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**THE CHINESE POLICY ON XINJIANG: INTRA AND OUTER
FACTORS AND AFFECTS**

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 9598 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

The rise of China creates many discussions, especially now during the redesign of the international system. China, as well as the other major powers, participates in it, using the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as its foreign policy tool. At the same time, while the Initiative is for the *outer* world, for its own people it offers the Chinese Dream. However, there are many both *intra* and *outer* factors, including the ongoing conflict with Uyghurs, that may influence implementing the both ideas. This paper is to demonstrate the affects of the conflict on both the BRI and the Chinese Dream, as well, to check if the Chinese stance towards the Uyghurs falls within the international legal framework, specifically within the legal definition of genocide.

Keywords: Uyghurs, China, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Chinese Dream, genocide, international system.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CPPCG – Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

DNA – deoxyribonucleic acid

ETIM – East Turkestan Islamic Movement

EU – European Union

FBI - Federal Bureau of Investigation

ICC – International Criminal Court

OIC – Organization of the Islamic Conference

RSICC – Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

TIP – Turkistan Islamic Party

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

USA – United States of America

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WW – World War

INTRODUCTION

One of the most sounding arguments that is getting tested by different schools of legal and political thought these days is about factors that affect a multi-polar global redesign of the current international system, which arguably requires its legal framework to be ‘tuned up’. For instance, Mearsheimer, a prominent realist, believes that all the great powers are acting at each other’s expense in order to gain power.¹ Though, from the perspective of liberal intergovernmentalism, Moravcsik thinks that states define their preferences that further form their behaviour.² More specifically, considering the current circumstances of the pandemic, responses of the major powers to such global issues as the COVID-19 crisis demonstrate the ongoing geo-strategic competition, evident shortage of working legal frameworks, and the deficit of a political leadership on the global stage.³

A context for such an argument can be very different as well as multi-disciplinary each time because a range of major global actors are on a quest to comprehensively search for new ways to influence the decision-making process on the upper level. Arguably, the People’s Republic of China (further – China) via its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is effectively attempting to take part in developing a new international system, possibly even with Chinese geo-strategic characteristics. These features are related to many aspects of Chinese lifestyle, such as family, politics, cuisine, *et cetera*.⁴ In addition, for example, Do explains that the country’s characteristics and behavioural habits come from the ancient Chinese Tianxia philosophy, which consists of physical, psychological and political worlds.⁵

¹ Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York, USA: WW Norton & Company.

² Moravcsik, A. (2011). The New Liberalism. In: Goodin, R. E. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science* (709-729). New York, USA: Oxford University Press.

³ Likhotal, A. (2020). Global Leadership in the 21st Century. *Cadmus*, 4 (2), 134-140.

⁴ Vernygora, V. (2017). The Belt and Road: Gently Rebuffing Geo-politics? In: Ping, H., Zuokui, L. (Ed.), *China-CEEC Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative* (1-12). China: Paths International Ltd.

⁵ Do, T. T. (2015). China’s rise and the „Chinese dream“ in international relations theory. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 27 (1), 21-38.

Closer to the point, evidently, the BRI has already created a sub-field of academic research in itself. More specifically, international scholarship, considering the fact that the Chinese grand-initiative was introduced in 2013, has already commenced measuring the BRI's impact on *intra*-China affairs as well as the country's *outer*-perspectives. According to the liberalism-driven approach, the BRI is seen as a plan that will connect different states, create cooperation and rejuvenate the world economy through trade.⁶ On the opposite, political realism sees it as an ambition of China to become a great power and what will bring only more tensions.⁷ On the factual side, the BRI is the only comprehensive policy tool that Beijing has for others, except, arguably, for the United States of America (further – the United States or USA), and its failure will be distinctly tragic for China in geo-strategic terms. Now, the world's most populous country is increasingly enhancing its relations-building mechanisms in diverse fields (economic, cultural and political), therefore, the expansion leads to various complex issues, which need to be solved.⁸ Keeping in mind the country's multi-ethnic composition and a high number of difficult questions that are still unresolved in the neighbourhood, these issues, with necessity, are to be related not only to a range of external factors, but also with internal ones.

To indicate the point of departure, during the Third Plenum of the Central Committee in 2013 the then newly inaugurated President of China Xi Jinping made an announcement about the forthcoming economic and security reforms.⁹ Both the BRI and the Chinese Dream, a conceptual idea on rejuvenating the Chinese nation, are the core elements of the process,¹⁰ keeping in mind that the BRI is China's 'proposal' to the *outer*, non-China world¹¹. One may argue that the process of creating seamless philosophical, legal, socio-political and operational synergies between the Chinese Dream and the BRI may be jeopardised by one of the *inner* factors – the ongoing conflict of the central Government with the ethnic minority of Uyghurs, predominantly living in the north-western province of Xinjiang. Intriguingly, the Uyghurs-associated question can get an external extrapolation, because of a myriad of international claims that China's policies towards this particular ethnic as well as religious minority might be treated as having features of genocide¹².

⁶ Mahmud Titumir, R. A., Rahman, Z. (2019). Economic Implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): The Case of Bangladesh. *China and the World*, 2 (4), 1950021-1 – 1950021-38.

⁷*Ibid.*, 7.

⁸ Barnett, A. D. (2019). *The Making Of Foreign Policy In China: Structure And Process*. New York, USA: Routledge.

⁹ Jinping, X. (2013, 9-12 November). The Third Plenum of the Central Committee, Beijing, China.

¹⁰ Jinping, X. (2014). *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press.

¹¹ Vernygora, V. (2017), *supra nota* 4, 6.

¹² Finley, J. S. (2020). Why Scholars and Activists Increasingly Fear a Uyghur Genocide in Xinjiang. *Journal of Genocide Research*.

Therefore, a sizable body of academic literature has been focusing on legal aspects of what was predominantly understood by Western scholarship as suppression of Uyghurs in China. Meanwhile, this research is not only indicating that the Chinese position on the issue might be considered as being associated with genocidal actions, but as well that the stance, a multi-dimensional reflection on both *intra* and *outer* factors, is negatively impacting the ultimate success of the BRI. So, to check the argument out, there are following two questions that this research will be ‘employing’ in the process of data-gathering: a) does the treatment of Uyghurs by China fall within the legal definition of genocide and how does this *intra*-communication with the Uyghurs stack up with the Chinese Dream? and b) does the Chinese policy on Xinjiang have any interlinkages with the process of the BRI’s implementation?

