The Global War on Terror in China: an assessment of Beijing's Securitization of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

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Abstract

This paper examines shifts in Beijing's securitization of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), considering how the rhetoric produced through a Global War on Terror (GWOT) framework is irreconcilable with the Copenhagen School's securitization theory. Through the lens of this theory, this paper examines how two critical aspects of Uyghur securitization are in contention with the securitization that has become synonymous with the 'War on Terror' rhetoric. To fully examine this argument, this paper begins by first considering a theoretical elaboration of the Copenhagen school's *Securitization theory*, and a discussion of the GWOT framework. The focus will then turn to an assessment of the case study, considering a brief historical overview of securitization and how securitization applies to this case, followed by a discussion of the implications of framing the GWOT within Beijing's current securitization strategy. In considering these elements, this paper attempts to illustrate how China's securitization of Xinjiang has transformed into a reflection of Buzan, Waever and de Wilde's understanding of 'negative security'.

Keywords: Securitization, War on Terror, Surveillance, Speech Act, Extremism, Biopolitics

Introduction

When Senator Hutchinson spoke on the Senate floor in the wake of the September 11 attacks, he emphasized that just as the New York skyline had changed, so too had the geopolitical makeup of the world. While this seems like an imposing claim, the detrimental effects of the rhetoric that emerged in a post-9/11 context are observed astonishingly some 6561 miles away, in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Beijing's policy towards its north-eastern front can historically be characterized as one of national security, but in a post-9/11 context, the Chinese government has increasingly sought to label the Uyghur majority of Xinjiang as 'terrorists'. This represents a shift from previous labels of "counter-revolutionaries" and "separatists", the nuances of which this paper attempts to address. Importantly, there is also the emergence of a puzzle: to what extent is the rhetoric produced through a Global War on Terror (GWOT) framework reconcilable with securitization theory? In attempting to address this question, this paper argues that some of the key characteristics of the GWOT framework, primarily the creation of the securitized 'other' and the counter-measures (i.e. counter-terrorism) that have become expected of the securitizing actor, have rendered Beijing's securitization policy ineffective and ultimately (and ironically), counter-productive. To fully examine this argument, this paper begins by first considering a theoretical elaboration of the Copenhagen school's *Securitization theory*, and a discussion of the GWOT framework. The focus will then turn to an assessment of the case study, considering a brief historical overview of securitization and how securitization applies to this case, followed by a discussion of the implications of framing the GWOT within Beijing's current securitization strategy. In considering these elements, this paper attempts to illustrate how China's securitization of Xinjiang has transformed into a reflection of Buzan, Waever and de Wilde's understanding of 'negative security'.

It is precisely in the grey areas of the question "security for whom" that there can be witnessed a myriad of potential expansions – of state power, of insecurity at the individual level, of an infringement of rights. This space which clearly demarcates the security of the state from the security of the individual is wherein we find Xinjiang today. As of November 2019, the New York Times has reported on the "Xinjiang Papers" which refer to some 400 pages of internal documents from the Chinese Communist Party on policy directives relating to the "surveillance and control" of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). Of the key disclosures in the New York Times report, one bullet point summarizes best the importance of considering this research question:

> "Terrorist attacks abroad and the drawdown of American troops in Afghanistan heightened the leadership's fears and helped shape the crackdown. Officials argued that attacks in Britain resulted from policies that put "human rights above security," and Mr. Xi urged the party to emulate aspects of America's "war on terror" after the Sept. 11 attacks." (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019)

Two aspects of this disclosure stand out – first, the critique of policies that put "human rights above security" and second, the desire to emulate the "war on terror". While both of these directives are concerning from a human rights standpoint, this paper attempts to fill in the gap of how the shift to this "war on terror" securitization reduces security policies to dealing with normative absolutes, such as the label "terrorist". This ultimately results in insecurity at the individual level, without necessarily rectifying the core security problem.

