belief in Islam. All of the Uighur I interviewed, regardless of their individual religious practices, adamantly and proudly maintained that they were Muslim. Even those Uighur who admitted that they drank alcohol, didn't fast during Ramadan, and never attended services at a mosque, nonetheless maintained that in their hearts they were religious. This profession of faith in Islam was the one universal characteristic shared by all of the Uighur I met during the course of this study.

The Chinese constitution contains a guarantee of freedom of religion for ethnic minorities. However, the Chinese Communist Party, aware of the role that the Catholic Church played in undermining Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, is suspicious of organized religious activity. Prior studies have reported that Uighur religious activities have been widely suppressed and criminalized; however, during the course of my research, I observed no evidence of the criminalization of Uighur religious activities. While the Chinese government requires all Islamic organizations and places of worship to register with the Religious Affairs Bureau, services in the mosques that I observed (all of which were officially registered) occurred without any noticeable governmental interference.

Uighur were generally reluctant to speak about religion, usually saying that it was a private matter. However, while only a few of them were openly critical of the government's policies concerning religion, many of them were uncomfortable with the way religion was viewed by the Han. Uighur feel that Han look down on them, as one explained, "because they are too ignorant to understand the benefits of religion." According to another, "The people of China—the Han—are taught that religious belief is ignorance. And now, more than before, that Muslims are terrorists. Being a minority, being religious, especially Muslim, doesn't improve your situation in China. It only makes things more difficult."

Many of the Han I interviewed were of the opinion that the Uighur “believe in a strange religion and have strange traditions.” They felt that religion is holding the Uighur back. As one told me, “[The Uighur] don’t want to speak the language; they don’t want to learn or to know anything about Han culture or to interact with the majority society. Again, I think the main problem is their religion. I think it gets in the way of their joining society. And in some ways, it makes society look down on them.” For the Uighur and the Han, Islam reinforces the separation that exists between their two societies.

Racism

Han-Uighur relations are colored by racist attitudes. Many Han told me that the Uighur are a “fierce” and “unreasonable” people and that they have a “primitive mentality” and are “apathetic to development.” As one Han explained, “They just want to sell their goat meat or whatever and ignore the outside world. Their problem is they just don’t care. They don’t care to be modern. They don’t seem to care about anything.”

Many Uighur do sell goat meat or other food products. Even educated Uighur who speak Mandarin well rarely hold professional jobs. As one Uighur explained, “It’s not as easy for a Uighur to make contacts and gain the trust of Han businessmen. Most Uighur work in the food business. They either grow food or sell food. If they’re successful, they open restaurants. Some Uighur in Xinjiang sell clothes or leather or gold or jade, but that’s only in Xinjiang. In the rest of China, Uighur sell food.”

For the most part, the Uighur interviewed in this study saw little opportunity to escape from the low-status position they hold in Chinese society and expressed resentment at what they perceived as the disrespect that Han show for their culture and their religion. The coping strategy for these Uighur was, to the extent possible, to avoid contact with Han. This strategy of avoidance appears to be a matter of conscious choice. As one Uighur explained, “We don’t like speaking Mandarin, and we don’t like Han ways. We don’t like Han food or Han culture.”

John Ogbu, a pathbreaking scholar in the fields of minority education and identity, theorized that minorities attempt to assimilate if they believe that education holds the key to economic success. He draws a distinction between voluntary minorities, such as Chinese Americans who have immigrated to the United States, and involuntary minorities. He contends that voluntary minorities tend to be much more satisfied with their minority status than those forced into a minority situation. Thus, voluntary minorities are more willing to embrace aspects of the majority culture that they have joined, including learning the language of the majority. They believe that the cultural and linguistic differences they have to overcome are surmountable and that through education and hard work, they will be able to move up into mainstream society.

The results of this study indicate that the converse of Ogbu's theory is also true. When ethnic groups, for whatever reason, involuntarily become minorities, they may feel that they face insurmountable cultural and linguistic barriers. If they believe that even with education and hard work, they will still not be given the same opportunities for advancement as members of the dominant society, then they may choose to reject the goals of the majority society.

The Uighur, whose ancestral homeland was annexed by what they perceive to be an alien regime, are not a voluntary minority. In Urumqi, the Uighur have been made a minority by an unwanted influx of Han. Uighur who have migrated to China's coastal cities feel that they had no choice because of the limited opportunities for economic advancement in their homeland.