In the first part of this thesis, there is a necessity to give a brief historic overview on who the Uyghurs are, their socio-political connection with China and dominating Chinese ethnicities, since before going deeper into testing the argument it is required to understand the basics. Consequently, the first chapter tells about the findings related to the legal side of the issue, interconnecting the data-gathering with the Chinese Dream and internal factors, associated with the process. This chapter will be completed using the qualitative legal research method, which consists of cross-cultural clustering method and a comparative method, allowing to compare how two culturally different groups manage to coexist, and normative discourse analysis, which includes comparing the norms that should be followed and the case that we have *de facto*.¹³

The second part of the thesis goes in depth on the process of implementation of BRI, contextualising the data-gathering with Xinjiang province as well as different external factors, which can affect the success of the grand initiative. The research in the second chapter will be conducted utilising the benefits of process tracing method, which allows to analyse the case and understand the reasons of the events happening. Process tracing is extremely important due to the reason that it highlights the pattern of behaviour that leads to a specific outcome of an event that becomes a history and therefore it becomes easier to link it with other similar cases.¹⁴ Before concluding the research, there is a third chapter, which will analyse the findings from the first two

¹³ Gibbard, A. (1986). An Expressivistic Theory of Normative Discourse. *Ethics*, 96 (3), 472-485.

¹⁴ Beach, D. (2017). *Process-Tracing Methods in Social Science*. Retrieved from <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-176>, 3 March 2021.

chapters and discuss the main argument of this thesis. The third part of this research is dedicated to a discussion on the main claim.

1. DOMESTIC POLICY AND THE CONTEXT

1.1. Uyghurs as a minority in China

Uyghurs are Muslim Turks of Mongolian descent, who immigrated to the present day territory of China already from the ninth century.¹⁵ Similarly to the other people who are associated with the Muslim civilizational paradigms, Islam plays an important role in the lives of Uyghurs. Men often wear beards, most of the population pray five times per day and fast during the holy month of Ramadan, do not consume alcohol, etc. Thus, the difference between the lifestyles and worldviews of the indigenous Uyghur population and of Han Chinese living in the same territory called Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (further – Xinjiang) is substantial.

Back in history, the land did not belong to China until 1878, when the forces of the Qing dynasty overran Xinjiang, then it became solely *de facto* a part of China, but *de jure* only in 1884.¹⁶ Uyghurs were unsatisfied with this situation, which led to a great deal of uprisings. Ultimately, the empire formed by the dynasty collapsed. Thereafter, the province of Xinjiang has attempted to gain independence twice in the first half of the XX century – in 1933, when the first Islamic Republic of East Turkistan was established, and in 1944 with the assistance of an educated in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the Soviet Union or USSR) Uyghur Saifuddin Azizi after the end of the leadership of a Marxist Sheng Shicai.¹⁷ Sheng ruled Xinjiang, when the first Republic collapsed after the victory of China in numerous battles. According to Schluessel, he tightly cooperated with the former USSR, and, with its help, he established both the educational and linguistic independence for the Uyghur minority in the area.¹⁸ Although, all the previous China's leaders, on the opposite, tried to establish the traditional Chinese lifestyle in Xinjiang. The wish of Uyghurs to be independent received the Soviet Union's political support in principle (keeping in mind the former USSR's distinct anti-religious stance), but only until China became itself a communist state.¹⁹

¹⁵ Dillon, M. (1997). Ethnic, Religious and Political Conflict on China's Northwestern Borders: The Background to the Violence in Xinjiang. *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin*, 80-86.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ Dreyer, J. T. (1994). The PLA and regionalism in Xinjiang. *The Pacific Review*, 7 (1), 41-55.

¹⁸ Schluessel, E. T. (2009). History, identity, and mother-tongue education in Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey*, 28 (4), 383-402.

¹⁹ Share, M. (2010). The Russian Civil War in Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang), 1918-1921: A Little Known and Explored Front. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62 (3), 389-420.

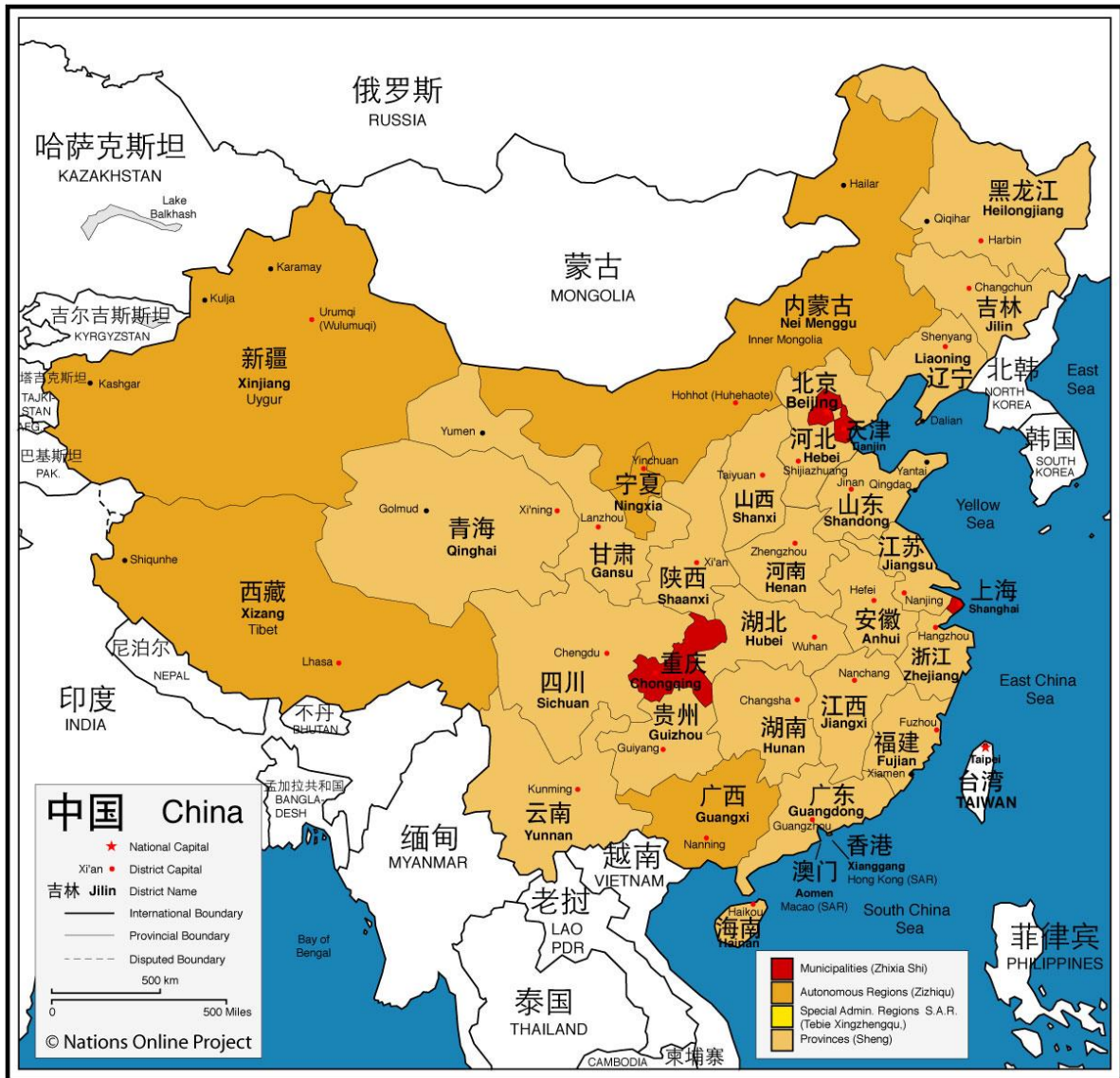


Figure 1. Map of China

Source: Administrative Map of China. (2021). Retrieved from

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/china_administrative_map2.htm.