Background

Throughout this paper there will be several references to concepts found in the domain of security studies, for ease of the reader's understanding, these will be briefly defined in this section.

Although the Copenhagen School's understanding of security is defined in the next sections, the notion of security more generally within the realm of international relations would benefit from some elaboration. While the definition of security in IR has changed over time, it's primary and most traditional sense is associated with military force as the domain, and the state as the referent

(or object of security). Following tenets of the Realist school of thought, this understanding of security concerns itself primarily with the protection of the state (in a territorial sense) against military threats from the external nexus of other state actors.

This definition begins to weaken however, when we consider the questions: “Security for whom? Security for which values? and How much security?”. It is the events of the late 60’s and early 70’s, such as the 1970’s energy crisis, that sees a shift in the domain of security. Whereas prior the domain had been military security, the oil crisis in particular brought forth the advent of ‘economic security’ – concerned with vulnerabilities of supply and demand in the ever-interconnected system of states. While our typology of security may have diversified (i.e. military, economic, environmental), it is never the case that one application of security supersedes another. This is best exemplified in the notion of ‘human security’ which shifts the object of security to the individual, and the domain of security becomes both traditional (i.e. military) and non-traditional (i.e. poverty, hunger, disease). In this case, while the state is the main facilitator of security for the individual, we can see that the security of the state is not a sufficient condition for human security. This is to say, the state can be secure while the individual remains insecure.

This paper also makes broad references to a Global War on Terror framework. While there are no specific references to this framework in the larger body of works this paper consults, it represents a culmination of references to how security is understood in a post-9/11 context. In the body of this paper, it is used primarily as an analytical tool to demonstrate how the definition of security, and in particular national security, can be strategically applied by states to further their agendas. Very briefly, the Global War on Terror framework encompasses a variety of shifts that occur in the security agendas of states globally within the context of the ‘War on Terror’. The subject of ‘securitization’ becomes very defined in that it reflects a specific region, religion, and perhaps gender in cases of everyday security. The domain of security shifts into a militarized understanding of security, which simultaneously attempts to assert development as a necessary

means to achieving that security. In practice, this brings several interesting consequences for international cooperation – there is the emergence of international interventions which are not entirely founded in the context of the "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" criteria, however they are nonetheless portrayed as 'humanitarian'. This lack of clarity around the conditions necessary for intervention contributes to the politicization of human security – security for whom?

Security and Securitization

The Copenhagen School (CS) of Critical Security Studies (CSS) popularized by the works of Buzan, Waever and de Wilde contends that security can be regarded as a "speech act" (Waever, 1995). That is to say, to utter 'security' is to create "a new social order wherein 'normal politics' is bracketed" (Balzacq, p. 171). In essence, the speech act carves out a space external to normal politics and therefore public deliberation, where the targeted issue can be dealt with. The target of securitization is often that which is deemed to be an "existential threat" to the state, and therefore the issue is framed as an emergency, which justifies exceptional state responses (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, p. 24). Three 'felicity conditions' exist for a speech act to succeed – first, the speech act must be executed in adherence to the accepted conventions, i.e. the "internal" grammar of security. Second, the securitizing actor (i.e. who defines security) is restricted to political elites. Lastly, the issue which is securitized is conventionally understood as constituting a threat. (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, p. 33) The absence of these conditions, according to Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, leads to a failure of securitization. At its core, as Balzacq argues, these conditions contribute to the "linguistic construction of a security problem" (Balzacq, p. 173). The emphasis on the linguistic construction of the threat reflects the self-referential nature of threat construction in securitization theory – i.e. the issue is not necessarily a threat, but is presented as such. The contingence of securitization theory's success on these core aspects is a reminder of its performative nature – it is an act which requires the necessary involvement of all the actors. If, for example in this case, the

Han Chinese (the intended audience of the speech act) had not been predisposed to the idea of Uyghurs (target of securitization) as an "existential threat" to Chinese sovereignty and "harmonious society", then to what extent would Beijing's securitization be deemed successful?

