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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

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Abstract

My dissertation, *Local Government and Ethnic Violence in Authoritarian Regimes*, explains why certain geographic and social subgroups within a marginalized ethnic minority group are more likely than others to participate in inter-group violence. Although ethnic violence constitutes the most prevalent form of civil conflict after World War II, scholars know little about the cause of these within-group differences. I argue that intra-group variations in the propensity to participate in ethnic violence result from differences in how local states treat subordinated minorities. To appease restive minorities, local states controlled by the ethnic group in power can offer fiscal accommodations, such as cross-ethnic patronage and public goods, to minority members. If some geographic and social subgroups within the ethnic group received fewer state accommodations, they are more likely to rebel.

To test this argument, I use a mixed-methods approach to explore the ongoing Han-Uyghur conflict in the Xinjiang region of China, which arguably poses the most imminent threat to China's internal security. The Uyghur group is both a majority within the Xinjiang province and a minority within China. First, compiling a geo-coded database of 244 yearly ethnic violence incidents in Xinjiang from 1980 to 2005, I demonstrate considerable variation in terms of participation in ethnic conflict even in those prefectures with a Uyghur majority. Second, I present a game-theoretical model to show the conditions under which the state is willing to offer concessions – public goods and patronage – to restive ethnic minorities; after receiving concessions, these minorities are less likely to rebel. Third, I test the appeasing effect of state fiscal concessions with a focus on two types of goods: (1) county-level education spending as an example of public goods and (2) county-level patronage targeted at minority elites. These explanatory variables are taken from an original county-year panel dataset, including ethnic composition and annual payrolls of over 220,000 local bureaucrats. Finally, I examine the demographic profiles of over 1,000 Uyghur prisoners sentenced for endangering state security to show systematic variation in propensity of social subgroups within the Uyghur group to participate in inter-group violence. I assembled this dataset during my 2017-2018 fieldwork in China where I also interviewed a host of Xinjiang experts, government employees, retired government officials, and local businesspersons. Overall, my dissertation challenges the conventional approach in current quantitative studies of ethnic violence – viewing each ethnic group as a unitary actor – and contributes to an emerging literature on how local states affect civil conflicts. Because the case of Xinjiang resembles ethnic violence in other developing countries in terms of ethnic grievances and geographical contexts, I expect my results generalize to other countries and groups.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

On July 5, 2009, Urumqi, the capital city of China's northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (hereafter Xinjiang), was the scene of the deadliest riots in China since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. According to official figures, the riots left 197 people dead and more than 1,700 injured. The 2009 riots were triggered by the perceived unfair state handling of the Shaoguan factory incident (Millward 2009). Shaoguan is a city in Guangdong, which is a China's coastal province that is over 3,000 kilometres away from Xinjiang. At the end of June 2009, "the mass late night brawl at the factory involving up to 1,000 local Han Chinese and Uyghur workers who had been recently recruited from Xinjiang, led to two deaths and 118 injuries" (O'Brien 2011, p.502). Before the riots erupted in the evening, the Uyghurs, the majority people of Xinjiang, organized a protest that began on the afternoon of July 5th. The peaceful protest later turned into a bloody social unrest after the crowd clashed with the police (Holdstock 2015, pp.186–187). The physical targets of Uyghur rioters included Han Chinese civilian passed-by, vehicles, and commercial and residential buildings owned by Han Chinese (Finley 2011, p.79). These riot targets clearly indicate the Uyghurs' ethnic resentment toward the privileged Han population. Although Han Chinese accounted for less than 45% of Xinjiang's total population at that time, the Han people is both the ethnic majority in China and the ethnic group in power.

When depicting the July 2009 Urumqi riots, reporters tend to "imply a war of all against all and neighbor against neighbor" (Mueller 2000, p.42). That is, the riots were largely viewed as a violent dispute between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, and these two groups are internally homogeneous and externally bounded (Branigan and Watts 2009; Wong 2009). However, the tendency to take concrete ethnic groups as chief protagonists of riots conceals substantial within-group variations. On July 5, 2009, only *some* of Uyghurs in Urumqi directly participated in the riots. In fact, most Uyghur perpetrators were not local Uyghur professionals who were employed by the city's public sectors. Instead, Uyghur rioters were mainly unemployed young men who recently migrated from southern Xinjiang (Xu and Wang 2009; Li 2012*b*).

The question naturally arises, why are certain subgroups within a marginalized ethnic minority group more likely to participate in inter-ethnic conflict? Although ethnic violence constitutes the most prevalent form of civil conflict after World War II, scholars know little about the cause of these within-group differences. Conventional wisdom portrays ethnic groups as unitary actors and tends to overlook such within-group variations. This group-as-a-whole approach dominates quantitative analyses of ethnic conflict in the last two decades. In the pages that follow, I explore how government fiscal concessions affect the within-group heterogeneity in participating in ethnic conflict. It is useful to first consider definitions of the principal terms used in this dissertation.

Ethnic Conflict as A Process-Oriented Concept

Following Fearon (2006*a*), I define *ethnic conflict* as a violent or non-violent confrontation across ethnic lines that satisfies one of the following two conditions: (1) it is motivated by ethnic antipathies; (2) targets are chosen based on ethnic criteria. Crucially, ethnic conflict must be viewed as a multi-stage social process that ends up with certain actions.

Before articulating the domain of ethnic conflict, it is useful to start with a discussion about *ethnic identity*. According to Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnic identities are understood to be defined mainly by descent rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as religiosity, language, customs, and shared historical myths" (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p.848). The prevailing constructivist literature has convincingly undermined so-called "everyday primordialism" – namely these membership rules and the content are "natural, inevitable, and unchanging facts about the social world" (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p.848). Instead, as the constructivist stance indicates, ethnic identities are "constructed, fluid, and multiple" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, p.1). However, as a number of scholars emphasize, a constructivist understanding of ethnic identity *itself* does not improve our knowledge of why and how ethnic conflict occurs (Fearon and Laitin 2000; King 2010; Wimmer 2013). The formation of the ethnic identities, whether is socially constructed or not, is perhaps only a part of complex social

processes that do not necessarily lead to the outbreak of ethnic conflict. To illustrate this point, it is important to note a key fact regarding ethnic conflict. That is, "despite the greater tensions, peaceful and cooperative relations are by far the more typical outcome than is large-scale violence" (Fearon and Laitin 1996, p.715). For example, Laitin (2007, p.10–11) illustrates that the percentage of neighboring ethnic group in Africa that experienced communal violence was "on average only 5 in 10,000" in a given year. Furthermore, the relationship between ethnic linguistic fractionalization and the probability of a civil war onset is very weak (Laitin 2007, pp.12–15). Put differently, the risk of ethnic conflict does not line up perfectly with the ethnic differences per se. Consequently, we should move beyond a debate about the nature of ethnic identity, whether primordial or mutable, and focus on a specific process by which ethnic identity is linked to ethnic conflict.

The ethnic identity, once has been generated, can be either incidental or intrinsic to conflict. In other words, ethnic identity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for ethnicity-based conflict to occur. Let us consider what I call the Brass-Kalyvas thesis. For both Brass (1997) and Kalyvas (2006), many supposedly "identity-based" conflicts are actually driven by motivations that have little to do with ethnic animosity. Instead, ethnicity-relevant rhetoric is appropriated by conflict protagonists as post hoc justifications for their actions. An attack can be made in the name of an ethnic group whereas the real motivation of this action has been obscured. For scholars working on the field of ethnic conflict, a fundamental challenge thus lies in discerning whether ethnic antipathy is one of the primary motivations of individuals' participation in inter-ethnic conflict. Because it is a daunting task to systematically gauge individual-level motivations across time and space in conflict zones, detailed ethnographic knowledge is almost imperative for researchers to rule out this alternative Brass-Kalyvas explanation. Hence, when we declare one conflict as "ethnic," we need to be extremely cautious about whether this label is spurious. The Brass-Kalyvas thesis is a manifestation of a deeper challenge in studying ethnic conflict – there are a variety of motivations that drive the individual to act, and the relative importance of each motivation varies across situations (Petersen

2002, pp.17–18). Without successfully identifying the relative salience of these desires through a rigorous data analysis, it is hard to discern specific mechanisms underlying individual actions. I will return to this point in the next section, which discusses the difficulties of examining the independent impact of the intensity of ethnic identity on inter-ethnic conflict.[1]

On the other hand, when ethnic identity is intrinsic to conflict, the making of ethnic boundaries must be viewed as the first stage of the sequence of ethnic conflict. Under this circumstance, ethnic conflict entails two additional integral stages after the formation of ethnic identity: the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic mobilization. By the phrase "the politicization of ethnicity," it refers to the circumstances that "access to political or economic benefits depends on ethnicity" (Fearon 2006*a*, p.853), which appears to (analytically and often chronologically) precede ethnic mobilization. An ethnicity-based mobilization means that a group of co-ethnics take collective action in pursuit of a goal that advances the perceived interests of that particular ethnic group, which requires numerous efforts spent on coordination and organization. Put simply, ethnic mobilizations are essentially organizational phenomena.[2]

This conceptualization suggests two other points. First, the politicization of ethnicity does not inevitably lead to ethnic mobilization. For instance, the former Soviet Union was characterized by a high degree of politicization of ethnicity. Since the establishment of the Communist rule, through the so-called "ethnofederalism" - an institution in which "the design of federal subunit boundaries to conform to the territorial distribution of ethnic groups" (Anderson 2014, p.165) - the distribution of resources was largely contingent on designated ethnic categories (Brubaker 1996). However, the Soviets had not witnessed large-scale ethnic mobilizations until the late 1980s (Gorenburg 2003). Second, ethnic mobilization can aim at non-conflictual goals. For example, ethnic parties can mobilize their co-ethnic constituents to vote purely based on ethnic categories, which does not

[1] Goldstone has made a similar point with regard to the difficulties of using a large-N approach to measure psychological bases of revolutions (Goldstone 2003, p.58).

[2] Communal conflict like ethnic riots and pogroms is often regarded as relatively spontaneous and thus it does not necessarily need organizations and planning (Horowitz 2001; Petersen 2002). However, the authors also recognize that it is hard to assert that communal conflict has noting to do with preexisting local organizations (Varshney 2003).

certainly involve inter-group conflict (Chandra 2005). Therefore, ethnic mobilization should be conceptualized as a separate stage prior to the outbreak of an overt conflict.

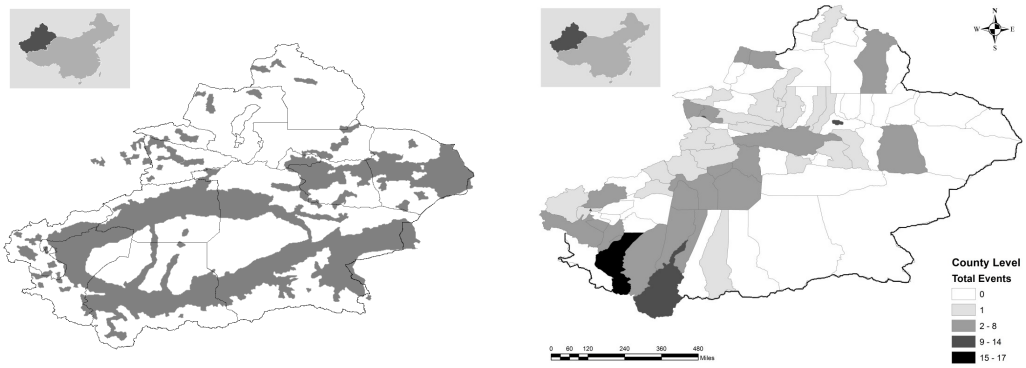
After the ethnic mobilization, the final stage of the process may involve the use of force to cause bodily harm and/or property damage. Put otherwise, ethnic conflict can be either peaceful or violent.[3] Peaceful ethnic conflict events are mainly nonviolent collective protests and demonstrations. Violent ethnic conflict encompasses a wide array of categories including riot, pogrom, violent confrontation, ethnic terrorist attack, genocide, insurgency, and ethnic civil war. Ethnic conflict usually exhibits considerable variations in terms of the propensity to commit violence. Focusing on the dissolution of the French colonial empire, Lawrence (2010, p.90) shows that nationalist movements in different colonies varied significantly in terms of the use of violence. With regard to secessionist campaigns, Griffiths (2014, p.573) finds that 31% of the 183 secession cases between 1816 and 2005 experienced violence. Compared to nonviolent ethnic conflicts, ethnic violence could be caused by a set of distinct mechanisms such as the inter-group dynamics of competing ethnopolitical organizations, a joint product of state repression and weak state capacity, and so on. Case-oriented studies reveal that ethnic violence may be a product of an orchestrated manipulation by ethnic elites (Gagnon 2004), a result of ethnic out-bidding (Lawrence 2010), the absence of political ties between elites at the center and in the separatist region (Bakke 2015), or an outcome of the state's failure to prohibit organized thuggery (Tambiah 1996).

Puzzle

Before turning to my theoretical framework, it is instructive to pay close attention to the puzzle of within-variations in the case of the Han-Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang. As highlighted in above discussions of the July 2009 Urumqi riots, although Uyghurs are usually described as a unitary actor in the conflict, Uyghur individuals rarely act unanimously *vis-à-vis* the Han. In particular, we can conceive within-group variations as a

[3]For example, see the discussions on strategic choices in self-determination disputes by Cunningham (2013).

Figure 1



Uyghur Settlement Areas **Spatial Distribution of Han-Uyghur Conflict**

two-dimensional concept. The first dimension involves a geographic aspect of intra-group diversity. The second dimension is about within-group heterogeneity across social class.

Geographic Subgroup and Intra-group Diversity

As Kaufman (2015, p.9) points out, a predominant approach in explaining social disturbance tends to focus on *how* and *when* turmoils occur rather than *where* these disorders outbreak. However, studying the spatial variations in ethnic conflict permits us to move beyond a conventional "groupism" understanding of the phenomenon.

The left panel of Figure 1 marks Xinjiang's Uyghur settlement areas in which Uyghurs constitute a majority of local population. The right panel of the same figure shows a spatial distribution of Han-Uyghur conflicts at the county level between 1990 and 2005. Note that even among the subset of counties experienced conflicts during this period, there had been considerable differences with regard to the intensity of violence. Therefore, Figure 1 illustrates a fact that despite sharing similar demographic configuration, some local Uyghur communities are more inclined to engage in conflicts with the Han Chinese than others.

This finding shows that in Xinjiang, as in other conflict-prone regions (Horowitz 1983; Wilkinson 2006; Varshney 2008), ethnic conflicts were highly localized. In fact, Han-Uyghur conflicts were spatially concentrated *within* a group of Uyghur-majority counties. This pattern has a clear implication – differences in ethnic traits such as language, religion, and cultural customs cannot fully account for variations in the levels of ethnic conflict. In

other words, in contrast to a large body of theory (Hale 2008, pp.16–22), ethnic differences do not inherently put groups in conflict.

Social Subgroup and Intra-group Diversity

In the ethnic conflict literature, it has been well documented the prevalence of intra-group differences in regard to intergroup attitudes along the socioeconomic dimension. Paxson (2002) finds that poorly educated in Ulster were more likely to support that it would be justifiable to take any measures necessary to unify Ulster and the Republic of Ireland. Gagnon (2004) shows that urbanites exhibited greater ethnic tolerance than rural residents in Yugoslavia. Based on his ethnological study of the Turpan oasis in Xinjiang, Rudelson (1997, pp.97-142) finds that Uyghur national identity varied significantly by social group. Turpan Uyghur merchants tended to see themselves as Chinese citizens while Uyghur intellectuals were highly nationalistic.

To be true, we should not conflate inter-group attitude with inter-group behavior. There may be stark differences between the intensity of ethnic identity and the propensity to participate in ethnic conflict. However, ample evidence also demonstrates some social subgroups are more likely to participate in inter-ethnic conflict than others (Reinares 2004; Gill and Horgan 2013; Lange 2012). In the case of Xinjiang, my empirical finding in Chapter 6 indicates that convicted Uyghur political prisoners were more likely to be poorly educated than the population age group they were drawn (Lu 2001; Ismail and Ehmetjan 2002). In fact, as Chapter 6 shows, according to local trial records, peasants are over-represented among Uyghur militants (Akesu Prefectural Gazetteer Codification Committee 2005).

Ethnic Sentiment as An Insufficient Explanation

One explanation for within-group variations of engaging in inter-ethnic conflict emphasizes the role of ethnic sentiment. In this approach, varying levels of intensity in ethnic sentiment account for both geographic and social aspects of within-group variations. Put differently, some geographic and social subgroups within a particular ethnic group are more likely to participate in inter-group conflict simply because they have stronger emotional attachments to their ethnic identities.

This explanation is premised on two separate arguments. First, a sense of common ethnic identity varies across both territory in which the ethnic group concentrates and social subgroups divided by socioeconomic cleavages. According to Gorenburg (2000)'s empirical study of Tatarstan in Russia, there are notable intragroup variations in nationalist sentiments. His finding thus refutes the argument that ethnic identity is extraneous for explaining ethnic conflict because nationalist sentiments tend to be distributed randomly in a population (Hechter 1995). Second, feelings of attachment to ethnic identity is directly conceptualized as a primary motivation of taking collective actions. That is, when an individual holds a stronger attachment to his/her ethnic identity, he/she is more likely to be willing to sacrifice his/her own narrow self-interests and act on behalf of the affiliated group. Put differently, this individual will not take his/her *absolute interests* as the main consideration. On the contrary, this individual is mainly motivated by a competition for the group's *relative status*, which is closely related to his/her self-esteem (Horowitz 1985; Kaufman 2001). Since group-based comparison is a key determinant of one's self-esteem, self-esteem is therefore a result of acquiring relative gains at the group level. Self-esteem is thus regarded as intrinsically relative. On the other third, a conventional definition of self-interest is mainly about absolute gains at the individual level.[4] This psychological mechanism thereby accounting for the reason why individuals are willing to partly abandon their narrow self-interests and contribute to collective goods if they view the group's social status as collective goods, which is integral to their self-esteem. Consequently, stronger feelings of belonging together, or a stronger sense of solidarity, allows for a higher possibility of collective actions like ethnic mobilization.

Despite the merits of this explanation,[5] it has four shortcomings. First, the ethnic sentiment theory falls short of providing a full causal account of within-group variations. The theory is largely based on psychological arguments about the individual's need for self-esteem, especially group status. However, this theory does not specify the scope

[4]This line of reasoning is analogous to the argument concerning relative gains and interstate cooperation in the IR literature (Grieco 1988; Snidal 1991).

[5]Hale (2008, pp.18–19)presents a host of recent psychological findings that undermine the argument that "people will opt to maximize their group's advantage over another group even when this means sacrificing material gains for their own group."

condition under which group-level "relative gains" trump the loss of individual-level "absolute gains." As a consequence, this argument provides no *ex ante* predictions about within-group variations in regard to the relative importance of esteem compared to other fundamental motives like safety and wealth. Put otherwise, it does not account for why some subgroups within a particular ethnic group are more inclined to prioritize group status over other motives.[6]

Second, to avoid tautologies, this explanation begs the question of the cause of such within-group differences in ethnic sentiment. Ethnic identity formation does not happen in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is usually a result of a set of social interactions between various actors constrained by structural factors. Therefore, the strength of ethnic identity of individuals often changes depending upon other tangible variables.[7] For example, Gorenburg (2000) reveals that the strength of an individual's sense of ethnic solidarity is molded by state institutions. That means, the purported relationship between the levels of ethnic sentiment and conflict intensity may be largely driven by other factors.

Third, as a stream of literature contends, inter-ethnic conflict can affect the intensity of ethnic identity (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2000). For instance, in the context of the second Palestinian Intifada, Shayo and Zussman (2011) finds that ingroup bias of judges is strongly influenced by conflict intensity nearby the court in the year prior to the trial. Stated otherwise, *stronger ethnic sentiments are often a consequence of a conflict event rather than a cause of the conflict.*[8] Without accessing to micro-level survey data *before* the outbreak of conflict, it is impossible to assess the independent impact of ethnic sentiment on conflict.

Four, and related to the preceding points, for studies on ethnic conflict, it is empirically challenging to measure the intensity of an individual's sense of ethnic identity. Compared to other settings, it is much more difficult to find samples that are likely to participate in intergroup conflict. Conducting such survey in conflict-ridden regions is

[6] Gorenburg (2000, p.117) finds that Horowitz (1985) implicitly assumes "all members of a single ethnic group will have identical preferences for ethnonationalism."

[7] Petersen (2002, pp.21–22) argues that instrumental emotions such as hatred, resentment, and fear result from structural change like modernization.

[8] For example, Finley (2011) finds that the 1997 Ghulja disturbances and the 2009 Ürümqi riots had significantly exacerbated ethnic resentment in the region.

usually dangerous, expensive, and time-consuming. Hence, the paucity of micro-level survey data prevents scholars to fully get rid of the endogeneity issue of ethnic identity.

Preview of the Argument

To fill this gap, I argue that this puzzle – ethnic violence exhibits sizable intra-group variations – is a result of varying state behaviors at the local level. Specifically, I hypothesize that, intra-group variations are largely a function of how local states treat subordinated minorities. To appease restive minorities, local states controlled by the ethnic group in power can offer fiscal concessions (cross-ethnic patronage and public goods) to minority members. If some geographic and social subgroups within the minority group received fewer fiscal concessions, they are more likely to rebel. Intra-group division over inter-ethnic conflict is therefore a function of strategic concessions made by local states.

Material Interests and Ethnic Conflict

My theory builds on the premise that the sake of material gains drives the behavior of individuals. This general pattern holds for members of ethnic groups. Thus, economic welfare can inductively account for an extreme type of inter-group behavior – ethnic conflict. The point is not to dismiss the importance of other essential motivations like self-esteem, power, and security. Instead, this materialist approach provides a parsimonious framework that captures a hard-core aspect of human behavior. More importantly, this approach allows me to postulate a set of new propositions that can be borne out by empirical evidence (Lakatos 1970). Rather than arguing that the causes of ethnic conflict can be boiled down to a single factor like material interests, the advantage of my theoretical framework lies in its ability of generating new knowledge about ethnic conflict. As long as I can offer adequate empirical evidence for my theorizing, this materialist framework provides a pragmatic tool for a better understanding of ethnic conflict.

Let me start with a crucial distinction between ethnic conflict and ethnic sentiment. This distinction corresponds to the well-known difference between inter-group behavior and inter-group attitudes in social psychology (McDoom 2012). The severity of ethnic

conflict does not line up perfectly with the intensity of ethnic identity per se (Fearon 2006*a*). Even in highly polarized multi-ethnic societies like post-apartheid South Africa and contemporary Malaysia, ethnic resentment and hostilities do not necessarily lead to the outbreak of ethnic conflict (McDoom 2012, p.127). Instead, "while group emotions lead to polarized attitudes, it is material or structural opportunities that mediate whether these emotions are expressed as violence" (McDoom 2012, p.121). In particular, material interests affect the likelihood of ethnic conflict through two distinct channels. The direct channel is by molding short-term constraints and opportunities facing individuals. The second channel, which is an indirect causal path, involves the reconstruction of ethnic identity in the long run.

In regard to the first channel, ethnic identity tends to be relatively stable in the short term while individual behavior is more susceptible to contingencies. In the shorter time scales, variable material incentives interact with relatively fixed ethnic identity to affect the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Put differently, ethnic violence often occurs *after* ethnic boundaries have been salient and ethnic identity is further politically mobilized by ethnic entrepreneurs to attack outgroup members. Note that the mobilization process itself is largely constrained or facilitated by shifting material factors.

It is important to keep in mind that such a materialist framework about ethnic conflict is also compatible with the argument that passions and emotions are deeply entangled in intergroup conflict. As noted by Hale (2008, p.54), "since material resources are undoubtedly a very important determinant of one's life chances, it is eminently understandable that these conflicts could become quite emotional." Therefore, it is not surprising that an inter-group competition over material resources often turns into an emotionally loaded collective struggling. To refute Horowitz's critics of materialist theories of ethnic conflict, Hale (2008, p.54) indicates that "the struggle over symbols that have no intrinsic material value" is also pertinent to material well-being because such struggle is largely triggered by a motivation of "promoting a much greater long-run stream of material resources." Thus, utility seeking behavior and emotions such as fear, anxiety, and resentment are not opposing alternatives. Emotional behaviors and materialist motivations are both integral

parts of the general human decision-making process.

Focusing on the long-term changes, the second channel is in line with the constructivist perspective on ethnicity. That is, the degree of "groupness" waxes and wanes contingent on various contexts (Okamura 1981). A large body of constructivist literature in sociology convincingly reveals that ethnic boundaries are not perennially fixed but historically malleable (Nagel 1994). In many cases, the making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries is a strategy to advance one's material interests given her specific resource endowments (Bates 1983). A key insight of constructivists is that whether a communal group can access to state resources greatly affects its way of drawing the boundaries between ethnic "us" and "them" (Young 1979; Brass 1991). Wimmer (2018) shows that public goods had been provided more evenly across ethnic fault lines in Botswana than Somalia. As a result, minority individuals in Botswana tended to pursue strategies of assimilation over time whereas the nation building eventually failed in Somalia. Based on a great deal of case study evidence, Smith (1984) shows that in the process of modernization, when aspirant elite members from a community had been excluded from the access to government employment because of certain characteristics that are different from the group in power, these disgruntled elites were motivated to "create a sense of identity among its members" (Brass 1991, p.33). Owing to its origin from this zero-sum competition over state resources, the newly formed ethnic group tends to be hostile to the ethnic group in power. That is, the emerged ethnic boundaries are generally politically salient and inter-group antagonism prevails. Stated otherwise, material incentives can give rise to a new ethnic identity associated with strong ethnic sentiments.

To reprise, in light of the preceding discussion of what makes ethnic conflict outbreaks, material interests can directly and indirectly affect the odds of ethnic conflict. In the short term, material factors create constrains and opportunities for individual behavior, which directly determines individual's propensity to participate in inter-group conflict. In the long run, concerns about economic welfare can re-articulate ethnic boundaries and thereby shaping the intensity of ethnic hatred. Because it is clear that the likelihood of ethnic conflict is also a function of ethnic hatred, material incentives can thus indirectly

have an effect on the risks of ethnic conflict.

A Two-Component Model of Fiscal Concessions

In modern times, the state plays a vital role in distributing goods among the population situated inside its territorial boundaries. Consequently, the state is deeply involved in domestic distributive politics. By deciding who gets what, a state affects how resources are allocated among competing ethnic groups within the territory it claims to govern. If ethnic conflicts are closely related with inter-group competition over scarce material resources, then states are central to these phenomena. To understand ethnic conflict, I therefore propose a state-centered theory with a focus on distributional consequences of state behavior. *State behavior* refers to the way in which a state implements decisions and put policy to work. My state-centered approach views government accommodation expenditures as a key component of state behavior.[9] As Mann (1993, p.361) writes, "expenditure reveals state functions." State expenditures, as a specific type of state behavior, are shaped by two attributes: state strategy and state capacity. *State strategy* is defined with reference to the state's strategic choices that seek to maximize its utility. The utility is usually power such as resources or control over territory and social relations. On the other hand, *state capacity* refers to the extent to which the state is able to implement its decisions across the territory it claims to control and across social categories within its territorial boundaries (Mann 1986).

The state can deploy a set of policy tools to achieve its goals. *State strategy* is essentially how the state chooses a specific tool or a combination of different tools to fulfill its objectives. Perhaps the most prevalent conceptualization of state strategy is to distinguish *coercion* from *accommodation*. Both forms of strategies require state agencies to use fiscal resources at their disposal. It is no secret that state can deploy coercive apparatuses to repress discontented ethnic minorities. However, the usage of repression is usually monetarily costly and it tends to be counterproductive in the long term (Hess and Martin 2006). Consequently, the ethnic group in power often employs fiscal accommodations to appease potential restive minorities instead of relying exclusively on repression (Alemán

[9] I use the term "government accommodation expenditures" and "fiscal concessions" interchangeably.

and Treisman 2005). The state is able to placate aggrieved minorities by allocating more material resources across ethnic lines (Brass 1991). Once members of the minority group can access to more budgetary investments, they are more likely to become stakeholders of the status quo. Therefore, the fiscal redistribution effectively serves as a tool to attract political loyalty through an exchange with personal benefits (Fjelde and De Soysa 2009; Taydas and Peksen 2012; De Juan and Bank 2015).

State strategy does not automatically translate into state behavior like public goods provision. Instead, state strategy is largely constrained by *state capacity* – whether governments are actually capable of implementing a policy that is regarded as an optimal instrument to maximize the state's utility. Here I define state capacity by following what Soifer (2008, p.236) calls "the national capabilities approach." This approach views state capacity as "the resources at disposal of the state for exercising control over society and territory." According to this definition, state capacity encompasses various types of resources ranging from financial resources such as fiscal revenues to the number of trained and professional bureaucrats. To restate, *state behavior* is the scope and content of implemented policies that reflects a constrained optimization by the state. As a specific type of state behavior, fiscal concessions should be viewed as a function of *state strategy* and *state capacity*.

To understand intra-group division over inter-ethnic conflict, I contend that it is crucial to focus on government spending on cross-ethnic patronage and public goods – a two-component model of government accommodation expenditures. By "patronage," I mean government personnel allocations and related fiscal spending on government employments. Cross-ethnic patronage refers to patronage allocated by the ethnic group in power to reward minority out-group elites. In this dissertation, by "public goods," I mean public services such as mass education and public health. It is worth noticing that both cross-ethnic patronage and public goods provision are driven by the state's tactical choices – the state cannot rule by brute force alone. Under many circumstances, as along as accommodation can effectively induce peace and order, the state prefers accommodation to coercion. As what Chapter 4 and 5 demonstrate, this preference is borne out by

the empirical evidence even in a highly repressive environment like Xinjiang.

My two-component model of fiscal concessions captures two distinct types of beneficiaries within a particular ethnic minority group. As many studies illustrate, ethnic violence is often a result of intragroup elite-mass interaction (Fearon and Laitin 2000). In particular, the chief protagonists of most ethnic conflicts are usually various kinds of insurgent organizations. Ethnic elites often take a lead in organizing these clandestine organizations and recruit their fellow co-ethnics from the less privileged classes. Building on this supply-and-demand model, ethnic conflicts could be driven by ethnic elites' political incentives to grip on power (i.e., the supply side) *and* the grievances among the masses (i.e., the demand side) (Giuliano 2011). Hence, the state manages to affect the likelihood of intergroup violence by providing material resources to minority elites or the mass public. Generally speaking, elites in the minority group get more benefits from the access to cross-ethnic patronage while the minority masses are main beneficiaries from the provision of public goods.