Xinjiang became officially a part of China in 1949, when Mao Zedong came to power with the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China. Characteristically for the new *status quo*, as noted by Dillon, in the same year Mao decided to resettle Han Chinese to the province.²⁰ Arguably, these circumstances are similar to the post-World War (WW) II development in the former British Palestine, where different migrative movements of Jewish communities led to the establishment of the State of Israel, having solved only one part of the issue. Back to China, while at that time there were only 6.7 percent of Hans, in 2008 there were already 40 percent of the population of

²⁰ Dillon, M. (1997), *supra nota* 15, 10.

that specific region.²¹ As a consequence, Uyghurs, previously the majority of Xinjiang, rapidly became a minority. In a similar manner, in order to stop the birth growth of Uyghurs the women sterilization campaign had started in Xinjiang. In *Figure 2* it can be seen that, compared to 2016, the percent of the sterilized women has grown extremely for two years. The sterilization, in turn, leads to the decrease in the birth rate, which is also demonstrated in *Figure 2*. In the long run the percentage of the Uyghur population will drop even more or might even disappear.

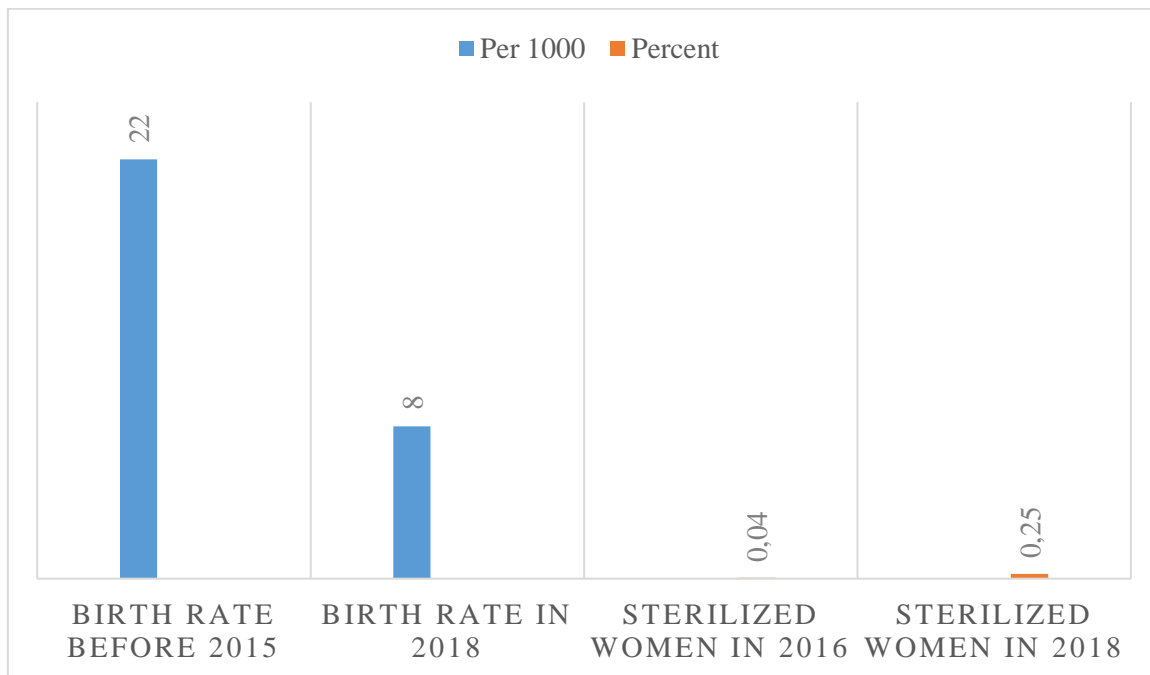


Figure 2. Uyghur birth rate and women sterilization in Xinjiang
Source: Mastrodonato (2021)

Despite the fact that all the fights for freedom from China were objectively unsuccessful, Uyghurs have been getting the desired freedom slowly step by step throughout history. In the 1980s, Hu Yaobang, the then Secretary General of Chinese Communist Party (CCP), wished to give autonomy to Uyghurs and change their economic, cultural and educational policies, but, some years later, Wang Zhen, the highly influential as well as conservative 4th Vice President of China, refused to make these reforms arguing that it would lead again to the establishment of East Turkestan with the time.²² The fate of Uyghurs in China has always been changing due to the different stance of the leaders. According to Millward, the issue concerning the Uyghurs and other

²¹ Fan, C. C., Howell, A. (2011). Migration and Inequality in Xinjiang: A Survey of Han and Uyghur Migrants in Urumqi. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52 (1), 119-139.

²² Dillon, M. (1997), *supra nota* 15, 10.

Muslim population in China became a great problem only in the 1990s.²³ Though, history has demonstrated that *de facto* it was the issue already a long period of time before. Uyghurs repeatedly fought for their freedom and China again and again tried to make them Chinese. The new wave of dissatisfaction arose in 2009, when China was engulfed with many bloody bombings and riots.²⁴

1.2. China as a host-country

In order to understand China's actions more comprehensively, a range of unique China-associated distinguishing features and characteristics should be taken into account.²⁵ However, their worldview can be revealed purely through their long and thorny history full of events. These events will give as well some explanations to their stance towards the Uyghurs and Muslims. The first struggles between the Mongols and Chinese were already in 300 B.C., when Mongols invaded China using the horseback warfare, so that Chinese, in order to protect their lands, built the Great Wall of China.²⁶ Although, there are many examples, when two parties had conflicts throughout the history, but they ended up having a good relationship, this is not the same case. Since the first struggles the relationship between those two ethnic groups did not improve at all.

The world famous Han dynasty rule began around 200 B.C and lasted for four centuries, during this time most of the changes were made as expanding the territories to the north-west, development of culture, education and art, similarly the Silk Road was built.²⁷ Then the original Silk Road went through the city Urumqi, which belongs to Xinjiang region and was an important point on this road. Although there were still many battles with Turks, but, from the perspective of Eberhard the Chinese diplomacy was more effective, because it aimed to incite eastern and western Turks against each other.²⁸ However, their way of diplomacy is very much alike to what it is nowadays. Then, the original concept of Silk Road was used for influencing others, but, these days, the whole project has a much grander outlook of the BRI. At the same time, there was a rearrangement inside the country. China was divided into several regions, which had their own

²³ Millward, J. (2004). *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*. Washington DC, USA: East-West Center Washington.