In considering some of the weaknesses of securitization theory, this paper agrees with Balzacq in saying that the necessity to adhere to the core elements of securitization (e.g. speech acts, political elites, conventional language) render it somewhat formal, and therefore misleadingly characterized as having a "fixed, permanent, unchanging [code of practice]". The procedural aspects of securitization theory are well-formulated and logical – but contingencies are not accounted for. These contingencies exist in the grey areas not defined by securitization theory – what is the weight of the audience's deliberation/acceptance of the speech act, what is the extent to which contextual and historical predispositions are drawn upon in constructing threats?

In order to construct the main argument of this paper, this paper will consider two relevant critiques of securitization theory, taking into account how some of these weaknesses may be amplified within the context of a GWOT framework. First, securitization theory "fails to recognize that human communities can react to securitization" (Topgyal, p. 166). Second, although securitization is a theory based on speech acts, it undermines the perlocutionary interpretation of speech, focusing solely on the illocutionary (Topgyal, p. 168) (Balzacq, p. 176).

To expand on the first critique of securitization theory, this paper turns to Topgyal who discusses the reaction of human communities to securitization within the specific context of Tibetan self-immolations. This form of counter-securitization, he argues requires space for elaboration within the Copenhagen school's framework – he proposes that the securitized 'other' is an "unavoidable audience", yet it is "rarely treated as an audience". The presence of an "overlapping audience" (i.e. the 'actual audience and the 'other') gains importance when considering the structural aspects of securitization – the 'other' is ultimately privy to the "construction of itself as a threat". In essence, if the speech act did not 'set off' counter-securitization measures from the

'other', then the implementation of the securitized, emergency policies will certainly do so. (Topgyal, p. 170) To consider this within the GWOT framework, Roberts' "cycle of repression-violence-repression" is useful to illustrate how securitization has failed to foresee, or at least accommodate Uyghur reactionary measures, therefore leading to more insecurity (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 236). This relates best to the notion of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' that China's war on terror has become (Roberts, 2018). The cycle, which consists of repressive state policies, followed by violent reactionary resistance from Uyghurs, has led to the gradual breakdown of trust between Uyghurs and the PRC. Considering the added label of terrorism within the GWOT framework, (re)-integration has been rendered "virtually impossible". It has led to the "de facto exclusion" of the Uyghurs, revoking their rights as equal citizens within the PRC. Per Slavoj Zizek, terrorists under the moniker of the GWOT have become the "modern equivalent" of *Homo Sacer* (Roberts, p. 236). Of course, this is not unique to Xinjiang but is applicable to all communities that have been persecuted in the name of the GWOT – using this framework, spaces have been labelled as uncontrollable, and populations have been cited as dangerous. This has potentially troubling implications for re-integration (de-securitization) of Uyghurs into normal politics and society.

Focusing on the philosophical ramifications of the speech act theory (per Austin), the act itself is composed of three main actions – the locutionary (utterance of sense and reference), the illocutionary (performative utterance), and the perlocutionary (consequential effects). Balzacq has argued that a weakness of the securitization theory is its emphasis on the illocutionary in speech, providing little to no attention to the perlocutionary interpretation of speech. The purpose (or rather success) of securitization, is to attain a "significant response" from the perlocutionary effect – without a response, there is no securitization. This inattention to the perlocutionary can be observed in the Xinjiang case study, and within the GWOT framework. The PRC's labelling of Uyghurs as 'existential threats' within the discursive rhetoric of the GWOT has a two-fold impact – Uyghurs

are securitized accordingly (this is extracted from the illocutionary), but the 'audience' (i.e. Han Chinese) form certain expectations as a result of the broader implications of the GWOT (the consequential effects, the perlocutionary). This notion will be further examined in the case study.