Most of the Uighur I interviewed believed that no matter how hard they tried, they would never be able to achieve economic and social parity with Han. They felt that they were being culturally marginalized and that they were the victims of criminal stigmatization and institutionalized racism. Uighur believe that the education that Han society provides for them is not sufficient to help them improve their situation. They also feel that Han discriminate against them in almost every aspect of their lives, and this perception of racism provides impetus for the Uighur to harbor their own prejudice against the Han. Given these circumstances, it is no wonder the Uighur have chosen to reject the goals of Han society.

Crime

Han-Uighur relations are also affected by the perception, generally held by the Han I interviewed, that Uighur are thieves. According to one Han, “Wherever they [the Uighur] are, they cause trouble. They steal, they sell drugs—mostly they steal. I think that even if the Uighur had good jobs, they would still steal.” When asked why Uighur commit crimes, Han typically responded, “Uighur are too primitive-minded to join society. They simply don’t want to develop . . . so they steal.”

Some of the Han I interviewed believed that Uighur criminality stemmed from Uighur unhappiness with the position they hold in Chinese society. As one Han sociology professor explained, “Some Uighur even hate society and have tried to break free from it. I think that’s why some Uighur commit crimes. It’s not because they’re poor—there are many poor people. Hui, Han—they all have poor people. But Uighur commit crimes. I think it may be because they’re mad at society.”

According to another Han professor, Uighur do not commit crimes because they have no other opportunities: “They could find jobs, but they choose not to. Many other professors at my university think Uighur crime is the result of their laziness, but I think they still have to work hard to steal. I don’t think Uighur are lazy, I think they’re simply unmotivated to earn in a way that helps Chinese society develop. I think they prefer to make their money harming society, which is why I think Uighur are completely unreasonable. They will never truly develop, and the Uighur problem will never go completely away.”

Self-admitted Uighur criminals told me that they committed property crimes against Han, but not against other Uighur. When asked why, they typically responded, “The Han have money, and we don’t like them because they don’t like us.” Another reason was, “Uighur steal because they’re upset. They are angry at how they’re perceived and how they’re treated by the Han.”

A secondary purpose of this study was to determine whether theories about the criminal activity of minorities that have been developed from studies of minorities living in Western countries also applied to the situation of the Uighur in China. In his classic 1938 paper, “Social Structure and Anomie,” Robert Merton postulated that there are certain goals strongly emphasized in each society but that if

society holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means (for example, educational and employment opportunities) to achieve them, a strain is created, and some individuals will respond to this strain by engaging in criminal activity.

Sociological theories that attempt to explain criminal behavior as the product of blocked mobility suggest that unemployment and poverty create incentives to illegal activity. This propensity toward criminal behavior is most evident among members of minorities who lack the education to obtain stable, well-paying employment. When crime seemingly pays more than the few legitimate jobs available, some members of minority groups naturally find illegitimate activities attractive. According to these theories, when a minority believes that their aspirations to achieve valued societal goals are being frustrated because the dominant society is limiting their opportunities for economic and social advancement, then some members of the minority will engage in criminal activities. One explanation for Uighur criminality is that it results from the frustration Uighur feel about their lack of opportunities for advancement when compared to the majority Han.

Conflict theories of criminology postulate that laws, especially criminal laws, are implemented to support the customs and interests of the most powerful members of society. This places poorer members of society at a disadvantage with respect to the legal system. Minority members of society are particularly affected when cultural differences are magnified, resulting in racism in the criminal justice system. Many of the Uighur I interviewed felt not only that they suffer racism at the hands of individual Han but also that racism so permeates Han society that it has become institutionalized. They believe that Chinese society does not offer the Uighur the same legitimate means to achieve societal goals that it does the Han.

Uighur—typically impoverished, uneducated, discriminated against by the majority Han, and having little or no opportunity to break the cycle of blocked social mobility—are likely candidates for criminality. However, sociological theories that explain minority criminal behavior as a result of blocked mobility and conflict theories of criminology provide only a partial explanation for Uighur criminality.

The results of this study suggest that the Uighur perceive that they are the victims of criminal stigmatization and institutionalized racism

at the hands of the dominant Han society and that because of this, the Uighur have rejected the goals of Han society. Therefore, Uighur criminal activity is not simply the result of frustration due to blocked mobility; it is also a reaction against the racism of the dominant society. Indeed, the data that I gathered suggest that Uighur criminality may be driven by anti-Han sentiment as much as or even more than by the desire for financial gain.