A large number of qualitative evidence shows that the state can use patronage as material incentives to keep nationalist zeal at bay. On the other hand, the risk of ethnic conflict increases when ethnic elites are excluded from the access to cross-ethnic patronage. Under this unfavorable circumstance, they are motivated to strategically whip up ethnic hatred for control over the government administration. For example, drawing from the case of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Madras in India, Brass (1991, p.284) argues that, the Tamil nationalist movement was caused by "competition between person from different ethnic categories or regions for government jobs, for places in educational institutions, and for representation in elected and appointed government bodies."

In addition to buying off elites through patronage, Hechter (2013) suggests that foreign domination can be accepted as legitimate when alien ruler provide public goods effectively and fairly to the ethnically subordinated group. The extent to which an imposed alien rule is viewed as legitimate is largely a function of the amount of valued collective goods provision. The key point is that the appeasing effect of material benefits is not limited to

minority elites. When minority masses gain access to resources and goods by alien rule, they are more likely to regard alien rule as legitimate. To to true, Hechter (2013) does not test the hypothesis that access to public goods can change the communal identity in the long run. Wimmer (2018) goes further, arguing that when public goods are provided evenly across ethnic fault lines, minority individuals tend to identify with the state regardless of the ethnic identity of the rulers. Put differently, a minority group's access to public goods facilitate an assimilation process. For this mechanism, material benefits can induce a gradual shift of group attachment over time.

A State-Centered Explanation of Intra-Group Diversity in Xinjiang

The two-component model of fiscal concessions is a good analytical starting point for thinking about intra-group division over inter-ethnic conflict. Let us start with the social aspect of within-group variation. Why some social groups within the ethnopolitical minority group are more likely to engage in inter-group conflict? If cross-ethnic patronage targets at minority elites whereas public goods provision mainly benefit minority masses, the relative difference between elite and mass in the propensity to participate in inter-ethnic conflict is shaped by how the state prioritizes one type of fiscal spending over another. When the state gives priority to cross-ethnic patronage, compared to the population at large, elite members are more likely to find it to their advantage to cooperate with the ethnic group in power. On the contrary, ordinary people are less likely to act as chief protagonists of ethnic conflict when the state concentrates on providing public services. Through an emphasis on the impact of the state's different priorities in terms of fiscal spending, my state-centered theory thereby offering a new explanation for different rates of participation in various classes with regard to inter-ethnic conflict.

The Uyghur society in Xinajiang is essentially a *dual* society. Its socioeconomic structure can be precisely characterized by a deep division between rural and urban Uyghurs. According to the 0.5% mini-census data in 2005, around 70% of the Uyghur population worked in the agricultural sector. In terms of personal income, compared to another 30% of Uyghurs employed in the non-agricultural sector, Uyghur peasants earned merely 34% of their urban counterparts (Calculations based on Wu and Song (2014, p.165, Table

2)). It is crucial to note that Uyghur urban dwellers are particularly dependent on the economic support of the state in terms of housing, logistic supplies, and job opportunities. In 2005, among the non-agricultural Uyghur population, about 58% of them worked for the public sector (Wu and Song 2014, p.165, Table 2). More specifically, 43.4% of urban Uyghurs at prime working age were hired by government and public institutions. Furthermore, the Chinese government have striven to assure that the offspring of urban Uyghurs would get access to higher education. Between 1980 and 1996, the Xinjiang government had implemented a set of preferential treatment policies to guarantee that minority students accounted for over 50% of all college students (Zhu, Chen and Yang 2004, pp.305–308). Before the early 2000s, Uyghur college students automatically received placement in local government offices and the public sector after their graduation. The key point is that Uyghur urbanites' children are more likely to have access to college than their rural co-ethnics (Ma 2016). Stated otherwise, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Chinese state had institutionalized a cross-ethnic patronage system to co-opt Uyghur elites, especially those who live in cities.

The picture contrasts strikingly with the fate of poor Uyghur peasants who received few public goods from the state despite the fact that they constituted a majority of the Uyghur population. During the 1990s, in the Southern part of Xinjiang in which most residents were Uyghur peasants, local education were severely underfunded (Li 2009*b*). Because of a lack of financial resources, most schools became mainly dependent on *ad hoc* school fees paid by local minority households. As a result, education expenses for textbook and other *ad hoc* school fees had become an important category of household spending, which imposed significant financial burdens on minority masses. As Chapter 6 shows, the fact that Uyghur peasants formed a disproportionately large percentage of Uyghur secessionist groups was a consequence of this dual society, which is to a great extent created by an uneven resource allocation by the state.

Having stipulated the relationship between different priorities in government accommodation spending and varying participation rates in ethnic conflict across social groups, we now turn to the geographic aspect of within-group variation. In the previous sec-

tion, I have demonstrated that Uyghur individuals exhibit variable levels of propensity to engage in conflict across the territory in which Uyghurs constitute a majority of local population. I contend that the spatial unevenness of fiscal concessions accounts for this within-group geographic variation. As we have discussed above, government accommodation spending, which is a type of *state behavior*, is to a great extent constrained by *state capacity*. Moving beyond what Snyder (2001) calls "whole nation bias," many studies have explored vast subnational territorial variations in the state's capacity of providing goods and services (Gisselquist, Leiderer and Nino-Zarazua 2016; Masaki 2018; Wilfahrt 2018). The geographical variations of state penetration are particularly remarkable in developing countries in which the state power is relatively limited (Migdal, Kohli and Shue 1994).

The spatial unevenness of government accommodation spending is evident in Xinjiang. For instance, in 2004, in terms of public health spending per capita, Karamay was almost 8.4 times higher than Aksu Prefecture, which is a Uyghur-dominated region. With regard to the amount of personal payrolls for public sector employees, Tacheng Prefecture was merely a half of Karamay (Li and Liu 2007, p.85). It comes as no surprise that such striking subnational differences in accommodation spending were caused by considerable geographic variation of state capacity. In fact, three cities alone (Urumqi, Karamay, and Shihezi) accounted for about a half of the entire fiscal revenue of Xinjiang in 2004 (Li and Liu 2007, p.133). As a result, even within the Uyghur-concentrated region, some local communities receive far more fiscal accommodations than others. Consequently, the likelihood of inter-ethnic conflict tends to be lower in these localities. This argument is borne out by a number of subsequent empirical analyses in Chapter 4 and 5.

Why Study Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang?

To test this argument, I explore the ongoing Han-Uyghur conflict in the Xinjiang region of China as a case in point. I choose this case for four reasons. First of all, the Han-Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang represents a typical ethnic conflict in which ethnicity-related

motivations play a vital role. As the preceding discussion of the Brass-Kalyvas thesis indicates, individuals may engage in civil conflict due to a large set of motivations that have very little relevance to ethnicity-based grievances (Kalyvas 2003). However, in the case of Xinjiang, ethnographic studies show that the ethnic boundaries between Uyghurs and Han Chinese are highly salient and the ethnic identity has also been deeply politicized (Bovingdon 2010*a*; Finley 2013). As a consequence, concerns about the validity of using an ethnicity-related framework are muted. Conceptually, it is safe to refer the civil conflict in Xinjiang as "ethnic."

Second, Xinjiang exhibits substantial intra-regional variations along a number of dimensions, which allows me to conduct a set of rigorous statistical analyses. First, there are stark differences in terms of demographic and socioeconomic configuration at the city level in Xinjiang (Bachman 2004, pp.165–173). Second, local governments display considerable diversity with regard to fiscal redistribution. For instance, in 2006, the education expenditures as a share of overall county-level fiscal spending was around 32% in Yarkant County while the number was about 48% in its neighboring Yengisar County (Guo 2010, pp.103–107). Third, there had been sizable county-level variations in the intensity of ethnic conflict across space and time. According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), Kargilik County of the Kashgar prefecture experienced more than 15 conflicts between 1980 and 2005 whereas there was no ethnic violence occurred in its adjacent Makit County despite both counties are demographically and socioeconomically likeable.

Third, the case of Xinjiang resembles other conflict-ridden countries to a high degree in terms of a set of characteristics: poverty, low state capacity, inter-ethnic inequality, and unfavorable geographic factors. The detailed discussions of these factors are presented in Chapter 4 – 6. For the purposes of illustration, it is worth noting a low penetration of state authority throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For example, consider a commonly used indicator of state capacity – road construction. Joniak-Lüthi (2016*b*, p.125) has pointed out that in 1979, "out of more than 20,000 kilometres of roads in Xinjiang, about half were of substandard quality ... Transportation within the region was thus slow and inefficient." In 1985, the total length of roads was about 22,232 kilometres.

Put differently, there were around 1.34 kilometres of roads per 100 square kilometres in Xinjiang, which was significantly laggard behind its two neighboring countries at that time: The corresponding numbers were 42 and 40 kilometres of roads per 100 square kilometres for India and Pakistan, respectively (Jiang 2007, p.82). Even until the mid-1990s, there was only one usable road in fair condition that linked the northern part with the southern part of Xinjiang (Becquelin 2000, p.68).

Finally, a study on Xinjiang's ethnic conflict has clear policy implications. The region's ethnic conflict presents arguably the most imminent threat to China's internal security. First, Xinjiang has an area of over 1,600,000 square kilometres and it is the largest administrative unit of China. To put it in perspective, Xinjiang is about the size of Western Europe or one-sixth of China's entire land mass. The secession of this vast region will thereby causing a unbearable loss of territory that deeply impairs China's Westphalian sovereignty (Carlson 2005). Second, Xinjiang occupies a strategically important position and therefore it plays an important role in China's grand strategy. Geographically, Xinjiang lies on China's northwestern frontier and this borderland neighbors Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. As the so-called "Eurasian crossroads," Xinjiang thus becomes logistic hub of the Chinese government's recent ambitious "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) (Rolland 2017). Third, due to Xinjiang's abundant resource endowment, taking control over this region is crucial for China's energy security. According to Warikoo (2016, p.22), Xinjiang's oil reserves account for about 30 percent of the country's continental reserves. In addition, the region's gas reserves account for more than one third of China's continental natural gas resources. For Xinjiang, "it was already producing around 11 per cent of the country's crude oil and 13 per cent of its natural gas" in 2000 (Holdstock 2015, p.146). By 2017, Xinjiang's oil production as a share of China's total production has reached 17% (Chung 2018, p.130, Table 5.2).

Data and Methods

This dissertation's task of exploring within-group variations of the Han-Uyghur conflict in Xinjiang proposes two acute challenges to data collection. First, because of the extreme sensitivity of ethnic conflict in China, an endeavor to collect relevant data requires access to source materials that are often not publicly available. In addition, when I conducted my fieldwork, it was difficult for me to reach out to potential interview subjects because of associated political risks of accepting interviews. In fact, throughout the research, a concern about personal safety has been omnipresent for both me and my interview subjects. Second, my subnational approach requires me to turn to a local perspective on ethnic conflict. I need to hand code a large number of county and prefectural documents housed in different public and university libraries in China, which is an enormously time-consuming process.

In particular, I use a mixed-methods approach to test my theory on intra-ethnic division over inter-ethnic conflict. The empirical materials of the dissertation draw on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data gathered during my fieldwork in China: original datasets of Xinjiang's ethnic conflict events (1980 – 2005), annual ethnic composition of county-level bureaucrats, disaggregated county-year fiscal expenditures, analysis of internally circulated government documents, and interviews. The large-N statistical analysis of ethnic conflict in Xinjiang (1980 – 2005) is based in part on a new dataset that offers comprehensive information about ethnic conflict in Xinjiang from 1990 to 2005. These conflict data were compiled by me and my coauthors and a related paper has been published in *The China Review* (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018). Multiple Chinese scholarly sources and internally circulated government documents provide conflict data for 1980 to 1990. Among these materials, the unpublished draft of *Xinjiang Public Security Gazette* (《新疆通志:公安志》草稿油印本) is the most important primary source and it offers firsthand information to illustrate ethnic conflict in Xinjiang during the 1980s. To test my hypotheses, the quantitative analysis also draws on key explanatory variables and control variables taken from a wide array of original sources – county gazetteers, Chinese census data, local statistical yearbooks, and internally pub-

lished government statistics. To collect these materials, I spent hundreds of hours in three repositories: the Universities Service Centre for China Studies in Hong Kong, the Peking University Library, and the Shanghai Library. The data about the ethnic composition of local bureaucrats that became essential for Chapter 5 are drawn from dozens of county-level Organizational History Statistics (*zuzhishi ziliao*, or 中国共产党组织史资料), which are acquired by this author alone over a period of two years.

The statistical analysis is complemented by the qualitative evidence gathered from my fieldwork. The qualitative portion of the project includes two parts. The first part of the qualitative evidence is a result of a twelve-month archival collection in the field. An extensive array of primary and secondary source materials was collected during the fieldwork. The archival material spans from the 1980s to the early 2000s, which covers the period that I am most interested in. Most of the primary source materials are internal-circulated government documents that are not publicly available. For example, between 1997 and 1999, the Xinjiang government dispatched 34 researchers who were affiliated with different local institutes to conduct a series of field investigations on the causes of ethnic violence in Xinjiang. The group of researchers later compiled a collection of internally circulated reports titled as *Studies on Xinjiang's Social Stability* (《新疆社会稳定问题研究》), which opens up a rare opportunity for understanding the Uyghur society in the late 1990s. In addition to using primary source materials, scholarly publications by local government-affiliated researchers constitute the project's major secondary source materials. Despite providing crucial information about local ethnic conflict, especially the socioeconomic profile of perpetrators of these incidents, these researchers' work is little known outside Xinjiang. For instance, Wang (2010) (《民族宗教统战理论政策在新疆的实践与研究》) offers indispensable information with regard to the percentage of *talifu* (students that received their religious education in madrasas) who were also Uyghur secessionists in southern Xinjiang. However, to date, no one has paid sustain attention to these materials in the English-speaking world. Of course, it is possible that published sources in China may be politically edited or distorted. Note that I use the writings of these authors with caution. Wherever possible, I strengthen the reliability of one

statement by combining multiple evidence.

Another part of qualitative evidence utilized is interviews with individuals who have grounded knowledge of the Xinjiang society. I conducted a dozen semi-structured interviews between 2017 and 2018. My interview subjects came from a variety of backgrounds: Xinjiang experts, retired government employees, journalists, and local businesspersons. These interviews provide substantive information that allows me to have a better understanding of contemporary Xinjiang. The invaluable information thus enables me to develop my initial theoretical framework of this dissertation. To be true, my interviews are far from ideal. The selection of interview subjects is not based on a representative sample because I use the "snowball" method to find my informants. As a Han Chinese in a society in which social interactions are highly segregated along ethnic lines, I had easier access to the Han Chinese than Uyghurs. Owing to the increasingly repressive environment after Chen Quanguo became Xinjiang's top leader in 2016, several Uyghurs declined my interview invitations when I was in the field. Therefore, my interview subjects were limited to Hans. However, given the intense political atmosphere in Xinjiang at that time, this method may be the only feasible way to protect potential interview subjects for this extremely sensitive political topic.[10] In addition, the fact that Hans constitute my interview sample allows me to have better access to the perspective of the local state because the Han Chinese is clearly the ethnic group in power.

The Road Map

Chapter 1 lays out the central puzzle of this project - within-group differences regarding inter-ethnic violence. It presents the reason why explaining such intra-ethnic variations is important for a better understanding of ethnic conflict in general. I also present the detailed background of the Xinjiang case and show the rationale of my case selection.

Chapter 2 develops a state-centered theory to explain intra-ethnic variations over

[10]The Chinese state exerts a tight control over the access to political restive borderlands like Tibet and Xinjiang (Reny 2016). It is commonplace that scholars conducting field research in Xinjiang are severely constrained by the government (Smith 2006). Chestnut Greitens and Truex (2018) shows that a significant proportion of Xinjiang scholars had been interviewed by the Chinese authorities.

inter-ethnic conflicts. The analytical focus is on the distributive politics of local governments. Specifically, local states can affect the likelihood of ethnic conflicts either using patronage to buy off minority elites or providing public goods to satisfy the general minority masses.

Chapter 3 builds a formal model of the theoretical argument and analytically demonstrates that the state is able to appease disgruntled minorities by making policy accommodations. The model shows that the appeasing effect holds even considering (1) the presence of state repression and (2) the strategic interaction between the state and the dissident group.

Drawing on data about disaggregated county-year fiscal spending in Xinjiang (1997-2005), Chapter 4 shows that a particular type of state accommodations – public goods spending – has a significant pacifying impact on ethnic conflict at the local level. This finding partially accounts for why the intensity of inter-group violence varied considerably across minority-concentrated localities.

Based on personnel records of more than 220,000 bureaucrats employed by Xinjiang's over 80 county governments (1980-1995), Chapter 5 shows that more cross-ethnic patronage led to a lower likelihood of inter-group conflict, even within those regions characterized by a Uyghur majority. Drawing on in-depth archival research and interviews, I also present causal mechanisms underlying this appeasing effect of cross-ethnic patronage. This chapter complements the finding of Chapter 4 and provides direct evidence for the pacifying impact of local inter-ethnic co-optation.

Chapter 6 focuses on another type of intra-ethnic variations – the differential participation rates across social classes with regard to inter-ethnic conflict. To demonstrate varying socioeconomic status of individuals who engaged in ethnic violence, I compile micro-level data based on rarely used reports by local prison officers. After examining demographic profiles of over 1,000 Uyghur political prisoner who were sentenced for endangering state security, I find that those social subgroups received fewer state concessions are more likely to be the protagonists of ethnic conflict.

Chapter 7 concludes with a summary of the empirical findings and provides a number

of theoretical and policy implications. The chapter ends up with future prospects of the research agenda.

My dissertation contributes to our knowledge on civil conflict in general and Chinese politics in particular. Instead of treating ethnic groups as homogeneous entities, my dissertation shows that intra-ethnic variations have important policy implications. To explain such intragroup variations, I develop a new theory that links ethnic conflicts with local states. It therefore challenges a prevalent view of civil conflict that discounts the role of local governments. For the field of Chinese politics, my study sheds new light on the onset, trajectory, and mechanisms of ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang. Despite Xinjiang draws significant attention from both academia and policy communities in recent years, there is a lack of systematic inquiries of ethnic violence in this region. My dissertation presents one of the most comprehensive analyses with regard to China's ongoing domestic ethnic conflicts.

Chapter 2

Local Government and Ethnic Violence: An Intra-Ethnic Explanation

... a war of all against all and neighbor against neighbor – a condition in which pretty much everyone in one ethnic group becomes the ardent, dedicated, and murderous enemy of everyone in another group – ethnic war essentially does not exist.

Mueller (2000)

The state is itself both a resource and a distributor of resources. It is not an abstraction, but a set of repressive, allocative, and distributive institutions and decision-making bodies.

Brass (1991)

Introduction

During the last decade, empirical studies of civil conflict have generated an array of important findings by taking a groupism approach. Like the realism paradigm in the international relationships (IR) that views the state as a whole, this groupism perspective tends to conceive ethnic group as a unitary social actor and employs each ethnic group as a basic unit of analysis. These group-oriented studies reveal that group-level factors such as the presence of kin groups in homelands, the geographical characteristics of ethnic groups, inter-group inequalities, and group-level political exclusions have profound influences on the likelihood of civil violence (Buhaug et al. 2008; Cederman, Girardin and Gleditsch 2009; Weidmann 2009; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010; Buhaug et al. 2011; Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011; Østby et al. 2011; Fjelde and Østby 2014).

By focusing on the group-level variation, this body of literature offers us a much better understanding of civil violence. However, this group-as-a-whole approach leaves a type of puzzles unanswered: even within a marginalized geographically concentrated ethnic minority community, why do members in some places manage to maintain a peaceful relationship with the politically dominant ethnic majority while failing to do so in other localities? Why are certain social subgroups within the ethnic group more likely to

participate in inter-group violence? The "groupism" paradigm, namely "the tendency to take ethnic groups ... as substantial entities to which interest and identity can be attributed" (Brubaker 2004, p.8), cannot explain these within-group variations over inter-ethnic conflicts.[1]

In this dissertation, I address this critical lacuna by exploring the strategic actions taken by local governments, particularly local fiscal policy towards ethnic minorities. The existing literature presents little systematic evidence of how local governments affect ethnic violence, especially the subgroup variation regarding inter-group conflicts. Although recent advances in civil conflict begin to examine the influence of local states on violence (Lacina 2014), few of them have explored the linkage between fiscal spending and ethnic violence, especially through a systematic quantitative approach. This dissertation thus bridges a gap between the well-established comparative politics literature on local government (Wibbels 2006; Treisman 2007), redistributive politics (Golden and Min 2013), and a burgeoning international relations research agenda on disaggregating civil violence (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009) – it applies rigorous statistical techniques to a new ethnic conflict dataset on the Xinjiang province of China that allows a disaggregated study of local governments. This chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 demonstrates the prevalence of intra-group variations in ethnic conflict and thus points out the limitations of the "groupism" view. Section 3 presents a new typology to conceptualize existing studies on ethnic conflict. Section 4 specifies my state-centered explanation of within-group variations with regard to ethnic violence.

Beyond Groupism

A large body of social science literature, both statistical analyses and ethnographic case studies, suggests the prevalence of within-group differences in terms of participating in inter-ethnic conflicts across a variety of contexts. The key finding is, ethnicity writ large cannot account for such intra-group variation. One of the most important findings about

[1] Comparative politics scholars on ethnic politics have recognized the importance of within-group differences in explaining political behavior, see Chandra (2006).

mass killing in last several decades is that the majority of the actual ethnic cleaning was carried out by a small segment of the society. In his meticulous analysis of infamous ethnic cleaning in the Twentieth Century, Valentino (2004) shows that the collective killing of national groups such as Holocaust and the Rwanda genocide was mainly conducted by a relatively small portion of the male population. Citing the estimations by Goldhagen (1997), Valentino (2004, p.36) concludes that hardcore Holocaust perpetrators "constitutes less than 1 percent of the adult male population of Germany in 1938." For the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, even if we focus on larger numbers of Hutu civilians who actively assisted mass killing rather than a smaller perpetrator group who directly contributed to the mass slaughter, this larger group "amounts to less than 9 percent of the male Hutu population over the age of thirteen" (Valentino 2004, p.37). Valentino's argument is supported by John Muller's study on ethnic wars in the former Yugoslavia. Mueller (2000) finds that criminals, sadists, and thugs played a far more important role in collective killings of out-groups than the general public in Yugoslavia's ethnic atrocities.

The intra-group variations are not specific to high-profile ethnic violence like genocides. We can observe a similar pattern in low-intensity ethnic conflicts such as riots[2] and other forms of communal conflicts. In particular, there are two aspects of the within-group differences: sociological profile of participants and spatial distribution of conflict incidents.

2.1 Participants of Ethnic Conflict and Their Social Class

In her study on Nigeria's Christian-Muslim riots, Scacco (2016) finds that rioters tended to be employed in poorly paid jobs while middle-class professionals rarely participated in the riots. This finding about the socioeconomic composition of rioting crowds is also corroborated by the influential works of Tambian and Horowitz. In his ethnographic study of Sri Lankan riots, Tambiah (1996) consistently finds that rioters were mainly drawn from young, urban, and poor male individuals. Similar conclusions have

[2] After a review of the literature on the social composition of rioters, Brass (1996) indicates that there seems to be no conclusive relationship between a specific social class and the actual participants in riots events. However, he also shows that there is ample evidence for the disproportional involvements of socially marginalized groups in a number of riots such as 19th century Russian pogroms, the 20th century Hindu-Muslim riots, and England's urban riots in the 1980s.

been made by Horowitz about participation in ethnic riots in Africa and Asia (Horowitz 2001, pp.258-266). Horowitz (2001, p.261) also notes that "in many riots, some subethnic groups are disproportionately represented among the attackers, while others are absent." This perspicacious observation is based on a host of cases that range from differential Malay participation in the 1950 Singapore riot to varying caste involvement in Indian riots. Another illustrative example is the aforementioned July 5, 2009 riots in Ürümqi. Most Uyghur perpetrators were not Uyghur professionals who were employed by the city's public sector but were mainly unemployed Uyghurs with poor Mandarin language proficiency recently migrated from southern Xinjiang (Li 2012*b*, p.147).

For other types of communal violence, participants also tend to be different from the general population in terms of personal traits. In the case of the Greek-Turkish conflict in Cyprus, Lange (2012, pp.84-95) demonstrates that two Greek nationalist groups – EOKA and EOKA-B, which conducted much of the ethno-nationalist violence during the Cyprus civil war, were mainly staffed by middle-class professionals and students. Another example is the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey. After scrutinizing biographical information of 8,266 Kurdish rebels, Tezcür (2016) finds that, at the individual level, although there is a general negative relationship between education and rebel participation, those highly educated political activists tended to join in insurgent groups. In terms of ethnic terrorism, scholars have identified that ethno-nationalist terrorists exhibit distinct sociological profiles compared with the population from which they were drawn. For instance, Reinares (2004) shows that, after the early 1980s, members of Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) were more likely to be students at the moment of recruitment. In short, regardless the specific type of ethnic violence, there are certain social subgroups that are more likely to engage in these violent actions than others.

Other compelling evidence for the presence of intra-group variations comes not from violent events, but from more peaceful nationalist movements such as mass protests. In a host of documented cases, nationalist activists tend to be over-represented among a particular social subroup. In Tibet, for example, as Barnett (2009, p.11) notes, a majority of protests against the Chinese state was led by a specific social group - Buddhist

monks and nuns - in the 1980s and 1990s. Other Tibetan classes except for students rarely involved in these protests. Similarly, in his study of Tatar nationalist movement, Gorenburg (2003) finds that one small group of individuals – scholars from the social science institutes and universities – constituted the vanguard of the movement. When these nationalist leaders mobilized their co-ethnics, university students from rural areas were especially likely to become followers of this movement. Using the ethnic mobilization data of Beissinger (2002), Marquardt (2017) reveals a significant intra-ethnic variation in terms of participating in mass demonstrations during the disintegration of the Soviet Union: for members of a peripheral group who could speak proficient Russian, they were less likely to follow the nationalist campaign orchestrated by ethnic elites.

In addition to engaging in overt collective actions, the level of mass support for ethnic hatred also varies across different social subgroups within the ethnic group. According to Lange (2017, pp.66-70), in Denver and Indianapolis during the early 1920s, Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members were under-represented among blue-collar workers and more likely to be upper class occupations. In Nazi Germany, doctors were the most enthusiastic supporters of the Nazi regime – a striking fact is that 45 percent of doctors had became the Nazi members (Lange 2017, pp.79).

2.2 Uneven Spatial Distribution of Conflict Incidents

Although a strand of ethnic conflict literature has emphasized the within-group variation in terms of participants' sociological profiles, much research has not paid sufficient attention to the geography of the within-group diversity. That is, there tends to be a considerable geographic variation of inter-ethnic conflicts across a set of regions that share similar ethnic demographics.

Taking China as an example. The Yecheng County of the Kashgar prefecture in southern Xinjiang experienced more than 15 Uyghur-Han conflicts between 1980 and 2005, whereas there was no ethnic violence occurred in the adjacent Makit County. These two counties are demographic and socioeconomic likeable. In the Tibetan plateau, likewise, most of the protests initiated by Tibetans in the 1980s and 1990s concentrated in a specific part of the Tibet Autonomous Region but many neighbouring counties in Qinghai

and Sichuan were largely acquiescent despite their alike local ethnic composition (Barnett 2009, pp.9-11).

The uneven geographic spread of inter-group violence among ethnically alike communities is not specific to China. In the case of Post-Suharto Indonesia, Panggabean and Smith (2011) find that anti-Chinese riots took place in some cities but other cities experienced none even if these cities had very similar ethnic demographics. Likewise, India's Hindu-Muslim riots spread unevenly across nearby cities within the same state. For example, in terms of the number of riot-related deaths, there were striking differences between Baroda and Surat in Gujarat, Hyderabad and W'aranpl in Andhra Pradesh (Varshney 2003). More interestingly, this pattern holds for the spatial distribution of violent organization membership. For instance, with regard to ethnic terrorism in Basque, Reinares (2004) demonstrates that around half of ETA members came from a specific province of Basque – Guipuzcoan – between 1970 and 1995. Another case is about violent dissident Republican (VDR) activities in Northern Ireland. According to Horgan and Morrison (2011), from 1997 to 2010, of convicted VDR members from the Republic of Ireland, a majority of them were from two counties of the country's thirty-two counties.

To sum up, it is necessary to move beyond a commonsense view that treats ethnic conflicts as the collective struggles between bounded ethnic groups. Instead, a more nuanced and sophisticated analysis needs to pay more attention to the intra-group variation, which is crucial to develop a more comprehensive understanding of ethnic conflicts.

A Typology of Theories on Ethnic Conflict

Research on inter-group violence is numerous. Instead of offering a sweeping overview, I construct a typology to illustrate several common features of these studies. Through this typology, I structure my research question in the field of ethnic conflict and also contrast my theoretical framework with the extant body of literature. Table 1 distinguishes four constellations of preexisting explanations on ethnic conflict according to (1) the unit of analysis, and (2) the role of state. The row variable, namely the unit of analysis,

indicates whether researchers view ethnic group as a unitary actor in their analysis of ethnic conflict. Scholars who adopt the groupism perspective tend to focus on group-level variations such as why some groups are more likely to take rebellion against the state than others. Accordingly, for this analytic approach, the within-group heterogeneity is often overlooked. On the contrary, other studies pay more attention to the intra-group dynamics and highlight the importance of within-group heterogeneity. This dichotomy has a clear implication: only by taking subgroup-level actors as unit of analysis, we are able to solve the puzzles mentioned in the above – the intra-ethnic variation regarding inter-group conflicts.

Table 1: A Typology of Theories on Ethnic Conflict

		Unit of Analysis	
		Group-Level	**Subgroup-Level**
Role of State	**Society-Centered**	**Type I**	**Type III**
	State-Centered	**Type II**	**Type IV**

The 2×2 typology also involves another dimension: whether the state is conceptualized as an explanatory variable. From the society-centered perspective, "government was viewed primarily as an area within which economic interest groups or normative social movements contended or allied with one another to shape the making of public policy decisions" (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985, p.4). In the context of ethnic conflict, these confrontations are interpreted as struggles over the control of resources by various ethnic groups. On the other hand, state-centered school tends to explain the process of ethnic violence as a function of the state's agency. For example, a set of institutional arrangements such as ethnofederalism and state capacity, are conceived as autonomous factors that affect the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

Given these two separate dimensions, I am able to tabulate four types of preexisting theories on ethnic conflict. The following parts of this section summarize each of the category one-by-one from Type I to Type III. I will return to discuss Type IV in the next section.

3.1 Type I: Society-Centered Groupism Theories

By far, one of the most thorough reviews of society-centered groupism theories is Kaufmann (2005). In his article, Kaufmann coins four distinct research programs: essentialism, constructivism, structuralism, and rational choice. Except for constructivism, three of them are society-centered groupism theories.