Global War on Terror (GWOT) framework

In discussing the GWOT framework, two main aspects will be examined – first, the creation of the securitized 'other' and second, the level of response required to address this constructed other. As mentioned in the previous section, threat construction relies on self-referential behavior, that is to construct a threat in reference to your own identity. This paper argues however, that even though China has historically labelled the Uyghur population as 'other' in reference to the majority Han or Confucian Chinese identity, the 'terrorist' label signifies a major shift in rhetoric, but also evokes several implications that have been difficult to address within the current security framework. With respect to the creation of the securitized 'other', this paper turns to examine how the 'terrorist' label has changed the dynamics of securitization in Xinjiang. To express simply, being labelled a terrorist is vastly different to being labelled a separatist/nationalist, or a counter-revolutionary (i.e. labels associated with Uyghurs in the past). Drawing on Roberts' interpretation of Foucault's biopolitics, terrorism has had significant implications for Uyghurs as citizens of the People's Republic of China. Roberts argues that the label of terrorism makes clear and urgent the "presence of a biological threat to society" (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 234). Similar to a virus (or disease), it must be cleansed (Chilton, p. 197). The recently disclosed 'Xinjiang Papers' have revealed that internal documents regarding the Uyghur detainment camps refer to the individuals that have been "infected by the virus of Islamic radicalism", and that they must be "quarantined and cured" (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). Logistically, what implications does this rhetoric hold for an entire community that is subject to securitization? Here this paper would supplement this hypothetical question with several facts. Consider that Uyghurs are ethnically

Turkic Muslims, they are visibly recognizable as an ‘other’, and the majority of the community is located within Xinjiang. What happens when a community with such characteristics is labelled as ‘terrorist’? As Roberts argues, the application of the GWOT framework on the Uyghur question has “substantively altered relations between the state and Uyghurs”. It has rendered them outside of Chinese society, of normal politics and of the “civilized world” (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 234). The main questions this paper poses with reference to the ‘terrorist’ label – how does a state begin to de-securitize a community articulated as a terrorist threat under the moniker of the GWOT? Are terrorists recognized as a community with true grievances, and are they reconcilable within the state (and within the realm of normal politics)? In the case of Xinjiang, the opposite is becoming increasingly clear.

Examining the biopolitics of China’s War on Terror is incredibly important, particularly when we begin to consider the specific measures that are being taken to securitize Xinjiang. Roberts argues that biopolitics categorizes the body politic into two groups – us vs. them, internal vs. external, or productive vs. unproductive. Whereas productive bodies are seen as a “critical tool in the hands of government” (i.e. this paper argues for the purposes of successful speech acts), unproductive bodies are considered to be a threat to the polity – subject to banishment, exclusion and repression (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 235). Echoing the “container schema” (Chilton, p. 197), Roberts argues that if the polity is to be seen as a living organism, then its health depends on “fostering productive actors while excluding the infectious potential of those who are unproductive” (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 235). Per Chilton, although these labels take place within the metaphorical realm, they are translated into the “pragmatic domain of political, social or military action” – this is most relevant to the case of Xinjiang.

Considering the level of expected state response to such ‘existential threats’, we can see that once the label of terrorist has been employed, the response can only heighten and repression can

only increase. Interestingly, it would seem that the Chinese re-framing of Uyghurs as terrorists has constituted the bracketing of a newer 'speech act' within an existing framework of securitization. In a sense, this transition has elevated Uyghur livelihoods and insecurity to a higher realm of exceptional politics – not only are they an 'other', but they are a 'terrorist other'. This consequential elevation explains why the PRC has attempted (rather successfully) to construct a security state within a state. The case study will elaborate further on current developments in Xinjiang.

Case study: Xinjiang

In presenting the case study, this paper will consider a contextual setting of Xinjiang (geographic and ethnographic), and the historical framing that it has been subjected to in attempting to understand the shift from counter-revolutionaries to terrorism as the primary underlying threat.

