

University of Tartu

European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation  
A.Y. 2022/2023

# Authoritarianism, Human Rights and Securitization

## The Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People's Republic of China

**Author: Cecilie Seidelin Nobel**

Supervisors: Lauri Mälksoo & Thomas Linsenmaier

Word Count Declaration: 22542

## Abstract

This thesis will research the differences in the measures used to deal with security threats between democratic and authoritarian states. Such extreme security practices have been studied extensively through the framework of securitization. However, while the theory explains how security is constructed and why different actors can justify measures beyond the ordinary rules of society, it has not included the variable regime type and thus cannot account for how it affects the scope of the measures implemented. This is due to the development of the theory based almost exclusively on democratic countries. Therefore, this research will investigate how authoritarianism as a regime type affects the scope and intensity of extraordinary security measures used to deal with a securitized issue, through the securitization of the Uyghur minority population in the Xinjiang Autonomous region of the People's Republic of China, which occurred primarily in the year following 9/11. The analysis is based on a source critical, comparative, discourse analysis of primary source material in original language, substantiated by existing academic literature in the field. It is concluded that authoritarianism as a regime type permits a widening of the scope and intensity of the extraordinary measures used to deal with securitized issues, which is due to the power dynamics in the speaker-audience relationship, leading to a larger threshold for audience rejection and the lack of counterbalancing influence and de-securitizing power afforded to functional actors. Both are affected by the authoritarian regime type.

## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Theoretical Framework: The Copenhagen School and Beyond - The Securitization of Religious Minorities in an Authoritarian Setting .....	6
2.1 Securitization Beyond the West .....	12
2.2 Explaining the Scope of Security Measures: The Impact of History and Culture on the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China.....	14
2.3 Explaining the Scope of Security Measures: The Impact of the ‘Legal Framework’ on the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China.....	16
2.3.1 International Law.....	16
2.3.2 National Law & Chinese Interpretation.....	18
3. Methodology .....	21
4. Analysis: The Securitization of the Uyghur Minority in the People’s Republic of China (2001-2020) .....	26
4.1 The Securitizing Move: The Construction of the Uyghurs as a Threat .....	26
4.2 Audience Acceptance of ‘the Uyghur Threat’ .....	40
4.3 The Scope of Extraordinary Measures in the People’s Republic of China .....	41
4.3.1 Legislation .....	41
4.3.2 Surveillance .....	43
4.3.3 Punitive.....	44
4.4 Functional Actors in the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China: The significance of De-securitization .....	49
5. Conclusions .....	53
6. Bibliography.....	56

## 1.

## Introduction

There is a significant discrepancy in the measures used by democratic and authoritarian states to deal with security threats. Hence, there is also a large quantity of academic literature detailing these differences.<sup>1</sup> For instance, in many democracies immigrants are perceived as a threat, to which the measures used to alleviate it have included reinforced border control, deportation, unspecified periods of detention and policies to reduce their influx.<sup>2</sup> Whereas a security threat such as political dissent in an authoritarian regime has resulted in enforced disappearances, extrajudicial detentions, internment camps, pervasive surveillance, extensive restrictions of movement and torture.<sup>3</sup> It is recognized by scholars that such measures are not exclusive to authoritarian regimes as they have been widely utilized by the U.S. in places such as Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and other so called ‘black sites’.<sup>4</sup> As such, it is not only the severity of these measures, but rather the scope that is the focus of this research, such as how widespread the measures are or the intent of the measures e.g., if they are used for deterrence, putatively or as a means to gather information. However, very little has been written about *why* such security practices differ. The concept of universal human rights and the legislation created to uphold it should prevent extraordinary measures such as internment camps, pervasive surveillance, and extensive restrictions of movement even when done in the name of national security. Yet, it does not fully as these measures are often utilized in authoritarian regimes.

In the field of Security Studies, the way in which such radical security practices become possible has been extensively studied through the framework of securitization theory. The theory of securitization explains how securitizing actors can speak or enact security and, through audience acceptance, justify extraordinary measures. And while it provides an explanation for how security is constructed and why actors are allowed to implement measures that go beyond ordinary rules, it has not done so with a view on different regime types and how regime type affects the scope of the measures that are adopted. However, it should, because if the theory of securitization explains how societies accept situations where rules no longer apply, through the successful securitization of a perceived

---

<sup>1</sup> Clarke 2013, Doyle 2007, Gheciu & Wohlforth 2018, Leibold 2020, Roberts 2012, Topal 2021 and many others.

<sup>2</sup> Benam 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Leibold 2020, 50-55 & Smith 2019, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Macmaster 2004, 15.

threat, why should there be any difference between the measures implemented in a democracy and an authoritarian state? If no rules apply, why are internment camps for instance not a valid measure in democracies? The usual logical argument is that democracies respect human rights and authoritarian regimes do not. So, when rights are violated in a democracy an individual can take steps against this violation with help from an independent and fair judicial system, but in an authoritarian regime this is not the case.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we should not be surprised to find differences in the measures used against security threats in democratic and authoritarian states. However, this argument overlooks that even authoritarian regimes require legitimacy<sup>6</sup> and as such security practices are not limitless. Therefore, there is still a point in exploring what the conditions for security practice in an authoritarian setting are. Another aspect which this standard argument overlooks is the very logic of security, as described by the Copenhagen School, which is that once security is invoked, the rules - that limit security practices in democracies – are suspended. Security thus leads to a state of exception where, at least theoretically, no rules constrain the sovereign, not in a democracy or in an authoritarian setting. Against this background, it is necessary to explore how certain aspects in a democracy such as the judicial system still seem to limit security practices, while they do not cause the same effect in an authoritarian setting. The framework of securitization does not fully explain why more violent, repressive practices are legitimate in authoritarian regimes, yet not in democracies. Hence there is a need for securitization theory to explore how regime type – or other context factors – shape the scope and intensity of measures in an authoritarian setting, which is why this thesis will explore what the cause for this difference is.

As such the research question posed is: *How does authoritarianism as a regime type affect the scope and intensity of extraordinary measures used to deal with a securitized issue?* The research is based on the hypothesis that authoritarianism as a regime type, results in a wider and more intense scope of measures being considered legitimate when dealing with security threats and thus can explain the differences in the measures implemented to deal with security threats in authoritarian regimes and democracies. To understand the processes of securitization, it is necessary to empirically research how a specific issue is securitized, the measures, and which actors are involved. To answer the research question, discourse analysis will therefore be used to analyze the case of the securitization of the Uyghur minority population in the Xinjiang autonomous region, within the People's Republic of China

---

<sup>5</sup> Doyle 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Dukaliskis & Gerschewski 2017 & Gerschewski 2013.

(PRC), primarily in the first year following the events of 9/11. However, later sources will also be used to show the continued securitization of the issue. The PRC is a distinctly authoritarian regime and will therefore allow for the best possible study of the way securitization transpires in an authoritarian setting. Specifically, the securitization of the Uyghurs is a good case, as similar rhetoric was used to securitize Muslims in the U.S. following 9/11,<sup>7</sup> which will enable contrasts to be drawn between the securitization of the Uyghurs in the PRC as a case of the securitization of a religious minority, with the securitization of a similar group in a democratic setting.

Firstly, the securitizing move will be analyzed via a source critical, comparative, discourse analysis of original source material in Mandarin Chinese, the official language of mainland China. This will identify the Communist Party of China (CPC) as the securitizing actor, show how they spoke security, i.e., clarify the ways in which the Uyghurs were constructed as a threat in the original language and that the securitizing move was made in the year following the events of 9/11, to merge their discourse with the already successfully securitized narrative surrounding the Global War of Terror (GWOT).

Secondly, the acceptance or rejection of the audience will be approached through secondary sources pertaining to the growth of anti-Muslim sentiments in China, as the highly regulated nature of the PRC complicates the procurement of primary sources about the audience rejecting the official CPC narrative. This will be done to show how an authoritarian regime makes audience rejection less likely and that the move to securitize the Uyghurs was at least partially successful.

Thirdly, the scope of the extraordinary measures will be researched through a combination of primary and secondary source material, to establish exactly what measures have been implemented by the CPC in response to the 'Uyghur threat', thus enabling a contrast with measures used in a democracy.

Finally, the impact of functional actors will be established as having a significant impact on the processes of securitization, because they are a major source of counter-securitization in democracies but lack influence in authoritarian regimes. Thus, it will be shown that the differences in the measures utilized to deal with security issues in democratic and authoritarian states are largely a result of the influence of functional actors. The extent to which functional actors can counter-securitize is specific to

---

<sup>7</sup> Shipoli 2018.

regime type, which is why authoritarianism as a regime type is concluded to be the most significant factor behind the differences in the extraordinary measures used by authoritarian and democratic regimes.

## 2.

### Theoretical Framework:

#### The Copenhagen School and Beyond - The Securitization of Religious Minorities in an Authoritarian Setting

This chapter will first summarize the original framework of securitization; the main concepts, how the theory works, what effects it has, and the justification for using this particular theory. Second, it will turn to the critique of the securitization framework, centrally its Western centrism and the need to go beyond the original framework to explore securitization in non-Western, non-democratic settings. Third, the conditions of history, culture and legislation which affect the securitization processes will be introduced, and how these conditions vary across regime type – once one goes beyond thinking in a democratic setting by default. On this basis, the chapter finally formulates a theoretical explanation of how regime type and other related aspects impact the scope of security measures and lead to a wider scope in an authoritarian setting.

*Regime type* is a central concept for this research, as its hypothesis is that authoritarianism as a regime type is the cause of the differing security measures in authoritarian and democratic regimes. Regime type is the classification of the type of government ruling a country. As such, regime type carries with it norms and rules that indicate societal power relations and is therefore a useful category for analysis.

*Authoritarianism* is the regime type which is the focus of this research and is generally understood as a government which does not arrange regular fair and free elections and thus has a society controlled by a small, centralized leadership that holds all the power.<sup>8</sup> Whereas a democracy is governed by a leadership elected in regular cycles by the people, thus distributing power more evenly.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Glasius 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Schmitter & Karl 1991.

However, these are more ideal type definitions for the benefit of analysis, realistically there are country specific deviations from that ideal even within the same regime type. *The People's Republic of China* is an especially pronounced example of an authoritarian regime, while the U.S. and most European countries are often used as examples of democratic states. This research does not intend to give a fully extensive account of the characteristics of the authoritarian regime type as this has already been widely researched.<sup>10</sup> As such, only the characteristics assessed to be relevant to the process of securitization and the scope of extraordinary measures, have been included.

Specific to the selected case study is the population group known as *the Uyghurs*. They are a Turkic-speaking ethnic group, most of whom are Muslims and based in the Xinjiang autonomous region of China, where they make up the majority of the population.

This study's main theoretical framework is securitization, which was first developed by the Copenhagen School in *Security, A New Framework for Analysis* by Buzan et al. When researching why the scope of extraordinary measures is wider in an authoritarian context, it is useful to have a theoretical framework explaining the justification processes necessary for the implementation of such measures. Securitization was therefore chosen as the main framework because it is a theory that explains how threats are constructed and how extraordinary measures become possible as a result. It is hypothesised that through the application of the securitization framework to the specific case of the securitization of the Uyghur minority in the PRC, the discrepancies in scope and the intensity of the measures utilized will become visible and thus enable the source of these to be established.

The theory of securitization describes the processes which follow the identification of a perceived threat by a *securitizing actor*. A securitizing actor is the entity that first declares something as a security threat, thus initiating the processes of securitization. For this actor to initiate a process of securitization, it is necessary that it is in a position of authority. A Securitizing actor can be an individual, a group or an organisation. It is often political leaders, intelligence agencies, government officials, security personnel, or international organisations such as the International Court of Human Rights (ICtHR) or NGOs like Amnesty International.<sup>11</sup> The securitizing actor in the case of the securitization of the Uyghurs in the PCR is the Communist Party of China (CPC). In general, all of these actors possess an official kind of authority; however, a securitizing actor does not have to possess an official kind of

---

<sup>10</sup> Glasius 2018 and others.

<sup>11</sup> Buzan et al. 1998, 36 & 40.



authority, e.g., Greta Thunberg securitizing global warming. An issue is often securitized with political, economic, environmental, or other kinds of motivations for the securitizing actor as the reason for the initiation of the securitizing move. It does not matter whether the threat is real or not, only that it is perceived as such by the securitizing actor.

The first step of securitization is called *the securitizing move*, which is the action taken by a securitizing actor to elevate an issue previously unrelated to security out of its typical context and into a security context.<sup>12</sup> It could be addressing a health issue like Covid-19 as a security issue in a press conference, or in the case of the securitization of the Uyghurs, the inclusion of a religious and ethnic minority group in official documents pertaining to the security of the PRC.

The securitizing move is made using a *speech act*. A speech act is the securitizing actor literally speaking security, i.e., framing an issue with the language of security to construct it as an existential threat by using terms such as threat, danger and point of no return before finally promising a solution to the threat.<sup>13</sup> E.g., the danger to the health of the population and the health sector itself, if a country were to reach an overload of Covid-19 cases, which would collapse the system, and then provide the solution of lockdown. In the case of the Uyghurs, as will become evident through the analysis, it was the safety of the population against the violence of terrorism, where the solution was identification through surveillance and consequent internment.

An *existential threat* in relation to securitization is when something is described as an impending threat that, if not addressed, could impact the existential foundation of a group, an identity, a society, or the world. It is a part of the language of security, which is used to motivate the acceptance of something as a threat.<sup>14</sup> In relation to the Uyghurs, the threat was argued as existential due to the way religious extremism was “spreading like a virus”<sup>15</sup> and could thus infect all of China.

A *referent object* is the entity that the securitizing actor argues the issue is threatening and which needs warning and protection from the threat. Traditionally, this has mostly been a nation, encompassing both the physical health of the population and government, but also anything related to national identity.<sup>16</sup> In the case of the securitization of the Uyghurs in the PRC, the referent object is

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>15</sup> Anonymous 2019, n.p.

<sup>16</sup> Buzan et al. 1998, 36.

also the nation, but it could also be a smaller group or an individual, for instance all women or a religious minority. However, the referent object is rarely an individual, as it is necessary for the threat to impact a certain quantity of people to be accepted as securitized by the audience.

The language of security and the position of authority for the securitizing actor are a part of the *facilitation conditions*, which also include features of the perceived threat that does not justify securitization themselves, but adds to the likelihood of successful securitization,<sup>17</sup> such as guns, tanks, bombs, or hostile sentiments. All of which are included in the securitization of the Uyghurs.<sup>18</sup> The facilitating conditions increase the likelihood of acceptance of the threat as genuine by the audience, i.e., facilitate successful securitization.