²⁴ Hayes, A. (2019). Interwoven „Destinies“: The Significance of Xinjiang to the China Dream, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Xi Jinping Legacy. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29 (121), 31-45.

²⁵ Do, T. T. (2015), *supra nota* 5, 6.

²⁶ Eberhard, W. (2013). *A History of China*. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.

²⁷ Fairbank, J. K., Goldman, M. (2006). *China: A New History*. London, England: Harvard University Press.

²⁸ Eberhard, W. (2013), *supra nota* 26, 13.

rulers, but all in all the country was still unified. Many years later, in the XIII century China was ruled by the Great Khan until the XIV century, when the Mongols were expelled by the Ming Emperor.²⁹ Since then China was governed only by the Chinese leaders, but the footprint of Mongol and Turk rule together with the disaffection was left for a long period of time. The same Emperor Ming later on decided to stop trading with Mongols with an eye to reduce their attacks, as a result it led to the new policy influenced by the rising xenophobia.³⁰ The outcome of such a policy was reduced trading with all other countries around the world and the end of modernization. Therefore, in the case of China restraining itself from the rest of the world, repeatedly triggered by xenophobia, might be seen as a failure in a successful trading. This mistake cannot be repeated with the BRI, but it should not be forgotten that the xenophobia still exists, especially towards the Uyghurs, who remind of the difficult times in the past. Thus, something has to be done with those cultural groups, so that they are not going to disturb China for completing their huge plans.

After the rise of Mao Zedong, the next big policy that had dramatically affected the context was the Cultural Revolution in 1966-1976, which brought human rights abuses, because, as Fairbank argued, the assertion of human rights would be too selfish and antisocial.³¹ These abuses were not only against all non-Chinese, but against China's own people. However, nowadays, China is opened economically, it is still closed culturally, which can be seen through the extremely strict censorship due to which many Western websites and social media are blocked in China.

1.3. The legal side of the issue

The issue of genocide has been discussed in different contexts among various segments of society starting from the far from the political life people and continuing with outstanding scholars and global politicians. It has been always a hot topic due to the reason that it is quite hard to come to unanimity whether is one case a genocide or not. For instance, the first concentration camps of modern time were, arguably, established by the British during the Anglo-Boer War, or another illustration might be exemplified by the debates on the Holodomor or the question of Armenian genocide (with the latter gaining momentum right now in the international arena, especially, in the

²⁹ Fairbank, J. K., Goldman, M. (2006), *supra nota* 27, 13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

USA under the new leadership of President Joe Biden³²). Although the normative side of the issue is crucial and the political world has to be within the legal framework, the concept of the genocide is highly politicized. Back to the USA and the re-emerged debate about Armenian genocide, intriguingly, Armenia has not recognized the Holodomor as such, but Azerbaijan, on the opposite, has³³. These and similar situations highlight discrepancies and disconnections existing between international politics and international humanitarian law, showing how fragile our international system is.

1.3.1. Genocide and crimes against humanity

First of all, in this subchapter the legal documents regarding the genocide will be reviewed. Among them the most prominent international document is the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), which is completely dedicated to genocide and ratified by China. Here, Article 2 of CPPCG states: “In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”³⁴

Based on the aforementioned information in *Figure 2* in the chapter 1.1., if the involvement of China in the women sterilization campaign is going to be proved, then the point d of this Article could be implemented. However, it needs serious evidence, which will demonstrate that the Uyghur females are not doing it on their own free will. On the other hand, China is world famous with its one-child policy, therefore, such a campaign of sterilization might be claimed to be a part of this policy with no special intent to destroy the Uyghur minority. Since it is an extremely serious crime, there should be clear and reliable proof of it. Especially, even if some of the above mentioned *actus reus* are verified, there should be plenty of work done in order to prove the *mens rea* of the state to destroy the group. At the same time, there might be an intention not to destroy a

³²BBC. (2021). *Biden says Armenia mass killing was genocide*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56874811>, 08 March 2021.

³³Socor, V. (2006). CIS Split at Minister Conference. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 3 (80).

³⁴United Nations, General Assembly, Treaty Series, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948.

particular group, but, as China claims, what will be discussed later on in the next subchapter, to defend the state from the terrorists. Here, it becomes questionable, where is the 'provable' line that divides the counterterrorism from the intentional extermination. Similarly, according to the Article 3 of the same convention genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide and attempt to commit genocide shall be punished.³⁵ Repeatedly, the attempt will be also hard to prove, because in such case there should be a failure to commit the crime, so if there was no genocide, then there has to be only little evidence of a trial.

The next important international legal document is Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (RSICC), which Article 6 about the crime of genocide is absolutely identical to the above mentioned Article 2 of CPPCG.³⁶ However, while in the case of genocide, which is in these terms almost impossible to determine, especially, in the international arena, where politics is an exquisite game, there are articles that prohibit the crimes against the humanity and here the RSICC comes to hand. According to the Article 7 of RSICC crimes against humanity are defined as: "For the purpose of this Statute, "crime against humanity" means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

- (a) Murder;
- (b) Extermination;
- (c) Enslavement;
- (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;
- (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;
- (f) Torture;
- (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
- (h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;
- (a) Enforced disappearance of persons;

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁶ United Nations, General Assembly, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17 July 1998.

- (b) The crime of apartheid;
- (c) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.”³⁷

Hence, based on this specific Article, having all the necessary evidence, the possibility to hold China responsible for the actions, which are claimed to be suppression of Uyghurs, is significantly higher. Observing all China’s actions in the next sub-chapter, it will get this research closer to the arguable point that the criteria for the prevalence of the attacks and the civilian population, mentioned in the Article 7, are met.

In a like way, it is not only claimed that there might be genocide, but as well that there is a breach of human rights, for instance, on the base of Article 27 (1) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”.³⁸ Trying to change the lifestyle, what is closely associated with the culture of Uyghurs by resettling Han Chinese to Xinjiang is, to a particular degree, depriving Uyghurs from their rights. In addition, actions that lead to the decrease in birth rate of Uyghurs result the chance for the disappearance of their culture. Undoubtedly, the link between the culture and genocide cannot be denied, although, there is no such definition as cultural genocide in legal terms.³⁹ Thus, it can be argued that the violations of human rights might end up with more unlawful activities.

Not to commit genocide is a rule that is considered as *jus cogens*.⁴⁰ Hence, it means that it is a rule, which is above the others as all the *jus cogens* regulations, since they provide the basic legal standards. Intriguingly, it does not matter if a state, in this case China, has any genocidal policy, it will still be internationally responsible.⁴¹ The same applies to the crimes against humanity, because they are also *jus cogens*. However, there is a court that logically has to investigate and conduct trials related to genocide and other crimes against humanity, which is called International Criminal Court (ICC), but since China is not a party of this court, the ICC refuses to investigate this case. Here, it becomes unclear how a state can be held responsible for a crime, breaching the

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁸ United Nations, General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948.