Xinjiang is a region in north-eastern China which shares borders with 8 countries (Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India). It is home to 55 of the 56 ethnic groups living in China – a 1953 census showed that 75% of the population was comprised of Uyghurs (10% Kazakh, 6% Han, 9% others). The extent of the Uyghur majority had changed dramatically by 1982, where a census revealed a composition of 45% Uyghur, 7% Kazakh and 40% Han (Kozhirova, Khazhmuratova, & Marmontova, p. 75). This shift in ethnic composition reflects specific targeting and promotion of Han in-migration to "increase the stability of the region" (Toops, p. 2). It is worthy to note that the capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi, has a majority Han population (73%), while Uyghurs constitute 9% of the population (2009) (Kozhirova, Khazhmuratova, & Marmontova, p. 75). A caveat to apply to these empirical facts – it should be mentioned that the influx of Han Chinese to Xinjiang has been a strategic position of the Chinese government in hopes that economic development and growth would "assuage separatist inclinations" (Toops, p. 2). This is a response in line with the assumption that poverty and poor socio-economic conditions harbors violence and extremism. Unfortunately, as Roberts argues, these

economic opportunities have had little impact on Uyghur livelihoods due to the “ethno-graphic disparity” of the strategy and the “macro-economic nature” (Roberts, The biopolitics of China's "war on terror" and the exclusion of the Uyghurs, p. 237) – economic growth has continued to be skewed towards the Han Chinese. Essentially, while Uyghur grievances are left largely unaddressed, Han in-migration continues to be encouraged. Many scholars have reflected on this tactic as being characteristic of China’s ‘internal colonialism policies’ (Zhu & Blachford, p. 27) (Finley, p. 22). Further, the strategic in-migration of Han Chinese into the capital of Xinjiang is again reflective of the intended audience of the speech acts.

Considering the historical interactions between Xinjiang and China proper, it can be observed that China has dealt with Xinjiang through the prism of security for many years and across several governments (Trédaniel & Lee, p. 182). The Qing, Republican and Communist governments have had common governing ideologies with respect to the north-eastern frontier – national security has dominated the security discourse due to the vulnerable (internal and external) geographical and ethnographical aspects of Xinjiang. The region has been subject to ‘foreign influences’ historically, whether it’s the emergence of pan-Turkism, to the hold of the Soviet Union on Xinjiang, to seizure of Qing control by local warlords. The contingency of Xinjiang is reflected in Chinese historiography – its people are commonly referred to as “KuagoMinzu”, trans-state people or “KuatszinMinzu”, cross-border nations (i.e. people living on both sides of the border) – this anthropological demarcation is significant in the ‘othering’ of the Uyghurs (Kozhirova, Khazhmuratova, & Marmontova, p. 75). These influences have, in one form or the other, shaped threats to Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity. Drawing again on Chilton, the precarious geo-political context of Xinjiang has been presented as a potential ‘breach in security’ – its proximity both internally (through ethno-political identities) and externally (to strong regional competitors with similar identity profiles) has maintained its status as a national security concern to China.

Although the referent of securitization has remained the same in Xinjiang, the underlying reasons, i.e. the charge, has changed. Historically, security threats to China have been primarily focused on "civilizational hierarchy" rather than "power differentials". In the case of Xinjiang, Uyghurs who are ethnically Turkic, are non-Sinicized people (i.e. who are less civilized according to Confucian Chinese) and therefore have been historically perceived as an existential threat. Separatism has also been securitized as it has been viewed as a threat to Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity (Trédaniel & Lee, 2018). The shifts in discourse can be mapped as follows: in the 1980's Xinjiang experiences a brief period of liberalism which ends as the PRC becomes increasingly concerned with the potential for national liberation movements. This is in light of the Baren Uprising of 1990, which signifies the beginning of anti-separatist campaigns run by the PRC. The late 80's is further characterized by insecurity in reaction to the fall of the USSR and the resulting independence of Central Asian states in 1991. Throughout the 90's, the PRC launched a series of security campaigns which sought to combat Uyghur separatism which increased in intensity over the course of the decade. By the early 2000's, Uyghurs were increasingly confronted with repressive policies, however it was during a period of relative stability that China began counter-terrorism measures (Roberts, 2018).