All these steps are taken in an attempt to influence *the audience* so that they will accept the issue as securitized and thus enable extraordinary measures i.e., the solution, to be taken in response to the threat. The audience is the recipients of the securitizing move, the entity with the power to ultimately accept or reject the validity of the existential threat and thus authorize extraordinary measures to counteract it.<sup>19</sup> The audience need not be the same as the referent object, for instance if the President of the U.S. securitizes an issue to Congress for approval of measures to deal with an issue that may threaten the population. In that case the President would be the securitizing actor, Congress would be the audience and the American citizens the referent object. However, there may be an overlap, as it is often necessary to securitize the same issue in several contexts, which includes towards the referent object itself. E.g., in the securitization of the Uyghurs, the CPC is the securitizing actor, but both the referent object and the audience are the Chinese population. More specifically, when the securitizing actor speaks security to the audience, the audience may choose to accept that discourse as true, thus giving validity to the issue as a security threat and consequently justifying the use of extraordinary measures to obstruct that threat, successfully securitizing the threat. The audience may also evaluate that the threat is either not real or at least does not pose an existential threat and thus reject the securitizing move, which leads to the threat never gaining the urgency of a security threat, and therefore extraordinary measures are not justified as a response to counteract it. According to the Copenhagen School, an issue is only securitized if the audience accepts it as such,<sup>20</sup> they have the

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>18</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2001, n.p.

<sup>19</sup> Buzan et al. 1998, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 25.

power, which is why a lot of effort is put into the speech act and the facilitating condition. Thus, the threshold for securitization is the audience acceptance of something as an urgent threat, which needs urgent measures to counteract it. According to the theory of securitization the power is in the hands of the audience, which seems like a very democratic notion and signifies the more even power dynamics between the state and the population in a democratic state, which underlines why there is a need to look at whether this process is the same in an authoritarian setting.

*Extraordinary measures* are the means used to deal with a successfully securitised issue. These measures may go beyond what is usually acceptable in a society due to the accepted existential threat, and they therefore often conflict with notions of human rights and democracy. Extraordinary measures in the original framework are not imposed, they are simply a necessity for the threat to be argued as existential.<sup>21</sup> E.g., lockdown after Covid-19 or the targeted interrogation and incarceration of African Americans in the U.S. In the case of the Uyghurs, these will be elaborated on in a specific chapter, but include measures on three levels: legislative, surveillance and punitive measures, such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial detentions, extensive restrictions of movement and internment camps. Extraordinary measures in a democratic setting are usually used to contain a threat, to which lockdown is again a good example. It could also be to gain information, e.g., the detainment of terrorist suspects after 9/11, which could often be considered illegal in both process and interrogation methods if it has not been securitized. To make a direct contrast between the securitization of Muslims in the U.S. and the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, the measures used by the U.S. only targeted a small number of people, whereas the measures in the PRC are much more widespread. Additionally, extraordinary measures are not used as a means of deterrence or punishment in most democratic states, but this is most certainly the case in the PRC. This is where the discrepancies in the scope and intensity of the measures utilized begin to imply differences in the framework of securitization between democracies and authoritarian states.

*Functional actors* are third parties, neither securitizing, referent object nor the audience, but who can still affect the processes of securitization.<sup>22</sup> E.g., The ICtHR is an institution that can de-securitize an issue or provide a check to disproportionate securitizations or extraordinary measures. In some contexts, the ICtHR could also be a securitizing actor, however in most cases it is a functional actor. In

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>22</sup> Buzan et al. 1998, 36 & Floyd 2021.

this thesis, the functional actors relevant to the securitization processes in the PRC, i.e., courts, NGOs, and IGOs will be addressed in its own chapter, which will show how few outside actors can be said to have influence on an authoritarian government such as the PRC, which is part of the reason more extreme measures are possible.

Thus, the outcome of the securitization process, if successful, is a state of emergency or exception, where it is acceptable to go beyond the established rules of society and the political practices associated with them, such as human rights and democratic practice, and into survival politics, where extraordinary measures, such as those already specified, are acceptable as they are used to stop the existential threat posed by the securitized issue. Evidently, securitization is a process with multiple actors involved, in which, according to the original framework, an issue is not considered securitized until the entire process has taken place. From the description of the actors involved in securitization, it is clear that most entities can be any type of actor depending on the context. Therefore, it is important to identify which actor has which role in all cases where the framework of securitization is applied, as has been done for the case of the securitization of the Uyghurs in this section.

The theory of securitization will be utilized to explain how extraordinary measures which go beyond the conventional methods of dealing with an issue are accepted, and then to point out the differences in these measures between authoritarian and democratic regimes, why they exist, and which actors enable or prevent them. In other words, why measures such as internment camps, enforced disappearance, pervasive surveillance and extensive restrictions of movement are accepted in authoritarian regimes, yet not in democratic states. These differences will be shown to be due to the lack of checks and balances, which is currently not accounted for in the academic literature on securitization because most research ends with the securitizing act itself. This thesis will add to the original framework of securitization by detailing how the actors involved (securitizing, functional and the audience), their relationship and interactions differ in authoritarian and democratic regimes. Emphasis will be placed on the audience, whose influence may be lessened in an authoritarian regime and functional actors who can counter-securitize to keep securitizing actors in check. The understanding of these discrepancies will not only improve scholarly understanding of the political processes happening in authoritarian regimes, but it will also consider new functional actors who have previously been disregarded in the literature, which will diversify the theory, thus making it more widely applicable, addressing its Eurocentricity, and enabling more accurate studies of non-democratic states.

## 2.1 Securitization Beyond the West

Securitization has been criticized for being Eurocentric<sup>23</sup> as it was developed based on Western democracies and therefore cannot necessarily be applied outside the West or in non-democratic regimes. The problem of Euro or Western centrism is that it prioritizes and spreads one set of characteristics, based only on Western societies, as the ideal type for the rest of the world, which not only erase diverse knowledge systems and perspectives, but also lead to discriminatory generalizations in society and obscures nuances in academia. In terms of the framework of securitization, this means that the majority of empirical analysis has been done in democratic settings and that the speaker-audience relationship was developed based on the power dynamics present in Western societies. Furthermore, it has contributed to the understanding of normative concepts such as ‘society’, ‘security’ and ‘identity’, which may carry different understandings outside of the West. As perfectly put by Wilkinson “a portrayal of a situation that is by default cast in Western terms, and that ‘edits’ the processes of securitization into a linear and simplified version of events owing to the emphasis on outcome – that is, a successful securitization – rather than on the processes involved.”<sup>24</sup> The Eurocentrism visible in the framework of securitization has resulted in the regime type variable being omitted from the theory, effectively assuming a democratic setting and causing the exclusion of other regime types such as authoritarianism from consideration within the framework.

The relevance of authoritarianism as a variable for securitization has already been identified by several scholars,<sup>25</sup> as it signifies a situation where the audience may be unable to speak. Hansen argues that there are even instances where speaking security might actually increase risk, which she exemplifies through the honour killings of female survivors of sexual assault in Pakistan who, by attempting to securitize their situation as women, put themselves under threat from another angle.<sup>26</sup> This example also shows the Copenhagen School’s lack of consideration for the gendered aspect of security, which unfortunately is beyond the narrow scope of this research to explore deeper. As such, the role of the audience has been described as less central in non-democratic settings,<sup>27</sup> which may change the speaker-audience relationship as originally conceptualized by the Copenhagen School, as

---

<sup>23</sup> Ezeokafor & Kaunert 2018, Hansen 2000, Stritzel 2007, Vuori 2008, Wilkinson 2007 and others.

<sup>24</sup> Wilkinson 2007, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Hansen 2000, Stritzel 2007, Vuori 2008, Wilkinson 2007 and others.

<sup>26</sup> Hansen 2000, 294.

<sup>27</sup> Balzaq 2005 & Côté 2016.

the audience may be unable to reject a securitizing move. Wilkinson offers an alternative to rejecting securitization by speech, suggesting that physical expressions of audience rejection, such as protest actions and physical migration, may be the only options available in non-Western countries due to censorship and the threat of repercussions.<sup>28</sup> And Stritzel argues that symbolic language, sound, and visuals can also securitize,<sup>29</sup> both underlining the fact that security can also be acted upon rather than simply spoken about, as is often the case when authoritarian regimes implement extraordinary measures without first speaking security as in the case of the CPC's securitization of Covid-19,<sup>30</sup> the Uyghurs, the Tibetans,<sup>31</sup> the Falun Gong,<sup>32</sup> and many other cases. The centrality of the speech act to the original theory of securitization makes sense as it is based on democracies, where simply acting out security without audience acceptance is not possible due to the balanced power dynamics between government and citizen. This discrepancy could be argued to be one of the biggest differences in the processes of securitization in democratic and authoritarian states. While I agree that the speech act is insufficient as the only means of securitization for the theory to properly capture all securitizing situations, Wilkinson fails to consider how even protest actions and migration can have negative consequences for an individual in an authoritarian society and thus might also be difficult to utilize. In this thesis it will be argued that the role of the audience remains the same in an authoritarian state, it simply has a higher threshold for rejection due to the inflated risk associated with rejection compared to in a democracy. Thus, the securitizing actor-audience relationship still exists, albeit in a slightly different version. This is more in line with Vuori's argument that the audience matters in authoritarian states, but that the public can only be the audience of securitization in the retrospective legitimization of past actions or for control.<sup>33</sup> The different role of the audience is tied to the scope of the extraordinary measures, because the higher threshold for rejection is the first part of what allows more intense measures. The second part being the lack of de-securitizing actors to function as a counterweight to the implementation of disproportionately extreme measures.

Another criticism of securitization is that, according to the Copenhagen School, the speech act stands on its own and is not embedded in any kind of existing context.<sup>34</sup> Historically, context is an

---

<sup>28</sup> Wilkinson 2007, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Stritzel 2007, 370.

<sup>30</sup> Seeking Truth Magazine 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Topgyal 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Vuori 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Vuori 2008, 83-92.

<sup>34</sup> Buzan et al. 1998, 46 & Wæver 2000, 286.

element which has often been left out or not emphasized enough in academia, which can easily be seen when reading literature on feminist perspectives and postcolonialism.<sup>35</sup> However, context does matter. The context of history, culture, legislation, and regime type, i.e., the context conditions will always impact how actors are shaped, speak, and act, how arguments are linguistically framed and with reference to what events a threat is constructed. Thus, the processes of securitization cannot be considered in isolation of the context in which it happens. The lack of context in securitization has also been criticised by Balzaq<sup>36</sup> and Stritzel who argues that “most scholars nowadays are aware and take into account that actors always act within a structural context.”<sup>37</sup> The next two sections will therefore address the role of the context on the scope of the security measures used after the successful securitization of the Uyghurs in the PRC.

## **2.2 Explaining the Scope of Security Measures: The Impact of History and Culture on the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China**

The processes of securitization always happen in relation to the historic and cultural context in which it is carried out, and as such should not be analyzed without it. This context informs discourse both by often being referenced in the discourse itself and by providing the background against which the audience understands such discourse. Therefore, this section will delve into the building blocks of the Chinese nation from Confucius to Communism and the central concept of Collectivism. This will show how history and culture have impacted the Chinese regime and consequently the processes of the securitization of the Uyghurs in the PRC.

The earliest figure of historical significance whose impact is still a part of Chinese culture today is Confucius. Many scholars, like Chan,<sup>38</sup> attribute too much of modern Chinese culture exclusively to the teachings of Confucius, especially as several other historical events have had an even larger impact, as will be shown in this section. However, any account of Chinese culture without the inclusion of Confucius would still be incomplete. While Confucian teachings are no longer very central to most Chinese citizens today, the principle of filial piety has had a direct impact on the Chinese understanding of family, society, and morals.<sup>39</sup> Central to the concept of filial piety is that the

---

<sup>35</sup> Peoples & Vaughan-Williams 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Balzaq 2005, 171 & 180.

<sup>37</sup> Stritzel 2007, 368.

<sup>38</sup> Chan 2013, 649.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



individual does not serve themselves, but instead their parents and the state, “I am the totality of roles I live in relation to specific others.”<sup>40</sup> As such Confucianism laid the foundation to a hierarchy of authority and self-sacrifice where the collective is placed above the individual. When the CPC succeeded in uniting China under one central government (the PRC) in 1949, it ended a century of political division and promised a better life for the working class.<sup>41</sup> Communist ideology was adapted to fit Chinese circumstances, and the notion of the collective masses revolting against the bourgeois and intellectuals who had been suppressing them became a shared vision for the future.<sup>42</sup> Communism is based on collectivism, which means that the individual not only surrenders ownership of property and production for the state to administer, but also individual rights so the state can safeguard the greater good of the people.<sup>43</sup> While the current political system in China is more centred around capitalism than Communism,<sup>44</sup> the prioritization of the collective over the individual is inscribed in the constitution,<sup>45</sup> and the rhetoric of communism is still perpetuated by the CPC, which displays how deeply rooted collectivism is in Chinese society. The centrality of collectivism is thus deeply embedded in Chinese culture, as a direct consequence of the historic influence of Confucius and Communism. This is relevant for the processes of securitization because it directly impacts how the audience views a securitizing move by the government. The government is trusted to identify threats to the collective and take measures to protect it, even though it may impact individual rights, which are viewed as less important and even selfish because such rights place the individual over the collective.

Additionally relevant is the CPC’s view on religion, which has been impacted by historic unrest in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when religious practice led to unrest in the pursuit of secession.<sup>46</sup> This led to religion being described as “an opiate to control the masses,”<sup>47</sup> which only exists due to the “helplessness of the people.”<sup>48</sup> Consequently, religious practice has been closely monitored and controlled by the CPC<sup>49</sup> to prevent it from developing into a threat for the party. The fear of secession, i.e., the threat to China’s territorial integrity, is relevant to how a religious minority such as the

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Meisner 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Zhou 2002.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Chinese Const. 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Smith 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Clarke 2013, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> 新疆维吾尔自治区宗教事务条例 1994 & 宗教事务条例 2004.



Uyghurs developed into a perceived threat for the CPC in the first place, thus leading to the initiation of the processes of securitization.

In sum, history, and culture matter in the processes of securitization as they shape the social actors involved and inform the background knowledge against which the portrayal of an issue as a threat makes sense to the audience. As such historic incidents have often been referred to in securitizing rhetoric itself in order to validate a threat, e.g., inferring that all Muslims are terrorists because historically many terrorists have been Muslims. In other words, history and culture provides discursive resources which can be used to frame a threat and hence increase the possibility of audience acceptance. History has a huge impact on the development of culture, and both in turn influence the current structure and norms of society, along with the legal system and regime of each country. This also includes interpretations of international legal frameworks such as human rights, which will be elaborated in the next section. These contexts directly influence the actors involved in securitization, making the differences between democratic and authoritarian states visible.

### **2.3 Explaining the Scope of Security Measures: The Impact of the ‘Legal Framework’ on the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China**

How much importance is ascribed to the legal system is significant for how a nation works and where power is placed, i.e., whether it is centralized as in an authoritarian system or divided more evenly as in a democracy. Thus, the political processes of securitization cannot be considered without the legal context in which the actors operate. This section will detail the impacts of international and national law human rights legislation along with the Chinese interpretation *called human rights with Chinese characteristics*, to show how the disregard for the legal system contributes to the possibility of a wider scope of security measures in response to securitization.