3.1.1 Essentialism

With regard to essentialism, the most exemplary works are Horowitz (1985) and Petersen (2002). The essentialism is mainly built on various psychological theories. For example, Tajel's social identity theory plays an fundamental role in the theory building of Horowitz (1985). Modernization usually leads to uneven socioeconomic developments across different regions within a country. For Horowitz, backward groups in backward regions are most likely to become secessionists. Compared with advanced groups in backward or advanced regions, backward groups in backward regions face the issue of low self-esteem. Consequently, to enhance the level of self-esteem, they are motivated to organize secessionist movements.

Similar to Horowitz, Petersen (2002) develops his four-model explanation of ethnic conflict based on a set of psychological research on types of human emotions: fear, hatred, resentment, and rage. In particular, this four-path argument accounts for "variation in the timing and targets of ethnic violence" (Petersen 2002, p.75), which is largely overlooked by mainstream ethnic conflict theories. Petersen articulates four narratives of emotion-imbued social processes that result in ethnic violence. Taking his analysis of resentment as an example. According to Petersen, resentment is more about a sense of subordination. When status reversals occur, namely "a more regionally powerful group in an established hierarchy is dislodged from its position and place below a less powerful group"(Petersen 2002, p.52), it give rises to a heightened feeling of resentment. Therefore, "the predicted ethnic target will be the group perceived as farthest up the ethnic status hierarchy that can be most surely subordinated through ethnic/national violence"(Petersen 2002, p.40).

For both Horowitz and Petersen, ethnic groups are largely viewed as unitary actors and ethnic groups are "allowing group members to maintain or enhance self-esteem"

(Fearon and Laitin 1996, p.717). According to this research program, ethnic conflicts occur because a group experiences psychologically negative emotions during its interaction with another group: security threat, historical grievance, status discrepancies, etc. Note that the role of state is mostly marginalized in this line of reasoning. For instance, it remains unclear how state institutions interact with emotions to affect the likelihood of group conflict (Varshney 2007*a*, p.282). For scholars who hold a essentialism perspective, they often treat states as theoretically peripheral actors in their analyses of ethnic violence.

3.1.2 Structuralism

Structuralism emphasizes the primary effect of group settlement patterns – where groups live and whether they are a minority or a majority. This theory includes two variants. The first type, which is pioneered by Posen (1993), underlines the relationship between settlement patterns and ethnic security dilemma. For this type of structuralism, a key precondition of large-scale ethnic violence is the collapse of state, or put simply, the emergence of anarchy. That is, "the failed state becomes a pocket international system and behaves like one. The side then face a security dilemma in which mobilization by any side can pose a real offensive threat to others" (Kaufmann 2005, p.199). Only given a failed state, the domestic security dilemma becomes acute. In particular, ethnically intermixed settlement patterns exacerbate the problems of security dilemma. In a thorough analysis of partitions in twentieth century, Kaufmann (1998) heavily relies on this intergroup security dilemma argument. According to Kaufmann (1998, p.122), "the intensity of this security dilemma is in part a function of demography: the more intermixed the pattern of settlement of the hostile populations, the greater the opportunities for offense by either side; and it becomes more difficult to design effective measures for community defense except by going on the offensive preemptively to 'cleanse' mixed areas of members of the enemy group and create ethnically reliable, defensible enclaves."

On the other hand, Toft (2005) develops a second type of structuralism. Similar to the ethnic security dilemma argument, Toft also stresses the impact of ethnic settlement patterns. However, in contrast to Kaufmann (1998), Toft (2005) contends that dispersed

groups (i.e., groups usually live in intermixed areas) are least likely to engage in ethnic conflicts. This is largely out of two reasons. First, dispersed groups have the weakest capabilities. That is, "Because members are scattered across a state, dispersed groups are unlikely to have either the fighters necessary to achieve sovereignty in any particular region or the dense networks that facilitate coordinated action" (Toft 2002, p.90). Second, in terms of claiming legitimacy, it is hard for these dispersed groups to use the majority rule principle.

To reprise, despite distinct predictions with regard to the relationship between settlement patterns and ethnic violence, proponents of structuralism tend to overlook the agency of state (because they assume the coming apart of a centralized state as the context of their theories) and thereby interpreting ethnic violence as results of group-level interactions.

3.1.3 Rational Choice Approach (Bargaining Models)

Most rational choice scholars on ethnic conflict stress strategic inter-group interactions. Interestingly, they tend to use rational choice to construct a type of society-centered theory. These researchers model the inter-group interaction as a process of dynamic bargaining by representing ethnic groups as unitary actors. These scholars are mainly inspired by the seminal work of Fearon (1995). In the same vein of Fearon (1995), intra-state war/conflict is viewed as following similar mechanisms that result in inter-state war: information failures (de Figueiredo and Weingast 1997; Weingast 1998), problems of credible commitment, and issue indivisibility. Put differently, ethnic violence emerge from inter-group bargaining failures. For example, Weingast (1998) shows that "if information is incomplete and there are costs to becoming a victim in the future, changes in the beliefs of one group about the intentions of another can play a large role in setting the parties in the road to violence" (Lake and Rothchild 1996, p.51).

Of all these mechanisms, many rational choice scholars give their most attention to problems of credible commitment (Fearon 2004). Problems of credible commitment arise when "groups cannot credibly commit themselves to uphold mutually beneficial agreements they might reach" (Lake and Rothchild 1996, p.48). Given the problems

of credible commitment, Fearon (1998) argues that the expected shift of power balance between groups often causes ethnic war. The minority will initiate a preventive war against the majority because the latter's inability to commit to protect the former in the future. In a series of highly influential papers, Walter extends the rational choice explanation of ethnic conflict by focusing on the strategic environment in which the government and ethnic groups operate. Walter (2006*b*) shows that ethnic groups are less likely to initiate secessionist movements when the number of ethnic groups is higher. The reason is, a government is less likely to make concessions when there are more potential challengers (Walter 2006*a*). As a result, given this reputation-building concern of the government, ethnic groups are less likely to seek self-determination under this condition because they strategically anticipate that the government is less likely to grant concessions.

Except for being viewed as a disputing side during the negotiation, the role of state is largely absent in the preexisting rational choice models. In particular, for these models, it remains ambiguous with regard to the specific strategies employed by the state to control the restive minorities.[3]

3.2 Type II: State-Centered Groupism Theories

The vast body of state-centered groupism research can be divided into three variants with distinct focuses: 1) institutionalization of nationality, 2) inter-group political constellation in terms of power sharing, and 3) strategic actions taken by historical colonialists. Although these three factors studied by scholars are obviously empirically intertwined social phenomena, it is helpful to better assess the relative importance of each factor by treating them separately.

3.2.1 Institutionalization of Nationality

This line of reasoning is associated with two strands of literature: 1) ethnofederalism, with a regional focus on the East European Communist countries, and 2) the state's institutionalization of ethnic categories. Borrowing the well-known differentiation by Brubaker (1994), the former refers to "ethnoterritorial federalism" while the latter refers

[3] Grigoryan (2015) is an exception in this camp. However, he still implicitly assumes the homogeneity of the ethnic group in his discussion.

to "personal nationality." Ethnoterritorial federalism, or ethnofederalism, means "a federal political system in which component territorial governance units are intentionally associated with specific ethnic categories" (Hale 2004, p.165). On the other hand, a system of personal nationality "divided the population of the state into an exhaustive and mutually exclusive set of national groups" (Brubaker 1994, p.53). Briefly put, personal nationality is an institutionalization of ethnicity-based categories. That is, state leaders use ethnic categories to "structure their rule, allocate resources, and enshrine norms of conduct and justice" (Lieberman and Singh 2012*b*, p.2).

Ethnofederalism is widely regarded as a cause or at least a significant catalyst of separatist conflicts in Czechoslovakia, the former Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia (Bunce 1999; Roeder 2007; Hale 2008). This group of scholars make an institutionalist account by arguing that ethnofederalism facilitate large-scale ethnic mobilization that eventually crippled down these three states. Specifically, an ethnofederal state breeds inter-ethnic conflicts through two mechanisms. First, this institutional arrangement strengthens or even create ethnic identity, thus diminishing the potential for group permeability. As a result, it becomes much easier for political entrepreneurs to mobilize alongside the clear-cut ethnic line. Second, ethnofederalism offers ethnic cadres a number of designated institutional resources such as pre-defined national legislatures, indigenized administrative bureaucrats, and cultural symbols (Roeder 1991). Once the state is organized as a set of such quasi-nation-states, national cadres can easily convert these enshrined organizational resources into contentious political actions.

In contrast to ethnofederalism, which is associated with a specific territory-based administrative arrangement, institutionalization of ethnic categories is related to the prevalence of socially relevant ethnic distinctions (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004). Put differently, through a process of state-led institutionalization, "people notice and condition their actions on ethnic distinctions in everyday life" (Fearon 2006*b*). The most comprehensive examinations of the relationship between institutionalized ethnicity-based categories and group conflict are Lieberman and Singh (2012*b*) and Lieberman and Singh (2017). Lieberman and Singh (2017) explores one of the most important state catego-

rizing institutions – census. The enumeration of ethnic cleavages on the census affect the likelihood of ethnic conflict through several mechanisms. First, in the same vein as Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov (2004), Lieberman and Singh (2017, pp.8-pp.9) argues that "As a state institution invested with a high degree of authority, census-based categorization is therefore likely to draw clear boundaries between and to deepen allegiance among those who might previously have held more fluid identities and recognized more flexible intergroup boundaries." Second, when the ethnic boundary becomes more salient, it provides opportunities for political entrepreneurs to wage conflicts because of the hardwired in-group bias. Put differently, the politicization of ethnicity is easier when ethnic distinctions are socially noticeable.

3.2.2 Inter-Group Power-Sharing

The state-based groupism perspective identifies three distinct mechanisms of power sharing: inclusion, dispersion, and constraint (Strøm et al. 2016). First, "in inclusive power sharing, the purpose is to give each participant (often an ethnic group) a share in the exercise of political power" (Strøm et al. 2016, p.5). This concept of "political inclusion" here is similar to the innovative operationalization by Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009) and Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010): focusing on ethnopolitical constellations, they systematically measure the extent to which a politically relevant ethnic group access to executive state power. Another manifestation of this "political inclusion" includes two core elements of consociationalism: (1) proportional representation (PR), (2) parliamentary system (Selway and Templeman 2012). The basic idea of consociationalism is that PR and parliamentarism effectively mandate the participation of more ethnic groups in the decision-making process. Wilkinson (2006) provides empirical evidence for this "political inclusion" argument based on subnational data in India. He finds that the breakups of large-scale Hindu-Muslim riots were shaped by the local politicians' political incentives. Specifically, when either of the following two conditions applies, the likelihood of riots is lower: (1) the party or multi-party coalition in a state relies substantively on the support of Muslim voters; (2) the overall level of political competition among political parties in a state is sufficiently high. The implication is clear: when Muslims are

somehow included in the ruling state government, politicians have stronger incentives to direct local police that prevent communal violence.

Second, dispersive power sharing "refers to institutions that distribute authority among a variety of decision makers in a territorial pattern" (Strøm et al. 2016, p.8). In other words, dispersive power sharing amounts to political decentralization along the ethnic-national line. The empirical tests show that political decentralization likes federalism has mixed effects on curbing ethnic conflicts. Using survey data from 51 multiethnic countries, Elkins and Sides (2007) show that federalism does not have a systematic effect on ethnic minorities' attachment with the state. In the same vein of this finding, Selway and Templeman (2012) find that the impact of federalism is less certain in ethnically-divided societies. Moving beyond the debate around the utility of adopting federalism, Brancati (2006) examines the variation that why political decentralization fosters ethnic tensions in some cases while alleviating ethnic conflicts in other circumstances. She measures political decentralization by creating an index of whether regional legislatures have control over tax authority, education, and police. Brancati (2006) suggests a more nuanced effect of political decentralization: the presence of regional party that encouraged by political decentralization exacerbates inter-group conflicts whereas political decentralization itself exerts direct appeasing effects on ethnic violence.

Third, constraining power sharing means "a variety of institutions designed to protect the rights of individuals and social groups from encroachments predation by, for example, politicians or armed forces" (Strøm et al. 2016, p.9). Gates et al. (2016) shows that this form of power sharing is more efficient with regard to pacify political violence. The key feature of this constraining power sharing is a institutional check against the abuse of government power. Gates et al. (2016) measure this concept using three indicators: (1) whether members of armed force are allowed to take positions in the legislature, (2) whether the constitution guarantees the freedom of religious practices, and (3) independent courts. Essentially, the concept of constraint-based power sharing is closely associated with the concept of liberal democracy. The impact of political institution is extensively discussed in the civil conflict literature (Hegre et al. 2001; Vreeland 2008;

Gleditsch and Ruggeri 2010). However, the consensus seems to be that there is no monotonic effect of democracy (Hegre 2014).

3.2.3 Legacy of Colonial Rule

The institutionalization argument implies as a key question, if the process of institutionalization is a policy decision made by the state, then why the state chooses to increase the salience of a particular cleavage rather than another one? Similarly, if power-sharing is viewed as an efficient tool to dampen conflict, why state leaders choose to exclude certain ethnic groups from state power?

To fill these gaps left by both institutionalization arguments and the power sharing approach, some scholars highlight the key role played by the colonial empires. In his magisterial study of ethnic conflict, Horowitz (1985) links ethnic resentment in many developing countries to historical colonial experience. Specially, colonial policy often gave rise to ethnic violence because of inter-group antipathy derived from preferential treatments. According to Horowitz, "colonial policy created images and a socioeconomic reality of some groups as advantaged and others as backward. For the groups that were considered backward by European, or that had not mastered the skills most valued by colonial masters, the colonial experience added up to group humiliation, and the humiliation is sustained through the articulation of group stereotypes ... Hostility expressed toward the advantaged, psychologists have found, helps restore self-esteem and reduces anxiety"(Laitin 2001, p.844).

In the same vein as Horowitz (1985), Wucherpfennig, Hunziker and Cederman (2016) show that the contemporary variations of political exclusion are largely shaped by colonial strategies. In particular, for a specific group, the likelihood of being excluded in the post-colonial state is a function of two variables: whether the colonial ruler is Britain or French, and the remoteness to the coast. In contrast to their French counterparts, Britain rulers tend to adopt a selective indirect rule. That is, Britain colonists intentionally counterbalanced the threat from preexisting powerful ethnic groups by favoring peripheral groups located in the remote areas. As a result, for Britain colonies, groups at the coast are less likely to be included in the post-colonial state compared with groups concentrated

in remote hinterland. This opposite pattern is found in French colonies.

Regardless of their differences, all these state-centric perspectives share an implicit assumption. That is, they tend to conceptualize each ethnic group as an unitary social actor. The intra-group heterogeneity is thus underplayed for the purpose of parsimony. Consequently, this group-as-a-whole approach masks an important question: how to explain the within-group differential participation in ethnic conflict?

3.3 Type III: Society-Centered Intra-Ethnic Theories

We have discussed the within-group difference with regard to engaging in inter-ethnic conflict. Across a variety of contexts, there are also considerable intra-group variations in terms of nationalist sentiment (Gorenburg 2000), the willingness to cooperate with alien rulers (Hechter 2013), and the likelihood of ethnic defection in civil war (Kalyvas 2008). All of these within-group diversities show that ethnicity writ large is inadequate for explaining a group member's political behavior over the inter-group relationship. If ethnicity by itself cannot explain why some within-group members are more likely to engage in ethnic conflicts than others, it suggests that the relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic violence is contingent on specific local circumstances (Brubaker 2004, p.27). Ethnic boundaries are malleable and flexible, thereby ethnic groups are not static and they are largely subject to a process of internal contestations (Wimmer 2008). Kalyvas (2003) goes further by arguing that many "ethnic" violence were indeed motivated by local or private issues rather than driven by the 'master' ethnic-national cleavage. As a result, an ethnicity-based reading of many "ethnic" conflicts are either superficial or misleading.

Research on intra-group heterogeneity in terms of being involved in inter-group violence is numerous. Specifically, there are three different mechanisms proposed by scholars who embrace this analytical approach.[4] First, several authors have suggested the impor-

[4]An emerging strand of literature goes beyond this "groupism" by examining the influence of intra-ethnic political rivalry: Cunningham (2011) and Cunningham, Bakke and Seymour (2012) show that the number of competing factions within self-determination movements significantly affect the pattern of inter-ethnic conflict. In addition, the fragmentation of rebel groups also leads to ethnic defection (Staniland 2012), inter-rebel violence (Fjelde and Nilsson 2012), and violence against co-ethnic civilians (Wood and Kathman 2015). However, this rapidly growing research agenda is incomplete for three reasons: first and foremost, the origin of these intra-group cleavages largely remains obscure. Relevant literature usually takes these divisions as given rather than systematically explores the cause of this

tance of interest groups in the development of ethnic violence. This argument comes in two forms of variants: occupation-based groups and identity-based groups. Hechter (1992, 2000) suggests that the middle-class and white-collar workers are the social base of secessionist movements. Building on a rational choice paradigm, he argues that the degree of supporting nationalist movements is a function of expected private benefits derived from the success of these nationalist goals: jobs, patronage, and other types of material payoffs. Because of their privileged ethnicity-specific cultural capitals, professionals and government employees are the certain groups that are most likely to ripe personal material benefits after establishing an independent new state. Rogowski (1985) lends empirical support for this argument on the basis of nationalist movements in the developed countries. In contrast to the above purely materialism argument, Gorenburg (2000) proposes an alternative explanation focusing on the variation of intra-group cultural identity. According to this model, the depth of an individual's emotional attainment to his or her co-ethnics matters. Among the Tatars in Tatarstan, Gorenburg finds that those university students who received a native-language education were significantly more likely to support nationalist movements.

The second argument emphasizes the extent to which social subgroups within the ethnic minority are characterized by cross-cutting identities. Several researchers show that (Selway 2011; Gubler and Selway 2012) societies of more cross-cutting cleavages are significant less likely to experience civil war onset. Essentially, cross-cutting cleavages attenuate ethnicity-based group loyalty. It is possible that when a ethnic group is featured by more intra-group cross-cutting cleavages, ethnicity may lose its position as the predominant identity marker. Members can develop more social ties with out-groups based on the shared non-ethnic identity. Therefore, it becomes more difficult for ethnic

within-group disunity. Second, these studies focus on rebel organizations rather than the general intra-group division. Even if those secessionist movements with greater number of competing factions are significantly associated with severer inter-ethnic violence, it is unclear why ordinary members of an ethnic group are more likely to participate in inter-ethnic conflicts in some localities than others. Third, related to understudied causes of intra-group cleavages, few of these studies examine the strategic action taken by the state to generate the intra-group division. For example, Byman (2002) show that states can adopt a variety of tactics to deal with a contentious ethnic minority: coercion, co-opting key elites, changing group identities, implementing power-sharing, and partitioning states. Little research in this camp has been conducted to examine on the impact of state's strategy of manipulating intra-group disunity.

entrepreneurs to mobilize co-ethnics to achieve nationalist goals.

The third explanation highlights the the structure of local social networks (Gould 1995; Petersen 2001; Varshney 2003). There are two variants of this strand of arguments: mass mobilization based on intra-communal networks and inter-ethnic cooperation based on inter-communal ties. Petersen (2001) suggests that dense community-based ties facilitate the process of mobilization. Because of local variation of social capitals (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1994), group members in some places are endowed with better preexisting local networks. As a result, barriers to engage in collective action are lower in these communities. Instead of stressing the intra-communal networks, Varshney (2003) argues that intra-group variations over ethnic violence are contingent on inter-communal networks such as cross-ethnicity civil society at the local level. He finds that for those Indian cities characterized by thicker inter-communal civic networks, they are less likely to suffer from Hindu-Muslim riots.

Society-centered studies on intra-group heterogeneity resonate well with more sophisticated theories against a primordial view of ethnicity and they thus make an impressive progress of understanding ethnic conflict.[5] This dissertation does not refute these society-centered arguments. Instead, it suggests that an important theoretical contribution can be made by focusing on how local states affect within-group heterogeneity in terms of participating in ethnic conflict. My key argument is that, most of these aforementioned society-centered explanatory variables, have been largely shaped, mediated, or even forged by modern nation-states. Now I turn to my theory.

A State-Centered Intra-Group Explanation

4.1 Bringing the State Back In

[5]In addition to these three arguments, someone may pose the importance of local ethnic configuration. Here I do not articulate this argument mainly because the extant literature is inconclusive. Members who live in a ethnically more diverse local community may either be more likely to endorse ethnically belligerent actions or support the opposite. The well-known contact hypothesis lends support for the former prediction (Hewstone and Brown 1986). In the vein of this reasoning, increasing inter-group connections would decrease the between-group antipathy, which ameliorates the risk of ethnic violence. On the other hand, the presence of out-group may led to more intensive competition over scarce resources or job opportunities, which exacerbates the likelihood of communal conflicts (Olzak 1994).

Before proposing a state-centred theory for within-group differences in terms of differential participation in ethnic conflict, a case can be made for the pivotal role of state in explaining ethnic violence in general. I sketch the outline of such an argument in four parts. I begin by identifying the profound impact of nationalism – a state-centered ideology of modern communities – in shaping political struggles after the demise of empires. Then I emphasize the relatively independent role played by the state in ethnic politics. After that, I seek to conceptualize ethnic politics as a type of politics deals with the allocation of state resources. In the end, I specify the channels through which state-relevant factors shape or mediate the variables that scholars previously denote as society-centered explanations of intra-group differences.

4.1.1 State and Nationalism

The notion of nationalism - the congruence of ethnic community and the bureaucratic territorial state - has been central to scholarly discussions of ethnic conflict (Breuilly 1993). Since the arrival of modernity, ethnic differences are politicized in the name of nationalism. Almost all ethno-nationalist conflicts in the modern world are to some degree framed in the language of nationalism.

The classic modernist approach to ethnicity and violence emphasizes the deep connection between the modernization process and the emergence of mass nationalism, ethnic exclusion, and ethno-nationalist wars (Wimmer 2012; Brubaker 2015*a*; Lange 2017). According to proponents of the modernist approach, nationalism is a historically unprecedented ideology and the ascendance of such an idea is an unintended result of modernity: popular sovereignty, a new self-understanding of autonomous human agency, changed social communication, and a ever growing division of labor. In short, all of these dramatic cultural and socioeconomic changes led to a fundamental shift of the base of political legitimacy. The linked new concepts of peoplehood, nationhood, and citizenship had replaced the divine rule of monarchy as the basic words to describe the political world. According to the language of nationalism, the state is able to exercise its power only by gaining the consensus of the ruled individuals, namely the perceived homogeneous 'people' or the 'nation'. As a result, in the eyes of nationalists, all multi-ethnic empires

are illegitimate and thus doomed to disintegrate. This sweeping change of ideology was accompanied with the emergence of modern bureaucratic territorial states. Along with the spread of nationalism from the Western world to the globe stage, this form of organizational template – the centralized territorial states – had trumped other types of polities and eventually became the predominant institutional form of power around the world. By the 20th century, modern states have been the most important actor in the political arena. Moreover, the states have greatly expanded its capacity to intervene the everyday life of its citizen over the last several centuries. Because of this, the way in which the states exercise its power and who is granted to access state services have direct consequences for the general population.

One of the results of this global-level transformation is the increasing ethnicity-based struggle over goods provided by modern states or sometimes the states themselves. Because the political legitimacy now is built on nationalism and the impact of state is so consequential, it is not surprising to witness the ethnicized competition for state resources. Since the state is central for any discussions of nationalism and it thus serves as a key actor for any explorations of ethno-nationalist conflict, it is reasonable to develop a state-centered theory of within-group differences in terms of inter-ethnic conflict. Before undertaking that step, I first direct our attention to an argument that stresses the relatively autonomous effect of the state in an era of nationalism.

4.1.2 State as a Relatively Independent Actor

The state-centered approach views state as a relatively autonomous organizational actor that has its own goal and capacity. The key point is that even if a state is ethnicized and substantively captured by a specific ethnic group (i.e., most executive-level positions in the state are occupied by political elites of an ethnic group), we cannot simply conflate the interests of that group with the goals of the state (Brubaker 2004, pp.14-16). There are two important reasons for this argument. First, as members of a putative group, individuals who share similar cultural and linguistic traits may have different levels of attachment to that group, which makes it difficult to infer their interests solely based on the supposed ethnic identity (Chandra 2006). Moreover, the mass support for an

ethnicized state does not necessarily means an unconditional approval of the state's ethnic policies. That is, the state's actions in a number of ethnicity-related policy arenas may not necessarily reflect the public's support. One extreme example was the Nazi Germany. Despite the Nazi state's official rhetoric that its brutal goal of annihilating Jews actualized the Germans' national interests, it is hard to automatically conflate the general preference of Germans at that time with unanimous support for the Holocaust. As Valentino (2004, p.33) notes, "almost two-thirds of German voters cast their ballots against the Nazis in 1932" in the July election that was Nazi party's largest electoral victory. Moreover, "scholars of German popular opinion overwhelmingly reject the notion that most Germans favored violent measures against the Jews" (Valentino 2004, p.34).

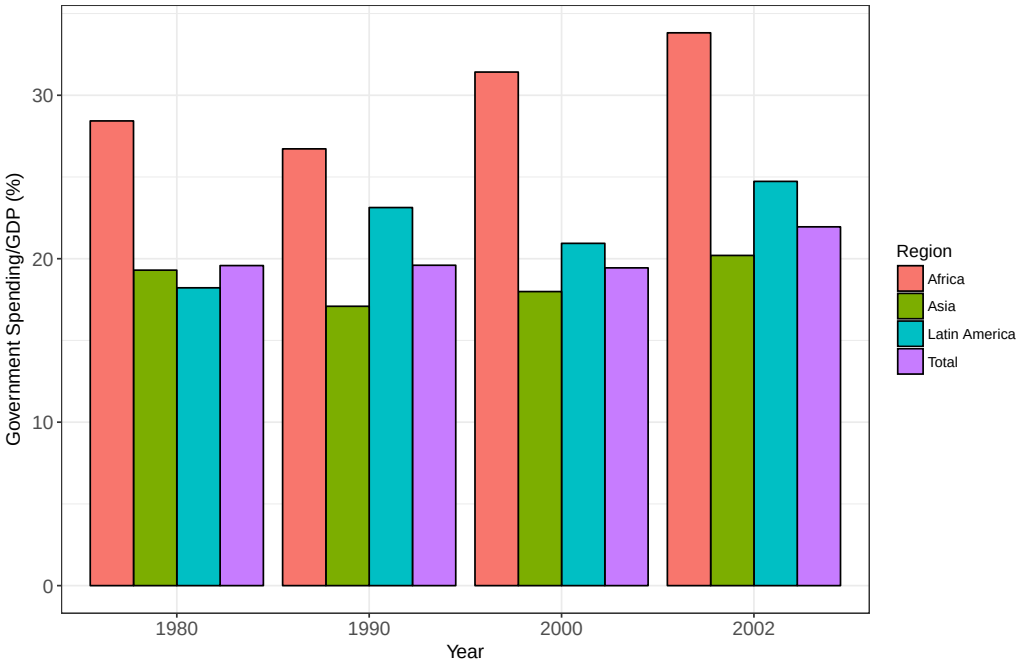
Second, unlike other putative groups, the state is structured by a set of concrete constraints and incentives that are only specific to bureaucratic territorial organizations. As a result, the state usually faces a number of trade-offs that are unique to achieve its goal (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985). In particular, the states are often motivated to preserve the territorial integrity while other putative groups do not necessarily recognize how territorial boundaries define their organizations (Mann 1984). Ethnic groups are usually more than territorially organized and they can be defined along culture, language, religion, or other social cleavages. To be true, unlike their imperial predecessors, the proliferation of modern nation-states have reduced the leeway of the state. However, under many circumstances, implementing state policies may damage rather than enhance the individual interests of members of the ethnic group in power. Those bureaucrats in power may view these policies as necessary compromises to serve the territorial integrity. Taking the Chinese state as an example. The state is clearly under the control of the Han Chinese, which constitutes more than 90% of the entire Chinese population. However, the Chinese state had adopted a number of affirmative actions towards ethnic minorities such as preferential college admission and the exemption of one-child policy (Sautman 1998*a*). Despite such pro-minority policies have been viewed against the Han Chinese's interests and remain controversial in the eyes of many Han Chinese, the Chinese state had been able to insist these preferential treatments over several decades. Departing from the society-

centered approach – viewing government as an arena in which different bounded ethnic groups contend for the control over resources, state-centered theory argues that state can exert partly independent effects on ethnic politics because it does not simply reflect the aggregated preferences of individuals from a privileged group, which is largely a putative entity with heterogeneous interests. Instead, because the state possesses organizational resources and capacities to intervene the society, it can forge, shape, and mediate the behavior and identity of various ethnic groups. These interventions are ultimately made by a small segment within the ethnic group in power – public officials and political leaders – even if the state has been ethnicized. For the ruling bureaucratic apparatus, its decision-making process partly reflects interests of their co-ethnics while the process is also subject to a set of strategic trade-offs that are bounded within broader institutional environments. Put differently, bureaucrats are political actors who possess somewhat distinct preferences from their co-ethnics and they enjoy more capacities to manipulate the inter-ethnic relationships. Most crucially, these bureaucrats may strive to preserve the territorial integrity or social order by conceding monetary benefits to potential restive secessionists though these political elites also aim at maximizing their revenue collection and investing more state resources on their co-ethnics. The degree of autonomy of the ethnizied state is thus a function of the extent to which the state allocates goods towards peripheral groups in order to mitigate the risk of inter-ethnic conflicts.

4.1.3 Ethnic Politics and the Distributive State

Despite its weaker role in developing countries (Migdal 1988; Migdal, Kohli and Shue 1994; Herbst 2000), the state remains as the most important political actors in the Third World. Figure 2 reflects this stylized fact. Using government spending a percentage of GDP to measure the degree to which states can interfere the lives of billions in Africa, Asia, and Latin American, it clearly shows that states matter a lot. With a nearly 20% share of the entire created wealth in the developing world, it is hard to underestimate the role of states compared with other non-state actors. Another way to gauge this effect is to examine the percent of people in a country have access to electricity. According to Min (2015, p.37), "especially in the developing world, government have played central roles

Figure 2: Government Spending as a Percent of GDP in Developing Countries



Note: The figure is plotted based on Fan (2008, p.23, Table 2.1).