³⁹ Finnegan, C. (2020). The Uyghur Minority in China: A Case Study of Cultural Genocide, Minority Rights and the Insufficiency of the International Legal Framework in Preventing State-Imposed Extinction. *Laws*, 9 (1), 1-20.

⁴⁰ Gaeta, P. (2007). On What Conditions Can a State Be Held Responsible for Genocide? *European Journal of International Law*, 18 (4), 631-648.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

fundamental laws, if the court cannot examine the case due to the state not being a party and what is the point in *jus cogens* then, if the culpability of the state depends on the agreement with the court. Though, there is still a possibility to bring China to the ICC, but for that it is required to get the referral from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is unlikely to happen because of the veto power of China.⁴² Again, the situation demonstrates that the established international regulations, which are meant to be for all and form equality between all the states, in fact, creates the possibility for some states to avoid the proceedings and any other conflictual situations owing to veto power, becoming superior.

1.3.2. China's policy towards Uyghurs: then and now

In 1978, already in the post-Mao time, Deng Xiaoping became the country's Paramount leader to start his unprecedented economic, political and social modernizations in order to open the previously closed China for the rest of the world.⁴³ As it was mentioned above, the trading as well as the modernization of China were dramatically decreased by Emperor Ming, what naturally inflicted damage to Chinese economy and its political position in the world. In 2010, there were many developments done in China under the leadership of Hu Jintao also in the city of Kashgar, which is predominantly populated by the Uyghurs, with an eye to attract international investors and increase the economic prosperity, which led to the full destruction of the Old City.⁴⁴ Understandably, the idea of modernization was made with noble intentions, but the interests of the Uyghurs were not taken into account at all. In 2013, the current Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that the reforms, which he is planning to arrange during his presidency, require improving the strength of the leading party with an eye to taking control of the whole situation going on in the country.⁴⁵ It includes as well the undeniably conflictual situation with the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang, where the strengthening of the CCP would be likewise taking place. Since the conflict is becoming brutal with the years passing, then the Chinese side is expected to take over the control using the hard power. Similarly, one of the reasons for the strengthening that Yu mentions may be the main aim of the leading CCP, which is to stay in power, what can be achieved by keeping everything under total control.⁴⁶ Especially, there are some difficulties in establishing authority in

⁴² Finnegan, C. (2020), *supra nota* 39, 17.

⁴³ Marti, M. E. (2001). *China and the Legacy of Deng Xiaoping: From Communist Revolution to Capitalist Evolution*. Dulles, USA: Potomac Books.

⁴⁴ Hayes, A. (2019), *supra nota* 24, 13.

⁴⁵ Lam, W. (2016). Xi Jinping's Ideology and Statecraft. *Chinese Law & Government*, 48 (6), 409-417.

⁴⁶ Yu, J. (2018). The belt and road initiative: domestic interests, bureaucratic politics and the EU-China relations. *Asia Europe Journal*, 16, 223-236.

the regions, where locals are restless, for instance, in Xinjiang. Consequently, the existing authority of the leading party is at stake, because of the ongoing for many centuries conflict. However, the BRI will engage all the regions of China bringing up their strong sides that might contribute to trading, what will lead to the economic development inside the state.⁴⁷ Thus, the Initiative might be seen as a rescuing instrument, although at the same time the conflict may be the obstacle for implementation of the idea.

As a consequence, it is questionable to understand why cannot China waive the land and give autonomy to the Uyghur minority in order for them to have decision-making powers. Since Xinjiang is the biggest region of China, which covers 1/6 of its territory⁴⁸, it would be an enormously big part of its land to give away. In a like manner, giving it just to the minority will lead other minorities, not forgetting about the multi-ethnic composition of China, similarly to fight for independence. As a result, there will be no powerful China not only on the international stage, but also in the context of the territoriality there will be many different smaller states. In economic terms, 84 percent of China's cotton is produced near Aqsu and Kashgar, which are located in Xinjiang according to Byler.⁴⁹ China, as one of the most significant and largest exporters, cannot lose so much cotton, which is widely used in manufacturing textile and other goods that people use every day. Though, since 2020 it has come to the attention that many clothing brands and some states such as the USA have imposed sanctions on cotton products from Xinjiang due to the claims that Uyghurs are forced to labour. Similarly, Kuo noted that the province has a lot of mineral, oil and gas resources.⁵⁰ Therefore, China due to its own reserves might cover to some extent its energy demand and as a consequence be less dependent on energy import.

Though, according to the facts above there should be many workplaces, but, as Kuo argues Muslims face unequal treatment, when trying to find a job, especially in the administrative positions.⁵¹ China is known as a hierarchically structured society and getting a higher position at work, would mean more significance in the community. Thus, speculatively, if Uyghurs get these positions, their common voice will get more attention from socio-political perspective, and, as a

⁴⁷ Fallon, T. (2015). The New Silk Road: Xi Jinping's Grand Strategy for Eurasia. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 37 (3), 140-147.

⁴⁸ Dreyer, J. T. (1994), *supra nota* 17, 10.

⁴⁹ Byler, D. (2021, 18 March). *China Speakers Series: Understanding China's Power and its Abuse in Xinjiang*. Conference, Tallinn.

⁵⁰ Kuo, R., Steele, L. (2007). Terrorism in Xinjiang? *Ethnopolitics: Formerly Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 6 (1), 1-19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

result, the Chinese influence in the region can be diminished. Moreover, in his turn Hayes claims that there is a special contract that Muslims have to sign, which prohibits unusual travels, spreading politically sensitive information, sale of land, teaching Islam, refusal to watch or read official media, as well, China has set security checkpoints, smartphone checks, if there were any suspicious actions done, face and voice recognition, scanners, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samplings and other identification devices.⁵² Probably, such points as the security checks seem to be innocuous, because there are diverse threats around us during the era of globalization. Nevertheless, the majority of these requirements violate human rights and restrict the freedom of Uyghur culture. Although, as Leibold notices, diverse devices are also used in the West for surveillance, but there it is reasoned to be used for marketing purposes.⁵³ On the other hand, if it was used only with the goals of marketing, the terrorists and other serious criminals would not be found. Here, with an eye to prevent any kind of socio-political extremism, China has made a special registration for knives, chemicals or other things that might be considered as weapons in Xinjiang.⁵⁴ Again, on the one hand, it is understandable from the security perspective that China, which believes in the correlation between the terrorists and Uyghurs, tries to protect itself from the Islamic terrorism, what is close by, but it is extremely important not to go overboard with these rules. Byler in his turn adds that the Chinese government has also created a special list with the signs of extremists, which includes, for instance, wearing clothes with crescent moon and star or wearing masked clothes.⁵⁵ Such signs have clear bonds with the religion and traditions, but evidently not with the extremism that China states. Therefore, it can be concluded that the list is more a description of Uyghur Muslim rather than the Islamic extremist, what leads to the suppression of this specific cultural group.