#### *2.3.1 International Law*

International law is a concept of shared norms and rules which are intended as binding agreements between the different countries of the world. It includes frameworks such as international criminal law, human rights, humanitarian law, and regulations relating to fisheries, trade, economic relations, war, and general diplomacy.<sup>50</sup> As such contemporary international law is designed to be applied and

---

<sup>50</sup> Reuter 2011.

followed equally by all states.<sup>51</sup> However, not all states have signed or ratified all international treaties,<sup>52</sup> and the acceptance of any regulation can still be interpreted and implemented differently depending on a myriad of factors such as geography, history, culture, and regime type. The centrality and respect for the rule of law, both domestically and internationally, therefore also differ to a large extent. Some of the disregard for the international rule of law stems from the fact that, although it is supposed to be egalitarian, most of it was developed by only a selection of states at a point in history where those states were the main powers in the world, and as such many of the states which it applies to today were still under colonial rule at the time and therefore not included in the decision making process.<sup>53</sup> Due to this it has been argued that international law has placed the decision making and normative powers in the hands of the few and that international law and norms are not in fact representative of the entire world.<sup>54</sup>

The PRC is one of the countries that has not signed all international treaties and often treat the treaties it has ratified as secondary to the centrality of sovereignty and non-interference, which for many authoritarian regimes are the most absolute international standards.<sup>55</sup> The aspect of international law relevant to this thesis is international human rights regulations, of which the PRC has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (CESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its optional protocols, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Most notable is the signature without subsequent ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) and the lack of both parts concerning the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED).<sup>56</sup> While many states and international organizations criticize China for their human rights violations and lack of signature and ratification of several human rights treaties, a central principle of treaty law is that a state is free to sign or ratify any treaty in accordance with their own national ideals.<sup>57</sup> However, most

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification status by Country*.

<sup>53</sup> Lorca 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Lorca 2012, Pollis & Schwab 1979 & Tang 1995.

<sup>55</sup> Glasius 2018.

<sup>56</sup> OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification status for China*.

<sup>57</sup> Chan 2013, 667.

Western institutions would argue that any country would still have to act according to customary international law.<sup>58</sup> All in all, these discrepancies in the implementation and interpretation of international human rights legislation have led to blame between most countries about the right way to correctly follow it. As such, it makes sense that an authoritarian regime, like the PRC, places less emphasis on international law, which resultatively does not restrain the conduct of the government and the measures they evaluate as permissible in the same way that it does in a democracy.

### 2.3.2 National Law & Chinese Interpretation

Through domestic legislation it is possible to understand which international norms are accepted in China and which are not. This will enable an understanding of the centrality of the law and thus which functional actors have an impact on the processes of securitization.

China has a specific interpretation of human rights called *human rights with Chinese characteristics*, which gives priority to economic, social, and cultural rights over civil and political rights. This prioritization is partly justified through the argument of China being a developing state and thus not having the capacity to fully realize all rights.<sup>59</sup> It can certainly be disputed if a country with a rapidly growing middle class and booming economic growth can still be called a developing country, however, this is nevertheless how they view themselves. Furthermore, the CPC argues that priority is often given to civil and political rights in the West,<sup>60</sup> thus making it equally valid for them to prioritize economic, social, and cultural rights, which are valued more highly in China due to the cultural and historical developments already described. This claim is certainly not untrue, especially since the U.S., for instance, places a high priority on civil and political rights, while often overlooking many aspects of economic, social, and cultural rights, a treaty which the U.S. has yet to ratify.<sup>61</sup> As such, the Chinese government insists that they are not committing human rights violations, and that they respect the legitimacy of international human rights legislation. Instead, it is the interference in the internal affairs of other states that violates international law,<sup>62</sup> as human rights are considered a domestic matter in the

---

<sup>58</sup> Customary international law consists of rules that are the result of continuous general practice and acceptance of a custom, which a majority of states considers binding, and consequently gains legal status beyond treaty law (*opinion juris*). See Wolfrum 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Chan 2013, 669.

<sup>60</sup> 中国人权研究会 2021, 17.

<sup>61</sup> OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification Status for the United States of America*.

<sup>62</sup> 中国人权研究会 2021, 17.

PRC.<sup>63</sup> According to the CPC, rights are not universal, and the implementation of human rights should take regional differences into account.<sup>64</sup> As such rights are viewed more as citizen rights, depending on the country you live in, a view shared by many other Asian countries.<sup>65</sup> This is an expression of cultural relativism, the full analysis of which is outside the scope of this paper. However, it is a relevant part of understanding human rights with Chinese characteristics.

The Chinese constitution (1982) has a lot of overlap with many democratic constitutions, as considerable amounts of the UDHR are included such as the freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, association, education, demonstration, freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to vote etc.<sup>66</sup> However, there is also a relevant contrast, which can be described as the difference between *a rule of law model*, as is common in most democracies, and *a rule by law model*, typical in authoritarian regimes.<sup>67</sup> Rule of law means that every member of a state, from ruling politician to ordinary citizen, is equal under the law. Whereas the rule by law instead places the ruling authority above the law, imbuing them with the power to utilize the law to rule the people however they see fit. As such, the law does not necessarily guarantee the protection of rights, but can instead be used to justify oppression, as has been argued to be the case in China.<sup>68</sup> The Chinese constitution however states that “no organization or individual shall have any privilege beyond the constitution or the law,”<sup>69</sup> which goes against the perception of China as a country ruled by law. Furthermore, since rights are outlined as citizen rights, “every citizen shall enjoy the rights prescribed by the Constitution,”<sup>70</sup> which can be legally rescinded or restricted by the state, “persons deprived of political rights in accordance with the law shall be an exception,”<sup>71</sup> it could be argued, as is often done by the CPC,<sup>72</sup> that their actions are still within the limits of the law.

---

<sup>63</sup> Chan 2013, 671.

<sup>64</sup> 中国人权研究会 2021, 17.

<sup>65</sup> Tang 1995, 214.

<sup>66</sup> Chinese const. 1982.

<sup>67</sup> Ginsburg 2020, 233 & Ruskola 2013, 655.

<sup>68</sup> Lavicka, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Chinese const. 1982, art. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Chinese const. 1982.

<sup>71</sup> 中华人民共和国宪法1982, art. 34.

<sup>72</sup> 中国人权研究会 2021, 17.

In China, rights come with obligations; “the rights and obligations of a citizen are indivisible.”<sup>73</sup> Thus, chapter 2 of the constitution outlines both the rights afforded and their numerous exceptions. Generally, these obligations pertain to citizens not using any of these freedoms to “disrupt public order,”<sup>74</sup> “make false accusations,”<sup>75</sup> or “behave in any way that endangers the motherland’s security, honour or interests.”<sup>76</sup> Not acting in accordance with these obligations is considered to cause instability and consequently justifies the withdrawal of rights. “Nobody shall place his own rights and interests above those of the state and society.”<sup>77</sup> As such rights are not individual and inherent simply from being human, as they are in the UDHR, but rather collective with roots in communist tradition. Just as individualism is the core of the Western understanding of rights, the group has continuously been at the centre of Chinese society, beginning with Confucius and the mentality cementing with communism.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the government can also circumvent any individual right if deemed “necessary for national security or criminal investigation,”<sup>79</sup> which effectively nullifies the rights laid out in the same chapter.

All of this aligns with China’s distinctive type of governance called *the people’s democratic dictatorship*. It can be described as a ‘fragmented democracy’, where democracy and rights are privileges granted to those citizens who conform to the state, which represents the will of the people, whereas authoritarianism is used to strip dissidents of such rights.<sup>80</sup> Mao Zedong (1893-1976) described it as “democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries.”<sup>81</sup> The democratic multi-party system on the other hand is viewed as a dilution of this centralized leadership,<sup>82</sup> and as such, a threat to the development of the nation and the improvement of its citizen’s lives. Evidently, regime type and consequently the construction of the political and legal system has a big impact on a state’s understanding and implementation of human rights.

---

<sup>73</sup> Tang 1995, 215.

<sup>74</sup> Chinese Const. 1982, art. 36.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 41.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Tang 1995, 215.

<sup>78</sup> Pollis & Scwab 1979, 9; Nathan 1986, 89.

<sup>79</sup> Chinese const., art. 40.

<sup>80</sup> Mao 1965, 10.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>82</sup> Chan 2013, 652.

As shown in this section, the PRC places less value on the legal system than what is usually done in democracies. This has demonstrated that the legal framework in China and its specific characteristics contribute to the possibility of a wider scope of security measures against the Uyghurs in response to their securitization by Chinese authorities, exhibiting how the legal system is contextually relevant to the securitizing move, i.e., that it impacts the scope of the measures.

When considering the theory discussed throughout this chapter, an initial theoretical conclusion can be drawn, which is that securitization in an authoritarian setting is not only different from a liberal setting, but it is different in that the measures are more intense and have a wider scope. This is due both to the difference in power dynamics between the government (the securitizing actor) and the citizens (the audience), the influence of functional actors and the impact of history, culture, and the legal system, all of which is dependent on or related to regime type.

### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the research design and its operationalization will be specified, along with a more in-depth description of the methodology and empirical data used for the study. First will be the justification of the case study. Second, a description of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) and its applicability to the research question, before concluding with the structural layout of the thesis, containing both the operationalization of the research design and the selection of empirical data.

In order to study the effect of the authoritarian regime type on the scope of the measures adopted following the securitization of a minority group, thus proving the initial theoretical conclusion, this study will conduct a single case study of the securitization of the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang autonomous region of the PRC. A case study is a research methodology which allows for a detailed examination of a person, an event, or a group over a particular time period. The method collects quantitative or qualitative data, which provides in-depth knowledge about the research. The case is analyzed to seek causes for patterns or behaviour, such as why security measures differ in authoritarian and democratic settings. This is done to make a generalization across one variant or point out how one case differs from others. Case studies can be conducted as a single case study of one example, or it can be a

comparative study of two or more cases.<sup>83</sup> The compatibility of each of these depends on the research. In this case, a single case study was selected as it will enable a more extensive empirical analysis of the less researched area, i.e., authoritarian states. Although a comparative study could be conducted as well, extensive research has already been done on securitization in Western societies to develop the theory of securitization in the first place and in the application of the framework afterwards. Therefore, these cases will be presupposed and exclusively used for a contextualization of the findings of this study. Consequently, a single case study was assessed as the best way to demonstrate how and why extraordinary measures differ in authoritarian and democratic states.

The PRC will provide the best country for analysis because it is a particularly pronounced case of an authoritarian state. It has a centralized one-party state under the perpetual CPC, which does not allow for real opposition and rules the population through social control mechanisms such as censorship, surveillance, and deprivation of civil liberties such as the freedom of expression, assembly and movement.<sup>84</sup> The PRC has utilized some of the most extensive measures to deal with perceived security threats, which has been widely criticized by the international media and NGOs.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, the ability to locate and translate primary source material into Mandarin will provide an original insight into official party rhetoric, which will add more depth to the analysis. As such, the PRC has a very authoritarian structure and will therefore be ideal for researching how authoritarianism in particular affects the scope of security measures. While the findings of this research will conclude that the authoritarian regime type is the main cause for the widened scope of extraordinary measures in the PRC, it cannot necessarily be generalized to other cases as they may be less authoritarian or differ in other relevant aspects. Therefore, I would argue that a situational approach will always provide the most precise results in research, as many relevant nuances are lost without situational awareness.

Discourse analysis was selected as the main method for this analysis, as it provides the analytical tools to critically analyze the language of those in power. “Language is not powerful on its own – it is a means to gain and maintain power.” Thus, language is never innocent; it is never a simple reflection of reality. It can be used to hide the truth or tell a version of the truth that is influenced by the motivations of the speaker. Power imbalances impact how discourses evolve, which makes sense in relation to the uneven power dynamic between the CPC and the Chinese citizens, as this dynamic makes the citizens

---

<sup>83</sup> Gerring 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Meisner 1999.

<sup>85</sup> Amnesty international 2004 & 2021, & Human Rights Watch n.d., 2004 & 2001.



almost unable to reject securitization, in turn affecting how the CPC can speak to them. Language is thus an exercise of power. This is precisely what securitization is all about. The securitizing move is conceptualized as a speech act, which *is* discourse. As such, the construction of a threat can be studied through the discourse used to construct it, which is why discourse analysis is a good match for the analysis in this research. Methodological questions of discourse analysis such as what exactly the discourse advanced in the texts are, why it exists, what purpose it has, when and where it was created, who created it and for whom, what the discourse reflects about society and through which discursive strategies the meaning of the discourse is conveyed, will be used to analyze the discourse in the selected empirical source material. There are 5 discursive strategies defined by Reisigl & Wodak in their work on the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). These are 1. Nomination strategies, which frame phenomena and social actors linguistically. 2. Predication strategies, which attribute features and characteristics to phenomena and actors. 3. Argumentation strategies, which are based on ‘truth claims’ where topoi such as history, threat and authority are used to persuade the audience, or in other words argumentation strategies are “the means of intentionally influencing a person so that she or he adopts, fixes or changes her or his ways of perception, attitudes and views.” 4. Perspectivization strategies, which position the speaker’s distance or involvement in the situation, and 5. Intensification or mitigation strategies that modify the force with which statements are conveyed.<sup>86</sup> Thus, there is a clear overlap between the theory of discourse analysis and securitization, as both theories ask who created and consumed language in a specific situation. Therefore, the two theories intersect in a way that makes them compatible as methodological frameworks for the same analysis.

The main analytical part of this thesis; the move to securitize the Uyghurs as a threat, will be studied through discourse analysis on the basis of texts released directly from the CPC, such as speeches and documents, thus reflecting the official rhetoric of the party. At the start, specific quotes are selected where the portrayal of the Uyghurs as a threat is visible. This is mainly done through the location of the language of security, i.e., words and phrases such as hazard, threatens, threat, armed, murders, arsonists, terrorist forces, international fight against terrorism, army, explosions, enemy, atmosphere of terror, endanger social stability, their aim of splitting China, bloody, blew up etc. which constructs the Uyghurs as a threat to the Chinese nation. The impact of history and culture will be considered as a part of the argumentation strategies to establish the presence of historical and cultural

---

<sup>86</sup> Reisigl & Wodak 2001, 94.



arguments in the speech acts and how these factors may impact the processes of securitization and the measures acceptable to deal with security threats. Then the quotes will be connected to the context of the particular source in which they were used. After analysing each source in detail, parallels will be drawn between them in order to identify discursive strategies and overall tendencies, before finally concluding the intended effect of the rhetoric based on the findings. The discourse analysis of the construction of the Uyghurs as a threat is based on original Chinese source material, and thus analyzes the construction of the threat in the original language in order to tease out the ways in which the Uyghurs were constructed as a threat.