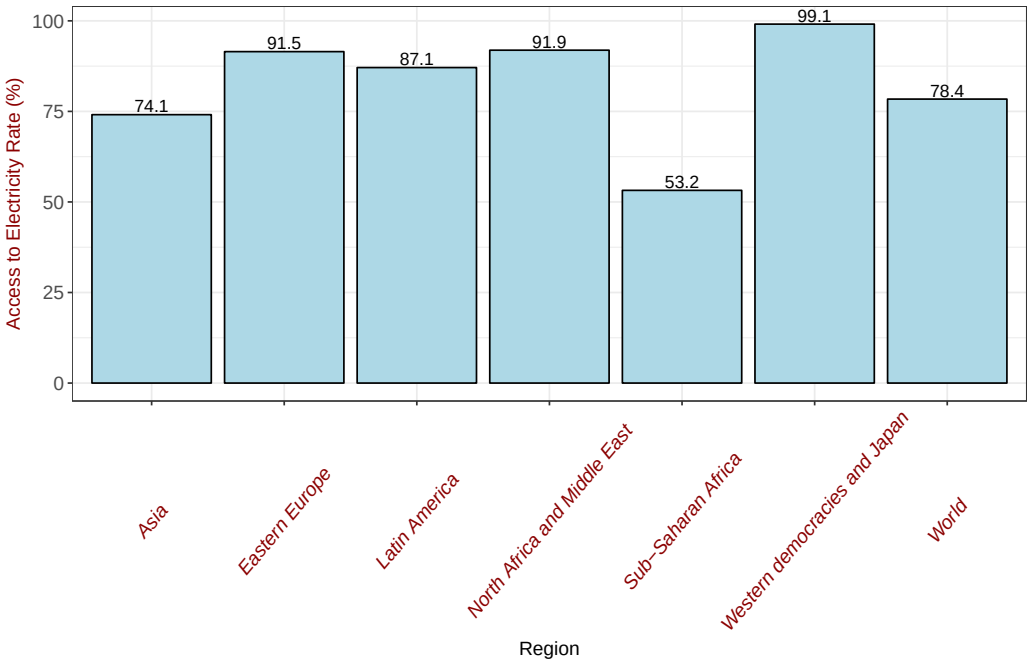
in the financing, construction, management, and regulation of the power sector." One indicator for the importance of states is that the power sector in roughly 64% of all countries is fully owned by governments while it is partly open to private investors in another 31% in the world. Although a fifth of the world's population had no access to electricity by 2013, a plurality of individuals live in the Third World are connected to electricity. Figure 3 shows that even more than half of the whole population in Sub-Saharan Africa, where states are characterized as weak and fragile,[6] had access to electricity in 2003.

The example of accessing to electricity is illustrative. Few of other public services by governments is more valuable than providing electricity. Electricity is the key engine of modern industrial developments and thus it is a crucial factor for the long-term economic growth. Without consuming electricity, people would be deprived of a large part of their utilities such as lighting, mass communication, and warming in the winter. In other words, the state matters because it effectively affects life chances of a majority of individuals in the modern world. As for the case of electricity, the allocation of general government

[6]Indeed, as Herbst (2000, p.107) recognizes, there was still "the strong balance of force in favor of the state compared to African societies."

goods and services lies at the heart of the state's behavior.

Figure 3: Access to Electricity Rate, Estimated Using Nighttime Satellite Images, 2003



Note: The figure is plotted based on Min (2015, p.80, Table 5.1).

The close relation between distributive politics and state entails an important implication for our understanding of ethnic politics. If we follow the theoretical argument of Hale (2008), ethnic politics in general and ethnic conflict in particular can be conceptualized as how individuals pursue various interests - namely life chances - once they have anchored their interests in the framework of ethnicity. This happens because ethnic identification reduces omnipresent uncertainty and thereby helping people navigate across an extreme complex domain of the social world. Because the modern state exerts a sweeping impact on people's life chances as we have discussed, the state can induce, mold, and shape how individuals from different ethnic groups behave when they provide state goods and services. This line of reasoning therefore allows us to model ethnic conflict as a part of the broader distributive politics.

4.2 Society-centered Theories Reexamined

With the conceptualization of ethnic politics as a specific type of distributive politics, now we can critically reconsider the previous society-centered explanations of within-group diversity from a state-centered perspective. Table 2 summarizes this theoretical

extension.

First, the interest group argument essentially derives the personal interests of individuals who participate ethno-nationalist movements from their social classes. Put simply, various classes tend to possess distinct material interests and thus they exhibit the within-group heterogeneity in terms of engaging in ethnic conflict. I do not dismiss this argument entirely. Instead, I push it one step further and contend that different classes usually define their interests through their concrete relationship with the state with regard to accessing state resources. As a result, for ethnic minority members with distinct socioeconomic backgrounds, their loyalties towards the state can be molded by public policies implemented by the state that directly affect their well-being.

A widely held view is that educated middle classes tend to be the nationalist vanguard who usually takes the lead of ethnic mobilization (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Brass 1991). A compelling explanation emphasizes the linkage between middle-classes' active involvement in nationalist movement and their impaired aspirations for civil service jobs because of the ethnicized state's discrimination (Horowitz 1985, p.114). When educated individuals look for employment in public sectors and fail to attain the positions because of the dominant group's ethnic favoritism, these disgruntled elites are motivated to demand a nation-state of their own (Smith 1984). However, when a state's policies cater to the needs of ethnic minority elites, these educated individuals are more inclined to favor the status quo and advocate for a multi-ethnic polity. Medrano (1995) shows that the Basque bourgeoisie was less frustrated with the Spanish state than their Catalan counterparts and these Basque business elites had closer ties with the Spanish state before the civil war. He suggests the establishment of iron-based industry in the Basque country, as parts of the Spanish state's plan to promote economic growth, made the Basque bourgeoisie more dependent on state contracts. As a result, the Basque economic elites were disinclined to support a nationalist program.

One eloquent example was Soviet Union. When the Soviet state could still sustain its developmental project and thereby providing a plenty of material benefits to ethnic elites, these elites were basically satisfied with the status quo. With a deteriorating

economy and a dwindling revenue base, the Soviet state could no longer able to buy off these indigenous cadres. As a result, these discontented minority elites shifted from being the backbone of the Soviet multi-ethnic state to becoming the vanguard of ethnic mobilization (Roeder 1991).

Table 2: A State-centered Extension of Society-centered Arguments

Mechanisms		
Name	*State-centered Re-examination*	*Cases*
Interest Group	State Contracts/Social Mobility	Basque, Soviet Union
Cross-cutting Identity	Colonial Enumeration/Education	Catalonia, India, Nigeria
Cross-ethnic Network	State-led Patronage Networks	Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon

Second, with regard to the cross-cutting cleavages argument, it makes an implicit assumption that these cleavages are viewed as exogenous to the state's social engineering. Thus, varying salience of different traits of a group (i.e., language, religion, and other identity markers) are taken for granted and further identified as a natural manifestation of the potential social structure. However, modern states are able to shape the relative importance of traits through a number of ways. Laitin (1986) shows that the religious cleavage in Yoruba, Nigeria (i.e., the difference between Muslims and Christians) is not politicized because the historical legacy of British colonial authority. For the purpose of administrative simplification, colonial rulers in Southwestern Nigeria prioritized the predominance of ancestral city identity in Yoruba. As a result of this political manipulation, Yoruba politicians are relatively indifferent to the religious distinctions among the local population. In other words, the relative importance of certain cleavages among Yoruba people in the post-colonial era is a function of the colonist state's political incentives at historically specific moments.[7]

Among the long list of the state's tactics of social engineering, as Gellner (1983) notes, the promotion of a standardized language stands out as one of the most important tools. The state's language policy, which manifests in public education, deeply affects the extent to which language is politically salient in ethnic politics. During the period

[7]For another excellent study on how colonial state in India manipulated cleavages among the locals, see Verghese (2016).

when large-scale ethnic mobilization occurred in the Soviet Union, Marquardt (2017) finds that for regions in which the proportion of non-Russian population could speak Russian was higher, these places were less likely to experience ethnic conflicts. The reason is that those who could speak Russian proficiently faced fewer barriers that hindered their social mobility. More importantly, the variation of the proficiency of Russian among the general Soviet population was largely a result of the Soviet state's evolving assimilation policy towards ethnic minorities, especially its language policy (Gorenburg 2006). On the other hand, if the state leaves the responsibility of promoting mass literacy to other political actors, it will strengthen the political salience of local language and thereby encouraging the centrifugal force of peripheral nationalism. Balcells (2013) finds that Catalan national identity is not salient in French Catalonia because the first generation of literate individuals were taught by French in newly-funded public schools. In contrast, the Spanish state did not actively promote the Spanish school system in Spanish Catalonia until the beginning of the 20th century, which opens the opportunity for the emergence of Catalan nationalist movement. In the same vein of this reasoning, Darden and Grzymala-Busse (2006) uses the historical patterns of schooling in Communist Eastern European countries to account for the relationship between nationalist grievances and the rise of anticommunist oppositions across the region.

Third, the strength of cross-ethnic networks is usually a function of the endeavor taken by political leaders of the state, especially through the allocation of patronage. When the state is largely under the control of elites from a specific ethnic group, these elites may be skilled politicians who are apt to build an ethnic balance in the public sector through an extensive cross-ethnic patronage network. In addition, in most developing countries, there is a lack of resources for a majority of civil society organizations. Thus, the elite-level cross-ethnic coalition has a profound impact on the development of cross-ethnic civil society. Trans-ethnic civil society organizations are more likely to be sponsored by a cross-ethnic political alliance and thereby being able to survive in a longer period. As a result, state leaders can intentionally build a trans-ethnic coalition – both at the elite and mass level – that is crucial to mitigate vicious ethnic competitions.

By contrasting different levels of ethnic mobilizations in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, Vogt (2013) find that the former experienced more ethnic violence because Gabon's long-time president Omar Bongo managed to create a larger trans-ethnic alliance through a more balanced distribution of public service positions across all major ethnic group in his country. On the contrary, in Côte d'Ivoire, elites from Baoule and northern groups kept excluding the Kru group from the central government. Consequently, both elite and civil society networks in Gabon are more trans-ethnic than their counterparts in Côte d'Ivoire. The more segregated civil society organizations in Côte d'Ivoire exacerbate rather than mitigate the ethnic hatred.

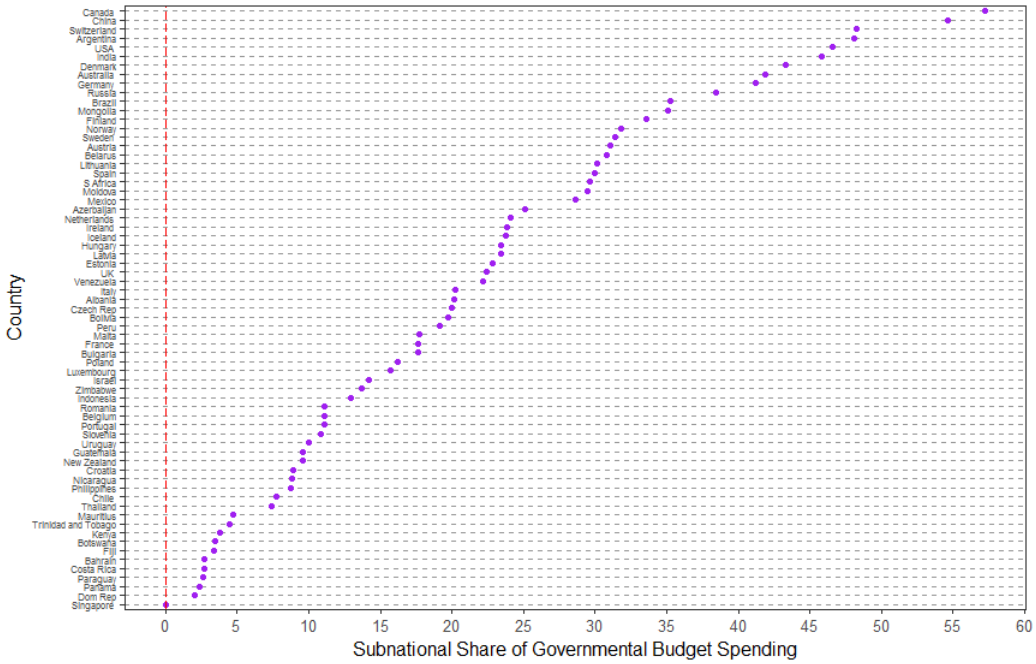
In short, a state-centered approach offers a theoretically appealing reinterpretation of the extant society-centered explanations of within-group differences.

4.3 From the Central State to Local States

Ethnic conflict studies should be reoriented towards an inquiry with more focuses on local states. Disaggregating to subnational units allows researchers to control for a broad range of national-level cultural and historical factors that cannot be controlled in cross-national regressions. Besides the methodology advantage of adopting a disaggregated approach, I argue that there are three substantive reasons why we should pay more attention to local state variation.

First, the vast majority of experiences that citizens have with the state are their direct interactions with local states. This pattern holds particularly true for fiscally decentralized countries. For these countries, a variety of essential services such as electricity, public health, and sanitary water are provided by local states. Figure 4 visualizes the cross-national differences with regard to subnational government spending in the early 1990s. It shows that local government expenditures account for a significant part of the overall government spending in a number of developing countries like China, India, and Mexico. Even in those fiscally centralized countries in which central governments account for a large proportion of public expenditures, local governments also matter because of their vital functions of public administration. For example, after the sweeping decentralization reforms across the developing world in last three decades, local states have

Figure 4: Subnational Government Spending as % of Government Budget, 1993–1995



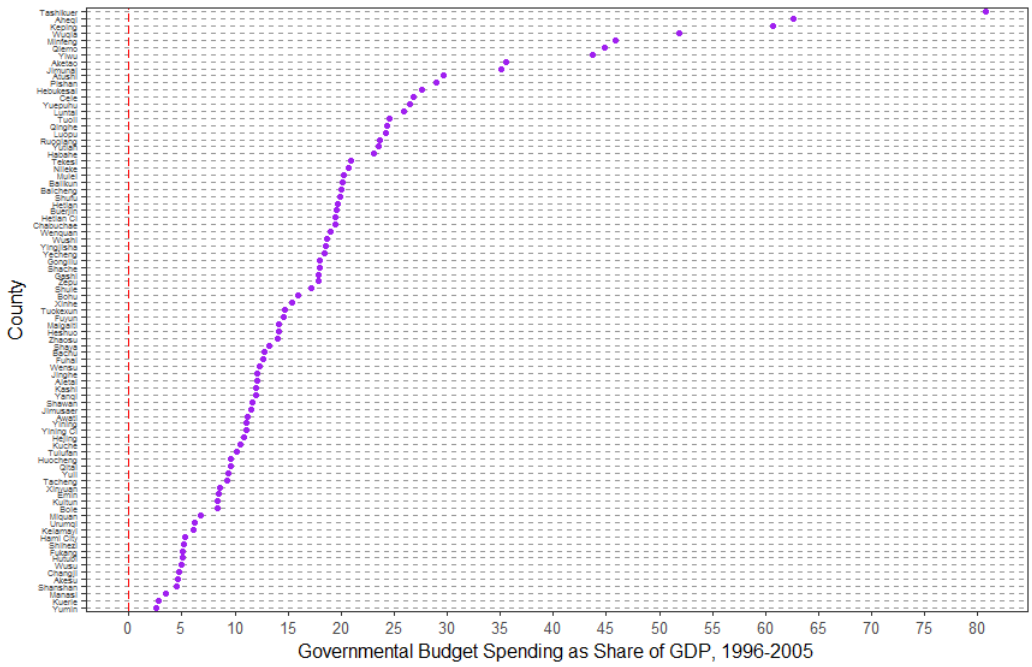
Note: The figure is plotted based on Treisman (2006).

become increasingly important even in the majority of African countries that were previously featured by fiscal centralization (Olowu and Wunsch 2004; Erk 2015). According to Ndegwa (2002, pp.5-6), twelve of the 30 countries analyzed displayed a moderate or higher degree of administrative decentralization – namely whether local governments hold actual responsibility for service delivery and the hiring/firing of civil servants. When it comes to the relative importance of service delivery across various ties of government, another study finds that local governments have been granted substantial roles even compared with the central governments. In particular, survey results show that local states are viewed to play a more important role in six of eight public functions than both traditional leaders and community members (Bratton 2012, p.520).

Second, states exhibit vast subnational variations in their capacity of providing goods and services, repressing political challengers, and controlling their territories. Put simply, a focus on national average state-relevant indicators may obscure the uneven reach of the states. These geographical variations of state penetration are especially remarkable in developing countries in which the state power is largely constrained by social forces (Migdal, Kohli and Shue 1994). Using satellite estimations of electrification across local

units in each country, Giraudy and Luna (2017) find that subnational electrification rates vary considerably in Africa and Latin America. Such a high variation of local state penetration has also been found in India. Singh (2015) demonstrates that social development outcomes, which is a function of local states' social policy implementation, vary widely across Indian states. In weak states like a host of Sub-Saharan African countries, scholars have also identified phenomenal subnational differences in terms of the quality of local governments. For instance, Wig and Tollefsen (2016) reveal that local governments in 20 African countries display high levels of variability in terms of their institutional quality based on survey data of Afrobarometer. Case-oriented studies also show substantial local diversity with regard to government performance in Senegal (Wilfahrt 2018), local state capacity of revenue extraction in Tanzania (Masaki 2018), and public goods provision by local governments in Zambia (Gisselquist, Leiderer and Nino-Zarazua 2016). As Figure 5 demonstrates, like many other developing countries, there had been substantial differences in the levels of government spending across counties in Xinjiang.

Figure 5: County-Level Government Spending as % of GDP in Xinjiang, 1996–2005



Third, it has been well known that ethnic conflicts tend to be highly localized. In other words, ethnic conflicts usually geographically concentrate in specific regions within

countries. This pattern has been confirmed in a set of conflict-ridden places across the world. In India, as Varshney (2003) notes, eight cities accounted for nearly 22.5% of all deaths in Hindu-Muslim violence between 1950 and 1995 although these cities only had a mere 6% of India's total population. Similarly, Indonesia's 15 districts, which had 6.5% of the country's entire population, accounted for roughly 85.5% of all deaths in ethnic violence between 1990 and 2003 (Varshney 2009, p.20). For African civil wars, Buhaug and Rød (2006) demonstrate that these conflicts were spatially clustered within those countries experienced intra-state wars. As a result, national-level ethnic conflict investigations are often vulnerable to the risk of ecological fallacy. Therefore, to avoid such fallacy, it is imperative to shift the attention from national institutions to local governments if we aim to explore the relationship between ethnic violence and the states.

4.4 Local States as the Cause of Intra-Ethnic Variation

Having discussed the pivotal role of state in explaining ethnic violence in general, I will now specify how local states affect within-group variations of participation in ethnic conflicts. As mentioned above, I view local states as a set of subnational institutional arrangements that allocate valuable objects among various ethnic groups. Consequently, this allocation process is key for us to understand how ethnic conflicts happen at the local level. Focusing on local public spending thereby allowing me to solve the puzzles at the beginning of this chapter – Within a politically marginalized ethnic minority community, why do its members manage to maintain a peaceful relationship with the out-group in power in some localities while failing to do so in other places? Why are certain social subgroups within a particular ethnic group more likely to participate in inter-group violence?

4.4.1 Local Government Expenditure Matters

My theory begins with the proposition that local governments essentially intervene the everyday life of minority citizens through three types of fiscal means - investments on coercion, public goods provision, and private goods expenditures. First, local states need to deter potential political challengers. Therefore, it is imperative for these state agencies to devote at least a certain proportion of their revenues to build a coercive apparatus.

Moreover, as we have discussed, local governments often shoulder the responsibility of providing basic public services – public education, sanitary water, and electricity. These public goods provisions often cost a substantive part of local governmental budgets. In addition to spending on coercion and public goods, the core agents of local states – bureaucrats who work in public offices – need to receive adequate payments to sustain the routine functions of the governments. It is hard to deny that patronage – the use of state resources to reward personal interests – constitutes a significant aspect of these personnel payments in most Third World states.

In ethnically-divided societies, local states in the hands of a small circle of elites from the ethnic group in power face acute challenges. These elites have the discretion to allocate their limited financial resources to different types of expenditures. Local bureaucrats who occupy the offices may invest more money on coercion because they fear political contentions by the marginal group. Furthermore, because of their ethnocentrism, local officers may tend to give preferential treatments to co-ethnics in terms of providing public services. These bureaucrats may also favor their relatives and co-ethnic friends when hiring new staffs to fill positions in local agencies and departments. On the other hand, the ethnic bias against out-groups in the state's resource allocations may exacerbate collective grievances among the disadvantaged groups and thus results in inter-group violence, which eventually hurts the incumbents' individual self-interests. Likewise, using the force to repress may simply backlash and devolve into costly violence. As a result, local states need to strike a balance of government expenditures across three types of public spending to maximize their net-benefits. The key is, regardless of the concrete strategies employed by the states, more fiscal resources offer incumbent elites more political leverage to control the peripheral minority groups.

In short, from the above discussion, we can deduce the proposition that the intensity of ethnic violence varies according to the level of fiscal expenditures. Note that this effect should be relatively independent from the local ethnic geography. In other words, even within a region in which a ethnic minority group constitutes a local majority, those localities received more government expenditures are less likely to experience ethnic conflicts

than others.

4.4.2 Cross-ethnic Co-optation and Cooperation at the Local Level

Depending on the specific type of fiscal expenditures, subnational governments are endowed with two forms of strategies to control restive ethnic minorities. First, local states are able to co-opt minority elites by offering cross-ethnic patronage. Moreover, local states can also influence the incentive structure of ordinary minority individuals by providing more public goods.

Ethnic violence often arises out of the pragmatic usage of ethnicity by ethnic leaders as a means to retain power or enhance material interests (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985; Wilkinson 2006). On the other hand, when minority elites manage to access to adequate resources shared by the dominant ethnic group, they can act as local collaborators of the state. There are a large number of qualitative evidence and case studies supporting this argument. Drawing from cases like Welsh aristocracy in Wales, Lithuanian nobility in Lithuania, and Romanian nobility in Transylvania, Brass (1991, p.26) argues that, "political elites find it to their advantage to cooperate with external authorities and adopt the language and culture of the dominant ethnic group in order to maintain or enhance their own power." Laitin (1991) proposes the so-called "elite incorporation model." According to this model, as long as "elites in the incorporated region of a state have rights and privileges equal to those of elites of similar status and education in the political center" (Laitin 1991, p.143), these ethnic elites will be in compliance with the ruling majority. He finds that many Ukraine elites were willing to support the rule of Soviet Union in the wave of its disintegration since they were granted the "most-favored-lord-status." Inter-ethnic collaboration between elites from antagonistic sides can even occur in extreme forms. For instance, Kalyvas (2008) has demonstrated how minority elites actively help the state dominated by others across a number of civil wars. For example, U.S. was able to elicit a large group of Sunni alliances with the help of local community leaders (Kalyvas 2008, p.1055).

As Fearon and Laitin (2000) notes, a pure elite-based explanation cannot account for the variation that the masses follow the ethnic mobilization initiated by elites in some

cases but not in other cases. By taking the post-Soviet Russia as a case, Giuliano (2011, p.25) shows that "individuals with ethnic identities neither automatically nor routinely become nationalist at the command of ethnic entrepreneurs." According to Giuliano, only when elites frame collective grievances resonates with local residents' personal experiences, the masses are willing to follow nationalist entrepreneurs. State otherwise, there are two conditions under which the masses are most susceptible to the nationalist manipulation by ethnic elites: (1) low personal income, and (2) impaired state legitimacy because of inter-group inequalities. Consequently, local public goods expenditures exert a pacifying effect because these spending can (1) increase the opportunity costs of participating in rebellion groups, and (2) improve state legitimacy from the perspective of the disadvantaged minority group.

Figure 6: Local States with a Heterogeneous Minority Group

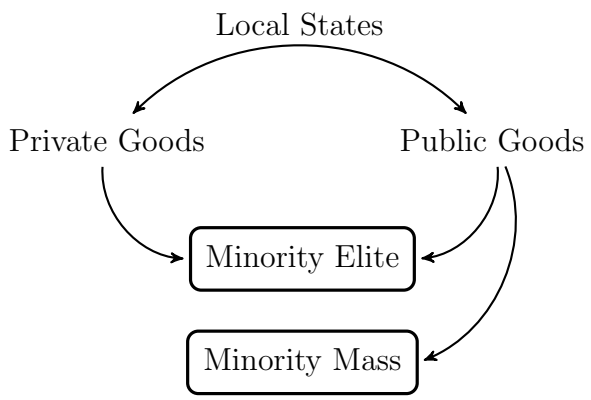


Figure 6 summarizes the argument regarding how different types of local government expenditure affect the onset of ethnic conflict through distinct channels of causal mechanisms.

- **Hypothesis 1**:

  Local governments spend more cross-ethnic patronage in a specific administrative jurisdiction, the lower the risk of inter-ethnic conflict in that area is. This general pattern holds even within an ethnically homogeneous region in which a peripheral group constitutes a local majority.

- **Hypothesis 2**:

  Local governments invest more public goods in a specific administrative jurisdiction, the lower the risk of inter-ethnic conflict in that area is. This general pattern holds even within an ethnically homogeneous region in which a peripheral group constitutes a local majority.

4.4.3 Local Fiscal Spending and the Social Class of Participants in Conflict

In addition to affecting the geographic dimension of within-group variations regarding inter-ethnic conflict, local fiscal expenditures also influence the social composition of individuals who directly engage in inter-group conflicts. In particular, local fiscal policies shape the sociological profiles of participants in ethnic conflicts by having an impact on life chances of both elites and the general public within the minority group.

If the local state devotes a larger proportion of its budget to buy off minority elites through the cross-ethnic patronage, the intelligentsia class (i.e., writers, teachers, journalists, and academics) and other middle-class professionals are less likely to pursue an aggressive nationalist platform. As Gellner (1972, p.169) said a half century ago, "[for] the intellectuals, independence means an immediate and enormous advantage: jobs and very good jobs." The lure of monopolizing white-collar occupations and excluding non-coethnics is not limited to the intelligentsia. Other professionals and middle-class employees share the same material incentives to create an independent national state (Rogowski 1985). On the other hand, as long as the state is able to offer adequate private goods (e.g., free subsidies, government contracts, and public sector jobs) to minority elites, they would be less likely to act as the vanguards of nationalist movements. The reason is quite clear: to lead a nationalist organization, involved activities need to overcome the free-rider problem (Hechter 2000, pp.125–126) and take the personal risk of being repressed by the state. The opportunity costs of participating in ethnic rebellions are much higher when the state implements an inclusive fiscal policy to appease minority elites.

Second, if the local governments invest more fiscal resources on public goods provision to cater to the needs of the minority group's ordinary members, it is harder for ethnic

entrepreneurs to agitate ethnic hatred among the general public. Under this circumstance, a mass-based nationalist movement encompassing a large segment of the ethnic group is less likely to emerge. In fact, if alien rulers manage to establish good governance and effectively deliver public goods to a broader subordinated population, potential dissidents face more barriers to mobilize a mass-based nationalist movement (Hechter 2013). When it comes to the salience of ethnic boundary, Wimmer (2016) also shows that in those place in which states were historically capable of providing public goods across the entire territory, the contemporary level of ethno-linguistic diversity is lower. Once the ethnic boundary is blurred, an ethnicity-based social cleavage is less likely to materialize in the first place.

To sum up, we expect that:

- **Hypothesis 3**: The sociological profiles of conflict participants

  If local governments prioritize cross-ethnic patronage than public goods provision, minority elites account for a smaller proportion of protagonists of ethnic conflict.

Finally, there is one important caveat of above discussions: because the group in power can use the force to dispel minority oppositions and it is financially costly to make fiscal concessions to non-coethnics, there is a trade-off between accommodation and repression. This dilemma is particularly acute in autocracies where leaders have greater discretion to use coercive means. To fully understand the appeasing impact of fiscal spending, we therefore need to address the strategic interaction between the state and minority dissidents given that the government can crack down contentious ethno-nationalist movements. The presence of state repression affects both the calculation of net-benefits behind the minorities' drive for secessionist movements and the state's deliberate choice of fiscal policy.

The next chapter articulates the state's strategic responses to minority dissidents and how these government reactions in terms of fiscal spending in return influence the ethnic minority group's contentious activities. These interactions include the mutual expectation of the use of coercion by the state. In particular, I zoom in on a specific type of states – autocracies – and use a game-theoretic model to capture the interdependence

between the state's fiscal policy and the dissident group's action, which jointly determines the likelihood of inter-group conflict. In other words, the next chapter provides a micro-foundation for a state-centered theory of intra-group differences with regard to inter-ethnic conflict.

Chapter 3

Why Do States Accommodate Ethnic Minorities?

A Theory of Cross-Ethnic Concession

... whereas the state's coercive response to dissidents has been considered extensively, the use of alternative mechanisms of control in the face of political conflict ... have not been examined extensively.

Davenport (2007*a*)

... the effect of accommodating strategies by the state, either in terms of policies or institutional arrangements, have mostly been explored in a highly aggregated and decontextualized fashion ...

Cederman and Wucherpfennig (2017)

Not by the Sword Alone

Consider the case of China's Xinjiang region, the homeland of the Uyghur group, a place that is well-known for its repressive political atmosphere. Since the July 5, 2009 riots in Ürümqi, the regional capital of Xinjiang, nowadays it has been used to observe the patrol of machine-gun toting police on the street and a growing number of CCTV cameras installed in the region's local communities. There, an increasing enmity between Han Chinese and Uyghurs derives an aggravated threat-repression spiral. The usual story of how the Chinese state controls Xinjiang thus goes basically in this direction - it emphasizes the overwhelming impact of state repression. Since China has a authoritarian regime that is able to use coercive measures, a focus on the state's coercive capacity seems to be reasonable. In fact, this view is well in line with a predominant perspective that repression is less costly to autocratic states than to democracies (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Even before the bloody July 2009 Ürümqi riots, the conventional wisdom among Xinjiang experts was that state repression was one of the most important factors in explaining the region's political landscape (Bovingdon 2010*b*).