GWOT Implications in Beijing's Securitization of Xinjiang

In general, although the context of 9/11 hasn't resulted in the emergence of new theories, it has allowed for the rise of a "new political landscape upon which to maneuver" (Larrinaga & Salter, p. 14). This logic can also be applied to the context of Xinjiang securitization. Per Rodríguez-Merino, the Copenhagen School enables scholars to understand how the GWOT discourse is used to "legitimize domestic policies in front of international audiences". Using Buzan and Waever's "universalist grounds", referent objects become embroiled in a process of macro-securitization – "localized conflicts" are re-framed within the wider context of the truly *global* war on terrorism.

This is best captured by Rodríguez-Merino's discussion on the "amplifying effect" of GWOT on Beijing's construction of terrorism. He reasons that this amplification occurred through four ways – first, the PRC moved from selectively employing the language of 'terror' to its "blanket deployment" in a post 9/11 context. Second, Chinese authorities began publicizing unrest in Xinjiang. Third, there was an implicit re-framing (and re-writing) of historic events of violence as constituting early forms of terrorism. Finally, the Chinese government framed their "domestic threat of terrorism" as being on par with the global threat of terrorism (Rodríguez-Merino, p. 31).

The first amplification is best understood through the examination of violent incidents, specifically how they were represented in official government statements and state media. The Ghulja incident of 1997, for example, was described as "beating, looting and destruction" by protestors who were attempting to seize power. In contrast, the Urumqi Riots of 2009, which was similar to Ghulja in that both began as nonviolent forms of protest, were blamed on 'terrorist forces' (Rodríguez-Merino, p. 31). This represents the shift in Chinese discourse – in a post 9/11 context, the "three gangs of forces", (ethnic) separatism, (religious) extremism, and terrorism were newly emphasized (Trédaniel & Lee, p. 183).

The second amplification is found in Chinese disclosure of unrest in Xinjiang. This disclosure started with the report 'East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity' – it bolstered the presence of terrorism in Xinjiang, reporting previously undisclosed violent incidents that were now framed as being a part of the GWOT framework. Within this strategy, there are two implicit assumptions that constitute the third and fourth aspects stated. First, that if the Chinese government were to disclose previously unreported events in a report on terrorism, then this would entail a re-framing of past events in a new framework. More troublingly, multiple sources have reported on this re-imagination and retro-construction of terrorism in past events – Trédaniel and Lee cite an example from 2015:

> China's state media in November 2015 reported an attack in a coal mine in Xinjiang's Baicheng county that was estimated to have killed more than 50 people and attributed it to terrorism. However, the deadly attack indeed took place in mid-September and the Chinese media did not disclose it until shortly after a series of terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015. (Trédaniel & Lee, p. 177)

This example illustrates the deliberate framing of violence within the framework of the broader global war on terror. More specifically, evidence such as this is indicative of the purposeful amplification that the PRC government has employed in Xinjiang with respect to securitization. The second assumption is that China's disclosure of events framed within the GWOT would imply that there is a broader, global call towards the securitization of Uyghurs – in a sense, this both justifies Chinese policies but also appeals to fights against global terrorism.

Drawing on some of the elements of the GWOT framework discussed earlier, this paper consider another implication on securitization in Xinjiang. With previous labels, such as separatists, Beijing was able to securitize and de-securitize sections of the Xinjiang population that it had identified as being part of the target group. Separatists for example, had the potential to re-integrate into society as new loyalists. The issue with terrorism is the supposed permanence (at least for now) of the label – the embedded historical context (and therefore justified grievances) of the Uyghurs are erased, or circumvented by association with terrorism. Not only is their past re-written, but their future too, seems suspended – as the West is now facing issues with re-integrating extremist terrorists into society justly, so too will Beijing if Xinjiang ever ceases to pose as a threat.