The texts for the analysis of the securitizing move were collected from the Asiaportal's different databases, mainly on the People's Daily (人民日报) and China Academic Journals (CAJ). With key search terms such as Xinjiang (新疆), Urumqi (乌鲁木齐), Uyghurs (维吾尔族), Terrorism (恐怖主义), The Three Forces in Xinjiang (新疆三股势力), The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (东突厥斯坦伊斯兰运动), Xinjiang terrorism (新疆恐怖主义), East Turkistan (东突) and 9/11. The People's Daily is a central source for analysis as it is the official outlet for the CPC, in which they disseminate the official party line, policies and viewpoints. It is thus also a media utilized for the securitization of any perceived threat to the CPC. Furthermore, it has a circulation of more than 3 million, making its reach extensive. Ordinary searches on Google, Baidu (百度) and the PRC official government site (gov.cn) were also utilized to diversify the source material. The analyzed sources were selected after a broad initial literature search with no timeframe to ascertain when exactly these key terms began showing up in the CPC rhetoric. This search revealed that the securitizing rhetoric appeared after the events of 9/11. As such, the overall time period for the following search was from September 11, 2001, and until 2020, when Covid-19 started to shift the focus of the CPC. However, the main focus was on the first year after 9/11. This was chosen as the original securitization of the Uyghurs happened in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, while continued rephrasing and re-securitization has been ongoing ever since. About 50 texts were located as potentially relevant due to the appearance of the key search terms. When reading, 15 texts were selected as especially relevant and were consequently translated and analyzed. Finally, the 7 texts included in the analysis were evaluated as sufficiently representative of the rhetoric presented in all 15 texts and thus incorporated in the thesis, to make the most succinct construction of my argument. Additionally, while the Uyghurs have been securitized by the CPC to several audiences, the sources chosen for this analysis were selected as they were intended for the Chinese public, as it is in the power dynamics between government and citizen that the main

differences between authoritarian and democratic regimes can be found. Many of the articles not included in this analysis concerned international meetings with heads of state, further spreading the narrative of the Uyghur terrorist threat internationally, which it is beyond the scope of this analysis to include.

Secondly, audience acceptance or rejection will be measured to the extent that it is possible on the basis of secondary source material relating to the growth of anti-Muslims sentiment in China.<sup>87</sup> These will show that the Chinese population has accepted the official government rhetoric of Muslims, specifically Uyghurs, being likely terrorists. The sources were located through extensive online research on Google Scholar and the online database of the Danish Royal Library. The selection of secondary source material is due to the highly controlled output of information in the PRC, where most expression of dissatisfaction with the government is censored, thus complicating the attainment of relevant primary sources, which is to be expected from an authoritarian setting. However, inaction is also a powerful indicator of audience acceptance. Therefore, the lack of outspoken dissent, online comments, demonstrations, or revolt will also be used to corroborate audience acceptance in the securitization of the Uyghurs and show how the CPC dominates the relationship between the creator of discourse and the audience.

Thirdly, the type of extraordinary measures utilized in the PRC will be identified based on a combination of primary and secondary source material, found using the methods already described, in order to fully convey the intensity of these measures. In the final part, reflections will be made on whether the demonstrated measures go beyond what we can observe elsewhere, e.g., in democratic settings, which will be done through contrasts with the U.S., in order to determine whether they are in fact wider in scope or not.

Finally, the different functional actors involved in the processes of securitization in the PRC will be discussed to understand which checks and balances are applicable in an authoritarian regime, before contrasting them with the influence functional actors have in democratic states. The impact of authoritarianism on the processes of securitization can be observed via functional actors in that they have hardly any de-securitizing impact. E.g., the legal system (courts and legislation), NGOs or IGOs cannot de-securitize in an authoritarian regime as power is centralized in the government, that is able to

---

<sup>87</sup> Luqiu & Yang 2020 & Stroup 2021.

make decisions without regard for the opinions of these actors. Thus, the impact of the authoritarian regime type is visible in the absence of courts challenging the government, the lack of legal cases concerning human rights violations, and the lack of impact that appeals from NGOs has, all of which would have counterbalancing effects on the extraordinary measures used in democracies.

Relevant academic literature on securitization and its development, especially on the applicability of the theory outside of the democratic Western tradition will be used to support these arguments. However, the main empirical focus of this thesis will be on the translation and analysis of primary Chinese source material from the CPC used to frame the security issues of interest. This analysis will reveal the differences in the measures used and the points of influence which leads to them. Throughout the analysis, all potentially relevant factors will be considered, so that there is not just a narrow focus on regime type. However, regime type will ultimately prove to be the most impactful point of divergence. The methods and literature used are thus interdisciplinary in nature, as the main theoretical framework (securitization) is from international relations, while both international and domestic legislation is included to anchor the analysis and findings in a legal context.

## 4.

### Analysis: The Securitization of the Uyghur Minority in the People's Republic of China (2001-2020)

#### **4.1 The Securitizing Move: The Construction of the Uyghurs as a Threat**

In this part, the securitizing move in which the CPC constructed the Uyghur population of the Xinjiang Autonomous region as a security threat will be shown through the official rhetoric used to describe the Uyghurs in newspaper articles and speeches. The analysis will focus on the year following the events of 9/11, but it will also include later source material to show how the securitizing rhetoric has evolved and continued until today. Furthermore, it will be shown that 9/11 triggered the discursive activity which has since been used to refer to the Uyghurs in China.

In November 2001 articles started to appear in most Chinese newspaper outlets about China's support for the GWOT, which had been initiated by George W. Bush in response to 9/11. They often included references to the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) or the threat of domestic terrorism in Xinjiang, sometimes as a small side note in a general piece on terrorism, other times as the central focus. The CPC saw this as an opportunity to reconstruct the 'Uyghur threat' from a regional issue and insert it into the globally spread narrative on the GWOT.<sup>88</sup> Due to the high level of censorship and government control of all media in China, a new trend or a general addition to the contents can only be interpreted as intentional by the CPC. "The Central Propaganda Department (CPD) is an 'omnipresent body' which uses its great influence for the purpose of 'sustaining the party's dominance in the area of ideology and culture,'"<sup>89</sup> which is how the following sources will be viewed.

### *Earliest Signs of Securitization*

The earliest of these articles still available online is a transcript of a speech by Tang Jiaxuan (唐家璇), China's foreign minister at the time, to the 56<sup>th</sup> UN Assembly, which was released in the People's Daily on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2001.<sup>90</sup> The speech approaches the topics of terrorism, human rights, and development as broader issues to be tackled by the international community; "terrorism is a major public hazard to the international community and seriously threatens world peace and stability."<sup>91</sup> However, he also manages to cast terrorism as a domestic threat; "China is also facing the threat of terrorism. The East Turkistan terrorist forces are trained, armed, and financed by international terrorist organizations. Opposing East Turkistan is an important aspect of the international fight against terrorism."<sup>92</sup> That short section is the only time 'East Turkistan' is mentioned in the speech, which spans around 8 pages in total. However, much is achieved by this. Most importantly, this was a clear securitizing move made by the CPC against 'East Turkistan'. It was done by portraying them as a threat to both domestic and international security in the context of the already successfully securitized issue of international terrorism. The spectacle of 9/11 had convinced the world of the threat of terrorism and as such, using that rhetoric about a domestic group, especially claiming that the ETIM was connected to international terrorist organisations, undoubtedly invoked fears of terrorist attacks like 9/11 in China.

---

<sup>88</sup> Roberts 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Stroup 2021, 1233.

<sup>90</sup> 唐家璇 2001, n.p.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

By making the terrorist threat a domestic issue, the CPC also managed to garner sympathy and allies from the international community, especially the U.S. was quick to show support in such a short time after 9/11.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, Tang connects the domestic terrorist threat to the international war on terror in a way that makes it a common fight and thus not just significant for China. The rhetoric used is that of war, induced by words like *forces*, *armed*, *international fight* and the general construction of an *us* and *them*. As this speech was made for the UN Assembly, they were clearly the main audience, but publishing the full speech in the People's Daily also shows the intent to start spreading this message to the Chinese public. As such, this is the first instance of official securitizing rhetoric from the CPC attempting to securitize the 'Uyghur problem' in the context of the GWOT.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 a short article was published by Sina News.<sup>94</sup> It is an account of a background briefing between the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao (朱邦造) and several journalists, detailing "a series of murders committed by East Turkistan members at home and abroad."<sup>95</sup> It describes different acts of terrorism, such as bombings, arson, and the murder of police officers, occurring between 1992 and 2000, perpetrated by terrorists in Xinjiang. These "terrorist forces"<sup>96</sup> are portrayed as having ties to international terrorist organizations from which they receive military and financial assistance, along with training. They are described as a threat not just in Xinjiang, but to Beijing and the rest of the world via phrases such as "posing a threat to regional security and stability,"<sup>97</sup> and consequently making "combating the East Turkistan terrorist forces a part of the international fight against terrorism."<sup>98</sup> This article is relevant because it claims that terrorist attacks in Xinjiang have been happening continuously throughout the 90s, although the first official mention of these attacks as terrorism only occurred in the aftermath of 9/11. It shows that the CPC wanted to capitalize on the events of 9/11 by coupling their securitization of a perceived domestic threat to that of an already recognized global threat. The article continues the narrative of the first source, further introducing the issue into the widespread Chinese media.

---

<sup>93</sup> Roberts 2012, 3.

<sup>94</sup> 新浪网 2001, n.p

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 the Chinese government released its first official document referencing the ETIM, titled “Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by Eastern Turkistan Organizations and their Links with Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban.”<sup>99</sup> The document was written for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which was to conduct a meeting following the 9/11 terrorist attack.<sup>100</sup> The title clearly shows the intent of the document; to link the ETIM with the Taliban and as such legitimize actions taken against them in the eyes of the UNSC as a part of the GWOT. The document describes how “the Eastern Turkistan force”<sup>101</sup> has committed terrorist activities in and outside of Chinese territory, that it is “a major component of the terrorist network headed by Osama Bin Laden”<sup>102</sup> and that this “army”<sup>103</sup> has received equipment, financial resources and training from the Taliban and infiltrated Xinjiang. The document portrays the ETIM as a cog in an international terrorist organisation which could have global consequences if not pursued, consequently both supporting the already securitized issue of global terrorism and seeking acceptance of extraordinary measures against the ETIM in China.

Common to these initial documents is the construction of the ETIM as a terrorist group with ties to international terrorist organisations, which poses a serious domestic threat to Xinjiang and, by extension, China, and the Chinese population. Two fronts are clearly drawn up, *us*; the Chinese government, the Chinese population and the rest of the international community working together to fight terrorism and *them*; the ETIM, the Taliban and anyone else labelled as terrorists. The rhetoric is clearly that of war, fighting and opposing forces, which is very similar to what was circulated internationally regarding the GWOT.<sup>104</sup>

### *East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity*

In January 2002 the CPC released a white paper entitled “East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity”<sup>105</sup> in the People’s Daily, continuing the securitization of the issue for the general Chinese public. Terrorism was once again cast as an international threat; “terrorism is a big public

---

<sup>99</sup> The Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN 2001. N.p.

<sup>100</sup> Roberts 2012, 2.

<sup>101</sup> The Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN 2001. N.p.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Roberts 2012.

<sup>105</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China 2001, n.p.

hazard in the world, posing an enormous threat to peace, security and the order of international society.”<sup>106</sup> It was also made into a more direct threat to Chinese society “these terrorist incidents have seriously jeopardized the lives and property of people of all ethnic groups as well as social stability and security in China,”<sup>107</sup> which clearly shows the change in the intended audience. The CPC portrays the ETIM as any other terrorist group; “like most terrorist groups in the world, the East Turkistan terrorists are keen on directing explosions at innocent people, to create an atmosphere of terror and to extend their influence,”<sup>108</sup> and “seriously endanger social stability,”<sup>109</sup> in order to highlight the similarities between the ETIM and other international terrorist groups, which truly demonstrates the securitizing move by the CPC. The White paper gives a historical account of Xinjiang’s ties to China to refute “the myth of East Turkistan,”<sup>110</sup> which is claimed by “old colonialists”<sup>111</sup> to have been “an independent state since ancient times”<sup>112</sup> to “achieve their aim of splitting China.”<sup>113</sup> Thus, legitimizing the threat in relation to history and making it clear that the perceived threat to the CPC is the threat posed to China’s territorial integrity.

The language used is very dramatic and visual, e.g., “the East Turkistan terrorists have engineered a series of bloody terrorist incidents, leaving many blood-soaked chapters in the historical annals,”<sup>114</sup> which leaves no doubt about the intent to paint the ETIM as the villains that the Chinese people and the CPC need to defend themselves against. Bin Laden is claimed to be corroborating with the ETIM in launching a “holy war, with the aim of setting up a theocratic Islamic state in Xinjiang.”<sup>115</sup> This directly prays on the U.S. post 9/11 fears to gather support and legitimacy for utilizing extraordinary measures against the ETIM, using the extreme descriptions of *holy war* and *theocratic Islamic State* to install a fear of the unknown in the public. “While the Chinese people were celebrating the Chinese New Year, the terrorists blew up two buses.”<sup>116</sup> From this quote there is a clear distinction between *us* (the Chinese people) and *them* (the terrorists). Such a separation of the social actors

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.



involved helps create a very one-sided image of one side as ‘the bad guys’ and another as ‘the good guys’, leaving no room for nuance. Throughout the paper, many specific ‘terrorist attacks’ are described against government officials, ordinary citizens, and “patriotic religious personages of the Uyghur ethnic group,”<sup>117</sup> to show that the CPC is not targeting all Muslims or Uyghurs, but that all these groups are in fact a part of the *us* that the terrorists are endangering. This is done to reassure the public that it is ‘only the terrorists’ they are criticizing, to demonise these ‘terrorists’ and induce fear in the public.

In the paper, there are many references to claims and even a booklet made by the ETIM describing their intentions, such as a threat to "make Urumqi a sea of fire and cause losses of hundreds of millions of yuan."<sup>118</sup> However, it is not described through which channels such information was relayed, and no material produced by anyone other than the CPC is available online, meaning that these claims cannot be verified. It is also claimed that the Xinjiang police has found terrorist training grounds “and confiscated large numbers of anti-tank grenades, hand-grenades, detonators, guns and ammunition,”<sup>119</sup> and that “there is plenty of evidence to show that most of the terrorist and other violent incidents which have occurred in Xinjiang were directly plotted and engineered by the East Turkistan organization beyond China’s borders,”<sup>120</sup> again without any evidence being referenced. Furthermore, in several of the sources analyzed whenever statistics are used to make a point the term “incomplete statistics”<sup>121</sup> is used and no reference is made to any dataset or method used to obtain these statistics, which leaves the impression that the numbers are made up to substantiate a point. If such things were indeed available, it simply does not make sense not to refer to them. This demonstrates that many of the claims made by the CPC are not supported by evidence, calling into question the validity of those claims.