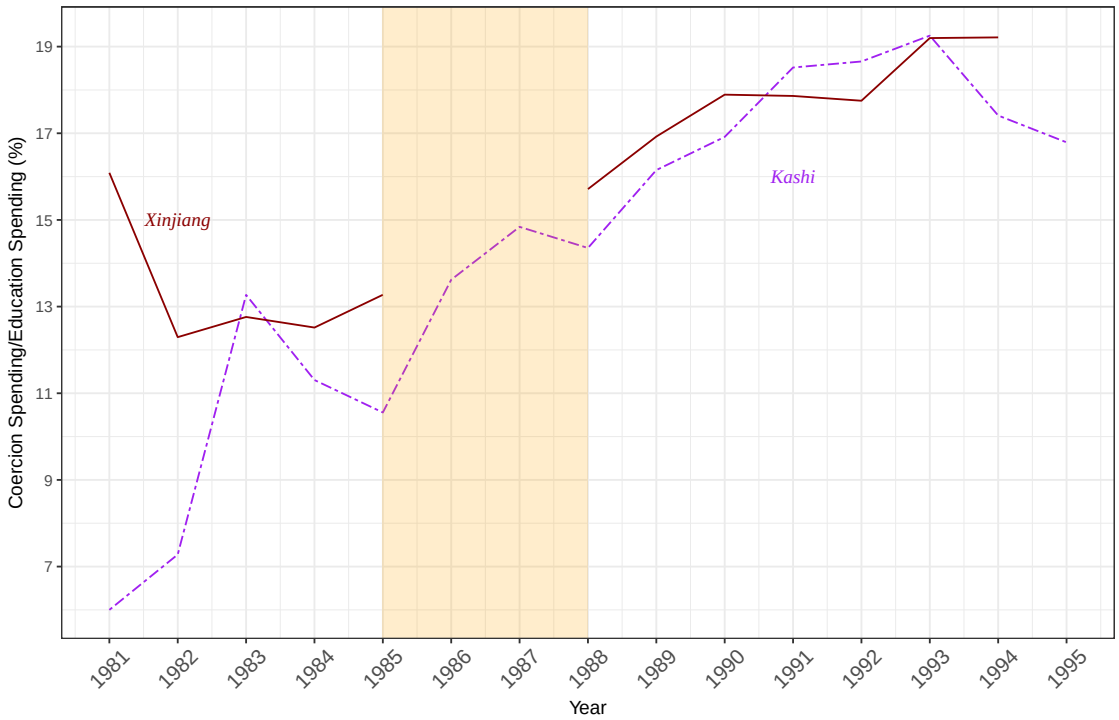
While not denying the vital role of state repression in Xinjiang, I argue that we need a more comprehensive view of the authoritarian state's strategy of controlling restive ethnic minorities. It has long been recognized the autocratic state tends to use a combination of

concessions (carrots) and repressions (sticks) to quell mass threats (Gallagher and Hanson 2009). For concessions, they "range from the distribution of rents and patronage to programmatic redistribution and broad-based economic growth" (Gallagher and Hanson 2009, p.668). For repressions, according to Tilly (1978, p.100), they are "any action by another group which raises the contender's cost of collective action." Both of these two tactics constitute the basic policy toolkit of autocratic leaders. That means, to better address the question of how state chooses the level of repression, we also need to know how authoritarian governments implement accommodations. The same is true vice versa. Only examining state repression itself cannot provide us a complete picture of ethnic conflict in autocracies.

Xinjiang is an exemplar of how autocratic state uses both carrots and sticks to exert control over insubordinate minorities. Despite a widespread political repression in the region, Xinjiang's local governments spent far more resources on public goods spending than coercion in the time of period that I study. Figure 7 presents public security spending as a ratio of education expenditures in Xinjiang as a whole and in Kashi Prefecture of Southern Xinjiang, respectively. The results are striking: In Kashi Prefecture, where 36% of the Xinjiang's entire Uyghur population lived, local government's coercion investments had never exceeded 20% of the amount of state's expenditures on education towards Uyghurs between 1981 and 1995. This finding is telling for two reasons: First, Kashi is one of the most disturbing prefectures in Xinjiang after 1980 (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018), and therefore we would expect the Chinese state had spent disproportionately on coercive apparatuses. Second, 95% of Kashi's local residents were Uyghurs in 1991. When it comes to Han Chinese and Uyghur school enrollment, 95% of elementary school students were Uyghurs and the corresponding number of middle school students was 88%. Put differently, most of these education spending directly targeted at local ethnic minorities (Benson 2004, p.201). The pattern holds for the provincial-level comparison between coercion expenses and education spending. Indeed, this comparison apparently *underestimates* how state prioritizes concessions because I only compare public security spending to education expenditures while not including other types of material

concessions such as infrastructure investments, health care, and cross-ethnic patronage.

Figure 7: Public Security Spending as a Ratio of Education Expenditures, 1981 – 1995



Data Sources: Calculations are based on Lü, Fake (1995), Xinjiang Gazetteer Codification Committee (1999), and Kashi Prefectural Gazetteer Codification Committee (2001). The provincial-level values of year 1986 and 1987 are missing.

The limited coercion spending in Xinjiang before the 2010s[1] arise a couple of questions: Why does the authoritarian regime divert a larger proportion of fiscal resources to cross-ethnic concessions instead of spending on the dominant ethnic group that is its social base of support? What is the relationship between the use of repression and the implementation of accommodation when the state faces restive ethnic minorities? How does the state's strategy of using carrots and sticks affect ethnic minorities' contentious

[1]Someone may point out that I ignore the role of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) as a part of the state's local repressive power. XPCC is a bureaucratic and paramilitary organization that has administrative authority over a number of military-agricultural settlements in Xinjiang (Seymour 2000). These settlements are mainly for consolidating the Chinese state's control of strategic regions. However, the main reason for which the Chinese state selected where to locate XPCC was the external threat of Soviet Union. As a result, a majority of these XPCC divisions are located in Northern Xinjiang, where was historically under the informal control of Soviet Union (Benson 1990; Rudelson 1997; Brophy 2016; Jacobs 2016). In 1996, of all ten XPCC divisions at that time, only two of them were located in Southern Xinjiang (the XPCC First Division and the XPCC Third Division), where Uyghurs were geographically concentrated and most post-1980 Han-Uyghur conflicts occurred. If we calculate the personnel number of these two divisions as a share of the entire XPCC population, around 19.75% of them lived in Southern Xinjiang. The calculation is based on the number provided by Jiang (2007, p.267, Table 7-1). Moreover, for the XPCC Third Division, one of the two that were located in Southern Xinjiang, 49% of its member were Uyghurs (Jiang 2007, p.267, Table 7-1).

activities? To answer these questions, I develop a new theory that articulates the role of states in ethnic conflict, especially the strategic employment of preemptive concessions by the state.

When Autocratic States Accommodate Ethnic Minority

Since the end of multi-ethnic empires, ethno-nationalist conflicts have mainly been struggles over collective goods provided by nation-states (Wimmer 2002). Wimmer defines what constitutes the collective goods in a broad way - they include "protection from arbitrary violence, equality before the law, political representation, social solidarity, economic infrastructure and the symbols of independence and state power" (Wimmer 2002, pp.101-102). Because modern states have greatly penetrated the society and state services have been indispensable for individuals' daily life, inter-group competition for state resources becomes more intensive when ethnic differences have been politicized. With deteriorated inter-ethnic relationships, the social boundaries between different groups harden, which in return intensifies ethnic hatred. This general process of ethnic closure eventually leads to a vicious cycle that provides the fertile ground for manipulative ethnic elites to instigate ethnic violence.

However, less well known is that although those in power favour their co-ethnics (Franck and Rainer 2012), a number of authoritarian regimes do spread modern collective goods across ethnic lines over a large proportion of the entire population. In other words, these states distribute a significant part of state resources to ethnic minorities who are out-groups in the eyes of those in control of power. The Soviet Union was famous for its monumental affirmative action programs, and it is thus labelled as "the world's first Affirmative Action Empire"(Martin 2001, p.1). Terry Martin's book, which remains a masterpiece on this topic, offers an impressive account of how Soviets recognized national culture and language, trained national elites, and institutionalized a federal system of national territories before the World War II. Stalin's political terror did not stop the extension of this Affirmative Action Empire. Instead, this multiethnic empire was further developed in the post-Stalinist period and became more mature over time.

We can distinguish two types of accommodations towards ethnic minorities in Soviet Union – cross-ethnic co-optation and public goods provisions. The Soviet state had been able to co-opt political entrepreneurs in ethnic communities for more than several decades (Roeder 1991). This co-optation was institutionalized through the so-called indigenization process, namely appointing ethnic elites as leaders of formally autonomous minority homelands (Hodnett 1978; Jones and Grupp 1984). By the 1980s, "indigenization extended well beyond the most visible posts ... it also reached such sensitive and less visible areas as internal security"(Roeder 1991, p.204). Likewise, Burg (1984) has identified a dramatic increase in the number of Muslim cadres in Central Asian republics during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to offering opportunities of social mobility for burgeoning ethnic elites, the Soviet Union state had also invested enormous resources on public goods targeting non-Russian groups. For instance, in Georgia, the elementary attendance rate was only 3.31 percent in 1911 (Bilinsky 1968, p.414). After half a century since the establishment of USSR, "whereas Georgians constituted 67 percent of their republic's population in 1970, they constituted 83 percent of the student body of the republic's institutions of higher education" (Roeder 1991, p.207). In Azerbaijan, "the total number of schools grew from 3,415 in 1938/39 to 4,054 in 1963/64, while the number of Azerbaijan-language schools climbed from 2,733 in 1938/39 to 3,651 in 1963/64" (Bilinsky 1968, p.420). Besides these Caucasian republics, there had also been an impressive increase in terms of level of education among Central Asian republics during the Soviet era. For example, for Turkmen, their number of students in 1938/39 was fifteen times higher than the number in 1926 (Bilinsky 1968, p.422).

The Soviet Union government was by far not unique in accommodating restive ethnic minorities. In China, for example, the government has implemented a set of affirmative actions to ameliorate living standards of ethnic minorities (Zang 2015, pp.44-52). It has been well known that Beijing employs preferential policy for minority students when it comes to college admissions (Sautman 1998*a*). For example, "in 1986, admitted Xinjiang Han averaged 435 points in science and 440 points in liberal arts" while "minorities averaged 300 points in science and 245 in liberal arts" (Sautman 1998*b*, p.93). Because of

these sorts of preferential treatments toward ethnic minorities, Jia and Persson (2017) shows that Chinese children in ethnically mixed marriages are more likely to follow their mothers' (minority) ethnicity to get these preferential treatments. In Tibet and Xinjiang, like its Soviet counterpart, the Chinese state has attempted to accommodate local minorities by increasing the level of co-optation and public goods expenditures. For the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), by the end of 2007, 70.42% of provincial-level cadres and over 50% of bureau and prefecture-level cadres had been Tibetan. The proportion of Xinjiang's minority cadres had increased from 28.94% in 1978 to 51.25% in 2008 (Xie 2013, p.31). In terms of public goods spending, taking education expenses as an example, the Chinese state had implemented "two exemptions and one subsidy" in Xinjiang since 2005 – local governments offered free textbooks and abolished ad hoc education fees for 2,050,000 students from poverty families (most of them were ethnic minorities) (Ge and Ma 2009, p.77). TAR and Xinjiang's basic infrastructures, road construction in particular, had also experienced a dramatic improvement under the sponsorship of the Chinese government since the 1980s (Dreyer 2003; Joniak-Lüthi 2016*b*).

Outside of Soviet Union and China, other communist regimes had also experimented with territorial autonomy for domestic ethnic minorities. In Romania, the state created the Magyar Autonomous Region that was located in the middle of the country in 1952 – though the region was later eliminated in 1968 (Connor 1984, pp.340–341). In Vietnam, after the foundation of the communist state in 1954, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had established two autonomous regions – the Tay Bac Autonomous Region and the Viet Bac Autonomous Region – in where self-governance and cultural rights have been granted to local ethnic minorities (Connor 1984, pp.342–345). However, like the case of Romania, the regime later dissolved these autonomous regions after it won the Second Indochina War in 1975. With regard to the long term legacy of this 20-years policy concession, Mai (2017) finds that there was an nearly 23% increase in household income among local communities residing in historical autonomous regions.

State accommodations for ethnic minorities are not limited to Leninist regimes. Other authoritarian countries also use "carrots" to appease potential minority rebels. According

to Azam (2001, p.438), many autocratic African states acted as "a system of redistribution between the ethnic group through their elites or via the government budget." To make this system work, the group in power that controls the state bounty provides education opportunities to other ethnic groups. This policy concession thereby allowing elite members from a variety of ethnic groups to become educated urbanites. Once these elites secure their jobs in public sectors because of their better human capitals, they could share these patronage with their co-ethnics who lived in the countryside through remittance. For example, Nkrumah's Ghana devoted a disproportionate amount of fiscal resources on school building projects and education subsidies in the North, where was economically backward and dominated by ethnic minorities (McDonnell 2016, p.1530). In addition to extending public services to integrate ethnic minorities, the prevalence of cross-ethnic patronage in Africa autocracies has been identified in a number of countries (Duignan and Jackson 1986), including Côte d'Ivoire (Zolberg 1969), Tanzania (Bienen 1970), and Gabon (Vogt 2013). For instance, in Omar Bongo's Gabon, the leader was able to "achieved a remarkable ethnic balance in the public sector with elites from all major ethnic groups occupying prominent positions in the government, state bureaucracy, and party apparatus" (Vogt 2013, p.163).

Beyond Africa, in Arabian Gulf states such as Qatar, marginalized ethnic out-groups like foreign migrant workers also receive targeted goods (e.g., basic utilities, transport, etc.) from the ruling autocrats (Johnston 2015). For indigenous groups in Latin America, some of them had been granted the regional autonomy under the rule of autocratic regimes: Kuna and Choco (Embera-Wounan) in Panama, indigenous people in Venezuela after 2000, and indigenous communities in Ecuador (Vogt 2016, p.794).

State Repression and Preemptive Accommodation

1.2.1 The Strategic Logic of State Repression

Given the primary role of coercion in maintaining authoritarian regimes (Davenport 2007*b*), it is natural to explore how state concessions affect ethnic violence within a broader context of state repression. Put simply, without specifying the strategic calculus

of government repression, it is insufficient to account for the impact of state accommodation. Therefore, before laying out my game-theoretical model of state concession, I first briefly summarize the literature of state repression below and articulate how the core findings of this strand of literature enable me to put my arguments into perspective.

To understand the use of repression in autocracies, I follow the conceptual model that has been widely accepted in researchers – rational choice model. This general framework assumes that top leaders, who strive to maximize the chances of their political survival, make their decisions based on cost-benefit calculations (Davenport 2007*a*). In this framework, the key to understanding why states use coercion lies in four factors: benefits, costs, the probability of successful repression, and the availability of other alternative. In terms of alternative mechanisms of exerting control, as Davenport (2007*a*, p.9) said, "authorities have many strategies available ... normative persuasion, material or symbolic benefits, neglect, etc. – that could be used to address behavioral challenges and establish or maintain political order." Although there have been a host of works scrutinizing the repression's benefits and costs, the influence of policy alternatives have not been systematically investigated (Davenport 2007*b*, p.488). Because "material or symbolic benefits" constitute a great proportion of concession, the effect of repression on dissent is closely related to the impact of state concession on dissent. Consequently, exploring the influence of concession largely mirrors the endeavor of understanding state repression. Scholars have not yet reached the agreement on how state chooses the level of accommodation given that political leaders can also use repression to quell dissidents.[2]

This critical lacuna is further complicated by a set of strategic interactions between the dissidents and the incumbents, which is a thorny issue needs to be addressed before I specify the details of my model. That is, there is a strategic interaction between governments and dissidents. According to Ritter and Conrad (2016), in terms of the influence of repression, there are two unobservable censoring mechanisms underlying this

[2]There are only a handful of studies on how political incumbents select an optimal mix of accommodation and coercion to quash dissident behavior (Moore 2000; Shellman 2006; Franklin 2009; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor 2014; Ritter 2014; Davies 2016). However, except for Ritter (2014), few of these studies views state actions as results of strategic interactions between governments and dissidents. In addition, none of them explicitly addresses the importance of preemptive accommodation that I discuss in details below.

interactive process: strategic self-censoring and preventive repression. More specifically, self-censoring refers to the situation that people do not participate in dissent behaviors because of their expectation of being repressed after encountering with the regime (Pierskalla 2010). This specific mechanism is different from the well-known collective action problem. Under the circumstance of strategic self-censoring, actors fail to challenge the state not because of the free rider problem but due to the threat of repression (Sullivan 2016*b*, p.4). Put differently, because of their fear, many potential dissidents self-censor and stay out of the group of people who make the decision to dissent later.

However, as Ritter and Conrad (2016, p.88) said, "although many groups self-censor out of the observable population in this strategic interaction, others nonetheless dissent in expectation of repression." Only when moving into this second stage of mobilization, the preventive repression mechanism begins to work. Preventive repression refers to the authority's efforts of stifling the development of any latent dissent into observable challenges. To exert an effective control the population, the state is usually politically vigilant and thus actively monitors the society to prevent the development of any overt challenges. Dictatorial leaders are unnerving about any observable signals that indicate increased mass dissent in their jurisdictions – for example, civil conflict in neighboring countries (Danneman and Ritter 2014), suspicious organizational activities (Sullivan 2016*b*), and youth bulges in the population (Nordås and Davenport 2013). In addition to using signals that immediately precede collective action, the state may also employs other information shortcuts to gauge latent probabilities of future overt challenges. One example is that those localities once experienced large-scale protests may be more likely to witness such mass dissent in the future (Liu and Ma 2018). These strategic censoring mechanisms suggest that governments can resort to the usage of force under two different circumstances – the preventive repression *before* the open conflict between states and dissidents and the reactive repression *after* the overt conflict. In sum, people decline to take overt contentious actions either because (1) some of them self-censor in expectation of state repression and thus opt out of the conflict with the government in the first place, or because (2) some of them formed clandestine organizations later but these underground

groups have been cracked down before acting as platforms to direct overt challenges. In other words, these nascent challengers are censored by the preventive repression.

Such a process-oriented view of the mobilization-repression nexus thereby highlighting the central role of dissident organizations. As Sullivan (2016*a*) emphasizes, in repressive authoritarian regimes, a small group of challenger organizations play a central role in most anti-regime mobilizations. These mobilization activities reconstruct social affiliations, generate selective incentives, and institutionalize tit-for-tat reciprocity. These three functions are prerequisites for sustaining the opposition movement. In China, Fu (2017) shows that a number of ostensible individual contentions are actually coordinated, orchestrated, and helped by a small number of activists. These behind-the-scene organizers coach disgruntled individuals to take contentious actions that induce local governments to tackle the contenders' grievances. Because these challenger organizations pose the most acute threat to the governments, the states are motivated to employ preventive repression against these activists even if these dissidents have not overtly challenged the governments yet. However, the use of force is not the only available tactic to preempt the subsequent overt opposition. There is another alternative strategy for the states – preemptive accommodation, which will be discussed in details below.

1.2.2 How Preemptive Accommodation Works

Preemptive accommodation refers to policy concessions made by the governments *before* disruptions are expected to happen. Put differently, these concessions are different from reactive accommodation – benefits provision *after* the disturbs have already taken place. Examples for such reactive accommodation can be founded in a set of studies on how China's local governments use cash payment to buy off individuals who participate in protests (Lee and Zhang 2013). On the other hand, preemptive accommodation is aimed at preventing dissidents from engaging in collective actions in the first place.

I argue that the states facing a given rival ethnic group are more likely to offer preemptive accommodation than reactive accommodation out of three reasons. First, the state has the rationale to believe that reactive accommodation tends to be ineffective. As we have discussed above, those who successfully endured two types of censoring mechanisms

and mange to participate in subsequent overt contentious activities are more likely to be committed nationalists. This selection effect makes these individuals more likely to have higher resolve and therefore less likely to be enticed by material concessions afterwards (Ritter and Conrad 2016, p.87). Second, reactive accommodation can be counterproductive in the eyes of the state because these *ex post* concessions create incentives for other potential dissidents to emulate and imitate, which results in more disruptions (Pan 2015, pp.9–10). Third, these benefits provisions *after* occurred conflicts are more likely to be interpreted as a signal that the government is politically weak and therefore encourage more attacks in the next stage (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000*a*).

Moreover, under certain circumstances, the states also have incentives to provide *ex ante* concessions instead of using preventive repression. First, the governments are usually uncertain about the efficiency of using violence. Sometimes government violence successfully deter dissidents whereas state repression inflames further challenges in other times. A large body of empirical literature on the impact of repression on collective action has found mixed results (Hibbs 1973; Muller and Opp 1986; Lichbach 1987; Mason and Krane 1989; Muller and Weede 1990; Opp and Roehl 1990; Francisco 1995; Rasler 1996; Findley and Young 2007). In contrast, if the state believes that preemptive concessions are more efficient in terms of preventing overt dissent activities, it will be inclined to offer carrots rather than using sticks. Second, it is technically easier to extract information from the local community when preemptive concession is used. Even if the states detect a higher latent probability of covert oppositions in a place, coercive apparatuses often fail to suppress nascent mobilization activities. Since the overt challenge has not occurred yet, the security agencies struggle to find clues that they can use to arrest the behind-the-scenes individuals. Underground organizations are concealed and thus it is difficult for the states to infiltrate these groups. Because of a lack of information, security bureaus face considerable barriers to exert effective discriminate violence against specific groups who are planing political challenges. This information problem tends to be especially acute in ethnically divided societies in which daily life of individuals are highly segregated and inter-group animosity is high. In these places, it is particularly hard for security agencies

staffed by members from the majority group to find minority informants who are willing to collaborate with the authorities. To mitigate this information problem, the state can make its coercive apparatuses to be more indigenous in the peripheral regions, but the authorities may also be reluctant to hire more local minorities as agents because the government may suspect the latter group's loyalty. On the contrary, the state is better at extracting the intelligence from the minority group if policy concessions like public goods provision have been made. After all, the flow of information to the state across the ethnic lines would be much easier when the minority group's well-being has been improved by state behavior.

1.2.3 Preemptive Accommodation in China

A growing body of literature begins to examine how redistributive policies affect the civil conflicts, especially in ethnically divided societies (Taydas and Peksen 2012; De Juan and Bank 2015). However, most of these works do not conceptualize the distribution of benefits targeting ethnic minorities as preemptive accommodations. Departing from this strand of literature, I argue that it is usually logistically difficult for the state to immediately adjust redistributive policies after the occurred conflict. It often takes considerable time and efforts for bureaucracies to alter the extant internal budgets, techniques, and organizational personnel (Thomson 2017). For conflict-ridden regions, there is especially a lack of wealth and resources for local bureaucracies to swiftly adjust their fiscal policies. To be sure, the states do often make selective benefits provision as reaction to ethnic turmoil. However, I argue that a major proportion of these fiscal re-distributions tends to be routine expenditures that serve as preemptive targeting of potential challengers because of the limited bureaucratic capabilities in peripheral regions. In the case of Xinjiang, I contend that Chinese government's spending on cross-ethnic patronage and public goods targeting ethnic minorities can be viewed as a type of preemptive accommodation.

Pan (2015) presents by far the most comprehensive study on how the Chinese state uses Dibao, which is China's largest cash transfer social assistance program, to maintain social order. Her research offers suggestive evidence for my argument.

First, Pan (2015) shows that China's local governments spend far more fiscal expen-

ditures on social welfare and unemployment than domestic security expenditures, which is in line with my previous finding that the Chinese state invests more resources on "carrots" than "sticks" in Xinjiang. In particular, in 2010, "provincial and lower levels of government spent 868.0 billion on social welfare compared to 464.3 billion on domestic security" (Pan 2015, p.36). Second, Dibao, as cash transfers and ad hoc benefits, tend to be distributed by the local states prior to the period when the perceived likelihood of collective contention is high. In other words, Pan (2015, pp.56–58) demonstrates that these material benefits are aimed at preempting social disruptions rather than serving as a reaction to social unrest. Third, Pan (2015, pp.60–62) finds that at the city level, there is a strong correlation between the number of ad hoc Dibao benefits and the proportion of minorities with higher perceived propensity to contest. Put simply, the Chinese state pays particular attention to the area in which restive minorities concentrate.

In my subsequent empirical chapters – Chapter 4 and 5, I explicitly examine the preventive use of cross-ethnic patronage and public goods provision in Xinjiang. Supporting my hypothesis here, I find that ethnic conflicts in the previous time period (t) do not significantly affect how local governments distribute benefits in the next time period ($t+1$).

A Strategic Model of Cross-Ethnic Concession

2.1 Model Notation and Structure

To illustrate the strategic interaction between the ethnic group in power and the discontent minority group, I build a simple extensive game. The model shares some similarity with the work of Carter (2010) and assumes complete and prefecture information.

Assume there are two relevant actors in an ethnically divided society for this conflict: the government and the ethnic minority dissident group. The government is here understood to be controlled by the ethnic majority. In other words, we are modelling how an ethnicized government responses to a restive minority, and the strategic logic of using repression and accommodation by the ethnic group in power. The dissident group is in

disagreement with the central government around a set of policy issues ranges from economic discrimination to political rights. The dissident group may seek self-determination and therefore initiating a secessionist movement.

The game starts with the dissident group (denoted as M) that chooses to mobilize or keeps the status quo. Following Sullivan (2016*a*, p.650), we define mobilization activities as "organizational formation, development, and maintenance occur through a series of behaviors". The key point is that, these mobilization activities are different from overt challenges such as protest and insurgency. As Sullivan (2016*b*, p.7) notes, mobilization activities "do not directly threaten its authority but involve the coordination of individuals organizing in support of collective challenges". If there is no ethnic mobilization, then the status quo ensues and M receives a payoff of 0. On the other hand, the government (denoted as G) receives benefits of $B > 0$ from controlling the disputed territory. If M decides to mobilize, it incurs costs of C_m for organizing the collective action. Notice that we assume M is able to overcome the collective action problem if it decides to organize the opposition. In the second period, if M has chosen to initiate a ethnic mobilization, G in turn chooses to accommodate the dissidents or repress. We define accommodation broadly – it includes policy changes that bring more public goods spending target the minority group, more patronage expenditures to buy off ethnic elites, and more fundamental policy concessions to empower M (e.g., the granting of political rights). G makes all these concessions at the cost $x > 0$ while M receives x. An important assumption here is that there is no credible commitment problem – it means the government will keep its promise and carry out the promised concession. Alternatively, G can choose to use the force - the government can decide to repress the dissident group at the cost of $C_r \in (0, x]$, which makes M suffers from a negative payoff of $-r$. In this period, the government implements either preventive repression or preemptive accommodation. In other words, the state takes actions in expectation of a subsequent overt challenge organized by the dissident group. Notice that $C_r <= x$, which indicates that the preventive use of force is always cheaper for the government than preemptive accommodation. This condition will especially likely hold in autocratic countries.

In the third period, the ethnic minority dissident group can move a second time. If G has chosen to repress M and M directly challenges the state, the dissident group receives a payoff is $pB - C_m - C_f - r$, where $B > 0$ denotes the positive payoff associated with a successful secession, the cost of engaging in an open conflict with G is $C_f > C_m$, and M's probability of winning the fight is $p \in (0, 1)$. Under this circumstance, G receives a payoff of the rent from controlling the disputed territory B multiplied by the probability it wins, $1 - p$, minus the costs of fighting w and the costs of repressing M's initial mobilization activities C_r. It is important to note that $w > x$ – that is, from the perspective of the government, experiencing a devastating civil conflict is much more costly than spending money on cross-ethnic concessions. Alternatively, M chooses to back down in the face of the government's repression and the status quo remains. In this case, M receives a negative payoff of $-C_m - r$, while the government also incurs the cost of repression C_r.

If the government accommodates M, there are two possible scenarios. The dissident group can acquiesce and get the positive concession x, minus C_m, the costs of collective action in the first place. Accordingly, the government receives $B - x$. The second scenario is more complicated. Again, M decides to fight with the government but its probability of winning is conditional on another variable $\alpha(x) \in (0, 1)$. The coefficient $\alpha(x)$ measures how effective the policy concession can augment the government's chance of winning the fight. $\alpha(x)$ that approaches 0 indicates that accommodation is extraordinarily effective in enhancing the government's fighting capacity whereas values that approaches 1 indicates that accommodation is not effective at all in terms of counterinsurgency. Notice that we make a key assumption here: $\alpha(x)$ is a decreasing function of x – more concessions improve the government's chance of winning a fight. Therefore, the ethnic dissident group's payoff is $p\alpha(x)B - C_m - C_f$ while the government receives $(1 - p\alpha(x))B - x - w$, w is the costs of fighting an open conflict. To reprise, there are four possible scenarios after M's decision to mobilize: (Repress, Conflict), (Repress, Acquiesce), (Accommodate, Conflict), and (Accommodate, Acquiesce). Table 3 summarizes model notation and parameters. The extensive form of the model is displayed in Figure 8.

Table 3: Model Notation and Parameters

Variable	Description
Exogenous Parameters: Benefits and Costs	
$B \in (0, +\infty]$	The perceived benefits of controlling the disputed territory
$C_m \in (0, C_f)$	The ethnic minority group's costs of initial mobilization
$C_f \in (C_m, B]$	The ethnic minority group's costs of escalating the conflict
$C_r \in (0, x]$	The government's costs of repressing the ethnic minority group's initial mobilization
$w \in (x, B]$	The government's costs of repression in an open conflict
r	The ethnic minority group's costs of being repressed after the initial mobilization
$p \in (0, 1)$	Probability of rebel victory
Exogenous Parameter: Effectiveness	
$\alpha(x) \in (0, 1)$	The efficiency of accommodation in altering the advantage of government in the face of conflict
Endogenous Parameter: Strategy/Action	
$x \in (C_r, w)$	The government's expenditures of accommodation

2.2 Solution

Since the game is a sequential model with complete and perfect information, I use backwards induction to get the solution. Specifically, the solution concept is the subgame perfect equilibrium (SPE).