This permanence points to the metaphorical elephant in this paper – what is currently taking place in Xinjiang with regards to the implementation of their security policies? Unsurprisingly, not many academic papers have discussed the lengthy implications of Beijing's security policies. Accounts are difficult to independently verify given the heavy media repression imposed region-wide, and much of it is shrouded in secrecy. What is evident however, is that the Chinese

government has crafted a social (but also physical re: infrastructure) panopticon that is beyond Foucault's wildest imagination. The ultimate security state in Xinjiang has been slowly developed over the years, it consists of a multi-pronged approach – deep state surveillance, large-scale internment camps, and a specific targeting of religious objects.

Roberts has observed that counter-terrorism legislation passed in 2015 defines "terrorism, terrorist activity and terrorist organizations" in such a way that provides a blanket criminalization of any Uyghur "dissent or religiosity as well…cultural traditions as signs of terrorism or extremism" (Roberts, p. 246). This legislation was supplemented by "de-extremification regulations" which specifically target "public expressions of Islam" and provide legal justification for the policing of "Uyghurs' thoughts, appearance and behavior". Speech, actions, physical appearances and behaviors are criminalized and brought down to the level of the community – the population as a whole is asked to "root out the extremified among them" (Roberts, p. 246). Mobility has been limited, in 2016 authorities announced that residents had to "submit their passports for review" to the Public Security Bureau. As well, the number of forced disappearances has increased, many of which have comprised of ethnically Uyghur students studying abroad (Bunin, 2019). The use of technology has amplified the possibilities of the panopticon in Xinjiang – "unprecedented levels of surveillance" have been observed – from spyware applications that record suspicious messages and data, to GPS trackers on cars, to the grid-based-system of physical checkpoints, to the network of surveillance cameras that employ facial recognition software. Furthermore, there are reports of the development of a "genetic database of all residents", using the capturing of bio-metric data and genetic samples.

Liu and Yuan discuss how insecurity linked to terrorism is based more on the potential rather than the actual (Liu & Yuan, p. 31). That is, China's securitization is constructed on the notion of the 'unknown unknowns' – but this has implications for the melding of GWOT securitization and the "mundane life of individuals". When security practices are so intimately

intertwined with public, everyday spaces, security becomes more than "state-sponsored discourse", instead becoming more "civil, urban and personal". It is perhaps a closer understanding of Xinjiang securitization, how it has affected the everyday spaces, that is needed in order to garner significant attention to the violations taking place.

Conclusion

The natural conclusion to 'securitization' is addressed in the Copenhagen School as the process of 'de-securitization'. That is, the "return of an issue from urgent, securitized situation to the area of normal negotiations" in the domain of politics (Putnik & Milošević, 2017). Throughout this paper, there have been suggestions that securitization of the Uyghurs and the GWOT discourse applied to them is irreconcilable, and this perhaps best understood in discussing a possible de-escalation of security. The GWOT rhetoric perpetuates the idea of an enemy that is known but unknown. The issue with attempting to de-securitize an idea that is unsophisticated, unorganized and scattered is that it is everywhere and nowhere. In this sense, de-securitization would not be viable in Xinjiang in the same way that it has not yet been viable for any of the security approaches that the West has perpetrated globally in the name of the war on terror. The paper began with a puzzle of whether the framework of the Global War on Terror has any significant implications (i.e. of irreconcilability) with the Copenhagen school's securitization theory. By examining some of the inherent weaknesses of securitization theory, this paper considered how GWOT discourse has led to the amplification of Beijing's securitization. It has produced ineffective security measures whereby Uyghur extremism has not (and cannot) be addressed, and where de-securitization is left questionable, particularly given current failed Western attempts at de-securitizing their own GWOT terrorists. In essence, it is evident that securitization has not been effective in addressing Uyghur discontent – it has not taken into account Uyghur counter-securitization measures, nor the Han Chinese communities elevated

expectations towards state responses, nor the effects of employing ‘terrorism’ within the broader scope of the global war on terror.

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