It is also claimed that the CPC only targets the core members and criminals of the ETIM given the regulations of the RXR, the ability to make detentions based on simply having family members abroad<sup>122</sup> and the source on question-and-answer strategies, and the source on question-and-answer strategies, which is certainly not true. These will be presented in detail in the section on extraordinary

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Topal 2021, 10.



measures. Furthermore, the Xinjiang Autonomous region is said to have policies protecting ethnic equality and the freedom of religion, which stands in direct opposition to these regulations. One quote summarizes the CPC narrative particularly well; “the Chinese government’s crackdown on the East Turkistan terrorist forces is not directed at any particular ethnic group or any particular religion, but at criminal activities of violence and terrorism, in order to better protect the common interests of the country’s various ethnic groups and safeguard normal religious activities.”<sup>123</sup> The CPC is claiming that their actions are justified, within the law, not discriminatory or based on religious practice or ethnicity, but in fact only undertaken to safeguard the Chinese people and their enjoyment of rights, including the freedom of religion. Here it is very visible that the CPC is grounding their argumentation in the cultural prioritization of the collective over the individual in order to persuade the Chinese public that the CPC is acting in their best interest. The white paper ends with encouragement from the CPC; “we hope that all peace-loving people throughout the world... Will fully recognize the nature of the East Turkistan terrorist forces and the serious harm caused by them,”<sup>124</sup> which perfectly summarizes the point of the paper, to securitize the ETIM and justify the use of extraordinary measures against them.

The first official mention by the CPC of a terrorist threat in Xinjiang was in November 2021, shortly after the events of 9/11. There are previous accounts of dissent and violence in the region, but nothing like a centralized and organized threat as described in the sources analyzed so far. It simply does not make sense that an organization has been committing terrorism since 1992, while it has not been mentioned at all by the government. Unless it is viewed in the context of the CPC realizing that 9/11 was a highly legitimizing opportunity. So, while the perceived threat existed to the CPC prior to 2001, it was not securitized until after 9/11, where the rhetoric of the GWOT made the securitization of the issue easier both nationally and internationally, thus incentivising the initiation of a securitizing move.

### *To Condone Violence is to Condone Terrorism*

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2009, shortly after the Urumqi riots,<sup>125</sup> The People’s Daily published an article which framed a peaceful demonstration as planned terrorism organized by the world Uyghur Congress (WUC). “The ‘World Uyghur Congress’ was born out of a terrorist organization, while wearing the

---

<sup>123</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> “The largest incident of civil unrest in China since the Tiananmen Square conflict in 1989.” See Roberts 2012, 23-24.

mask of human rights, religious freedom, and national self-determination, it continues to plan and create violent terrorist incidents and call on the international community to put pressure on China.”<sup>126</sup> The article includes powerful rhetoric and loaded words, calling the Uyghurs involved “murderers and arsonists,”<sup>127</sup> who “fanatically vandalized, smashed, looted and burned everything in their path,”<sup>128</sup> while blaming the west for “turning a blind eye to the loss of hundreds of innocent lives”<sup>129</sup> and “a deaf ear to the thousands of wounded lying in the hospital.”<sup>130</sup> This article shows how the narrative shifted from the ETIM to the Uyghurs in general, attempting to legitimize the widespread measures affecting all Uyghurs in Xinjiang. This is corroborated by Millward, who has argued that the Urumqi riots changed the way the CPC discussed terrorists. Instead of blaming specific groups, they simply used the collective Uyghurs “to vilify, not explain.”<sup>131</sup> The CPC claims that the U.S. and other Western countries provided financial assistance to the WUC, which enabled them to portray the incident as a “conspiracy by the Chinese government.”<sup>132</sup> The article plays into an often-used CPC narrative of China being the unfortunate and misunderstood underdog that the West continuously sides against. It also attempts to portray China as having the moral high ground by stating that “terrorism is the common enemy of all mankind,”<sup>133</sup> which maintains the securitized nature of the ‘Uyghur terrorist threat’ that could “cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians.”<sup>134</sup> All to sway the opinion of the Chinese population in favour of the suppressive actions taken against Uyghurs in Xinjiang by the CPC. This article is just one of many from the time and it shows how the ‘Uyghur terrorist threat’ was continuously securitized to the public even many years after 9/11 when such rhetoric originally appeared.

### *The International Community Strongly Condemns the "5.22" Violence and Terrorism*

The People’s Daily also has articles which aim to display external legitimization of the extraordinary measures used in Xinjiang. In essence, this article is a list of foreign experts and politicians who align with the CPC view on the issue of the ‘Uyghur terrorist threat.’ It includes quotes from the Russian

---

<sup>126</sup> 人民日报 2009, n.p.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Millward 2009, 355.

<sup>132</sup> 人民日报 2009, n.p.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Foreign Ministry, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the secretary general of the African National Congress of Gauteng and several academics from around the world, who all “strongly condemn the violent terrorist incident in Urumqi.”<sup>135</sup> On the surface, it does give validity to the CPC’s actions and claims about the Uyghurs. However, the list of experts and politicians is not very long, nor does it include very prominent political leaders, which makes it appear as though the international support is not actually very widespread and therefore calls into question the credibility of the people who have offered their support. However, as this is aimed at the general public, this nuance may not appear obvious. Furthermore, the political actors involved all come from regimes similar to the PRC and thus has quite similar political views, making statements such as “China is an important force for peace and development in East Asia and the world, and it will strike hard at any behaviour that undermines peace or threatens the safety of the people,”<sup>136</sup> which is beneficial not just to China, but to themselves. This is yet another article attempting to bring legitimacy to the securitization of the ‘Uyghur problem’, this time by showing foreign support. The article was released in 2014, once more underlining the continued securitization of the issue.

*Promoting Human Rights Through Development, Treating both Symptoms and Root Causes, the Chinese Government Effectively Curbed the Spread of Violence and Terrorism in Xinjiang*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2019, 22 countries signed a letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the UN Human Rights Council voicing concern on the governance of Xinjiang.<sup>137</sup> This was described by the CPC as “seriously inaccurate,”<sup>138</sup> “unwarranted criticism and slanderous attacks”<sup>139</sup> with “no factual basis.”<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, the letter was criticized as being unrepresentative, as it was only signed by Western countries and did not receive support from any developing or Islamic countries. This is correct since the only signatory not geographically located in the West is Japan, which is often considered to subscribe to Western notions of democracy and therefore not representative of most Asian values. However, that does not mean that any accusations of human rights violations are incorrect. The letter expresses concerns regarding reports of arbitrary detention and surveillance measures specifically targeting the Uyghur minority in the Xinjiang Autonomous region. It

---

<sup>135</sup> Chen et al. 2014, n.p.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> OHCHR 2019.

<sup>138</sup> Zhang 2019, n.p.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

is stated that “officials from Western countries have never conducted field visits to Xinjiang”<sup>141</sup> and that these concerns are therefore “based entirely on groundless speculation and unconfirmed information”<sup>142</sup> to “smear Xinjiang's deradicalization vocational education and training centres.”<sup>143</sup> It is true that hardly anyone has been able to gain access to the Xinjiang region to conduct field research on this topic. However, because the area is under pervasive surveillance and is highly controlled, even if officials could somehow gain access to internees in the re-education camps, the fear of repercussions would deter anyone from speaking their mind. Therefore, first-hand accounts of the camps from people who have previously been interred and leaked documents are the main source of information available. The CPC claims that “the establishment of the vocational skills education and training centres is in accordance with the law”<sup>144</sup> and that “Xinjiang's anti-terrorism work has always adhered to the United Nations Charter and other international law norms, while being carried out under the domestic anti-terrorism legal system.”<sup>145</sup> Instead, it is the Western countries that do not care about the human rights of the citizens of Xinjiang, only criticizing the “just and civilized struggle against evil and barbarism”<sup>146</sup> which has resulted in “no violent terrorist incidents in Xinjiang for more than two years.”<sup>147</sup> Another central claim of this article is that “there is not only one path to modernization, nor is there only one model for human rights protection”<sup>148</sup> and that “China has the right to independently choose its political system, development path and human rights protection model according to its national conditions.”<sup>149</sup> These quotes highlight how the CPC utilizes the importance of sovereignty and *human rights with Chinese characteristics* to mitigate any outside criticism of their way of operation, including how the Uyghurs in Xinjiang are treated. This is not only the central point of this article, but it also shows the relevance of the PRC’s interpretation of international human rights legislation. The fact that the article was published in the People’s Daily makes it yet another justification that the CPC is right, and the outside world is simply trying to prevent them from doing what is best for the Chinese population, the audience of the article.

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

*Discursive Strategies and Arguments of History and Culture in the Construction of the 'Uyghur Threat'*

The meaning in these sources is conveyed through the utilization of discursive strategies, which frame groups and concepts in specific positive or negative ways. The strategies mainly utilized are 1. Nomination strategies, 2. Predication strategies, and 3. Argumentation strategies. Perspectivization and intensification are also used to some extent,<sup>150</sup> but not as often, which is why they are not included in this analysis.

The overarching social actors created through nomination strategies in the discourse constructed in these sources are *us* and *them*. *Them* being mainly *the terrorists*, constructed through the almost constant use of phrases like, The East Turkistan terrorist forces, international terrorist organizations, the terrorist threat, the domestic terrorist threat, terrorists in Xinjiang, terrorist forces, the terrorist network and terrorist group. These *terrorists* include the subgroups ETIM, the Taliban, The World Uyghur Congress, and the collective Uyghurs when negatively framed. However, it also includes Western countries, as they are also framed negatively along with the terrorists as providing financial aid for them, not caring about the human rights of the citizens in Xinjiang, and generally not understanding or supporting China's righteous pursuit of domestic terrorism. As such, 'collectivising' *the terrorists* is one of the main nomination strategies utilized, which is done to construct the terrorists as one homogenous group and thus facilitate the generalisations made by the securitizing actor to the audience. *Us* refers mainly to China, i.e., the Chinese government and the Chinese citizens, including the Uyghurs when framed positively: "patriotic religious personages of the Uyghur ethnic group."<sup>151</sup> It also includes the international community, East Asia, the world, and all mankind, which are all classifications meant to not include the terrorists, thus reinforcing a characterisation of them being less than human. This division of actors is emphasized using deictic expressions like *they* and *we*, to construct a dynamic of insiders and outsiders. E.g., "*we* strongly condemn the September 11 terrorist attack,"<sup>152</sup> "*we* firmly condemn this barbaric act,"<sup>153</sup> and "*we* stand for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."<sup>154</sup> Versus "*they* have participated in regional terrorist activities,"<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> Reisigl & Wodak 2001, 94.

<sup>151</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.

<sup>152</sup> 唐家璇 2001, n.p.

<sup>153</sup> Chen et al. 2014, n.p.

<sup>154</sup> 唐家璇 2001, n.p.

<sup>155</sup> 新浪网 2001, n.p

“*they* threatened to make Urumqi a sea of fire,”<sup>156</sup> and “*they* [the West] turn a blind eye to the loss of hundreds of innocent lives.”<sup>157</sup> All the sources analyzed in this chapter contains this juxtaposition of us and them, the two sides of a war, which clearly shows the attempt at securitization by the CPC.

The framing of *us* as positive and *them* as negative is achieved through predication strategies that assign characteristics such as justified, important force for peace and development, patriotic, protects and safeguards versus murderers, arsonists, enemy, and threat to the social actors described.

Negative characteristics are also ascribed to the phenomena of terrorism using phrases such as the threat of terrorism, the international fight against terrorism, criminal activities of violence and terrorism, and terrorism is the common enemy of all mankind. The phenomena terrorism is thus juxtaposed with society, which is cast as the referent object through the characteristics of peace, security, order, stability, and innocent, peace-loving people. Society is thus constructed as an entity that terrorism can destroy, described as jeopardizing “the lives and property of people of all ethnic groups as well as social stability and security in China.”<sup>158</sup> A juxtaposition which is particularly visible in one quote; “just and civilized struggle against evil and barbarism.”<sup>159</sup>

Another negative connotation ascribed to the Uyghurs is them being a *force* or an *army*. This is done to signify that the CPC and the Chinese population is at war with the terrorists and consequently that the ‘Uyghur threat’ equated the level of urgency and threat associated with war. Furthered by the mention of facilitating conditions such as anti-tank grenades, hand-grenades, detonators, and guns. This fits well with the narrative surrounding the Global War on Terror, where much of the same rhetoric was used. Additionally, fear inducing imaging was used to paint the threat as dangerous as possible, using phrases such as bloody terrorist incidents, blood-soaked, holy war, theocratic Islamic state, terrorist blew up two buses, making Urumqi a sea of fire, murderers, arsonists, burning everything in their path, the loss of hundreds of innocent lives, thousands of wounded etc. All done to alienate and demonize the Uyghurs and cast them as a threat to the security of China.

The CPC often invokes history in their argumentation strategies. The entire source from the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 is an account of all the terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Uyghurs from 1992 to

---

<sup>156</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.

<sup>157</sup> 人民日报 2009, n.p.

<sup>158</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.

<sup>159</sup> Zhang 2019, n.p.

2000, which helps construct the Uyghurs as a threat.<sup>160</sup> The CPC also often uses statements such as “since the peaceful liberation of Xinjiang,”<sup>161</sup> and “the historical fact that all China’s ethnic groups have joined their efforts to create the great motherland,”<sup>162</sup> which constructs the Uyghur threat in relation to history and attempts to disseminate the spread of the CPC version of history as the one true version. In the 2002 white paper, a whole ‘origin story’ of Xinjiang is even provided as context “in the beginning of the 20th century, a handful of fanatical Xinjiang separatists and extremist religious elements fabricated the myth of ‘East Turkistan’... They claimed that ‘East Turkistan’ had been an independent state since ancient times and that the ethnic group in this state had a history of nearly 10,000 years.”<sup>163</sup> Conflicts between the government and minority ethnicities are abundant in Chinese history,<sup>164</sup> making such historical argumentation an easily accessible tool to portray the Uyghurs as threats. The Uyghurs were also linked to the GWOT, a globally securitized issue, which initially garnered global recognition. However, as the global recognition was based on scarce evidence, international sentiments later changed to criticisms,<sup>165</sup> which the PRC then countered with defences based on the centrality of sovereignty and regional differences in understandings of human rights. Events both historic or recent, can thus be invoked as a resource to support an argument and to justify actions, which is exactly how 9/11 was utilized by the CPC to argue that the global war on terror was an imminent threat in China and that the measures against the Uyghurs were therefore justified. So, argumentation made in relation to history matters when the audience ‘buys’ the claim because it is linked to history. i.e., the Uyghurs are a threat because they have always wanted to destroy China. It is very clear that these statements represent a one sided and biased version of history that is never substantiated by facts, but it is nevertheless the way that the CPC wants the Chinese population to view the situation. Referring to history provides the context in which the audience will understand the rhetoric.

The ingrained culture of collectivism can also be seen in the CPC’s argumentation throughout the sources in the continued reference to social stability and security, which the Uyghurs are constructed as a threat to, e.g., “These terrorist incidents have seriously jeopardized the... social stability and security

---

<sup>160</sup> 新浪网 2001, n.p

<sup>161</sup> Information Office of State Council of the People’s Republic of China 2001, n.p.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Luqiu & Yang 2020, 263-270.

<sup>165</sup> Roberts 2012, 3.



in China,”<sup>166</sup> “a threat to regional security and stability,”<sup>167</sup> and “terrorism is the common enemy of all mankind.”<sup>168</sup> The discourse emphasizes that the collective and indirectly the state protecting the collective is more important than any individual and thus any individual rights, clearly showing how culture has impacted the discourse of securitization in China.