Intriguingly, the feeling that their culture, traditions, language and religion are under threat makes Uyghurs vulnerable and they get easily recruited to the terrorist organizations, which fight against the so-called enemies of Islam.⁵⁶ Hence, the situation reminds of a vicious circle, because this feeling of threat leads to joining the terrorism and threat of terrorism from another side leads to the extraordinary lists with signs and restrictions that in turn create the sense of threat to culture.

⁵² Hayes, A. (2020), *supra nota* 24, 13.

⁵³ Leibold, J. (2019). Surveillance in China's Xinjiang Region: Ethnic Sorting, Coercion, and Inducement. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29 (121), 46-60.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁵ Byler, D. (2021, 18 March), *supra nota* 49, 19.

⁵⁶ Roberts, S. R. (2018). The biopolitics of China's „war on terror“ and the exclusion of the Uyghurs. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50 (2), 232-258.

At the same time, as Kuo argues, only a minority of all the Uyghur population in China are violent extremists.⁵⁷ That is why imposing these measures against all the cultural and religious groups would be unfair towards the majority of them that are not under the influence of the ideology of terrorists or these measures could be spread then across the whole China. Especially considering the claims of Roberts, there is no evident connection between the arguably terrorist organizations as, for example, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), also there are no other actions undertaken by these groups except the threatening videos towards China that they have published.⁵⁸ Intriguingly, the ETIM is considered as a terrorist organization by the United Nations (UN)⁵⁹ and the USA, which under the leadership of Donald Trump removed it from the list of terrorists.⁶⁰ Since a lot of time has passed from the moment of publishing and no attacks considered as terror and proved to be done by Uyghurs were committed, then there is a low possibility that any of these threats will ever be brought to life.

Similarly for more effective security arrangements in the country, China has established detention camps for Uyghurs, so-called political re-education centres, which are claimed by Hayes to have inadequate conditions for human beings.⁶¹ While all the other states in the world have prisons for detention, sometimes also with poor conditions, China is building in addition the re-education centres. Though, one of the main differences is that there are no trials and the detained have no chance to challenge their stay there using any of the well-known legal methods. Intriguingly, at first China has denied the existence of such places, but later confirmed.⁶² The initial negation naturally leads to a thought that China is acting illegitimately and is trying to hide something, otherwise there would be no reason to deny. In his turn, Roberts claims that in the camps Uyghurs are forced to watch propaganda movies and march.⁶³ Zenz also adds to that learning patriotic texts, Chinese language and criticizing their religious traditions, in other words learning to love China and everything related to it.⁶⁴ Thus, camps are made for forcing one group to forget their lifestyle

⁵⁷ Kuo, R., Steele, L. (2007), *supra nota* 50, 19.

⁵⁸ Roberts, S. R. (2021, 18 March). *China Speakers Series: Understanding China's Power and its Abuse in Xinjiang*. Conference, Tallinn.

⁵⁹ Chinadaily. (2021). *Truth about Xinjiang's anti-terrorism efforts the West doesn't tell*. Retrieved from <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202104/25/WS608536a0a31024ad0baba36d.html>, 08 May 2021.

⁶⁰ Shan, W. (2021). *Xinjiang: what the West doesn't tell you about China's war on terror*. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3129325/xinjiang-what-west-doesnt-tell-you-about-chinas-war-terror>, 08 May 2021.

⁶¹ Hayes, A. (2020), *supra nota* 24, 13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶³ Roberts, S. R. (2018), *supra nota* 56, 20.

⁶⁴ Zenz, A. (2018). „Thoroughly Reforming Them Towards a Healthy Heart Attitude“: China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey*, 38 (1), 102-128.

and learn the way of life of another, which is predominant. Knowing the traditions, culture and language of a state of residence is indisputably essential, but it should not obstruct in any way living one's own preferred lifestyle. Before there were also similar camps called *laojiao*, where people were sent in the same manner without any trials and legal procedures, but the re-education was done through the labour and among the detainees could be everyone, not only non-Chinese.⁶⁵ So, the idea of the detention of "undesirables" for the Chinese government is nothing new, the only thing that has changed is that the group of undesirables consists purely of Uyghurs now. On the other hand, China Daily argues that the measures undertaken by China are effective, because there have been no attacks since 2017.⁶⁶

1.4. The Chinese Dream

As it has been already mentioned in the introduction part of this paper, the Chinese Dream is a crucial idea for *inner*-China. The Dream aims to assist its development and, therefore, revive the whole Chinese nation ⁶⁷, which means, based on Xi himself, that the Chinese will become an invincible force ⁶⁸. Making them irresistible, as if it were an army, and above the others inside the state will make them powerful and more dominant outside the borders as well, adding here the influence of the BRI. Thus, it will have more chances to become the next world hegemon, especially with the fast economic growth. Moreover, Xi highlights the fact that a person can live well only when his or her state and nation are doing well, hence, the Chinese Dream will make its people happy.⁶⁹ In this way, the Chinese current leader emphasizes the unity of his nation abroad, while trying to establish it inside. Possibly, such speeches and statements will also inculcate to the people residing in China that they are one. It was similarly mentioned by Bekkevold and Ross, who argued that the Chinese Dream, which Xi is representing, encourages nationalism among the people and creates the nationalist foreign policy.⁷⁰ The feeling of unity and superiority as Chinese will stimulate the historical xenophobia and contemptuous policy towards the diverse minorities. Evidently, nationalism cannot always be considered as something terrible, but in the case with the minority of Uyghurs the Chinese Dream can play an important role. Though Xi, on the contrary,

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁶ Chinadaily. (2021), *supra nota* 59, 21.

⁶⁷ Bekkevold, J. I., Ross, R. S. (2016). *China in the Era of Xi Jinping: Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges*. Washington DC, USA: Georgetown University Press.

⁶⁸ Jinping, X. (2014), *supra nota* 10, 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁰ Bekkevold, J. I., Ross, R. S. (2016), *supra nota* 67, 22.

claims that without creating a unity between the ethnic groups of China it will be impossible to realize the Dream.⁷¹ Here, it becomes questionable how the unity will be established, through friendship or forcing the minorities to become Chinese and eliminating the undesirables. According to the last subchapter, the Chinese government is choosing the second path.