(I) Looking at the subgame after the decision to mobilize and repression by the state, it is clear that the dissident group will acquiesce as long as:

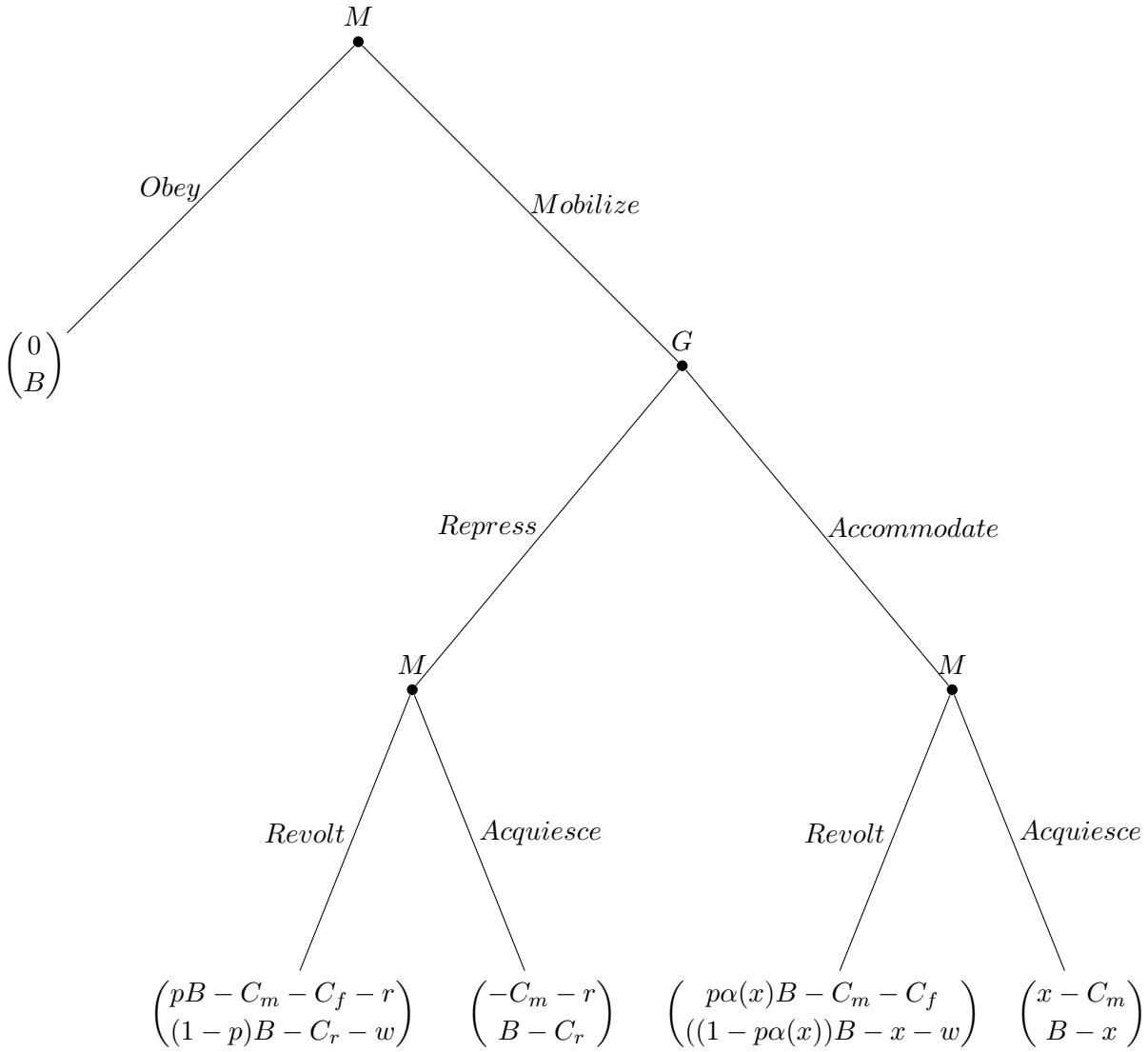
$$pB - C_m - C_f - r < -C_m - r \Longrightarrow p < \frac{C_f}{B} \tag{1}$$

If the state decides to accommodate, acquiesce would occur when the expected benefits of being acquiescent are higher than the cost of revolt:

$$p\alpha(x)B - C_m - C_f < x - C_m \tag{2}$$

For this equation to hold, p has to be smaller than $\frac{C_f + x}{\alpha(x)B}$. Because $\alpha(x) \in (0, 1)$ and x is a positive number, it ensures that $\frac{C_f + x}{\alpha(x)B} > \frac{C_f}{B}$. In other words, if (1) holds, (2) would always hold. That means the minority dissidents will always acquiesce when (1) holds. Knowing this, the state will repress because $x \in (C_r, w) \Longrightarrow B - C_r > B - x$.

Figure 8: Extensive Game of Accommodation and Ethnic Conflict



Expecting the state to repress, the minority opposition group will choose to not mobilize in the first place ($-C_m - r < 0$).

(II) Now let us look at another scenario:

$$\frac{C_f}{B} < p < \frac{C_f + x}{\alpha(x)B} \tag{3}$$

Under this circumstance, (2) holds but (1) does not hold. Put differently, when the government chooses to accommodate the ethnic minority, the opposition group will be acquiescent whereas it will fight with the state when the latter decides to repress.

Given this result, the state will make the accommodation if $(1-p)B - C_r - w < B - x$. Notice that the government will always accommodate given that $p \in (0,1)$ and $x \in (C_r, w)$. Hence, the minority dissidents will make the decision based on the relative value of x compared with C_m.

That is,

$$\begin{cases} C_m < x \Longrightarrow M \textit{ will mobilize} \\ C_m > x \Longrightarrow M \textit{ will not mobilize} \end{cases}$$

If it is less costly for the minority opposition group to overcome the collective action problem ($C_m < x$), the dissident group would initiate covert mobilizations. In return, the state chooses to make policy accommodations to the restive ethnic minorities. Moreover, the opposition organization would not fight with the government after receiving the accommodation.

(III) The third scenario is as followings:

$$p > \frac{C_f + x}{\alpha(x)B} = P^* \tag{4}$$

When (4) holds, the minority opposition group will always choose to fight with the state regardless whether the state decides to accommodate or repress the minorities. Knowing this, the state needs to choose a less costly strategy. Put differently, the state has to compare $(1-p)B - C_r - w$ with $((1-p\alpha(x))B - x - w$:

$$\begin{cases} (1-p)B - C_r - w < ((1-p\alpha(x))B - x - w \Longrightarrow G \textit{ will accommodate} \\ (1-p)B - C_r - w > ((1-p\alpha(x))B - x - w \Longrightarrow G \textit{ will repress} \end{cases}$$

If the effectiveness of these concessions is high, the government would decide to accommodate the opposition group. In particular, $\alpha(x)$ has to fall below this threshold value:

$$(1-p)B - C_r - w < ((1-p\alpha(x))B - x - w \Longrightarrow \alpha(x) < 1 - \frac{x - C_r}{pB} = \alpha^* \tag{5}$$

For (5) to be true, it has to satisfy the following condition:

$$p > \frac{x - C_r}{(1-\alpha(x))B} = P_t^* \tag{6}$$

It is easy to show that when $\alpha(x) < 1/2$, we will always have $P_t^* < P^*$. In other words, if (4) holds, it also ensures (5) and (6). In this case, the state will choose to accommodate even if the opposition group will engage in an open conflict. On the other hand, if $\alpha(x) > 1/2$, then $P_t^* > P^*$. Technically, we have

$$\begin{cases} \frac{C_f + x}{\alpha(x)B} = P^* < p < \frac{x - C_r}{(1-\alpha(x))B} = P_t^* \Longrightarrow G \textit{ will repress} \\ p > P_t^* \Longrightarrow G \textit{ will accommodate} \end{cases}$$

2.3 Summary of Results

A summary of equilibrium conditions is given in Table 4. The table specifies the possible equilibrium paths that the state and the minority opposition group can take in the game and the corresponding conditions for which the path to be optimal. The far left column indicates the three equilibrium paths for the opposition group to play given the group had activated the mobilization. The formal conditions for which this path is optimal for the minority dissidents are shown in the next column to the right. The adjacent column to the right states the possible paths of action for the state given that

the dissidents play the strategy denoted to the left in the same row. Likewise, the formal condition is listed to the right of the state's equilibrium strategy. Finally, the far right column lists the condition under which the minority dissidents choose to mobilize in the first place for each corresponding equilibrium path.

Table 4: Summary of Results

Dissidents Action Given Mobilization		State Action Given Mobilization		Condition for Mobilization
M Always Acquiesces If	$p < \frac{C_f}{B} \Longrightarrow$	G Always Represses		M Never Mobilizes
M Acquiesces If G Accommodates If	$\frac{C_f}{B} < p < \frac{C_f+x}{\alpha(x)B} \Longrightarrow$	G Always Accommodates		$C_m < x$
M Always Revolts If	$p > \frac{C_f+x}{\alpha(x)B} \Longrightarrow$	G Accommodates If	$\alpha(x) < 1/2$	$p\alpha(x)B - C_m - C_f > 0$
M Always Revolts If	$p > \frac{C_f+x}{\alpha(x)B} \Longrightarrow$	G Represses If	$\alpha(x) > 1/2$ and $p < \frac{x-C_r}{(1-\alpha(x))B}$	$pB - C_m - C_f - r > 0$

The top row of Table 4 depicts the scenario in which the mobilized minority group cannot pose a notable level threat to the group in power (i.e., p is small enough) and thus it always prefers the status quo over a costly fighting. Intuitively, if the opposition group always acquiesces, the state's preferred strategy is to use preemptive repression, since doing so avoids more expensive preemptive accommodation. As a result, the minority activists choose not to mobilize in expectation of a subsequent state repression.

The second row presents the condition under which the mobilized minority group will acquiesce given the state's preemptive accommodation. If the mobilized group's strength p lies between the threshold of never fighting, and the threshold of revolting, $\frac{C_f}{B} < p < \frac{C_f+x}{\alpha(x)B}$, then the opposition group will only accept the status quo if the state accommodates the ethnic minorities. In return, the state has the incentive to offer accommodation. This equilibrium result is intuitive in the sense that as long as the organized minority rebels are strong enough to pose an intermediate level threat to the state, the state is pressed to make concessions. Given the complete and prefect information, the state anticipates that the opposition group will not engage in open violence after receiving the concession. Knowing that the minority group is also able to threaten the regime, the government will

be better off by making concessions and thus avoiding a more costly fighting after the repression.

The bottom two rows list the scenario in which the mobilized minority group always revolts, regardless of the government's strategy. Again, the group's threshold of fighting, p, depends on how large the fighting cost C_f and the opportunity cost of losing the concession x are relative to the discounted value of B under dispute. Given this result, the state makes its decision based on how large the expected payoffs of repression are relative to the value of making preemptive accommodation. The state's calculation is dependent upon a critical value of the efficiency of accommodation, $\alpha(x)$. When the efficiency is high enough (i.e, $\alpha(x) < 1/2$), the state will prefer the gamble of accommodation over the gamble of repression. On the other hand, the state will choose to repress preemptively if the efficiency is low enough.

Now, it is important to identify the conditions under which the status quo (i.e., peace) is possible at all. From Table 4 we can infer that the minority opposition group will be acquiescent if the mobilized minority group's strength, p, lies to the left of the critical threshold of fighting, $\frac{C_f+x}{\alpha(x)B} = P^*$. Put differently, when P^* increases, we should observe a lower odds of open conflict. This allows us to deduce comparative statics in terms of the relationship between preemptive accommodations and the risk of an overt ethnic conflict.

Because we have

$$\frac{\partial \alpha(x)}{\partial x} < 0 \tag{7}$$

It is easy to show that

$$\frac{\partial P^*}{\partial x} = 1/B \times \frac{\alpha(x) - (C_f + x)\frac{\partial \alpha(x)}{\partial x}}{\alpha(x)^2} > 0 \tag{8}$$

From (8), we can make two propositions in general.

- **Proposition 1**:

  An increase in government spending on preemptive accommodations leads to a lower likelihood of inter-ethnic conflicts.

- **Proposition 2**:

  When a given amount of concessions corresponds to a more effective state accommodation, there is a lower likelihood of inter-ethnic conflicts.

Plausibility

The theoretical framework above rests on three key assumptions about the nature of ethnic conflict in authoritarian settings. First, disgruntled members of the ethnic minority group manage to overcome the collective action problem. Second, the majority group in power can make a credible commitment in terms of carrying out its promised policy concession. Third, concessions tend to undermine the minority's capacity to mobilize while the appeasing effect varies a great deal across a variety of circumstances.

The Collective Action Problem Assumption

It has been a consensus among ethnic politics scholar that ethnic identity can play an important role in agitating collective actions. The instrumentalist school argues that ethnic mobilization is feasible because the central feature of ethnic mobilization is coordination instead of cooperation (Hardin 1995). In the vein of this rational choice argument, the fundamental barrier of mobilizing co-ethnics lies in finding a "focus" rather than overcoming the free-rider problem. Because ethnic markers can serve as a prominent focal point that distinguishes different social groups and facilitates the formation of mutually consistent expectation, ethnic identity tends to associate with group conflicts.

In different ways, scholars in favor of an essentialism understanding of ethnicity also highlight the linkage between ethnic differences and social conflicts. According to Petersen (2002), the motivation of participate in ethnic violence roots in human nature, especially those emotions that are related to self-esteem and personal ontology security. As a result, group-level attachments can provoke strong feelings and mass emotion that lead to ethnic conflict. The key part of this essentialism argument is that, individuals who feel a strong attachment to their groups can accept the personal risks and costs of engaging in related

collective violence.

Therefore, ethnic markers, as a type of ascriptive traits, can easily be mobilized by communal elites for political purposes – some may even argue that the mobilization potential derives from ethnic nationalism is stronger than other social identities such as class (Beissinger 2008; Slater 2009). In fact, after 1945, ethno-nationalist conflicts are the dominant form of violence from low-intensive terrorism attacks (Gleditsch and Polo 2016) to high-profile civil war (Lange 2017).

The Credible Commitment Problem Assumption

Since the seminal paper by Acemoglu and Robinson (2000*b*), the credible commitment problem has been a central issue of political economy literature on distributive conflicts. Although the elites in power may accommodate demands of excluded groups when they faced a popular threat, elites can renege on these concessions and reverse their promised commitments when the threat subsides. In the same vein of this rationale, ethnic minority may be suspicious about the promised policy concession made by a majority group in power.

However, when it comes to ethnic violence, I argue that this credible commitment problem is not as intractable as it first appears. In contrary to class-based distributive conflicts, ethnic conflicts can pose a nearly constant threat to the state in an ethnically divided society. As what we have discussed above, compared with their counterparts such as labor union leaders, ethnic entrepreneurs encounter less challenging barriers to overcome collective action problem by appealing to their co-ethnics. Consequently, as along as the ethnic opposition can constantly pose a threat of unrest, the group in power is pressured to make a credible commitment in terms of policy concessions. As noted by Acemoglu and Robinson (2000*b*, p.1185), because of a strong socialist movement in Germany, the German elites "should have more flexibility in dealing with social unrest by promising future redistribution, which was the pattern in practice." This line of arguments is also corroborated by several studies on authoritarian regimes. For example, Haber (2006) suggests that rulers may offer rents to co-opt potential political entrepreneurs

when these opposite elites can pose a credible threat of coup or revolution.

The Appeasing Effect Assumption

It may contend that making concession exacerbate rather than dampen ethnic conflicts. Discontented minority may view this soft-line taken by the state as a signal that the state is actually weak (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000*a*). This interpretation therefore encouraging ethnic entrepreneurs to escalate a larger scale contentious activity. In addition, concessions offer more resources to the minority group and thus improve the group's capacity to fight. Either way, making concessions increases rather than attenuates the likelihood of ethnic violence.

However, I argue that both of these arguments are tenuous. First, the decision to make concession conveys ambiguous information and thus can be subject to conflicting interpretations. Put differently, making concessions by itself a very noisy signal in the reality. On the one hand, the state may appear to be relatively weak when it tries to accommodate demands of the opposite group (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). On the other hand, only a stable strong state is willing to accommodate because it is confident that these policy concessions are unlikely to subvert the regime (Heurlin 2016). In fact, recent studies show a host of examples that strong states such as Turkey that are able to use force also attempt to appease ethnic minorities with welfare provisions (Yörük 2012). The most famous example is Soviet Union's effort to invest vast resources to satisfy the needs of its ethnic minorities despite the fact that USSR was a highly repressive state with strong coercion apparatuses (Martin 2001).

Moreover, it is far from clear that concessions will necessarily enhance the minority's capacity of fighting. First and foremost, the nationalism sentiment among minorities is rarely to be identical for all members of the group (Gorenburg 2000). As a result, some subgroups within the ethnic group may have already been satisfied with the state's policy concessions and thereby declining the recruitment by more radical nationalist groups. In addition, taking part in a collective action is always costly under the shadow of being repressed. For a large segment of the minority population, the opportunity costs of

participating in insurgent groups become higher after receiving material concessions by the state. This makes ethnic entrepreneurs less likely to establish a solid social base among the general population. Third, it may create more fractions within the nationalist camp and weaken the secessionist movement's cohesion. Cunningham (2011) finds that states are more likely to make concessions to internally divided separatists. Different nationalist factions may hold divergent views of whether acquiesce once the state made accommodations. These concessions thereby undermining the secessionist movement's capacity of coordination to initiate large-scale overt oppositions. Finally, it has been well-known that ethnic violence tends to generate a vicious circle in which state repression produce grievances among minorities that in turn breed further ethnic hatred (Olzak and West 1991). Making concessions send a benevolent signal to the other side that the state is willing to improve the well-being of minorities, which at least should not aggravate the preexisting conflict.

To be true, there is an important caveat of my theory. Notice that the game theoretical model above assumes the territorial control of the state over the minority's homeland in the beginning of the game, which is a prerequisite of our discussions. The appeasing effect of policy concessions, especially the transfer of material benefits, is crucially dependent upon the state's territorial control. The scope of this dissertation is limited to low- to moderate-intensity ethnic conflicts including protests, demonstrations, strikes, riots, terrorist attacks, and minor guerrilla events. I exclude fully-fledged ongoing ethnic war in my discussions for two reasons. First, if ethnic rebel groups can establish a *de facto* territorial control of their homelands, they can provide their own governance in these regions (Stewart 2018). This makes the state's policy concessions futile given most policy concessions involve club goods or public goods like building school and infrastructure construction have a strong spatial aspect (Bates 1983). That is, they mainly benefit the people who live nearby. Second, it has been shown that without a strong territorial control by the state, an injection of material resources into conflict zones aggravates rather than mitigates conflicts. Only when the state effectively exerts its territorial control and thereby securing the safety of people and property, concessions such as development as-

sistance can placate the disgruntled population (Berman et al. 2013; Crost, Felter and Johnston 2014; Nunn and Qian 2014; Berman, Downey and Felter 2016). The reason is that the absence of a monopoly on violence only creates incentives for non-state armed groups to loot and extort valuable concessions like cash, food, and other lucrative resources.

The Efficiency of Concession

This section spells out three prominent mechanisms that determine the efficiency of concession (See Table 5), that is, the outcome of policy accommodation in terms of appeasing ethnic conflict. Instead of treating the whole process of how policy accommodation undermines ethnic mobilization as a "black box," I pay special attention to three specific components underlying this process: bureaucratic competence, information, and social network. This disaggregated approach allows us to have a better understanding of conditions under which concessions toward ethnic minority groups are less/more efficient. It is noteworthy to distinguish *amount of concession* from *efficiency of concession*, which is crucial for my theoretical argument here. The amount of concession refers to the number of tangible resources like cash, development aid, and public employment jobs that the state is willing to concede to the minority. In my game theoretical model above, this concept is formalized as $x \in (C_r, w)$. The notion of *the efficiency of concession*, $\alpha(x) \in (0, 1)$, is the extent to which these concessions can decrease the likelihood of a successful unrest given the size of conceded resources. Put differently, these two concepts captures different aspects of the state's counter-insurgency policy. It is possible that a state can invest a large number of fiscal transfers to appease restive minorities while *the efficiency of concession* is low.

This theoretical difference between *amount of concession* and *efficiency of concession* echoes the insights of recent political economy work on development. Using cross-country data on cognitive skill scores of standardized test, Hanushek and Woessmann (2012) show that this outcome measure of human capital investment rather than a conventional input

measure (e.g., school enrollment rates) plays a far more vital role in explaining economic growth. Similarly, Huber and Stephens (2012) find that the relationship between levels of enrollment and cognitive skill levels was weak, which indicates the amount of government expenditures is qualitatively different from outcomes of these policy spending. To restate, the state's capacity to expend should not be conflated with state performance that depends on "the capacity to invest effectively" (Evans, Huber and Stephens 2017, p.387).

Table 5: Mechanisms of Accommodation Outcomes

The Efficiency of Accommodation $\alpha(x)$			
Unit of Analysis	Local State Apparatus	Political Institution	Minority Group
Mechanism	Bureaucratic Competence	Information	Social Network
Stylized Fact	Quality of Service Delivery	Mass Preference	Intra-group Structure

The Quality of Service Delivery

In analyzing the efficiency of concession to appease disgruntled minorities, the first factor needs to be scrutinized is to what extent these conceded resources have been actually delivered to the designated target – namely, the discontented minority population. If local street-level bureaucrats or other state agents who control the distribution of resource can simply embezzle or extort the transfer as booty, the accommodation policy easily fails. That means, the ability of the state to achieve its goal of accommodation is largely a function of how upper-level officials can effectively monitor and sanction their subordinates. As Hegre and Nygård (2015, p.6) notes, "corruption undermines the government's ability to implement public policies that generate economic growth and other outcomes that reduce the risk of conflict." In short, bureaucratic performance matters a lot for efficiency of cross-ethnic concessions (Pepinsky, Pierskalla and Sacks 2017).

It has been well documented in the literature of political economy about the prevalence of local capture in developing countries. For example, Reinikka and Svensson (2004) reveals that the delivery rate of central government's education program transfer in Uganda

was merely around 13% whereas the official statistics states 20% of the country's public expenditure was spent on education. In other words, most schools and students received nothing while corrupt bureaucrats benefited personally from capturing these grants. China is not an exception for these sorts of local capture. Using data on Chinese central government's education grant program towards rural schools after 2006, Ding, Lu and Ye (2015, p.2) find that "on average, schools receive only half of the intended central grant; only less than 10% of the counties release the full amount of the grant or invest even more in education from their own pockets."

Therefore, it is worth emphasizing the considerable discrepancy between the state's ideal policy goal and the local government's implementation of the goal. After the bloody July 2009 Ürümqi riots, many Han Chinese in Xinjiang blamed once Xinjiang's party secretary Wang, Lequan, who was notoriously known as a corrupt leader in the region, for the cause of these ethnic violence. During my interviews, several interview subjects (No.1, No.2, and No.3) mentioned that Wang and his clique (the so-called "Shandong Bang") misappropriated and embezzled development assistance for Xinjiang's Uyghur communities from the central government. The captured civil servants are regarded as one of the key reasons for the failure of China's national policy in the region. One of my interview subjects (No.3), who has a Uyghur friend worked as a county government employee in southern Xinjiang, mentioned that a county's local officials even embezzled earmarked funds by upper-level governments that were designated for improving school infrastructure like classroom window decorations.

The most striking stylized fact about the quality of local state's service delivery is its vast spatial and temporal variations. In Africa, using data from Afrobarometer, Wig and Tollefsen (2016, p.34) demonstrate sizable differences across the second administrative level below the state (i.e., district) in terms of their levels of "uncorrupt, law governed, and capable trusted by the public and efficient in their performance." The enormous diversity with regard to the quality of local states is not something new for students on Chinese politics. Preexisting literature in this field has identified a variety of ways in which China's local states operate. While local governments in some regions act as a

developmental state, their counterparts in other localities tend to be predatory (Saich 2002; Remick 2004). Despite corruption is common in China as a whole, local states do exhibit notable variations at both the province level (Zhu 2017) and the county level (Wu and Zhu 2011). In addition to these quantitative evidence, case studies based on in-depth observations also show inter-regional differences with regard to the levels of corruption (Bulman 2016, pp.86-98).

Additionally, local states' bureaucratic performance evolves over time. For instance, in China, local governance system has been systematically reorganized after several waves of gradual reforms, which results in a dramatic reconfiguration of local policy implementation (Ahlers, Heberer and Schubert 2016). One of these significant changes was the introduction of competitive elections at the village level in some localities, which leads to more local public goods provision (Zhang et al. 2004). Besides "bottom-up" reforms in recent decades like holding election in villages, China's central government had also conducted a series of "top-down" reforms such as the retrenchment of civil services at the county level (Brødsgaard 2002; Burns 2003), the abolition of agricultural tax (Oi et al. 2012), and increasing state-funded development programs in poor rural areas (Ahlers and Schubert 2009). Put aside whether these governance reforms have substantively improved well-being of the marginalized population, the reconfiguration of local states has a profound effect on their organizational coherence, especially "the system of controls and incentives created within the state bureaucracy in order to assure communication of directives, enforcement of rules, performance feedback, and general oversight" (Centeno, Kohli and Yashar 2017, p.26).

The Problem of Information

The information problem is especially acute when it comes to ethnic politics. As Fearon and Laitin (1996) indicates, an important aspect of ethnicity is information. Because of shared language and other cultural markers, co-ethnics tend to interact with each other more frequently than members from out-groups. This lower transaction cost gives an information advantage for co-ethnics so that each of them can have a better understanding

of their respective social standings. On the other hand, out-group members are technically disadvantaged in terms of their ability to overcome information asymmetry associated with the ethnic line.

In addition to ethnic politics, the crucial role of information is also recognized by the recent literature on state effectiveness (Evans, Huber and Stephens 2017; Pepinsky, Pierskalla and Sacks 2017). The authors use the term "embeddedness" to recapitulate the informational base of state effectiveness. Evans, Huber and Stephens (2017, p.388) argues that "without accurate information on collective priorities at the community level through multiple channels, the development state will end up investing inefficiently and wasting precious public resources." Likewise, through a review on bureaucracy politics in the developing world, Pepinsky, Pierskalla and Sacks (2017, p.258) contend that "embeddedness reduces bureaucrats' costs of information gathering and information sharing. Providers who are embedded in the communities they serve are likely to have a better sense of their needs and target their efforts at fulfilling those needs."

Consequently, the information problem has a far-reaching implication for efficiency of cross-ethnic concessions in deeply divided societies. Efficiency of cross-ethnic concessions is a part of a broader picture of state effectiveness. When the state is willing to offer goods to ethnic minorities, it faces problems to identify the mass preference among the latter group. Put differently, if state offers goods that do not cater to minorities' demands, a conciliatory policy is doomed to fail. One of my interview subjects (No.4), who is an expert on China's ethnic politics, indicated this problem clearly in our interview. During the last decade, the Chinese government had launched the so-called "partner assistance program" in Xinjiang, which is a package of development assistance that certain Eastern China cities are required to invest resources on partnered poor counties of Xinjiang. The interview subject noticed that, many of these developmental projects are politically futile because officials who were in charge of these programs tended to overlook the local minorities' preferences. For example, for a number of Uyghur residents in Hetian prefecture, on the top of the list of their concerns is employment. However, many assistance programs in Hetian had nothing to do with increasing local employment opportunities.

Instead, these projects are so-called "image projects" (*xingxiang gongcheng*) that aim at impressing supervisors rather than being responsible for local minority citizens (Cai 2004). As a result, infused investments brought by "partner assistance program" fail to accommodate local minority population.

This information-related difficulty is further exacerbated by the broader institutional settings in which ethnic politics embeds. Authoritarian regimes are deeply inflicted by the information problem – to ensure their grip on power, autocratic leaders need to know whether their power base is solid among the general population, whether their elite rivals are planning a military coup, and whether there is a covert mass threat to which they should pay immediate attention. However, because authoritarian regimes are by definition repressive, people in these countries tend to hide their authentic preferences, which makes the access to real information a daunting challenge to any dictatorial leaders (Kuran 1991).

To get rid of this dilemma, autocratic leaders around the world have created a set of institutions that can alleviate the information problem. Dimitrov (2014) reveal how Communist regimes like Bulgaria, China, and Soviet Union had established specialized state agencies to gather, store, and analyze citizen complaints. Moreover, autocratic leaders may also adopt semi-competitive elections as tools to gather essential intelligence. These semi-competitive electoral institutions can provide feedback that is particularly useful for leaders to maintain their rule. For example, an unfavorable electoral outcome of a local candidate who is affiliated with the hegemonic party may betray local constituents' true feelings (Magaloni 2006; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). This thereby allowing the ruling party to be alert about the constituent's discontent and preempts the outbreak of a potential protest. Despite prodigious efforts have been put on information gathering through institution building, this "bottom-up" information flow is still intrinsically vulnerable to distortions (Dimitrov 2017).

The above discussion on the role of information in ethnic politics focuses on different demands for goods along ethnic lines. However, what is especially intriguing to my dissertation is the suggestive evidence about spatial variations of mass preferences *within*

ethnic groups. In Nigeria, for instance, Kim and Bunte (2018) shows that individuals' preferences for specific public goods exhibit sizable differences even when they belong to the same ethnic groups. An example employed by Kim and Bunte (2018, pp.6-7) is particularly telling, "In some districts within the Yoruba-dominated area, more than 80% of the population demands increased spending on education, while other districts less than 30% of citizens demand this good." Hence, such within-group heterogeneity of demands help us have a deeper understanding of information politics with regard to *intra-group* impact of cross-ethnic concessions. The extent to which these concessions can placate discontented ethnic minorities at the *local* level is a function of the degree to which local governments can access to subordinated minorities' preferences.

Intra-group Structure

The third factor that shapes efficiency of concession is intra-group structure. Specifically, intra-group structure entails two different dimensions: (1) the social dimension, or how ethnic minority group is organizationally patterned by intra-group social networks; (2) the economic dimension, or the class cleavage within ethnic groups - namely, the intra-group economic inequality. Of course, these two dimensions are closely correlated in reality. But this is theoretically meaningful to distinguish these two dimensions in a more analytical way.

How does intra-group structure affect the efficiency of cross-ethnic accommodation? To answer this question, I build my arguments on two strains of literature. The first group of scholars emphasizes the importance of social network in the process of rebel recruitment (Petersen 2001; Siegel 2009; Parkinson 2013). When analyzing indigenous collective action in Mexico, Trejo (2012) reveals two different types of network structures in rural indigenous communities: political ties that encompass local actors, which is characterized by centralized and hierarchical networks; religion-based networks that are decentralized and horizontal. Trejo (2012) finds that religion-based networks are more successful to recruit rebel members than secular political networks. It is worthwhile citing him at length: "in a context in which subnational authorities had adopted repressive policies

targeting social movement leaders, a centralized network structure entirely dependent on a few leaders was highly vulnerable. Given the structure of interactions in this network, an attack on the leadership would bring the group to a near collapse ... In contrast, religious network had structural features that facilitated rebel recruitment ..." (Trejo 2012, pp.192-193). Although Trejo only provides empirical evidence for the conditional effect of social networks when insurgency groups face repression, he also briefly mentions how decentralized religious networks are more resilient than centralized ones when state tries to co-opt opposition movements (Trejo 2012, p.18). In fact, we can easily extend his original insight to other ethnic conflicts in autocracies.

Besides being a function of the social dimension, the effectiveness of cross-ethnic accommodation is also subject to the influence of intra-group economic inequality. The definition of intra-group economic inequality, or within-ethnic-group inequality (WGI), is self-evident. Although a large body of literature has established a connection between inter-group economic inequality and civil conflict (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013), the concrete causal mechanisms linking WGI to conflict initiation remain unclear (Kuhn and Weidmann 2015). There are two contrasting views of WGI's impact on ethnic conflict. Some authors argue that WGI undermines ethnic mobilization because such type of inequality cross-cuts ethnic lines and thus weakens the ethnic group's cohesiveness (Stewart 2000). On the other hand, Esteban and Ray (2008*a*) contends that the negative effect of WGI on reducing group cohesion is secondary when compared with a stronger positive influence of WGI on the group's capacity of mobilization. In Esteban and Ray's own words, when WGI is high, the likelihood of ethnic mobilization increases because "the elite contribute financial resources, while the masses contribute conflict labor. This is the synergy that drives ethnic alliances"(Esteban and Ray 2008*a*, p.2199). Consequently, WGI tends to enhance an ethnic group's likelihood of initiating a conflict.