It has now been demonstrated that culture and history are not only relevant as the context in which discourse is constructed, but also as resources of argumentation that can be used to increase the likelihood of audience acceptance. The presence of historical and cultural arguments in securitizing speech are thus rhetorical instruments in the portrayal of the Uyghurs as a threat.

This chapter has demonstrated the securitizing move made by the CPC, i.e., the attempt to portray the Uyghurs as a threat to the Chinese nation, thereby justifying extraordinary measures in order to get the threat under control. This was done through discourse analysis of primary source material from 2001 – 2020, which collectively has underlined the pervasive way in which the CPC spread their securitizing rhetoric to the public and how they continued to securitize after the implementation of extraordinary measures. It can be concluded that the Uyghurs were constructed as a threat through the language of security, which is visible in these texts through the deliberate choice of words and phrases like hazard, threatens, threat, armed, murders, arsonists, terrorist forces, international fight against terrorism, army, explosions, enemy, atmosphere of terror, endanger social stability, their aim of splitting China, bloody, blew up etc. a narrative supported by all of the analyzed source material. The purpose of spreading this discourse was to securitize the Uyghurs, so that the extraordinary measures already implemented would be justified and give the CPC a valid reason for the continued suppression of religious practice, which is in violation of international human rights legislation. While such motivations do not matter for the theoretical framework of securitization, because a securitizing actor can securitize whether an issue is real or perceived, motivations are relevant from a discourse analysis perspective, as motivations directly influence discourse.

---

<sup>166</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.

<sup>167</sup> 新浪网 2001, n.p

<sup>168</sup> 人民日报 2009, n.p.



## 4.2 Audience Acceptance of the ‘Uyghur Threat’

Once the securitizing move has been made, any analysis of securitization will usually include an analysis of whether the audience accepted or rejected the attempted securitization. However, due to the highly controlled environment of an authoritarian state like the PRC, it is difficult for the audience to reject a securitizing move in the first place, as the CPC can legally penalise anyone who goes against their wishes. This consequently makes the threshold for audience rejection of a securitizing move much higher. If such a protest action did take place, it is also often censored for outsiders and therefore next to impossible to obtain information about. A few articles describing the more general growth of anti-Muslim sentiments in China has however been found and can at least contribute to a partial description of audience acceptance. Luqiu & Yang claims that media reports in the PRC generally have a strong effect on social media posts and thus the sentiments of the general population, which seems to be the main reasons for the post-9/11 growth in anti-Muslim sentiment. In their research they have analyzed over 10.000 Sina Weibo (新浪微博)<sup>169</sup> posts, with the results that 10.48% of the posts were hateful and discriminatory comments stereotyping the Uyghurs as unreasonable, lazy, poor, and potential terrorists. It is undeniable that this trend could be influenced by factors other than the securitization of the Uyghurs, but it is equally undeniable that the rhetoric disseminated by the CPC concerning the Uyghurs has at the very least contributed. Stroup’s research also shows a rise in Islamophobic sentiments in China, especially towards the Uyghurs, and that is both in terms of online and in-person harassment. He even directly connects the government’s crackdown on “behaviour that it deemed extremist”<sup>170</sup> to the growing Islamophobia among the Chinese public, which certainly resembles the rhetoric found in the analyzed sources to securitize the Uyghurs, thus reinforcing the connection between the two. These findings do not directly prove audience acceptance; however, it does show an acceptance of the official narrative relating to Muslims as potential terrorists and extremists. This, along with the fact that there have been no outspoken objections, online comments, or protests against the extraordinary measures, also supports audience acceptance, as inaction is often as powerful an indicator as action. This is as much confirmation of at least partial acceptance as we can expect to gain in an authoritarian setting. There is simply not enough data available to firmly establish that the audience has accepted the securitization. However, it can be inferred from the lack of action and supported by the few articles and

---

<sup>169</sup> “The most popular social media platform.” See Luqiu & Yang 2019, 261.

<sup>170</sup> Stroup 2021, 1237.

dataset available on the subject, which is therefore the assumption under which the rest of this analysis will proceed.

These findings lead to a discovery of the role of the audience as being different in the PRC than in democracies, not insofar as they do not matter at all, but that there is a larger threshold for rejection due to the fear of repercussions. As such, the audience has a smaller impact overall on the securitizing processes, not because their role is smaller or non-existent as previously theorized,<sup>171</sup> but because the threshold is larger. This in turn makes audience rejection less likely and thus, assists in enabling the use of harsher measures, as the audience cannot provide much counterbalance to the securitizing actor in an authoritarian regime.

### **4.3 The Scope of Extraordinary Measures in the People's Republic of China**

The measures applied to the Uyghur ethnic group in Xinjiang are some of the most criticized current human rights violations in the world. It is widely recognized in academia that the Uyghurs have been securitized by the CPC utilizing the rhetoric connected to the global war or terror to justify these measures.<sup>172</sup> To compare the measures used in an authoritarian state, specifically the PRC, with those of a democratic state, it is essential to outline what these measures are, which will be done in this section. The extreme measures implemented by the CPC to deal with the 'Uyghur threat' exist on several levels. First and foremost, the changes made to the legislation both countrywide due the situation in Xinjiang and the legislation made specifically for Xinjiang. Second, the surveillance measures used to ensure compliance with that legislation, and finally, the punitive measures used in response to non-compliance.

#### *4.3.1 Legislation*

The point of securitizing an issue, according to the Copenhagen School, is to enable extraordinary measures that go beyond ordinary democratic process and legislation. While legislation may not qualify as an extraordinary measure in the original framework of securitization, Balzaq has argued that security measures can also be constructed within the law.<sup>173</sup> Additionally, the regulation of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Religious Affairs (RXR - 新疆维吾尔自治区宗教事务条例) made

---

<sup>171</sup> Balzaq 2005 & Conte 2016.

<sup>172</sup> Lavička 2020, Leibold 2020, Roberts 2012, Smith 2019, Topal 2021 and others.

<sup>173</sup> Balzaq 2011.

specifically targeting the Uyghurs of Xinjiang and the consequent general religious affairs regulation (RAR - 宗教事务条例) extended to the rest of China is of such a targeted nature that they themselves could be argued to violate the universal character of the freedom of religion and thus, while being legislation, also goes beyond ‘the ordinary’ and becomes an extraordinary measure in itself.

In 1994 the RXR was adopted “to protect citizens' freedom of religious belief, maintain normal religious activities, and facilitate the management of religious affairs”<sup>174</sup> in Xinjiang. It describes how religious practice should be contained to designated religious sites,<sup>175</sup> effectively making private religious practice illegal. Praying is central to Islamic practice and restricting it to designated sites, thus ascribing extremist connotations to a ritual performed by millions of Muslims every day is truly an extraordinary measure, which reinforces the securitization of religious practice by reconstructing a daily practice into a security concern. The RXR also describes how “religious personnel should support the leadership of the Communist Party of China,”<sup>176</sup> thus, making religious leaders who do not recognize the CPC into criminals. Additionally, it declares that “no one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order,”<sup>177</sup> which is such a vague and vast statement, that it could be applicable to almost anything if framed in the right way. Since the RXR was implemented in 1994, it supports my claim that extraordinary measures were implemented before the securitization of the issue. In 2014, a more extensive amendment was added as result of the Urumqi riots, directly outlawing Islamic clothing, symbols, and grooming,<sup>178</sup> and excluding minors from any participation in religious practice.<sup>179</sup> Consequently criminalizing Islamic practice in Xinjiang. In 2004 a general religious affairs regulation (RAR - 宗教事务条例) was formulated to detail the extent of legal religious practice throughout China. It contains most of the elements included in the original RXR, while specifying more clearly that “religion must not endanger national security... and must not be used for illegal activities, including those that harm state or societal interests,”<sup>180</sup> and adding regulations banning the construction of temples and religious statues as well as harsher punishments in its 2017 amendment.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> 新疆维吾尔自治区宗教事务条例, art. 1.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., art. 19.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., art. 8.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., art. 4.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., art. 28.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., art. 37.

<sup>180</sup> 宗教事务条例, Art. 4.

<sup>181</sup> 宗教事务条例.

Consequently, enabling a stricter enforcement of religious control in all of China and ensuring that organised religion could not be used as a unifier against the state. These regulations essentially adjust the rights set forth in the constitution and invalidate the legal system, as anyone can be legally stripped of their rights if they are judged to pose a threat to the government. Furthermore, both regulations can be seen as expressions of the continued securitization of the ‘threat’ religion poses to the PRC and “the safety of the people,”<sup>182</sup> if religion is not practiced within the rules set forth in these documents.

In sum, the CPC has utilized legislation to restrict and control the religious practice of the Uyghurs in a way which goes beyond what is normally legally permissible, which makes such targeted regulations extraordinary measures in themselves.

#### 4.3.2 Surveillance

In order to uphold the regulations on religious practice in Xinjiang, the CPC has created a system of pervasive surveillance measures that violates both the freedom of religion and privacy of the citizens of Xinjiang.

Religious personnel are appointed and supervised by the state.<sup>183</sup> Patrols and household interviews (入户走访) are carried out daily to search for religious pamphlets, posters, recordings, or books, both to dissuade people from practicing religion, but also to encourage community reporting.<sup>184</sup> Surveillance is done through the Cleannet Bodyguard surveillance app (净网卫士), which is mandatory for all Xinjiang residents to have on their phone. The app is designed to browse images, documents, videos, other apps, and online posts for any religious activities and automatically report the findings to the authorities, and compliance is regularly checked.<sup>185</sup> Another thoroughly pervasive measure is the Becoming Relatives program (结对认亲), which pairs CPC cadres with Uyghur families to extend the surveillance state into the private homes of the people. The cadre must visit at least five days in a two-month period, provide reports on local activities and serve as a deterrence to the practice of religion in the home.<sup>186</sup> These measures are all implemented from Convenience police stations (便民警务站),

---

<sup>182</sup> Chen et al. 2014, n.p.

<sup>183</sup> Lavička 2020.

<sup>184</sup> Leibold 2020, 54.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 55.

which are built to create a surveillance grid system enabling response times of less than a minute for maximum control.<sup>187</sup>

These surveillance measures work both as deterrence and a means to locate persons of interest who have disregarded the legislation and thus incurred punishment.

#### 4.3.3 Punitive

To punish transgressions of the Religious Affairs Regulations punitive measures have been developed, again both serving deterring and punitive functions. These will first be outlined according to the academic literature on the subject. This will then be supported by a primary source on question-and-answer strategies, which describes how guards at an internment camp have been instructed to speak to detainees' relatives and then further by first-hand accounts. Finally, it will be concluded exactly how extensive these measures are in contrast to what is normally observed in a democratic setting.

In response to the Urumqi riots, the CPC increased its efforts through the Strike hard campaign (严打斗争), and in 2017, the most extraordinary measure so far implemented in Xinjiang, the transformation through education campaign (教育转化) commenced. The campaign utilizes internment camps to 'reeducate' anyone suspected of 'the three evils' (三股势力); terrorism, extremism and separatism. The detentions are extrajudicial, with no regard for due process<sup>188</sup> and the alleged offences are any kind of religious expression, from growing a beard, to attending the mosque or displaying a religious symbol in the home.<sup>189</sup> The reeducation taking place in the camps is a form of forced secularization, where the detainees are coerced to abandon Islamic practices through various forms of physiological and physical torture like forced ingestion of alcohol or pork.<sup>190</sup> Although it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of people detained in these camps, sources estimate it to be between one and three million.<sup>191</sup> These measures have led to a society of fear and self-censorship, both online and in the private homes of the citizens of Xinjiang. These measures directly violate the freedom of movement, religion and belief, freedom from torture, the right to liberty and security of a person, to be treated with humanity in detention, to a fair trial and to privacy. However, indirectly it also violates

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>188</sup> Smith 2019, 5.

<sup>189</sup> A more exhaustive list of internment criteria can be found in Smith 2019, 5-6 & Lavicka 2020.

<sup>190</sup> Smith 2019, 6.

<sup>191</sup> Topal 2021, 7.

their freedom of expression, marriage, association, freedom from discrimination, the right to life, to peaceful assembly and to education.

Most of the measures enforced in Xinjiang can be covered by the umbrella term of religious surveillance, which is also why it is not surprising that many scholars believe that the CPC are trying to outlaw all religious practice,<sup>192</sup> especially when viewed in connection with the treatments of Tibetan monks<sup>193</sup> and the Falun Gong.<sup>194</sup> Although there are many differences between the situations of the Uyghurs, Tibetans and the Falun Gong, the common denominator is that these religious communities pose a threat to the one-party system, wherein the Chinese Communist Party is the only legitimate ideology in China. This perceived threat is what has led to their securitization and the extreme measures used to respond to that threat. However, it is an important yet often overlooked nuance that all religious practice in the PRC is not subjected to these measures. Not even all practices of Islam. The Hui Muslims practice religion freely,<sup>195</sup> as do many other religious groups such as Buddhists, Christians and a multitude of traditional folk religions practiced in smaller localized communities all over China. The main difference is whether such a group poses a threat or not.

The sections above have delineated the extraordinary measures used to contain the ‘Uyghur threat’ in the PRC through second-hand academic literature. This will now be supported by one primary source and several first-hand interviews extracted from second-hand material to underline both the existence of such measures and their scope.

#### Question and Answer Strategies for Children of Students in Turpan Technical Vocational School

This document was one out of 400 pages of leaked internal Chinese documents published by the New York Times on the 19th of November 2019. There is no author on the document, however it seems to be a sort of manual to the guards in the Turpan Centralized Technical Vocational School on how to answer questions by the relatives of the internees. Therefore, it is likely to have been developed by an official government organ. It is not possible to determine with 100% accuracy whether this document is fabricated or genuine, but it matches both the CPC’s way of writing, as is visible throughout this

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>193</sup> Topgyal 2016.

<sup>194</sup> Vuori 2010.

<sup>195</sup> Friedrichs 2017.

analysis, the location of a real internment camp, and the official CPC position regarding what goes on in the camps.<sup>196</sup>

The first question asked is “where is my family?”<sup>197</sup> To which the answer is “they are participating in systematic training, learning and education... You don’t have to worry about their lives at all.”<sup>198</sup> This suggests that their family member has received no information about where they are or why they have been detained. Furthermore, the family members of detainees often worry about their safety. It is then suggested that a video call can be arranged if they want to see their family member, making it clear that the compound is closed, and no in-person visits are allowed. When it comes to the question of why they have been detained, many answers are given, the meaning of which remains the same. “They have been affected by religious extremism and violent terrorist thoughts,”<sup>199</sup> “your family member has been infected with a ‘virus’ in their mind”<sup>200</sup> or “a stubborn malignant tumour of the mind.”<sup>201</sup> The vivid imagery usually utilized by the CPC is very visible in their full adaptation of the virus simile; “if you accidentally get an infectious virus such as SARS, you must be treated under closed isolation treatment, because your disease is contagious. If you have not been cured, and go home immediately, you will spread the virus to your family and cause the whole family to get sick.”<sup>202</sup> I.e., this ‘virus’ of extremism can only be cured by detainment and re-education, otherwise these ideas might spread.