1.5. Mini-conclusion

The biggest region of China - Xinjiang, which is mostly populated by the Muslim Uyghurs, who are Turks of Mongolian descent, is one of the most problematic China's part. The conflict began already a long time ago, when China was struggling with Mongols and what led to xenophobia and the state closure from the outside world. The fight of the Uyghurs for their independence has been going on since then, supported by the USSR in many ways until Mao Zedong came to power. The stance towards this minority of both the state's and the region's leaders was changing throughout the time, but only starting from the leadership of Deng Xiaoping China started modernizing this region similarly to others. Due to the importance of Xinjiang for China and its unstable situation, especially after the escalation of attacks and riots in 2009 and further suspicions of the relation with terrorist organizations, located in the neighbouring countries, China undertook the brutal measures and launched its counterterrorism campaign. The relationship between Uyghurs and China can be described by a vicious circle, where the China's actions are triggered by the fear of terrorism and the dissatisfaction of Uyghurs by the strict control. Some of these measures indeed go beyond the borders as the list with signs. Although, estimating the effectiveness, there have been no attacks since 2017. On the other hand, for instance, the re-education camps can be considered as a part of the Chinese Dream idea, which aims to unite the nation and the minorities in order to create a powerful state.

From the international perspective, the current hegemon – the USA changed its position towards the ETIM and accuse China in committing the genocide. Though, in the normative context it is not yet proved and needs incontrovertible evidence. The same concerns the crimes against humanity, which are more possible to prove since no testimony of a special intent is required. Despite these rules being *jus cogens*, it is unclear how to hold China responsible for the crimes, in case they will be proved, because the ICC refuses to investigate due to the reason that China is not a party to it.

⁷¹ Jinping, X. (2014), *supra nota* 10, 7.

The only possible way would be the referral of the UNSC, but even here China can veto. Therefore, the situation shows that the international system is not perfect and highly politicized.

2. EXTERNAL POLICY AND THE CONTEXT

2.1. External factors

Some 50 years ago, China could not even compete with the two great powers, who governed the whole world. Nevertheless, Marti claims that the collapse of the USSR and the withdrawal of the US from the western Pacific were the sign for China that now it is quite possible for it to become a hegemon in Southeast Asia.⁷² Evidently, after gaining power in one region it would be easier to spread its influence further. Currently the BRI is playing the role of the high-powered foreign policy tool, which assists China in approaching and, often, winning over other parts of the world. At the same time, Millward argues that the flourishing terrorism in the neighbouring Afghanistan, which is linked with Islam, and the Muslim population in the Central Asian states create a threat of the spread of jihadism to Xinjiang and further to the other parts of China.⁷³ In addition to that, terrorism inflicts not only a distributive threat, but also it forms an insecurity for trading. The aftermath of that is a potential risk that the products will not withstand the shipping. Naturally, such a prominent Initiative creates dozens of discussions around itself and, thus, the issue of Uyghurs in these circumstances cannot be left in the shadow without attention. Obviously, all the stories and appearing rumours from time to time form the waves of indignation and non-acceptance. In its turn, *WikiLeaks* revealed information about the alleged lobby that China conducted in Turkey, so that it would cancel the debates about the Chinese official stance towards the Uyghurs in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).⁷⁴ To a certain degree the stance of Turkey is quite understandable, because it would not want to lose such a big partner, despite the ethnical brotherhood with the Uyghurs, specifically in the terms of the BRI, where geographically Turkey is in the winning position. Similarly, Klimeš has also claimed that there is an active Uyghur lobby in Turkey, who are at the same time bringing the information about the repression on the

⁷² Marti, M. E. (2001), *supra nota* 43, 18.

⁷³ Millward, J. (2004), *supra nota* 23, 13.

⁷⁴ WikiLeaks. (2009). *Xinjiang: China reportedly defeated OIC statement on Uighurs, seeking observership*. Retrieved from https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BEIJING2185_a.html, 04 February 2021.

surface for the world.⁷⁵ Although, based on the speeches of a former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) whistle-blower, Sibel Edmonds, Turkey together with the USA organize the smuggling and training of Uyghurs, as well equip with the armament.⁷⁶ It is no wonder that Turkey allows itself to support both parties, because of its policy under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which is, as author suggests, featured by perpetual adjustments in accordance to a given moment or circumstances. This point can be illustrated by the nature of Turkey-Russia conflict in 2015. Due to the fact that, the USA has its involvement in the discussed matter, it has no will in losing its status as the hegemon, which China is likely to take over in the near future.

2.2. The Belt and Road Initiative and Xinjiang

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the Initiative is the idea of China to create the new version of the Silk Road. According to Summers, most of the people see the BRI as a foreign policy idea of the current leader of China Xi Jinping.⁷⁷ Indeed, the project involves a lot of communication and cooperation with the neighbouring states and as well with other states that have joined the Initiative. With quite a many of them China has not so friendly and peaceful relations. To some extent, the alluring financial benefit of the BRI makes China attractive in the context of cooperation, in other cases, the state-initiator has to undertake some steps in order to convince to participate. For example, based on the report, for completing different projects out of its borders, China is giving loans to the participants, what allows it to get a lease on the foreign land for 99 years, what therefore leads to the conclusion that China is making its colonies.⁷⁸ It is a bright illustration of one of the steps for convincing, especially the economically poorer countries, to work together. By giving loans China creates the picture of being a benevolent and generous partner that will support and help to upgrade or build the new roads, railways or ports. At the same time, this partner obviously needs guarantees, which can be the land abroad. As a result, participants do not see any serious threat behind the veil of temptation and China gains power softly. In the same manner, as Fallon claims, China tries to engage in the BRI 11 former communist states from Central and Eastern Europe, which will create a pro-China lobby in the European

⁷⁵ Klimeš, O. (2021, 18 March). *China Speakers Series: Understanding China's Power and its Abuse in Xinjiang*. Conference, Tallinn.

⁷⁶ Numuves. (2021). *Ex-FBI predicted Xinjiang "crisis" in 2015! 5 min vid* [Video]. United States.

⁷⁷ Summers, T. (2016). China's „New Silk Roads“: sub-national regions and networks of global political economy. *Third World Quarterly*, 37 (9), 1628-1643.

⁷⁸ Global Risk Insights China's Belt & Road Initiative: Risk Insights Report 2018.

Union (EU) and increase the influence of China.⁷⁹ Due to the similar communist historical background it is easier to get them on the same side. Additionally, making these states allies means that almost half of the EU Member States will be with China, what will push Chinese interests forward, not only related to the BRI, and trigger other European states to join as well.

On the other hand, for instance Yu sees this Initiative as a part of the economic reform of China.⁸⁰ This opinion might be reasoned by the fast economic growth of China and the promises given by the current leader regarding the development. In addition, no state would arrange such a huge project, if it did not gain anything from it. What makes Xinjiang province stand out from all the regions of China, which will take part in the BRI, is that it is an essential transit point of energy resources and trading, which makes it an extremely important territory for Chinese economy from the point of view of Kuo.⁸¹ Therefore, any instability or losing the territory at all as a worst scenario would be tragic for China, because it will undermine the BRI on the whole. Firstly, if China loses the cotton produced in the province, it would not be able to produce and export that much textile. Secondly, the conflicts with Uyghurs may lead the international society to be against China and impose sanctions or other strict measures. In a significant addition, Summers noted that, historically, Xinjiang was a part of the Great Islamic Circle, which linked China with the Middle East region through Central Asia.⁸² So, without Xinjiang China will have to search for the bypass in order to trade with these regions. Logistically, by maritime it would be possible only through the South China Sea or by land through India-Pakistan-Afghanistan, in both cases it has disputes with some of the implicated states. Not only it is crucial in terms of economy, Fallon noticed that trading with the Central Asian states will help to win them over to the Chinese side, because now it is a sphere of influence of Russia due to the common historic background.⁸³ Evidently, China would not like to lose its impact on the neighbouring region to another major power as Russia. However, the indigenous people living in Central Asia are also Muslims and ethnically similar to Uyghurs. Hence, the sense of brotherhood with Uyghurs should not allow Central Asia to have friendly relations with China until the suppression will be stopped.