Inspired by the above two lines of reasoning on intra-group structure, I thereby arguing that the pacifying effect of cross-ethnic concessions is conditional on both social and economic within-group heterogeneity. Departing from assuming that the state only provides uniform goods as concessions targeting ethnic minorities, we will show later

that the state generally offers two types of accommodations: public goods and private goods. More specifically, I contend that the appeasing impact of public-goods-oriented policy concessions is stronger when intra-group social networks are decentralized and the group's WGI is high. On the other hand, private-goods-oriented accommodations are more effective when the ethnic minority group is centralized and its WGI is low.

In socially decentralized localities with multiple local leaders, it is harder to buy off all crucial elites and thus co-optation may be less effective than public goods provision. In contrast, public goods spending is less efficient than co-optation in socially centralized localities – in these hierarchical local communities, only a small number of ethnic elites plays a key political role. Two interview subjects (No.1 and No.4) made the remark that Uyghur communities tend to be socially decentralized than Hui communities despite sharing the same Islamic identity.

Conclusion

Authoritarian regimes use a mix of carrots and sticks to contain mass opposition including political challenges posed by restive minority groups. However, exactly how the autocratic leaders make repressive and redistributive policy to prevent ethnic conflicts have not been well articulated in the ethnic violence literature.

This chapter develops a formal model that makes three contributions to the extant studies on civil violence. First of all, it presents a unified theoretical framework that accounts for how authoritarian states choose this mix of repressive and redistributive policies to control minority opposition. This approach therefore provides a micro-foundation to a state-centered explanation of ethnic conflicts in autocracies. Second, it specifies the conditions under which the autocratic governments are willing to offer policy concessions – usually in various forms of fiscal redistribution. Although there are ample evidence showing the prevalence of these cross-ethnic accommodations across authoritarian regimes, little preexisting research have offered a systematic explanation for such phenomena. This theoretical framework thus helps account for why a number of repressive autocratic

countries such as China and Soviet Union do invest a large amount of resources to accommodate restive minorities. Third, my equilibrium results show that in general the minority opposition group is more likely to acquiesce when the autocratic state offers more preemptive concessions to the restive minority group. This argument leads us to ask a new question that have rarely been explored before – what factors affect the efficiency of policy concessions? This approach thereby providing a nuance perspective on how state accommodations influence ethnic violence in divided authoritarian societies.

Chapter 4

Local Public Goods Expenditure and Ethnic Conflict: Evidence from China

Introduction

During the last decade, one of the most significant progresses in the civil violence literature is the shift from country level analyses towards local level ones. This approach, usually termed as "disaggregating civil war," has generated an array of important findings (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009). These new empirical results offer us a much better understanding of civil conflict. These disaggregation-oriented studies reveal that intrastate factors such as the local economy, geographical characteristics of groups, inter-group inequalities, the group-level political exclusion, and local resource endowments have profound influences on the likelihood of civil violence (Buhaug and Rød 2006; Buhaug et al. 2008; Weidmann 2009; Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010; Buhaug et al. 2011; Østby et al. 2011; Fjelde and Østby 2014).

However, these advances in disaggregating civil violence tend to overlook local government behaviors while focusing on other local conditions. As a recent paper briefly summarizes, "*governments are conspicuously absent from the empirical literature on civil conflict*" (Lacina 2014). I argue that it is necessary to examine the impact of local government for a more comprehensive understanding of civil conflict. Instead of viewing the government as a monolithic unitary actor, a better research design should highlight the considerable variations in subnational governments. Furthermore, rather than assuming local governments as passive recipients in the dynamics of civil conflicts, they can act as active agents. To explore the ramifications of local governments' behaviors on civil conflicts, this paper examines the linkage between local public goods expenditures and the odds of ethnic conflicts. The reason for focusing on public goods provision is twofold: First, the provision of public services is a fundamental task of a modern state. The capacity of securing adequate public goods for the citizenry is a core component of state capacity. Second, this study can be directly examined across different regime types. Other attributes of local governments, such as electoral institutions (Wilkinson 2006), are usually limited in terms of the possibility of generalization.

In this paper, I take advantage of an original database on ethnic conflicts in the Xinjiang province of China (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018). To the best of my

knowledge, this paper is one of the first quantitative studies on the ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang.[1] Xinjiang is a particularly intriguing case for this study because of several reasons. First, in terms of local public goods provisions, there are considerable county-level variations in Xinjiang.[2] Second, there are relatively well-documented data on county-level government spending in China. These disaggregated fiscal spending data offer us an opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of local public services delivery. Third, the provision of public goods in China is highly decentralized. Local governments are responsible for a disproportionate share of public services expenditures (Zhan, Duan and Zeng 2015). As a result, it is especially interesting to examine the role of local governments in this context.

I argue that increasing local public goods provisions mitigates the risk of ethnic conflicts through two casual mechanisms: (1) imposing higher opportunity costs of joining rebellion groups, and (2) enhancing a state's legitimacy. Empirically, this study shows that the increasing county-level education spending dramatically decreases the odds of ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang. Although the statistical analysis in this paper focuses on education spending, I argue that the pacifying effect is not specific to education services.[3] As we will see later, the general theoretical framework – the opportunity cost argument and the legitimacy story – can be applied to other types of public goods such as health and social security.

This paper makes several contributions to the literature on civil conflict in general and Chinese politics in particular. First, it contributes to a better understanding of civil conflict by focusing on subnational-level public goods expenditures. Most civil violence research on the ramification of public goods spending overemphasizes the role of central governments. The existing empirical works are overwhelmingly dominated by cross-country regressions (Burgoon 2006; Thyne 2006; Fjelde and De Soysa 2009; Taydas and Peksen 2012). This approach overlooks the considerable within-country variations

[1] The other two papers that I am aware of are Hong and Yang (2018) and Cao, Duan, Liu and Wei (2018).

[2] For instance, in terms of county-level education spending per capita in Xinjiang (the average value from 1996 to 2005), the value of the 1st quartile is only 58% of the 3rd quartile.

[3] In this paper, I only use education spending as a measure of public goods expenditures for two reasons: (1) data limitations, and (2) the construct validity problem. See footnote 13 and 14.

of the public service delivery (Treisman 2007). Furthermore, it is well known that ethnic conflicts are highly geographically concentrated within a country (Buhaug et al. 2011). As a result, studies on the basis of cross-country regressions may suffer from the ecological fallacy. In addition, using country-year as the unit of analysis is particularly vulnerable to bias from the unobserved heterogeneity. As far as I know, by taking China as a case, this article is the first systematic research regarding the influence of subnational public goods expenditures on ethnic unrest.

Second, my study advances the preexisting research by employing a direct measure of local governments' public goods expenditures. The previous civil conflict literature tends to include indirect measures of public service provisions as controls (Barron, Kaiser and Pradhan 2004; Tadjoeddin and Murshed 2007). For instance, these studies often use either the literacy rate or the total years of education completed as an indicator of public goods provision. However, the governmental policies regarding the provision of public goods are qualitatively different from these developmental outcomes. In many developing countries, these indicators are shaped by nongovernmental factors such as informal institutions (e.g., clan organizations) (Tsai 2007) or international non-governmental organizations. Contrary to the usage of indirect measures, this paper aims at capturing the effect of government spending by directly calculating the amount of money spent on public services.

Finally, this study sheds new lights on ethnopolitics in China. The extant research on ethnic conflict in China is dominated by qualitative cases studies and selective anecdotes (Schwartz 1994; Bovingdon 2010*b*; Hillman and Tuttle 2016) other than a few rare exceptions (Cao, Duan, Liu and Wei 2018; Hong and Yang 2018). My article makes an important departure from this body of literature. This study is one of the first comprehensive quantitative analyses of ethnic violence in China. Using a dataset on ethnic violent events in Xinjiang, this article allows us to explore different competitive hypotheses regarding ethnic conflicts in China. In recent years, the Chinese state has initiated an unprecedented "re-education campaign" to cope with the domestic security threat in

Xinjiang.[4] Given China's status as the second largest economy in the worlds, its domestic stability has wider regional and global implications.

This paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 discusses the necessity of unpacking how local governments affect ethnic conflict and why the Xinjiang case offers a unique opportunity to test the influence of local public goods provision on ethnic conflict. Section 3 briefly describes the ethnic conflict in Xinjiang as the background. Next, Section 4 presents the theoretical framework. Then Section 5 discusses the data used and explains my research design in more depth. Section 6 offers empirical evidence from various model specifications and corroborates my core argument through robustness checks. Section 7 examines the specific casual mechanisms underlying the pacifying effect of education spending. The last section concludes.

Local Government and Distributive Politics

Despite its weaker role in developing countries (Migdal 1988; Migdal, Kohli and Shue 1994), the state remains as one of the most important political actors in the Third World. It has been shown that the state possesses a nearly 20% share of GDP in the developing world (Fan 2008, p.23, Table 2.1). Because the state profoundly shapes the distribution of resources across various social groups, it plays a crucial role in determining people's life chances. As Hale (2008) notes, ethnic politics can be conceptualized as how individuals pursue various interests - namely life chances – given that they have anchored their interests in the framework of ethnicity. Because the modern state exerts a far-reaching impact on people's life chances, different ethnic groups tend to compete for state resources, especially public goods (Wimmer 1997). Therefore, ethnic conflict should be viewed as a part of the broader distributive politics.

Ethnic conflict research should pay more attention to local states for two reasons. First, the sweeping decentralization reform across the developing world makes local governments play a more important role in allocating scarce resources. Holding more respon-

[4]See the Section 7 of the Appendix A for the evolution of local coercive capacity and state repression in the region.

sibility for public service delivery, local states are increasingly becoming the arena where the contest between different ethnic groups takes place. In last several decades, there has been a rapid growth in the autonomy of local government around the developing world (Dickovick 2011). Both fiscal and political decentralization have become more popular since the 1980s. Focusing on a sample of 48 most populous counties in 1990, Arzaghi and Henderson (2005, pp.1158-1159) find that subnational governments shoulder more fiscal, political, and administrative responsibilities over time. For fiscal decentralization, share of the central government in total government expenditures experienced a notable decease from 1975 to 1995 (Arzaghi and Henderson 2005, p.1160). With regard to political decentralization in developing and transition countries, for over-time country averages, 58% of municipal executives in these countries were elected during the period from 1975 to 2000 (Enikolopov and Zhuravskaya 2007, p.2286). Rodden (2006) further shows that nearly 90% of countries experimented elections of local governments at the peak of political decentralization.

Second, the state tends to exhibit vast subnational variations in their capacity of providing goods and services across the space. As a result, a focus on national average stateness indicators may obscure the uneven reach of the state. These geographical variations of state penetration are particularly remarkable in developing countries in which the state power is largely constrained by social forces (Migdal, Kohli and Shue 1994). Case-oriented studies show substantial local diversity with regard to government performance in Senegal (Wilfahrt 2018), local state capacity of revenue extraction in Tanzania (Masaki 2018), and public goods provision by local governments in Zambia (Gisselquist, Leiderer and Nino-Zarazua 2016).

The Xinjiang case offers a unique opportunity to test how local governments influences ethnic conflict through public goods provision for three reasons. First, China's local governments are responsible for a large part of public goods expenditures because of the country's highly decentralized fiscal institution. If we use the subnational share of overall governmental expenditures to measure fiscal decentralization, China is one of the most fiscally decentralized countries in the world. In 2002, 70% of all government expenditures

had been spent at the subnational level (Landry 2008, pp.3-6). Local governments play a crucial role in providing public goods. For instance, county and township level governments accounted for over 50% of health care expenditures whereas the Chinese central government burdened merely 2% (Wong and Bhattasali 2003, p.176). Therefore, the case of China is especially intriguing – the influence of China's local governments could hardly be underestimated in terms of public goods provision. Second, as other states in developing countries, the Chinese state exhibits sizable variations of state capacity across its territory. Within Xinjiang, there are also considerable geographic differences in public goods provision by local governments. For example, in terms of public health indicators, across different regions, the Uyghur infant mortality rate ranged from 55/1000 to 25/1000 at the top to 140/1000 to 80/1000 at the bottom (Schuster 2009, p.435). Such striking spatial differences in public goods expenditures also manifest in county-level education spending data (see footnote 2). In short, the Xinjiang case is appropriate because it allows us to examine the influence of a spatially uneven distribution of local public goods spending. Third, for ethnic conflict research on many conflict-ridden regions, a big challenge is the paucity of data. It is particularly challenging to find fiscal data because government spending data are often not publicly available in many settings. Fortunately, disaggregated data from China's Ministry of Finance offer a rare glimpse into Xinjiang's local fiscal expenditures.

To be true, although China's local governments finance a large proportion of public goods, the central government owns a majority of fiscal revenue. In fact, for county governments, their share of total government revenues had decreased from 23.61% in 1997 to 15.2% in 2006 (Jia, Guo and Zhang 2014). This vertical mismatch thus has created a severe fiscal crisis among local governments since the mid-1990s, especially for those less industrialized regions. To cope with this crisis, after the 1994 fiscal reform, a substantive part of county-level budget has been financed by inter-government grants transferred by upper-level governments. Jia, Guo and Zhang (2014, p.119) finds that between 1997 and 2006, around 57% of county government expenditures are channeled by inter-government subsidies. In regard to the allocation of inter-governmental grants

– "central grants have to go through provincial governments before reaching prefectural and county governments" (Wu and Wang 2013, p.177). Likewise, informal negotiations between county officials and their prefectural leaders largely determine the amount of fiscal grants that county governments receive (Hillman 2014, pp.120-139).

Despite their financial dependency on upper-level governments, a county's top leaders (the CCP party secretary and the county head) enjoy substantial discretion over the allocation of county's budget (for relevant statistical evidence, see Lü and Liu (2018)). Field research shows that a small circle of county leaders largely control county budget (Guo 2009, p.627), including the allocation of grants by upper-level governments (Rogers, 2014, p.200). This autonomy is largely derived from local government's information advantage (Liu and Tao 2007, p.170). County leaders are apt at exploiting the ubiquitous information asymmetry problem to evade top-down regulations that are unfavorable to their interests. For example, Liu et al. (2009) shows that many county governments are able to sidestep stringent regulations on inter-government grants to enhance their self-interests. In Southern Xinjiang's three Uyghur-concentrated counties, a field study indicates that local county governments enjoy considerable discretion in allocating earmark grants from upper-level governments for local education sector (Guo 2010, pp.100-135).

Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang

The Xinjiang province is arguably the most violent region of China during the last several decades. During this period, although China witnessed an explosive growth of social unrest, most of them were relatively peaceful protests. More importantly, the Chinese state apparatus has adopted a wide array of tactics to routinize popular collective actions (Chen 2011). However, ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang are characterized by their high-profile violence. According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), of the 213 ethnic conflict events that occurred in Xinjiang between 1990 and 2005, 183 can be explicitly identified as violent (nearly 86% of all conflict events). These events include terrorist attacks, assassinations, gun fights between Uyghur militias and local police, and large-scale ethnic

riots. Such intensive violence rarely appeared in other Chinese provinces, even compared with Tibet.[5]

The ongoing ethnic conflicts are mainly between the Uyghur group and the Han Chinese in Xinjiang.[6] Xinjiang is ethnically divided in a specific way. The Uyghur group is both a majority within the Xinjiang province and a minority within China. On the other hand, the Han Chinese is both a minority within the Xinjiang province and a majority within China as a whole. Since the establishment of People's Republic of China, the Han population in this province has increased from only 6% of the entire local population in 1953 to 40.6% in 2000. During the same period, the share of Uyghur population decreased from 75% to 45.2%. The cleavage between the Uyghur and the Han Chinese is multiple-dimensional: religion, language, and other cultural traits (Finley 2013). Most of Uyghurs are Muslims while few Han Chinese are affiliated with Islam. In terms of language, the linguistic distance between the Uyghur language and Mandarin Chinese is wide. These cultural differences between two groups impose high transaction costs for the social interaction between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese.

During the period 1997-2005 - the late Jiang Zemin and early Hu Jintao periods, the central government adopted an increased use of both carrots and sticks to control restive Uyghurs in Xinjiang. On the one hand, the state began to invest more resources to develop Xinjiang's economy. For example, China's central government initiated the Western Development Programme in 1999. This state-led developmental project aims to reduce the inter-regional inequality between China proper and Xinjiang, which was regarded as an important reason of the growing Uyghur secessionist movement (Freeman 2013). In particular, the Chinese state had invested in about 200 key projects in Xinjiang from 2000 to 2008 (Wong and Takeuchi 2013, p.113). On the other hand, more economic assistance transferred to Xinjiang was accompanied with the intensified state repression. As Millward (2007) notes, after observing the increasing intensity of ethnic violence over the 1990s, the Chinese central government shifted away from its once more

[5] According to Barnett (2009), between 1987 and 1996, there were 213 reported political protests in Tibet. Most of them exhibited a relatively low level of violence.

[6] According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), of all 213 conflicts between 1990 and 2005, there were only 8 events that we are sure they did not involve Uyghurs.

liberal policy in the 1980s to a more tightened control over Xinjiang's Uyghurs. After the CCP Central Committee issued the so-called "Document No.7," the Chinese state began to strengthen the cultural integration of the Uyghurs (Millward 2007, pp.341-348). This reversal encompasses a set of policy domains, including stricter religion regulations and the promotion of bilingual education.

Consistent with the existing civil conflict literature, Xinjiang is particularly vulnerable to ethnic conflicts because of several reasons. First, Xinjiang, especially the southern part of Xinjiang where the Uyghur group is geographically concentrated, has economically lagged behind many other Chinese provinces. The existing literature shows that poverty is closely correlated with civil conflicts (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Second, the horizontal socioeconomic inequality between the Uyghur and the Han Chinese in Xinjiang is striking. For example, Schuster (2009) finds that the infant mortality rate for the Han Chinese is 13 per 1,000, while it is 102 per 1,000 for Uyghurs. In addition, Uyghurs tend to constitute the majority in rural areas or poorer urban areas of the southern Xinjiang (Hasmath 2012). These counties are also underdeveloped compared to other regions in Xinjiang (Chaudhuri 2010). Third, Uyghurs systematically suffer from political exclusion. Becquelin (2004) finds that most county, municipal, and prefecture level Communist Party Secretaries were held by Han officials in 2000. Cadre recruitment reveals a similar pattern. In 1987, only 38.4% of party members in Xinjiang were non-Han, though non-Han constituted over 60% of the entire local population (Bovingdon 2004). The underrepresentation of Uyghurs within the governing and Communist Party organ enhances their status as a subordinated group, which exacerbates the grievance of local Uyghur communities. Fourth, since the late 1970s, there has been a resurgence of Islam among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Since Xinjiang is geographically close to Afghanistan, Pakistan and several Central Asian countries, it may be deeply affected by the radical Islamic movement in these regions (Haider 2005). The salient Islamic identity among Uyghurs may also facilitate the collective action for insurgency through the extensive networks of local mosques and underground religious organizations (Mackerras 2001). Finally, Xinjiang's geographic factors may also play a crucial role in determining the outbreak of

conflicts. Xinjiang is China's largest province and a sixth of its land area. The vast physical size of Xinjiang hinders a full penetration of Chinese state apparatus. Xinjiang neighbors 8 countries, which offers porous boundaries for insurgents to find sanctuaries in neighboring countries. Xinjiang has the country's largest oil reserves and rich mineral resources (Starr 2004). Access to natural resources may further encourage the formation of violent organizations.

Despite the fact that Xinjiang is similar to many other conflict-ridden countries in terms of poverty, inequality, group concentration, and geographic factors, we should be cautious about generalizing my results to other contexts. First, ethnic conflict is a broad concept encompassing a wide array of diverse phenomena. In particular, it roughly entails three different types of conflicts that are defined by the actors involved. The first two types are conflicts that pit a state against armed ethnic opponent organizations. The first is conflict of nationalist secession – there is a secessionist movement that mobilizes an ethnic minority group to pursue self-rule. As a result, secessionist groups engage in secessionist conflicts with the ethnic group in power that controls the state. According to Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009), of 110 armed ethnic conflicts between 1946 and 2005, 57 of them had secessionist goals. The second type of conflict is ethnic war, whereby different ethnic armed groups fight for control of the central government. In addition to armed conflicts involving state, there is a third type of conflict – civilian-on-civilian violence such as ethnic riots. In the case of Xinjiang, the Han-Uyghur conflict includes both secessionist conflicts and civilian-on-civilian violence. In other words, my finding cannot be generalized to the second type of ethnic conflict – ethnic war.

Second, my finding is specific to the circumstance under which minority rebel groups do not have access to domestic territory control. Of 275 insurgent groups included in the non–state actor dataset (Cunningham, Skrede Gleditsch and Salehyan 2009), 178 of them do not control domestic territory (Stewart and Liou 2017, p.290). When the state possesses a solid territory control, insurgent groups are not able to seize and hold territory (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2012). For minority rebels who lack territorial control, they suffer from a logistical disadvantage in terms of combat capacity. A lack of territorial

control thus makes terrorist violence such as bombing and assassination a more appealing tactic than guerrilla wars (De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2015). This logic explains the reason why bombing was the dominant type of violence used by Uyghur dissidents in Xinjiang given that Chinese state has a strong territory control (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018). Furthermore, many secessionist groups with territory control provide public goods to people in the areas they control. According to Stewart (2018), of the 31 secessionist group that control territory, 52% of them provide inclusive public services. Of course, my finding of the pacifying impact of state-invested education spending cannot apply to these cases.

The Pacifying Effect of Public Goods Expenditure

Governments are able to shape the likelihood of ethnic conflicts. Specifically, a state can affect the risks of ethnic violence by distributing both public goods and private goods. Although it is interesting to explore the impact of providing private goods, this paper only focuses on the issue of public goods expenditures. The reason is that it is extremely hard to measure private goods spending, particularly at the local level.[7] Following Samuelson (1954), in the orthodox economic theory, public goods are both non-rivalrous and non-excludable. However, the most commonly used measures of public goods (e.g., public services) in the political economy literature do not line up perfectly with this classical definition. To be sure, citizens in many circumstances cannot get the same chance to access to a set of public services. Despite these limitations, as Wimmer (2015, p.3) notes, these widely used measures are "the kinds of outcomes that the political economy literature on government provided public goods has focused upon in the past." In this paper, by "public goods," I mean public services such as mass education and public health. My theory argues that there are two distinct causal mechanisms underlying the relationship between public goods provisions and ethnic conflicts. Both of them work at the local level. My theory thus contends that the increasing local public goods spending

[7]New research suggests that selective goods provision by authoritarian regimes result in a lower risk of violence at the local level. See an innovative analysis by De Juan and Bank (2015).

mitigates the odds of ethnic conflicts.

Public Goods Provision and Opportunity Cost

According to this scenario, public goods expenditures effectively reduce the likelihood of civil conflicts by increasing the opportunity costs of participating in rebellion groups. Investments on local public goods can improve the real income of local minorities. Consequently, the opportunity costs of joining insurgency organizations increase. As a result, ethnic violence becomes less likely to occur.

This argument is generally consistent with the instrumentalist explanation of ethnic conflict. As Fearon and Laitin (2000) note, "*large-scale ethnic violence is provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain or increase their hold on political power.*" The instrumentalist school views ethnic conflict as a result of an instrumental use of ethnicity by ethnic elites. These elites usually provide financial resources, organizational skills, and the logistics support to build rebellion groups (Esteban and Ray 2011). These groups recruit their rank-and-file members from a pool of individuals who are poorly educated or economically disadvantaged (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). When individuals are poor, they would abandon fewer material benefits if they want to join clandestine violent organizations. In other words, for the poor, the opportunity cost of joining a rebellion group is low. On the other hand, an effective provision of public goods has immediate positive influences on personal income. Without adequate public spending from the government, local residents have to substitute public investments with private expenditures. In China, with the decentralization of local fiscal system since the early 1980s, the share of total education funds derived from government spending decreased substantially from 84.46% in 1991 to merely 61.66% in 2004 (Hannum et al. 2008, pp.221–222). These government spending were even insufficient to fully cover teachers' salaries at the primary school level (Tsang and Ding 2005). Meanwhile, schools became more and more dependent on funding outside the government. For example, during this period, tuition and miscellaneous fees stood out as the most pronounced part of these nongovernmental education funds: it grew from 4.42% as a share of total education expenditures in 1991 to 18.59% in 2004 (Hannum et al. 2008, Table 7.2). When governments had pushed education expenditure

responsibilities to citizens and the society, it imposed more financial burdens on households. Because of shrinking government education funds, the access to basic education had become more limited among poorer local communities (Tsang 2000). Such fees usually account for 8% -16% of an average rural household's annual income (Shi 2012), which imposes a heavy burden on peasants.

Xinjiang is not an exception to this national tendency. According to a host of household surveys conducted in the Southern Xinjiang (Li 2009*b*), education expenses for textbook and other *ad hoc* school fees had become an important category of household spending: for local Uyghurs, it was on average 8% of the overall household income in the late 1990s. Nearly 20% Uyghur parents viewed that it was quite challenging to afford education costs for their kids. Among a set of factors mentioned that accounted for this difficulty, almost 32% Uyghur parents chose "high school fees" as the top reason. Consequently, in minority concentrated counties, increasing budgetary education spending may decrease school fees paid by local minorities, which increases the real income of minority members.

In sum, when local governments increase their spending on public goods, even the most vulnerable minority members' living standards will improve. Therefore, potential rebellion organizations may find that it becomes harder to recruit rank-and-file members from ethnic minorities.[8] The increasing opportunity costs of participating in violent organization leads to fewer or weaker rebellion groups, which in return decreases the risks of ethnic violence.

Public Goods Provision and Legitimacy

More public goods expenditures improve the state's legitimacy, which is indicated by compliance with the state in the absence of coercion (Hechter 2013, pp.41–42). Departing from the first mechanism, this mechanism emphasizes the relation between local governments and the general minority population. On the other hand, the opportunity cost theory highlights interactions between violent entrepreneurs and those potential combatants.

[8]For more details on the Uyghur rebellion organizations in Xinjiang, see Ma (2002).

According to Hechter (2013), there are two views of legitimacy. Normative legitimacy refers to "*a consensus among rulers and ruled about values, norms, and beliefs*" (Hechter 2013, p.40). On the other hand, an instrumental theory of legitimacy suggests that "*a regime is legitimate to the degree that it provides valued collective goods to the ruled*" (Hechter 2013, p.40). On the normative view of legitimacy, all types of alien rule are deemed to be illegitimate nowadays because nationalism is so pervasive in the modern world. In contrast to this view of legitimacy, Hechter shows that there are also substantial empirical evidence for the instrumental theory of legitimacy. After a throughout overview of historical and contemporary cases, Hechter finds that the ability of the state to provide public goods is a crucial determinant of whether an alien ruler can effectively control the indigenous population (Hechter 2013, pp.75–118).

Increasing public service provision sends a signal to the minority group that the government cares about the welfare of minority members (Thyne 2006). Expenditures on education and public health help to build a social safety net for discriminated minorities despite unfavorable outcomes of the labor market. These efforts enhance the linkage between the ruler and the ruled minorities. Whether the government treats different ethnic groups "fairly" or not is the key for the incumbents to gain the support of the minorities. As a result, investment on public goods for ethnic minorities increases the legitimacy of local governments, which may win the heart of potential collaborators.

In the same vein of this argument, increased government spending on public goods such as education may improve the local governments' legitimacy in Xinjiang. According to Li (2009*b*)'s surveys in 1998, 81% Uyghur students were eager to attend colleges while merely 10% of them were satisfied with a lower-secondary middle-school diploma. Their parents also heartily hoped their kids could end up with more prestigious jobs that were closely associated with higher education attainments. Consequently, for those Xinjiang counties that provide more sources for public education, local minorities might be more likely to view local governments as legitimate because they are more likely to observe that their kids achieve their educational aspirations. As Thyne (2006, p.735) argues, "parents can see schools being built and are likely to be more satisfied if their kids are attending

a well-maintained school." The fostered government's legitimacy may also have positive implications on the effectiveness of governments' counterinsurgency policies, especially in ethnically divided societies like Xinjiang. As Hasisi and Weitzer (2007, p.728) notes, "In divided societies, citizens' relations with the police are shaped, in large part, by their allegiance to or alienation from the state." Recent studies show that the extent to which ethnic minorities are willing to cooperate with the police is largely affected by the perceived trustworthiness of the state (Murphy and Cherney 2011). Once the local government strengthens its power base by delivering more social services, it becomes more efficient to exert the social control of local population. When potential participants of insurgency realize the legitimacy advantage enjoyed by the government, as rational actors, they would be less likely to take action in the first place. Consequently, there would be a lower likelihood of civil conflicts.

All these two mechanisms above can account for the negative correlation between public goods provisions and the risk of ethnic conflicts. Given this, I test the key hypothesis in this article:

Hypothesis: **Higher levels of public goods expenditures are associated with a lower likelihood of inter-ethnic violence**.

Research Design and Data

To test the effect of local public goods provisions on ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang, I employ logit regressions with Han-Uyghur conflict incidents as the dependent variable. I use a panel dataset consisting of the entire 102 county-level administrative units in the Xinjiang province from 1996 through 2005. I chose this time period because my key independent variable, the county-level education spending, is only available within this period. I use the county-year as the unit of analysis. To control for year-specific shocks, I include year fixed effects. For results of logit models, all standard errors are clustered by county. Finally, to control for the temporal dependence, I follow the method proposed by Carter and Signorino (2010) by including a cubic polynomial.

Dependent Variable: Ethnic Conflict Incidents Between Han and Uyghur

The dependent variable is the incident of ethnic conflict between the Han Chinese and Uyghurs in Xinjiang from 1997 to 2005, and is taken from Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018).[9] I use the operational definition of ethnic conflict by Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018, p.8) – "the intentional execution of violent acts, perpetrated by individuals or groups of ethnic minority status, with political motivations." They recognize an event as a politically motivated incident if it can be identified as one of the four types of acts: (1) terrorism, (2) insurgency, (3) riot, (4) violent street demonstrations and protests, and 5) assassinations. This definition thus distinguish inter-ethnic conflicts from other ordinary inter-ethnic crimes and disputes that lack a political motivation. Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) also includes number of casualties to measure the intensity of the event.