The content of the re-education camps is described as “a long period of comprehensive, systematic, and closed standardized learning and training,”<sup>203</sup> or “closed ‘hospitalization’ to completely eliminate religious extremism and violent thoughts,”<sup>204</sup> in which the government has “invited the best teachers to teach Chinese, laws and regulations, national policies, technical skills, and other knowledge for free, so that after training they will not do things that hurt themselves and others.”<sup>205</sup> The punitive nature of the detention is thus fully masked as a “free educational opportunity provided by the party

---

<sup>196</sup> Anonymous 2019, n.p.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.



and the government.”<sup>206</sup> This is further underlined by the outright denial of any crime having been committed; “they did not commit a crime and will not be sentenced. They are just ideologically infected by bad thoughts.”<sup>207</sup> It is thus very evident that they are detained without having committed a crime or being charged with one, which is a clear violation of both conventional and human rights legislation. Without a sentence, it is also impossible to know when they will be released. The only answer to this question is “if the ‘virus’ in their minds is cleared and their bodies healthy, they can be free.”<sup>208</sup> They use the word if, rather than when, which means that their release could also never happen. Regardless, such a release is at the discretion of the government and not according to any official regulations.

The securitization of the ‘Uyghur issue’ is also visible in this document, as the cause for detention “is related to the safety of our family members and the stability of our society.”<sup>209</sup> The threat is reaffirmed by writing that if the detainees “do not receive education and correction in time, they will cause major practical harm to society and their families,”<sup>210</sup> and become “a public enemy that undermines national unity, ethnic unity, and endangers society.”<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, a responsibility for the collective good is added “each of us should contribute our meagre strength to maintain social stability and protect our homeland,”<sup>212</sup> before finally imbuing a level of threat “you must also abide by the national regulations,”<sup>213</sup> i.e., if you do not, you will also end up in a camp. The global context utilized in other sources on securitization is also included; “Iraq, Syria, and other Middle Eastern countries are deeply poisoned by religious extremism. Wherever ISIS extremist forces go, countries are ruined, people are displaced, and countless deaths and injuries are suffered... As soon as our people arrive in a sensitive country, they [ISIS] will do everything possible to indoctrinate religious extremism, brainwash, and instigate rebellion. They [the people] will become pawns to overthrow our regime.”<sup>214</sup> All in all, this document furthers the dissemination of the fear of the unknown, of the consequences of

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

insubordination and of the practice of religion, while casting the government as ‘the good guys’ simply attempting to help counteract extremism for the good of China.

This primary source has shown the extraordinary measures from the viewpoint of the relatives of the detainees, which has supported the intensity and scope discovered through academic literature. The final source will provide first-hand accounts of the experience of being detained in such an internment camp, which will reinforce this even further.

### First-Hand Accounts

While first-hand accounts of what goes on in the Chinese internment camps in Xinjiang is not flooding the internet, several are partially available through articles published by large news media and NGOs.<sup>215</sup> It is difficult to verify such accounts as no official outside entities have been able to gain access to the camps. However, since several accounts tell the same story, which lines up with satellite images, immigration records and travel documents,<sup>216</sup> they are generally assumed to be correct. One article recounts the camps as “an organised system of mass rape, sexual abuse, and torture.”<sup>217</sup> A woman shared the story of how she was treated in a camp in Xinyuan county, which included the removal of her headscarf, being forced to watch propaganda programmes, having her hair cut short, violent interrogations, forced sterilization and food deprivation.<sup>218</sup> An Amnesty International report based on 55 interviews with previous detainees confirms the same methods and adds sleep deprivation, psychological and physical abuse, insufficient access to water, healthcare, and privacy.<sup>219</sup> The ‘re-education’ is recounted as including ‘statements of repentance’ in which one previous detainee had to write how he regretted installing WhatsApp on his phone as it ‘compromised’ his mind and “could potentially bring harm to the leadership of the CPC and the country,”<sup>220</sup> or that he “had mistakenly chosen the religion of Islam.”<sup>221</sup> Additionally, ‘letters of guarantee’ were also required, in which the detainees had to promise not to tell anything about what went on in the camps if they were released. The language recounted by the interviewees is reminiscent of the rhetoric used in the source on

---

<sup>215</sup> Amnesty 2021 & Hill, Campanale & Gunter 2021.

<sup>216</sup> Amnesty 2021.

<sup>217</sup> Hill, Campanale & Gunter 2021, n.p.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Amnesty 2021.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 90.

question-and-answer strategies previously analyzed, and thus both sources reinforce the validity of the other and corroborate the evidence of the intensity of the extraordinary measures being used in Xinjiang.

The extent of the extraordinary measures utilized by the CPC has now been demonstrated, and it can now be concluded that they differ from what can be observed in democratic states in multiple ways. First, in relation to the intensity of the measures. In China, enforced disappearance and internment are specifically used as a punishment for anything perceived by the CPC as a challenge to the government. Torture is simply a tool used for reeducation, and all of these are used as a means of deterrence to curb dissent through fear. As a contrast, in the U.S. such measures are mainly used to gain information about suspected terrorist activities, which means that they are not punitive in nature or used directly as a means of deterrence. I would argue that the intent of these measures intensifies their severity as they pose a general threat to the multiple freedoms of the Chinese population beyond what is directly impacted by the measures. The second point of divergence is the scope of the measures. Due to the intent, the measures in China are widespread and systemic, whereas the U.S. measures are aimed at a small number of people and have not led to any kind of systemic persecution like that of Xinjiang or any other religious minority groups in China.

In this chapter it has been demonstrated that the measures used in the PRC go beyond what can be observed in most democratic settings, in that the scope and intensity of the measures utilized are wider in the PRC. The specific legislative, surveillance and punitive elements being more intense and the systemic, widespread implementation of the measures themselves signifying the wider scope. Why this is the case will be answered in the next section, through the discussion of the de-securitizing effect of functional actors.

#### **4.4 Functional Actors in the Securitization of the Uyghurs in the People's Republic of China: The Significance of De-securitization**

This section will delve into the influence functional actors have in the PRC on the processes of securitization to understand which checks and balances are applicable in an authoritarian regime. This will be contrasted with the influence functional actors have in democratic states. It will be specified why the impact of functional actors differ in authoritarian and democratic regimes and what effect that has on the processes of securitization. Specifically, the functional actors addressed will be courts, NGOs, and IGOs.

What has become evident from this research is that the differences in the processes of securitization between authoritarian and democratic regimes do not stop with the audience or the severity of the measures utilized. The same argument used to argue the difference in the role of the audience can in fact be used to argue a difference in the relationship between securitizing actors and functional actors. In democratic regimes, functional actors such as domestic and international courts, NGOs and IGOs can have a large de-securitizing impact on any securitizing process due to the centrality of the rule of law and the relatively even power dynamic between the audience and the securitizing actor. NGOs can create awareness among the public about unjust measures used to deal with a threat and thus influence the acceptance or rejection of a securitizing move. Courts can have a deterring effect on securitizing actors as they can be held accountable to any breaches of the law, and IGOs can directly influence international political cooperation, which in turn can create domestic political backlash. All these points of de-securitization have a direct impact on the securitizing actors, as they can influence political legitimacy and thus the chances of re-election. However, these significant impacts are only possible because of the respect for these actors along with the centrality of the rule of law, which is directly linked to the democratic regime type. The rule of law is fundamental to democracies and provides control over the political leader(s) in power to make all equal before the law.<sup>222</sup> However, this is not the case in an authoritarian regime, where the centrality of the rule of law and thus the impact of functional actors is significantly different than in democracies.

The influence of courts is not often addressed in literature on securitization. However, both domestic and international courts, such as the ICtHR, carry a lot of weight in democracies and are therefore a big source of de-securitization in democracies. This is because such institutions were created to balance the power of democratic states and can thus directly influence political securitizing actors. However, in the PRC this is not the case. As argued by Ginsberg, courts in an authoritarian regime are not designed to hold the ruling authority accountable, but instead to administer low-level criminal proceedings and market transactions.<sup>223</sup> In fact, they are more of a tool the government can manipulate than an independent actor providing counterweight to the government. This is supported by the lack of accounts where courts challenge the government and legal cases where human rights violations committed by the government are addressed. As such, they carry no weight as a functional

---

<sup>222</sup> Schmitter & Karl 1991.

<sup>223</sup> Ginsburg 2020, 222.

actor who can de-securitize or balance the decisions of a securitizing actor. This is because authoritarian regimes rule *by law* instead of respecting the rule *of law*.<sup>224</sup>

The impact of NGOs in the PRC differs from democratic settings for two reasons. Firstly, due to the audience's lack of access to information. The CPC either directly owns, influences, or censors most information in China, reducing the reach of any awareness an NGO could potentially create. Due to the control of the media, most international NGOs which call out human rights abuses in China are not perceived as credible by most Chinese citizens, but rather as an expression of Western criticisms of Chinese society. Secondly, even if some information makes it through the Chinese firewall of censorship and is believed credible by the Chinese population, the power differential between the audience and the securitizing actor is so big that any rejection of securitization or attempt to influence the legitimacy of the securitizing actor is highly unlikely. This is due to the risk of personal repercussions, which makes the threshold for such a rejection much higher than in any democracy.

While China is a member of multiple IGOs such as the UN Security Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, these appear to be utilized more to promote the Chinese perspective and foster international cooperation rather than letting the IGOs influence anything domestically. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental organization between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan originally established in the aftermath of the Cold War to organise the borders following the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>225</sup> It has since developed into a sort of authoritarian normative power which has taken part in the international pursuit of terrorism by identifying 'the three evils' – terrorism, separatism, and extremism in its Shanghai Convention (2001).<sup>226</sup> Quite emblematic of its authoritarian member states, the institutional design of the organization is quite diluted, thus allowing room for individual agendas to become points of convergence, as was the case when China sponsored the process of gaining observer status in the UN.<sup>227</sup> Ginsburg argues that the SCO has been a way to gain legitimacy and distance from pressures to democratize, which I would certainly agree with.<sup>228</sup> However, I would also argue that it has been a way to spread authoritarian notions of good governance and the centrality of sovereignty to the international

---

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 247-249.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 248.

community, as is evident by the Chinese origin of ‘the three evils.’ In general, the PRC uses most international forums and IGOs of which they are members to further their own perspectives via speeches and white papers while ignoring any attempts at influence in the other direction. This is evident in the lack of changes in the understanding and implementation of human rights and democracy, even though China has been a member of multiple international IGOs with powerful Western influence for many years. As such, IGOs carry no real influence on Chinese securitization processes and are therefore not a functional actor with de-securitizing powers.

However, there are exceptions to the usual relationships between these functional actors and the Chinese government. If an issue is pressed enough by these functional actors, the PRC might feel pressured to at least address it so that such distress does not spread to the Chinese population. This was the case with the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Following the intensification effort of the so-called “vocational training school”<sup>229</sup> in Xinjiang in 2017, international criticism grew dramatically,<sup>230</sup> which led to the release of a white paper by the CPC in 2019, which brushed off the criticism as necessary to deal with religious extremism.<sup>231</sup> If the PRC did not care at all about the international functional actors, there would have been no need for such a white paper. On the other hand, if the functional actors had a very significant impact, changes in the measures themselves would have followed, which was not the case.

In summary, the impact of the authoritarian regime type on securitization is visible in the absence of courts challenging the government, the lack of legal cases concerning human rights violations, and the lack of impact that appeals by NGOs and IGOs, all of which would have counterbalancing effects on the extraordinary measures used in democracies. Thus, the impact of functional actors is much less in the PRC than in most democracies, and this, along with the influence of the audience also being smaller, leaves much more power in the hands of the securitizing actor. This is what enables the PRC to use a wider scope of extraordinary measures because there are not as many points of counterbalance and de-securitization.

---

<sup>229</sup> Anonymous 2019, n.p.

<sup>230</sup> Amnesty International 2021, OHCHR 2022 & Human Rights Watch 2021.

<sup>231</sup> Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2021, n.p.

## 5.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, it has been established that security measures differ in scope and intensity between authoritarian and democratic states through the case study of the securitization of the Uyghur minority group in the Xinjiang autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. The theory of securitization was chosen to analyze these differences, as it is a widely used framework within security studies that explains how extraordinary security measures become possible. However, so far it has not taken the variable of regime type into account, which underlines the general critique of the Copenhagen School's original conceptualization of securitization as being Eurocentric in nature.<sup>232</sup>

First, it was established that the securitizing process cannot be considered without the context in which it occurs, as history and culture shape the social actors involved, provide discursive resources used to frame a threat and the historical context through which the audience understands such rhetoric. One such contextual element central to the selected case study is the prioritization of the collective over the individual, as it has directly impacted the power relations between the Chinese government and population and thus contributed to reducing the power of the audience. Additionally, the disregard for international legislation through its Chinese interpretation has contributed to the possibility of a wider scope of security measures against the Uyghurs in response to their securitization by Chinese authorities, thus, exhibiting how the legal system is contextually relevant to the securitizing move.

Second, the securitizing move was analyzed using discourse analysis of original source material, through which it was demonstrated that the Uyghurs were constructed as a threat using the discursive strategies of nomination, predication, and argumentation. These strategies were utilized to create a separation of *us* and *them*, portraying the Uyghurs as murderers, arsonists, armed, enemies and terrorists who "endanger social stability,"<sup>233</sup> in major news outlets such as the People's Daily to the Chinese population. The data analyzed in this section has significantly contributed to the literature on

---

<sup>232</sup> Hansen 2000, Stritzel 2007, Vuori 2008, Wilkinson 2007 and others.

<sup>233</sup> Information Office of State Council 2001, n.p.



both securitization and the PRC in general, as primary source material is not accessible for analysis without the ability to translate them from Chinese.

Third, audience acceptance was partially established through second hand sources, which showed the acceptance of the official CPC narrative of Muslims as potential terrorists through the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment in the PRC, which, along with the lack of public objection to the extraordinary measures, is as much confirmation of audience acceptance as it was possible to uncover. These findings led to a discovery of the role of the audience as being different in authoritarian states than in democracies. Not to the extent that the audience does not matter, but that their role is seldomly used and thus less significant for the processes of securitization. The audience is less significant in the PRC, because of the uneven power distribution between the government and the Chinese population, which gives the audience less freedom to reject a securitizing move. The CPC can legally penalize anyone who goes against their wishes, which makes the threshold for audience rejection of a securitizing move much higher, thus giving the audience a much smaller impact on the securitizing processes, which in turn enables the use of more intense measures. Contrary to what has been argued by others,<sup>234</sup> this research has demonstrated that the role of the audience remains the same in the PRC, but that there is a larger threshold for rejection, resulting in a lower probability of rejection and thus a less significant overall impact on the processes of securitization by the audience.