The criminal activities of members of a minority are, in almost every instance, primarily directed against other members of that minority; that is, they occur within the minority community (for example, the crimes committed by African Americans and Australian Aborigines against members of their own ethnic groups). However, the results of this study suggest that Uighur are disproportionately involved in criminal activity in Han population centers as opposed to Uighur-dominated areas. Unlike the criminal activity of other minorities, which occurs predominantly within their own communities, Uighur criminal activity is directed against their perceived oppressors, the Han.

Uighur criminal activity is not driven solely by feelings of frustration due to blocked social mobility and the inability to assimilate into Han society. Uighur who have rejected Han societal goals and who have no interest in assimilating into Han society may feel no need to respect Han laws and customs. Not only are they more likely to engage in criminal activity, but it is also more likely that their criminal activity will be directed against Han victims as an expression of their rejection of Han society. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in extreme cases of criminal stigmatization and institutionalized racism, members of minority groups will reject the goals of the dominant society and that some will also turn to criminal activities directed against the members of the dominant society.

Steps the Chinese Government Could Take to Improve Uighur-Han Relations

Despite the assertion in the Chinese constitution that all ethnic groups are equal, China does not have a policy of multiculturalism (many

cultures coexisting equally within society while maintaining their individual cultural and ethnic identities). Han have traditionally viewed themselves as belonging to a superior race and have looked down on other races. According to the 1949 “Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference,” ethnic minorities require assistance “to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work.” Even today, China’s government has a paternalistic attitude toward its minorities. It desires to maintain (many Uighur would say, “showcase”) the Uighur as a national minority with a unique language and culture, but it also wants to solve the “Uighur problem” by having the Uighur wholeheartedly accept the goals of the dominant Han society and play an active role in China’s future development. These two aims may not be completely compatible.

Uighur frustration with what Han refer to as the “Uighur problem” was best expressed by a Uighur businessman: “I think it’s difficult for Uighur to excel in a Han society that is racist toward its non-Han members. I think it’s too bad that Han government policies, including hiring practices and education policies, hold Uighur back. And I think it’s too bad that many Uighur lash back by committing crimes, giving Uighur an even worse name and causing more Han to view us with disdain, in turn causing the Uighur to hate the Han even more. It’s a terrible cycle, and one that will not be broken. Xinjiang will not be freed—I realize this is the case. But if the Han will not free Xinjiang, they should do what needs to be done to draw the Uighur into their society.”

A number of the Uighur I interviewed believed that the critical first step to drawing the Uighur into Han society was to eliminate the practice of teaching classes in the Uighur language. As one explained, “The Han government wants Uighur to maintain their local language, so they encourage Uighur schools to teach in Uighur. But this should be a Uighur responsibility. The Han know little of our culture. It is up to Uighur parents to teach their children our language and about our Uighur culture. But it’s up to the schools to teach our children Mandarin and Han culture.”

The fact that many Uighur speak Mandarin poorly was the reason most frequently given by Han managers I interviewed for not hiring Uighur job applicants. As one explained, “It’s up to the individual Uighur.

If he works hard and learns Mandarin—which is absolutely essential if you want to have any sort of decent job . . . then he can have a good life.”

Uighur in professional occupations placed the blame for the failure of most Uighur to learn proper Mandarin on the Chinese government’s minority education policies. As one Uighur teacher told me, “The Chinese government says they encourage Uighur to learn Mandarin, yet at the same time they want to keep the Uighur language alive. They don’t want the world to see them as bad, as not protecting their minority cultures. So the government allows and even encourages Uighur teachers not to teach in Mandarin. But this holds the Uighur back.”

As a first step on the road toward getting the Uighur to accept the goals of Han society, the Chinese government could consider implementing a high-quality mandatory education program for Uighur children starting in prekindergarten and continuing through high school with a focus on Mandarin-language assimilation. To be effective, a Mandarin-language curriculum would need to be taught by native Mandarin speakers. The education program would have to be complemented with other programs (initially including affirmative action programs) to end discrimination in higher education, employment, and housing.

Such a program is not without risks to the viability of the Uighur language. In the United States, 91 percent of the children of Chinese American immigrants speak only English by the third generation. However, while there is a price to be paid for linguistic assimilation, the contribution of Chinese Americans to American society is considerable. Because the Uighur have a shared ethnic consciousness and a common religion, linguistic assimilation does not necessarily have to lead to the loss of their cultural and spiritual identity.