⁷⁹ Fallon, T. (2015), *supra nota* 47, 19.

⁸⁰ Yu, J. (2018), *supra nota* 46, 18.

⁸¹ Kuo, R., Steele, L. (2007), *supra nota* 50, 19.

⁸² Summers, T. (2016), *supra nota* 77, 25.

⁸³ Fallon, T. (2015), *supra nota* 47, 19.

2.3. Mini-conclusion

There are many external factors affecting the policy towards the Uyghurs. One of the main factors is the opportunity for China to become the next hegemon after the collapse of the USSR and due to the decline of power of the USA. Evidently, the United States is not interested in passing its power to somebody else and therefore, it might undertake some preventive measures as, for instance, its cooperation with Turkey in teaching Uyghur extremists and sending them back to China with armaments. The constantly changing position of Turkey, as it is beneficial for it, is not something new. It is acting diplomatic yet on the verge helping both China, while cancelling the debates in OIC, and Uyghurs by spreading the information about the violent treatment.

Here, the BRI steps into the game by convincing diverse states from different parts of the world to side with China. On the one hand, it helps to create a good picture of China through investing, for example, into poorer states, on the other hand, spreading its influence and gaining power as, for instance, it is doing in the EU by lobbying the Eastern Europe. However, the threat of terrorism, which is closely tied with Uyghurs from the China's point of view, might undermine the Initiative. At the same time, the information spreading about the violent treatment might create a conflict with the international society and there will be almost no participants in the BRI. In a similar manner, Xinjiang is extremely important for the Initiative, especially because of its location, which connects China with the Middle East and Central Asia, which it wants to win over as a sphere of influence. Without this Chinese region the trading in the BRI will become hindered.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Intra-communication with the Uyghurs and the Chinese Dream

The actions undertaken against the Uyghurs could fall within the legal definition of genocide, only if there would be the proof of *mens rea* and evidence that it is not a part of the counterterrorism with Chinese characteristics, which are way stricter than the Western. Since China is carrying out its counterterrorism campaign related to Uyghurs and Muslims in Xinjiang, it would be almost impossible to prove the intention to exterminate them. Thus, as a consequence, there should be a distinction made between the intentional eradication and the counterterrorism, but the line between those two concepts is very subtle.

From China's perspective, the Chinese Dream has to unite the Chinese nation, considering the fact that China has multi-ethnic society, it means that the diverse minorities would be also included and brought together. Hence, the Uyghur minority has to be included as well, which can be claimed by the re-education camps, where they are forced to learn the Chinese language and culture. Looking at those centres not with the Western view, it becomes possible that it is a way to involve Uyghurs in Chinese lifestyle. As a result, the Chinese Dream might be seen from the West as a way that expresses nationalism, but from China's perspective as a tool to get rid of the historical xenophobia.

3.2. The BRI's implementation and the context

Xinjiang is a crucial region for the BRI due to its geographical position and the resources. Almost all of China's cotton is produced there, as well as the energy sources. In addition, the province provides access to Central Asia and the Middle East, later even further to Caucasus, Europe and Africa. Therefore, struggles in the region caused by the threat of terrorism and the reaction both internal and external to the China's counterterrorism campaign may undermine the Initiative. As a result, the policy of China, evidently, has an impact on the BRI, because, first of all, Uyghurs are dissatisfied and there is still a possibility that there might be riots. In a similar manner, the China's fight with terrorism is dramatically brutal from the Western point of view. This, in turn, might lead to refusal to cooperate with China, adding here the significance of the opinion of the USA. In addition, for example, the society of Kazakhstan, the Central Asian state, is welcoming the

increasing Chinese influence with the mass protests.⁸⁴ On the opposite, the horridness of China's actions might be exaggerated due to the competition for world power. Making China look cruel through information warfare will reduce the probability to use the BRI as a foreign policy tool and spread its influence worldwide. Exactly after China's rise, the United States decided to remove ETIM from the list of terrorist organizations and accuse it in genocidal actions. Thus, it can be more a political game, where the policy on Xinjiang is used as a weapon against China.

⁸⁴ Taliga, H. (2021). *Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia*. Retrieved from https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/belt_and_road_initiative_in_central_asia.pdf, 09 May 2021.

CONCLUSION

During the process of writing this thesis, it became clear that there are not so many researches showing the correlation of Chinese Dream and the BRI with the Uyghur minority, as well as demonstrating non-Western perspective of the situation, which is crucial for understanding to the full extent. Thus, the paper has successfully shown both views on the conflict and that it can affect in a negative way the ultimate success of both Chinese grand ideas. One of which assists another in building the new international system with Chinese geo-strategic characteristics. The normative discourse analysis disclosed that even if the fault of China is verified, formally it will be impossible to hold it responsible for the committed crimes. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that what sees Western world, does not always match with the Chinese view due to the cultural and other differences. Therefore, it can be concluded that the international system and its legislation are not complete and flawless. Additionally, there is no separation between the politics and law, what impedes the system from proper and equitable work. As a consequence, the BRI is in danger not because of the Uyghur question, but it highly depends on the way it is interpreted in the world.

Moreover, this paper has successfully correlated the legal studies, showing the normative side of the Uyghur conflict, and political science, demonstrating the political view on this issue. In a like manner, it discovered the relation between the BRI and the Chinese Dream, between *outer* and inner dimensions, the domestic and foreign policy – and all this in the context of the Uyghur minority. In addition, this research is forehanded, because it was started some time before the genocide became one of the most discussed topics at the present time. Specifically, in the USA after the change of the President, who recently raised the debates about the Chinese position on Uyghurs and the recognition of Armenian genocide in the world, which now spoiled the relations with Turkey, who was arguably the ally in providing assistance in the organization of terrorism in Xinjiang province. As a consequence, in case China will decide to weaken the restrictions, the terrorism might reduce at least a bit due to the change in the relations between the USA and Turkey. Since the United States are currently the leaders of the world, then the others listen to and follow them. Hence, if the USA takes in future a more aggressive stance towards China with an eye to not to lose its position in the international arena, the rest of the world will be again in the same position choosing the partner to side with as during the Cold War.

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