Fourth, the exact scope and intensity of the extraordinary measures used in the PRC in response to the ‘Uyghur threat’ were demonstrated as being wider than in most democracies. Specifically, because both the legislative, surveillance and punitive elements of the measures are more intense, and the systemic, widespread implementation of the measures themselves demonstrates a wider scope. This research showed that the measures were not only wider in scope and more intense, but they were also initiated before the securitizing move even took place, leading to a contradiction of the linear timeline of the original framework. Whether this is indicative of a larger trend is outside the scope of this thesis to establish, but it could provide an interesting topic for further research.

Finally, the influence of functional actors was discussed based on the findings of the analysis. This resulted in the conclusion that the influence of functional actors is almost non-existent in the PRC. This is due to the disregard of the legal system, which results in courts that are influenced by the

---

<sup>234</sup> Balzaq 2005 & Côté 2016.

government and have no separate power, along with the indifference towards NGOs and IGOs. This has a direct impact on the scope and intensity of the measures, as there is no point of counterbalance and de-securitization as there are in democracies. In a democratic society where media, courts, the public, NGOs and even other states speak out against unjust measures, such as Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib,<sup>235</sup> it is not possible to simply ignore it. These functional actors hold the government accountable, which is a central part of how the division of power, the freedom of speech and the power of the people to elect their government is meant to work in a democracy. In an authoritarian regime there is no division of powers, and while there are courts, NGOs and IGOs, they are mostly directly controlled by the government or disregarded. Thus, there are no checks and balances to keep the government accountable or keep the measures used to deal with an issue proportional.

In conclusion, in light of the empirical findings and as has been argued throughout the thesis, the answer to the research question posed is that authoritarianism as a regime type permits a widening of the scope and intensity of the extraordinary measures used to deal with securitized issues. This widening is possible due to two main variables: 1. The power dynamics of the speaker-audience relationship, leading to a larger threshold for audience rejection and 2. The lack of counterbalancing influence and de-securitizing power afforded to functional actors, which includes the legal system (courts and legislation), NGOs and IGOs. All of which are affected by the authoritarian regime type. As such, it is my suggestion that the theory of securitization should include regime type as a variable in the securitization process in order to sufficiently reflect the differences caused by regime type, thus enabling a more usable framework. Understanding the processes of securitization in authoritarian settings is also important, because continued acceptance of securitizing moves may eventually lead to a normalization of measures currently considered extreme, thereby justify human rights violations to an unprecedented extent.

---

<sup>235</sup> Amnesty International 2004, Human Rights Watch n.d. & Human Rights Watch 2004.

## 6.

## Bibliography

- Amnesty International. 2004. "Pattern of brutality and cruelty -- war crimes at Abu Ghraib." <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/amr510772004en.pdf>
- Amnesty International. 2021. "Like we were Enemies in a War – China's Mass Internment, Torture, and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang." London: Amnesty International. [https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASA\\_17\\_4137-2021\\_Full\\_report\\_ENG.pdf](https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASA_17_4137-2021_Full_report_ENG.pdf)
- Anonymous. 2019. "吐鲁番市集中教育培训学校学员子女问答策略." *The New York Times*. [https://hackmd.io/@billy3321/BJn\\_M00jr/%2F%40billy3321%2Frk6De113S](https://hackmd.io/@billy3321/BJn_M00jr/%2F%40billy3321%2Frk6De113S) (accessed 5 jan 2022)
- Anonymous. 2019. "吐鲁番市集中教育培训学校学员子女问答策略." *The New York Times*. [https://hackmd.io/@billy3321/BJn\\_M00jr/%2F%40billy3321%2Frk6De113S](https://hackmd.io/@billy3321/BJn_M00jr/%2F%40billy3321%2Frk6De113S) (accessed 5 mar 2023)
- Balzacq, Thierry. 2005. "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context." *European journal of international relations* 11(2): 171–201.
- Balzacq, Thierry. 2011. *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. London: Routledge.
- Benam, Ç. H. 2011. "Emergence of in Europe: Border Control and Securitization of Migration." *Insight Turkey* 13(3): 191-207.
- Buzan, Barry & Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver & Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security, A New Framework for Analysis*. London: Boulder.
- Chan, Phil C. W. 2013. "Human Rights and Democracy with Chinese Characteristics?" *Human rights law review* 13(4): 645–689.

- Chen, Xiaowei et al. 2014. “国际社会强烈谴责‘5·22’暴恐案。” *人民日报*. <https://shorturl.at/iuCDM>  
(accessed 19 may 2023)
- Chinese Constitution. 1982.  
<http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/201911/1f65146fb6104dd3a2793875d19b5b29.shtml> (accessed 10 mar 2023)
- Clarke, Michael. 2013. “Ethnic Separatism in the People’s Republic of China. History, Causes, and Contemporary Challenges.” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 12: 109-133.
- Côté, Adam. 2016. “Agents Without Agency: Assessing the Role of the Audience in Securitization Theory.” *Security dialogue* 47(6): 541–558.
- Doyle, Michael W. 1995. “The Democratic Peace.” *International security* 19(4): 180–184.
- Dukalskis, A. & J. Gerschewski. 2017. ”What autocracies say (and what citizens hear): proposing four mechanisms of autocratic legitimation”. *Contemporary Politics* 23: 251-268.
- Ezeokafor, Edwin & Christian Kaunert. 2018. “Securitization Outside of the West: Conceptualizing the Securitization-Neo-Patrimonialism Nexus in Africa.” *Global discourse* 8(1): 83–99.
- Floyd, Rita. 2021. “Securitization and the Function of Functional Actors.” *Critical studies on security* 9(2): 81–97.
- Friedrichs, Jörg. 2017. “Sino-Muslim Relations: The Han, the Hui, and the Uyghurs.” *Journal of Muslim minority affairs* 37(1): 55–79.
- Gerring, John. 2004. “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?” *The American political science review* 98(2): 341–354.
- Gerschewski, J. 2013. ”The Three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression, and Co-optation in Autocratic Regimes.” *Democratization* 20: 13-38.
- Gheciu, Alexandra & William Curti Wohlforth. 2018. *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ginsburg, Tom. 2020 “Authoritarian International Law?” *The American journal of international law* 114(2): 221–260.
- Glasius, Marlies. 2018. “What Authoritarianism Is ... and Is Not: a Practice Perspective.” *International affairs* 94(3): 515–533.

- Hansen, Lene. 2000. "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School." *Millennium* 29(2): 285–306.
- Hill, Matthew, David Campanale & Joel Gunter. 2021. "'Their goal is to destroy everyone': Uighur camp detainees allege systematic rape." BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-55794071>
- Human Rights Watch. N.d. "Guantanamo." <https://www.hrw.org/topic/terrorism-counterterrorism/guantanamo>
- Human Rights Watch. 2004. "The Road to Abu Ghraib." <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/usa0604/usa0604.pdf>
- Human Rights Watch. 2021. "Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots." <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting>
- Information Office of State Council of the People's Republic of China. 2001. "East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity." *人民日报*. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm> (accessed 15 May 2023)
- Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. 2021. "The Fight Against Terrorism, Deradicalization and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang." [http://geneva.china-mission.gov.cn/chn/ztjs/ajljdiowqjknew/baipishu/202110/t20211014\\_9587970.htm](http://geneva.china-mission.gov.cn/chn/ztjs/ajljdiowqjknew/baipishu/202110/t20211014_9587970.htm) (accessed 21 May 2023)
- Karolak-Michalska, Magdalena. 2020. "The Role of Securitization of National and Ethnic Minorities in the Management of Ethno-Politics in Eastern European Countries." *International Journal of Contemporary Management* 19(2): 71–95.
- Lavička, Martin. 2020. "Changes in Chinese Legal Narratives About Religious Affairs in Xinjiang." *Asian ethnicity* 1: 1–16.
- Leibold, James. 2020. "Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement." *Journal of Contemporary China* 29(121): 46–60.
- Lorca, Arnulf Becker. 2012. "Eurocentrism in the History of International Law." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of International Law*, ed. Bardo Fassbender & Anne Peters, 1034–1057. Oxford University.

- Luqiu, Luwei Rose & Fan Yang. 2020. "Anti-Muslim Sentiment on Social Media in China and Chinese Muslims' Reactions to Hatred and Misunderstanding." *Chinese journal of communication* 13(3): 258–274.
- Macmaster, Neil. 2004. "Torture: From Algiers to Abu Ghraib." *Race & class* 46(2): 1–21.
- Mao, Zedong. 1965. *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*. 9. ed. Peking: Foreign Languages Press.
- McDonald, Matt. 2008. "Securitization and the Construction of Security." *European journal of international relations* 14(4): 563–587.
- Meisner, Maurice J. 1999. *Mao's China and after: A History of the People's Republic*. New York: Free Press.
- Millward, J. A. 2009. "Introduction: Does the 2009 Urumchi violence mark a turning point?" *Central Asian Survey* 28(4): 347–360.
- Nathan, Andrew J. 1986. "Political Rights in Chinese Constitutions." In *Human Rights in Contemporary China*, ed. R. Randle Edwards, Louis Henkin & Andrew J. Nathan, 77-124. New York: Columbia University.
- OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification Status by country*. UN Treaty Body Database.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/treaty.aspx](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/treaty.aspx) (accessed 11 Jul 2023)
- OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification Status for China*. UN Treaty Body Database.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=36&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=36&Lang=EN)  
(accessed 11 Feb 2023)
- OHCHR. N.d. *Ratification Status for the United States of America*. UN Treaty Body Database.  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=187&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=187&Lang=EN)  
(accessed 10 Jun 2023)
- OHCHR. 2019. "Letter to the OHCHR."  
[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/190708\\_joint\\_statement\\_xinjiang.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/190708_joint_statement_xinjiang.pdf)  
(accessed 17 may 2023)
- OHCHR. 2022. "Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China."  
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assesment.pdf>  
(accessed 7 Jul 2023)

- Peoples, Columba & Nick Vaughan-Williams. 2015. *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*. 2nd edition. Florence: Taylor and Francis.
- Pollis, Adamantia & Peter Schwab. 1979. "Human rights: a Western Construct with Limited Applicability." In *Human Rights: Cultural and Ideological Perspectives*, 1-17. New York: Praeger.
- 人民日报. 2009. "纵容暴力就是纵容恐怖主义." 人民日报. <https://shorturl.at/EHKS3> (accessed 16 Jun 2023)
- Reisigl, Martin & Ruth Wodak. 2001. "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer, 87-121. London: SAGE.
- Reuter, Tina Kempin. 2011. "International Law." In *21st Century Political Science a Reference Handbook*. Los Angeles: SAGE. 431-439.
- Roberts, Sean. 2012. "Imaginary Terrorism? The Global War on Terror and the Narrative of the Uyghur Terrorist Threat." *Ponars Eurasia*. <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/imaginary-terrorism-the-global-war-on-terror-and-the-narrative-of-the-uyghur-terrorist-threat/> (accessed 10 Mar 2023)
- Seppänen, Samuli. 2016. *Ideological Conflict and the Rule of Law in Contemporary China: Useful Paradoxes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. & Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What Democracy Is. . . and Is Not." *Journal of democracy* 2(3): 75–88.
- Seeking Truth Magazine, 2020. "习近平: 在中央政治局常委会会议研究应对新型冠状病毒肺炎疫情工作时的讲话." Gov.cn. [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-02/15/content\\_5479271.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-02/15/content_5479271.htm) (accessed 3 May 2023)
- Shipoli, Erdoan A. 2018. "Securitization of Islam in US Foreign Policy: The Bush Administration." In *Islam, Securitization, and US Foreign Policy*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 167–210.
- Smith Finley, Joanne. 2019. "Securitization, Insecurity and Conflict in Contemporary Xinjiang: Has PRC Counter-Terrorism Evolved into State Terror?" *Central Asian survey* 38(1): 1–26.
- Stritzel, Holger. 2007. "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond." *European journal of international relations* 13(39): 357–383.
- Stroup, David R. 2021. "Good Minzu and Bad Muslims: Islamophobia in China's State Media." *Nations and nationalism* 27(4): 1231–1252.



- Tang, James T. H. 1995. "Statement by Liu Huaqiu, Head of the Chinese Delegation, Vienna, 17 June 1993." In *Human Rights and International Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region*, 213-217. London: Pinter.
- 唐家璇. 2001. "唐家璇外长在第五十六届联大一般性辩论中发言:全面阐述中国对外政策." *人民日报*. <https://shorturl.at/loDH3> (accessed 13 mar 2023)
- Ruskola, Teemu. 2013. *Legal Orientalism China, the United States, and Modern Law*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN. 2001. "Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by 'Eastern Turkistan' Organizations and Their Links with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban." [http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/zt/fk/200111/t20011129\\_8413907.htm](http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/zt/fk/200111/t20011129_8413907.htm)
- Topal, Reyhan. 2021. "An Empirical Assessment of China's Counterterrorism Efforts and Securitization of Turkic Muslims." *Studies in conflict and terrorism* (ahead-of-print): 1–29.
- Topgyal, Tsering. 2016. "The Tibetan Self-Immolations as Counter-Securitization: Towards an Inter-Unit Theory of Securitization." *Asian security* 12(3): 166–187.
- Vultee, Fred. 2010. "Securitization: A New Approach to the Framing of the 'War on Terror.'" *Journalism practice* 4(1): 33–47.
- Vuori, Juha A. 2008. "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders." *European journal of international relations* 14(1): 65–99.
- Vuori, Juha A. 2010. "Religion Bites: Falungong, Securitization/ Desecuritization in the People's Republic of China." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, ed. Thierry Balzacq, Milton Park: Routledge. 200–225.
- Wilkinson, Claire. 2007. "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?" *Security dialogue* 38(1): 5–25.
- Wolfrum, Rüdiger. 1991. *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*. Oxford University.
- Wæver, Ole. 2000. "The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections from a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post Sovereign Security Orders." In *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration*, ed. Morten Kelstrup & Michael Williams, 250–94. London: Routledge.

新浪网. 2001. “朱邦造披露‘东突’分子在中外制造的一系列血案.” 新浪网.

<http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2001-11-15/400946.html> (accessed 10 apr 2023)

Zhang Wei. 2019. “以发展促人权，标本兼治，中国政府有效遏制新疆暴恐势力蔓延.” *人民日报*.

<https://shorturl.at/kABHZ> (accessed 14 Mar 2023)

中国. 1994. 新疆维吾尔自治区宗教事务条例. <http://www.xjksjj.gov.cn/yyyyttxz/9330.jhtml>

(accessed 5 Jun 2023)

中国. 2004. 宗教事务条例. [https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-09/07/content\\_5223282.htm](https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-09/07/content_5223282.htm)

(accessed 5 Jun 2023)

中国人权研究会. 2021. “美国人权政治化行径毁损人权善治根基.” *人民日报*. 17.

<http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2021/1228/c64387-32318535.html> (accessed 28 Apr 2022)

Zhou, M. 2002. “Continuation, transition, and challenge: Collectivism in China after

1949.” *Switch* 17(1), 9.