The Chinese government may not have the resources or be willing to undertake measures to increase Mandarin linguistic assimilation, to end discriminatory practices, and to improve the educational and employment opportunities for Uighur. However, until concrete measures are taken to draw the Uighur into Han society, the Uighur will continue to live under the heel of the dragon.

Appendix

Table 1.
Distribution of Uighur and Han Interviewees by
Age, Sex, Marital Status, Occupational Classification, and Location

	<i>Uighur</i>	<i>Han</i>
<i>Age</i>		
Under 25	38 (41 percent)	29 (23 percent)
25–50	46 (50 percent)	66 (53 percent)
Over 50	8 (9 percent)	30 (24 percent)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	67 (73 percent)	74 (59 percent)
Female	25 (27 percent)	51 (41 percent)
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	53 (58 percent)	50 (40 percent)
Married	39 (42 percent)	75 (60 percent)
<i>Occupational Classification</i>		
Professional	8 (9 percent)	41 (33 percent)
Nonprofessional	84 (91 percent)	84 (67 percent)
<i>Location</i>		
Urumqi	34 (37 percent)	41 (33 percent)
Beijing	25 (27 percent)	33 (26 percent)
Shanghai	26 (28 percent)	26 (21 percent)
Shenzhen	7 (8 percent)	25 (20 percent)
Total	92 (100 percent)	125 (100 percent)

Table 2.
Distribution of Interview Responses

<i>Subject Area</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents Answering "Yes"</i>			
	<i>Uighur</i>			<i>Han</i>
	<i>Urumqi</i>	<i>Shanghai</i>	<i>Beijing</i>	<i>All Locations*</i>
Chinese language: Should Uighur have to learn Mandarin?	35	31	60	98
Education: Do Uighur have the same educational opportunities and receive the same quality of education as Han?	12	12	96	99
Entertainment: Do you watch Chinese (Mandarin-language) TV and movies or listen to Chinese (Han) music?	0	4	92	98
Family Planning: Do you agree with government policies that limit the number of children per family?	0	15	40	44
Fashion: Do you prefer wearing Chinese (Western) clothing to traditional Uighur/Han dress?	15	19	80	97
Food: Do you enjoy eating Chinese (Han) cuisine?	0	4	20	92
Friends: Do you have Han/Uighur friends?	6	19	76	5
Han and Uighur dating: Are you in favor of (or at least not opposed to) Uighur-Han dating and marriage?	3	8	80	10
Han presence in Xinjiang: Have Han benefited Xinjiang, and are Uighur better off as a result of the Han influx into the region?	24	8	64	98
Han-Uighur relations: Are Han-Uighur relations good?	24	12	72	90
Housing: Do Uighur receive the same treatment as Han (i.e., are not discriminated against) when it comes to housing?	12	15	92	98

continued

<i>Subject Area</i>	<i>Uighur</i>			<i>Han</i>
	<i>Urumqi</i>	<i>Shanghai</i>	<i>Beijing</i>	<i>All Locations*</i>
Job opportunities: Do Uighur have the same job opportunities as Han?	12	19	84	99
Medical care: Do Uighur receive the same quality of medical care as Han?	12	15	88	99
National holidays: Do you observe Chinese (Han) holidays?	6	8	92	99
Police: Do the police treat everyone equally (i.e., Uighur are not harassed or picked on)?	9	4	92	99
Religion: Do you feel comfortable with the government's religious policies?	21	15	72	99
Role of China in the world: Are you interested in China's future development and its role in the world?	29	42	88	92
Thoughts about 2008 Beijing Olympics: Do you have any interest in the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing?	6	12	100	98
Travel: Are you interested in traveling within China?	9	15	100	94
Uighur criminality: Are you concerned that you might be the victim of a Uighur-committed crime?	0	0	0	99
Crime directed against Uighur: Are you (as a Uighur) concerned that you might be the victim of a Han-committed crime?	76	100	8	—

*Note: Data for Han interviewees are combined for Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Urumqi because Han responses were so uniform that the differences among the percentages for each city were so small as to be virtually indistinguishable.

Data for Uighur interviewees living in Shenzhen are not included because the number of Uighur interviewed in Shenzhen was too small to calculate meaningful percentages.

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