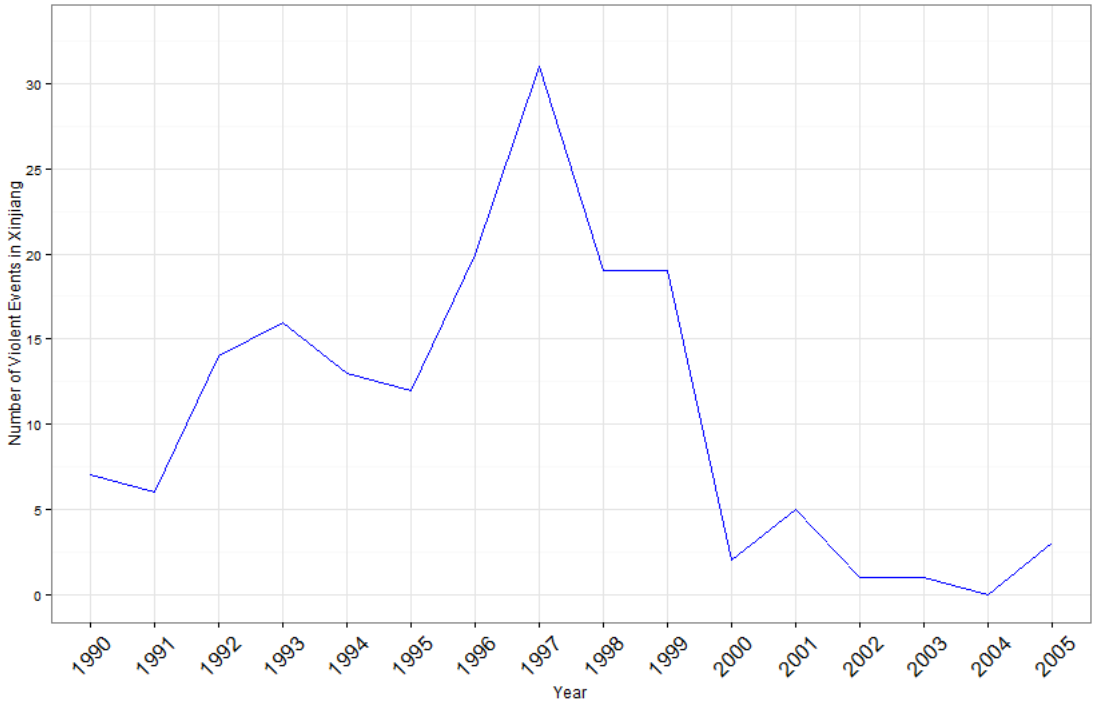
Although the dataset may suffer from reporting bias, it is reasonable to argue that such concern is less serious in our case. The reason is that Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) heavily relies on internal government documents. As Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018, p.15) notes, "These government documents help to address the concern of potential reporting biases by the mass media (Ortiz et al. 2005). Moreover, many government documents are based on police sources and administrative archives, which significantly improve the scope of coverage (McCarthy et al. 1996; Barranco and Wisler 1999)."

According to this database, there were 205 Han-Uyghur conflicts occurred between 1990 and 2005. The authors code a Han-Uyghur conflict incident if (1) there was an ethnic conflict event, and if (2) the conflict was fought along the Han-Uyghur line, with the respective ethnic groups involved. In this paper, the dependent variable is a binary variable, which is coded as "1" if there were any Han-Uyghur conflict incidents occurred in a given county-year. Otherwise, this variable is coded as "0." Cases coded as "1" include both violent events and peaceful protests. The detailed summary and definition of all these events are available in Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018).

Figure 9 shows the trend of reported ethnic conflict incidents over time from 1990 to

[9] The dependent variable starts from the year 1997 rather than 1996 because I use the one-year lag of education spending for regressions.

Figure 9: Annual Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang, Provincial Trend, 1990–2005



2005. Ethnic conflicts varied considerably during this period and there was a spike from 1995 to 1997.[10] There was also a clear decreasing trend after 1999.

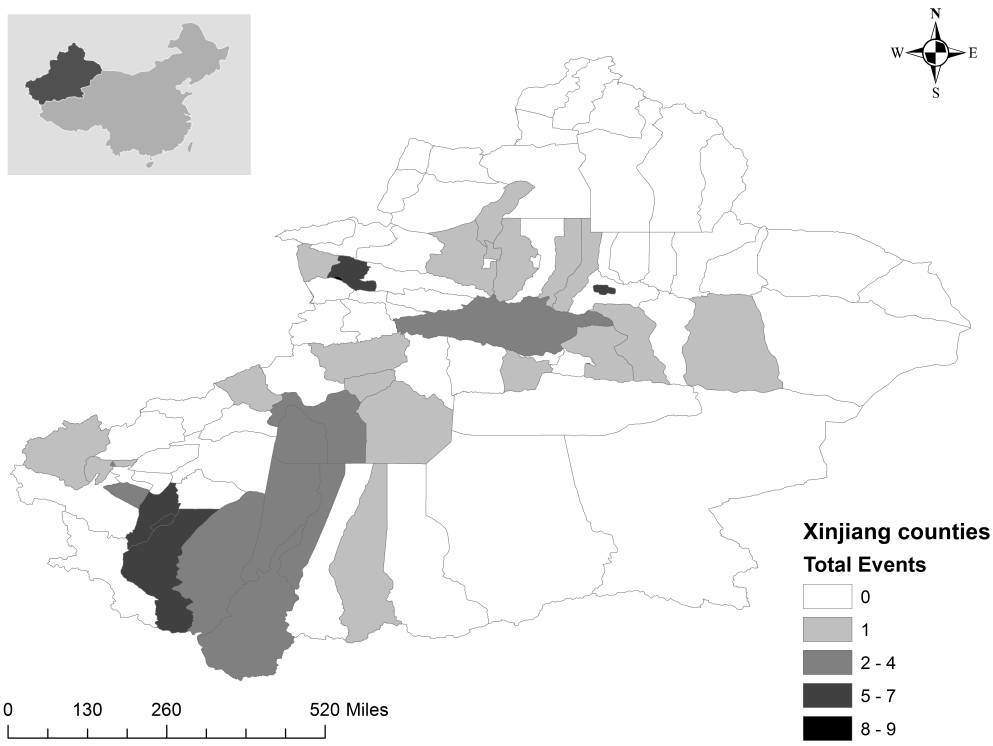
Of total 105 conflict events occurred between 1997 and 2005, 8 of them were peaceful protests (7.6%) while remaining 97 were violent (92.4%). After dropping out those cases that we cannot find their localities, there were 2 county-year units once experienced peaceful protests and 55 county-year observations with violent events. The spatial distribution of ethnic conflicts is displayed in Figure 10. There were significant geographic variations in terms of conflict incidents.

Key Independent Variables: Local Education Expenditure

To measure local public goods expenditures, I employ the county-level education spending. Data regarding education expenditures come from the Ministry of Finance

[10] Anecdotal evidence based on fieldworks in Xinjiang between 1995 and 1997 shows that Uyghur secessionist perceived that the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong might trigger a war between UK and China, which served as an opportunity to rebel (Smith 2000; Bovingdon 2002). This shared expectation acted as a focal point for ethnic mobilization in 1997 (Hardin 1995). Consequently, there was a spike around 1997. The marked decline of conflicts since 1999 may because of two reasons: an increasing international pressures on political Islamism after the "9/11" and a significant increase of public goods spending onwards (see Figure 11). Note that I include year fixed effects in the statistical analysis to control for these yearly idiosyncratic shocks.

Figure 10: Spatial Distribution of Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang (County Level), 1997–2005



(1994–2005). This database is widely used in empirical studies on the political economy of China (for example, Lü and Landry (2014)). Unfortunately, the education spending variable is only available between 1996 and 2005.[11] Figure 11 shows the trend of county-level education spending per capita over time from 1996 to 2005. To standardize this variable across counties, in the following empirical analysis, I use the logarithmic number of per capita value.[12] In addition, this variable is further deflated based on the 1990 Xinjiang price index.

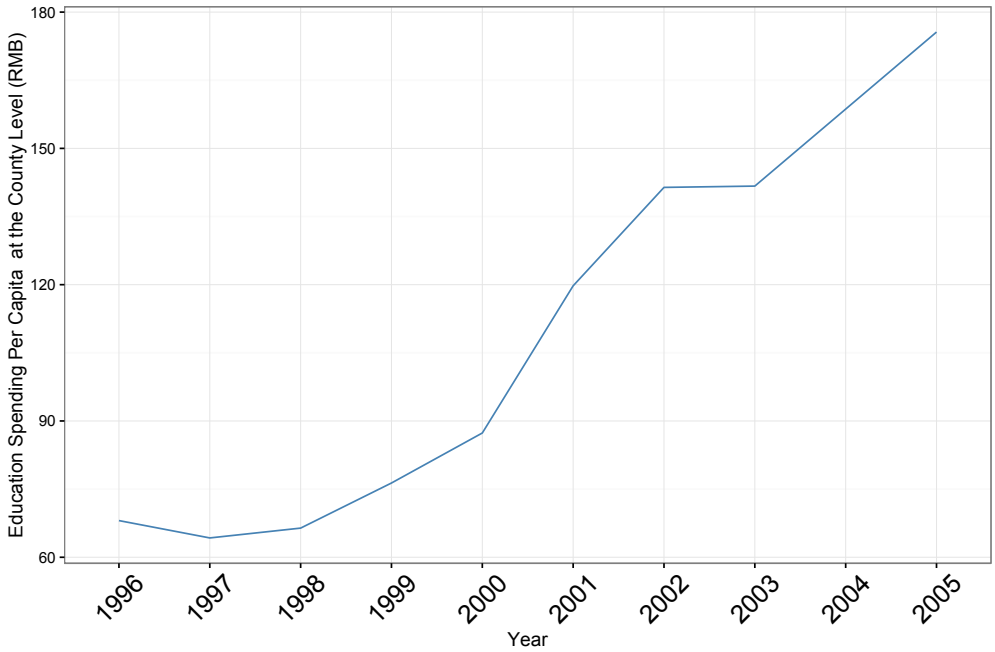
The reason for choosing this variable as the key explanatory variable is threefold: First, education spending constitutes the largest part of public goods expenditures in Xinjiang.[13] Second, other measures of public goods such as health care may be problematic in the

[11]For the definition of education spending, I use the same measure of Zhan, Duan and Zeng (2015, pp. 7–8).

[12]I replicate the negative correlation between local education spending and conflicts by using the education expenditure as percentage of GDP. Thus, the main empirical findings are robust to different measures of the key independent variable. Table 6 of the Appendix A shows that my key finding is robust to a different measure of the crucial independent variable.

[13]For instance, in 2004, the county-level mean value for the percentage of education expenditures as a share of GDP was 5.78% while this value for health spending was only 1.44%.

Figure 11: Annual Education Spending Per Capita in Xinjiang (County Level), 1996–2005



context of China. County-level governments in Xinjiang are responsible for a substantial proportion of local officials' health care spending, which has nothing to do with public goods provisions. However, these private goods spending are also counted as a part of the official statistics on overall public health expenditures.[14] Finally, despite the short temporary coverage, education spending offers us the least number of missing data in this case.[15]

Although I use education spending as the independent variable, the pacifying effect is not merely specific to education expenditures. Spending on other public goods, such as health and social security, might also alleviate the risk of ethnic conflicts at the local level. In the same vein of causal chains aforementioned, government investments on health and social security might increase the opportunity costs of participating in rebellion groups and improve the state's legitimacy. The opportunity cost story suits well for health/social security expenditures. In China, during the 1990s, health insurance coverage for rural residents was strikingly low: less than 10% of the rural population was insured by 1998.

[14]For example, in the Kashi prefecture of Xinjiang, the total amount of health care spending for local officials and public sector employees was 24,780 RMB in 1995. On the other hand, the overall amount of public health spending was 55,610 RMB at that year. Those health care expenditures on local officials and public sector employees were counted as a part of overall public health spending.

[15]The education spending data are available from 1996 to 2005, whereas the health spending data are only available in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

As the case of education expenses, the private share of total health spending increased dramatically since government investments declined precipitately. This led to a telling result: illness became one of the top reasons for impoverishment in rural areas (Liu, Rao and Hsiao 2003). The problem of affording health services is especially acute in Xinjiang given the severe public health crisis in this region (Cappelletti 2015). Therefore, increased public spending on health leads to a better economic situation for minorities. More health/social security expenditures might enhance the state's legitimacy as well. For instance, on the basis of a series of surveys, Jian, Ayixian and Chen (2009) find that in a county locates in the Southern Xinjiang, Uyghur respondents tended to evaluate the local government based on the provision of health care. It is plausible to argue a linkage between increasing health/social security spending and improvement of the state's legitimacy.

Before using the county-level education expenditures, I also employ the *Government Expenditure / GDP ratio* as a starting point. Previous cross-country civil violence studies find a strong pacifying effect of this indicator (Fjelde and De Soysa 2009). However, I argue that this variable is a crude measure of local public goods expenditures. Theoretically, local government expenditures may serve as both private goods and public goods. Specifically, a large proportion of local government expenditure may pay for patronage. Therefore, using the overall government spending may mask the independent influence of public goods expenditures.

Control Variables

The spatial dependence between the unit of observations poses a challenge to the analysis of conflict. Following Pierskalla and Hollenbach (2013), I construct a spatial lag on the dependent variable, which is an average count by dividing the amount of neighboring counties had conflict events over all neighboring counties at $t-1$. For estimating correlations between education expenditures and ethnic conflicts, I control for a number of variables that previous literature suggests are determinants of ethnic conflict: population density (Raleigh and Hegre 2009), Uyghur population share (Weidmann 2009), and county-level GDP per capita (Murshed and Gates 2005). The values of GDP per capita

are adjusted based on the 1990 Xinjiang price index.

I also ensure that my results are robust to the inclusion of a number of other geographic confounding variables: *the distance to the provincial capital*, *the distance to the prefectural capital*, *a dummy variable that indicates whether the county is a border county*. All these variables serve as a control for state capacity, especially as proxies for the coercive aspect of state capacity (Fjelde and Østby 2014). In addition, border distance has been identified as a determinant of civil conflict in the literature (Buhaug and Rød 2006). State boundaries offer porous exits for insurgents to find sanctuaries in neighboring countries.

Moreover, many studies have revealed a robust association between the abundance of natural resources, especially oil wealth, and the prevalence of civil violence (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). To control for this variable, I include a dummy of county-level oilfields in Xinjiang. Finally, one might be concerned about the confounding effects of a large-scale poverty relief program, "*The 8-7 National Plan for Poverty Reduction*" (hereafter 8-7 Plan). This program was initiated by the Chinese government in 1994 by delivering more fiscal transfers to a county designated as a "National Poverty County" (Meng 2013). There are 25 such "National Poverty Counties" in Xinjiang. To control for this sort of heterogeneity, I construct a dummy variable that takes value of "1" if a county is listed in the "National Poverty Counties" of the 8-7 Plan. Descriptive statistics and data sources for all variables used are reported in the Table 1 and Table 2 of the Appendix A, respectively.

Model Specifications and Results

Table 6 reports the result of my regression models. To avoid the problem of reverse causality, all temporally changing independent variables are one-year lagged. The analysis reveals a strong negative correlation between local public goods spending and the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. Model 1 is the baseline model that only reports essential control variables. Model 2 adds a widely used indicator, the *Government Expenditure / GDP ratio*. Model 3 includes the education spending variable in addition to other

controls. Model 4 controls for the spatial lag.

Table 6: Effects of Public Goods Spending on Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang, 1997–2005

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$			-0.644^{**}	-0.664^{**}
			(0.313)	(0.302)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.029^{***}	0.031^{***}	0.024^{***}	0.023^{**}
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	1.123^{***}	0.911^{***}	1.304^{***}	1.315^{***}
	(0.270)	(0.315)	(0.282)	(0.283)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.003	0.003^{*}	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	0.432	0.462	−0.064	−0.058
	(0.455)	(0.448)	(0.431)	(0.425)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	−0.059	0.068	0.273	0.290
	(0.450)	(0.461)	(0.507)	(0.479)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.566^{***}	0.547^{***}	0.425^{***}	0.422^{***}
	(0.141)	(0.146)	(0.149)	(0.146)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.637	−0.662	-1.017^{*}	-1.019^{*}
	(0.488)	(0.458)	(0.544)	(0.545)
Government Expenditure / GDP$_{t-1}$		−0.475		
		(0.381)		
Spatial Lag				0.850
				(0.698)
t	−0.589	−0.552	−0.638	−0.634
	(0.585)	(0.584)	(0.619)	(0.609)
t^2	0.040	0.030	0.048	0.048
	(0.197)	(0.198)	(0.214)	(0.211)
t^3	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Constant	-10.285^{***}	-9.188^{***}	-5.621^{**}	-5.611^{**}
	(1.912)	(2.047)	(2.328)	(2.234)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	848	848	763	763
Log Likelihood	−155.153	−154.298	−130.125	−129.656
Akaike Inf. Crit.	352.306	352.596	302.251	303.311

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The Baseline Model: Model 1

First, consistent with the theoretical expectation, ethnic conflict is more likely to breakout in more densely population areas. Across all of Table 6 models, this relationship is positive and statistically significant. This finding supports the hypothesis about the detrimental effect of population pressures on the intergroup competition for scarce resources.

Next, I evaluate the influence of spatial proximity of the minority group on ethnic conflict. It turns out that the geographic concentration of Uyghur population is consistently related with the higher risk of ethnic conflicts. Again, across all of Table 6 models, this relationship is positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, I find strong evidence for Weidmann's (2009) argument that the local ethnic spatial configuration exerts a profound effect on the odds of ethnic conflicts.

Strikingly, for GDP per capita, the estimation results suggest a strong significant positive relationship between this indicator and the likelihood of ethnic conflicts. In the case of Xinjiang, anecdotal evidence suggest that the positive relationship between GDP per capita and the likelihood of ethnic conflict is driven by the state-led marketization since the late 1990s, especially the reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the region. The GDP per capita is highly correlated with the size of the industrial sector at the county level. During the studied period, SOEs dominated Xinjiang's industrial sector (Wiemer 2004, pp.173-176). The reform of SOEs had a profound detrimental impact on the wellbeing of Uyghurs. First of all, the reform resulted in a massive wave of unemployment. Between 1995 and 2000, there was a more than 50 percent decrease of the workforce employed in Xinjiang's SOEs (Holdstock 2015, p.89). The reform caused more harm to ethnic minorities because they were overrepresented in the state sector (Wu and Song 2014). In fact, publicly unavailable government reports show that minorities accounted for a majority of workers who were laid off (Su 1999, p.22, p.89, and p.109). Consequently, the state-led marketization aggravated the grievances among the Uyghurs. Second, the reform of SOEs may cause a negative fiscal shock to local governments, which decreases government public goods expenditures and therefore increasing the risk

of conflict. That is, the economic reform eliminates the assets of state-owned enterprises as a source of government revenue. For instance, using firm-level data, Hamm, King and Stuckler (2012) find that mass privatization undermined state fiscal capacity in post-communist countries.[16]

Interestingly, none of the geographic variables is consistently statistically significant. The distance to the provincial capital, the distance to the prefectural capital, and whether the county is a border county are insignificant across most model specifications. It suggests that the penetration of the coercive apparatus may play a minor role in the process of ethnic conflict. Furthermore, for all of these model specifications, the presence of oilfields does not significantly increase the odds of ethnic conflicts.

Finally, the status of "national poverty county" does not affect the likelihood of conflicts. Notably, this result is consistently across all model specification. The insignificance of being a "national poverty county" might lie in the notorious fungibility problem. For these "national poverty county" received more transfers from upper-level governments, local officials have strong incentives to divert the funds for other purposes. Lü (2015) finds that being a "national poverty county" does not significantly improve the provision of education services. Instead of focusing on the amount of inter-government transfers, it is better to directly examine the real expenditures.

Main Empirical Results: Model 2-4

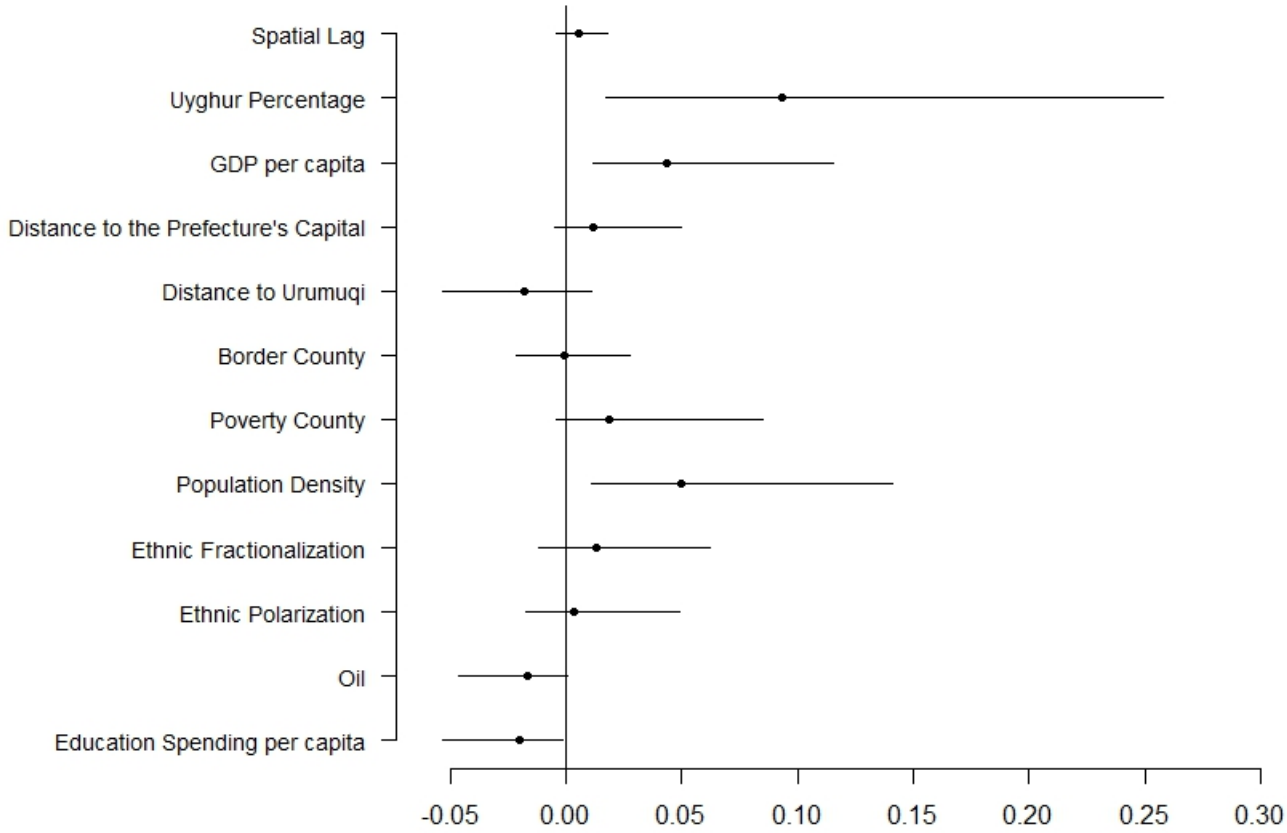
Model 2 shows that the *Government Expenditure / GDP ratio* is not a significant predictor for the risk of ethnic conflicts. Compared with using the overall measure such as the *Government Expenditure / GDP ratio*, a direct measure of public goods spending reveals better evidence for my theory. Model 3 show that local education investments strongly diminish the risk of ethnic conflicts. To control for the spillover effect of ethnic conflicts, Model 4 include the spatial lag. The appeasing effect of local public goods spending still holds even after controlling the spillover influence.

I simulated the predicted probability of ethnic conflict in Xinjiang based on Model 4 of Table 6: Figure 12 shows that the risk of conflicts diminishes significantly when the

[16] Addressing the casual mechanism underlying the positive correlation between GDP per capita and the likelihood of ethnic conflict is beyond the scope of this study, I leave this question to a future study.

level of education spending per capita increases.

Figure 12: Education Spending on Predicted Probability of Ethnic Conflict



Addressing Competing Explanations

Scholars have noted a number of explanations for the subnational variation of public goods expenditures. Some of these theories may also account for the varied spatial and temporal distribution of ethnic conflicts. As a result, this study needs to rule out these competing explanations.

First, ethnic fractionalization and polarization may cause both a lower level of local public goods provisions and a higher likelihood of ethnic conflicts. Hence, the negative relationship between these two variables might be spurious. On the one hand, a number of studies have established a link between higher levels of ethnic diversity and lower levels of public goods provisions (Alesina, Baqir and Easterly 1999; Miguel and Gugerty 2005). On the other hand, the connection between ethnic polarization and public goods provision remains unclear. Although the relationship between ethnic fractionalization/polarization

and conflict is debated (Esteban and Ray 2008*b*; Schneider and Wiesehomeier 2008), it is still a well-established approach to include these two variables in the regression models. Thus, I evaluate this competing explanation by adding both fractionalization and polarization index. To calculate these two indexes, I use annual county-level ethnic composition data from Statistical Bureau of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (1990–2005). I construct the fractionalization index based on Fearon and Laitin (2003). To calculate the polarization indicator, I follow the method by Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005).

I present the results in the first two columns of Table 7. I show that the inverse relationship between local public goods provisions and the likelihood of ethnic conflicts remains intact even after including both fractionalization and polarization index. This finding adds more confidence on my theory.

A second issue lies in the horizontal inequality between the Han Chinese and Uyghurs. This variable may simultaneously lead to a low supply of public goods and a higher likelihood of ethnic clashes. It is well documented that there is a robust linkage between group-level inequality and the presence of civil conflicts (Østby et al. 2011). Recent studies also find a negative relationship between horizontal inequality and public goods provision at the country level (Baldwin and Huber 2010). To measure the horizontal inequality between the Han Chinese and Uyghurs, I turn to China National Population Census (1990).[17] This database allows me to construct an inequality index along the ethnicity division on the basis of the individual-level education attainments. Based on China National Population Census (1990), I am able to extract *Xinjiang's* 1% *1990 Census Data*, which covers over 150,000 representative samples by randomly choosing respondents within each prefecture. I code the variable "*horizontal inequality in 1990*" by calculating the prefecture-level difference between the Han Chinese and Uyghurs in terms of the percentage of individuals who have finished their lower secondary school at the age of 18 and above. Model 3 of Table 7 shows that even after controlling for the influence of horizontal inequality, the pacifying effect of public goods provision remains

[17] This database is downloaded from `<https://international.ipums.org/international-action/variables/samples?id=cn1990a>`.

Table 7: Effects of Ethnic Fractionalization, Polarization, Horizontal Inequality, and State Repression on Conflict Incident in Xinjiang, 1997-2005

	Dependent Variable				
	Ethnic Conflict				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.728^{**}	-0.715^{**}	-0.692^{**}	-1.049^{**}	-0.765^{**}
	(0.319)	(0.319)	(0.320)	(0.432)	(0.323)
Spatial Lag	0.799	0.805	0.889	0.819	0.810
	(0.695)	(0.697)	(0.707)	(0.746)	(0.694)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.028^{***}	0.026^{***}	0.021^{**}	0.025^{***}	0.022^{**}
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	1.405^{***}	1.343^{***}	1.364^{***}	0.423	1.284^{***}
	(0.297)	(0.292)	(0.291)	(0.609)	(0.280)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.0001	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	−0.001	−0.001	-0.002^{*}	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	−0.088	−0.057	−0.038	0.127	0.024
	(0.434)	(0.431)	(0.411)	(0.457)	(0.421)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	0.533	0.499	0.314	0.326	0.383
	(0.501)	(0.512)	(0.493)	(0.451)	(0.482)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.442^{***}	0.442^{***}	0.420^{***}	0.372^{**}	0.491^{***}
	(0.145)	(0.142)	(0.145)	(0.146)	(0.163)
Oil$_{t-1}$	-1.052^{*}	-1.048^{*}	-0.996^{*}	−0.946	-1.076^{**}
	(0.547)	(0.537)	(0.533)	(0.595)	(0.526)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	1.298				
	(0.987)				
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$		0.751			
		(0.724)			
Horizontal Inequality in 1990			0.017		
			(0.019)		
Coercive Apparatus Spending$_{t-1}$				0.806	
				(0.509)	
XPCC					-1.676^{***}
					(0.609)
t	−0.612	−0.619	−0.607	−0.415	−0.580
	(0.611)	(0.609)	(0.612)	(0.785)	(0.621)
t^2	0.043	0.046	0.040	−0.107	0.036
	(0.212)	(0.211)	(0.214)	(0.368)	(0.217)
t^3	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.026	0.003
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.040)	(0.016)
Constant	-6.524^{***}	-6.379^{***}	-5.823^{***}	1.275	-6.159^{**}
	(2.323)	(2.177)	(2.001)	(4.782)	(2.403)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	763	763	754	678	763
Log Likelihood	−129.129	−129.304	−128.584	−118.451	−128.354
Akaike Inf. Crit.	304.257	304.607	303.168	280.902	302.708

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

significant.

Finally, it is possible that the empirical finding can be driven by a confounding variable – local governments' repressive power. Local education expenditures may be closely related to other types of governmental spending such as expenditures on repressive apparatuses. To assess this alternative explanation, I add a control for repressive apparatuses spending.[18] Model 4 of Table 7 suggests that the pacifying effect of education spending is not an artifact of local state repression. In addition, to further address the concern on repression, I include a dummy variable that indicates whether the county has at least one division of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). XPCC is a bureaucratic and paramilitary organization that has administrative authority over a number of military-agricultural settlements in Xinjiang (Seymour 2000). These settlements are mainly for consolidating the control of strategic regions. Model 5 of Table 7 reveals that adding a control for XPCC does not noticeably change my main results.

Robustness Check

Although Table 6 and Table 7 link increasing local public goods spending to fewer ethnic conflicts, there are several robustness issues to be addressed. First, the results of my analysis may be vulnerable to unit heterogeneity such as rugged terrains. Including county fixed effects in logit estimations is problematic because of the well-known incidental parameter problem (Lancaster 2000; Katz 2001). Furthermore, when the dependent variable is a binary indicator as this case, the conditional logit (probit) model with county fixed effects automatically drops all observations that their dependent variables are constant (King 2001). Since nearly 44% of all observations in my study would be dropped by taking a fixed effects model, this would greatly bias the result of estimations. To assess the issue of unit heterogeneity, I include the respective unit means for each independent variable by following Escribà-Folch, Meseguer and Wright (2015). Table 3 of the Appendix A presents the result of this empirical strategy. It indicates my main findings are robust to the influence of unit heterogeneity. To address further concerns about the issue

[18] Specifically, this control includes government spending on public security police, procuratorates, and courts. For a detailed discussion on how local repressive power is largely a function of expenditures on repressive apparatuses in the context of Xinjiang, see Li and Liu (2007, pp.97–100).

of unit heterogeneity, I also estimate the logit model by adopting a two-way fixed-effects model. The significant negative impact of local education spending on ethnic conflicts remains intact under all these extremely conservative estimations. The results of two-way fixed effects are presented in the Table 4 of the Appendix A.

Second, I also test the main findings while including (1) prefecture-level fixed effects and (2) year fixed effects. The significant negative correlation between local education spending and conflicts persists in these model specifications.[19] Note that a common problem in logit models with a number of year/prefecture/county dummies is "separation". To address this problem, I use a penalized likelihood correction following the suggestion by Zorn (2005). When estimating the penalized likelihood model, I use the *brglm* package by Kosmidis (2011) in **R**.

Third, Table 7 of the Appendix A presents the result after controlling for the presence of previous conflicts, non-education government spending, and external kin ties (Saideman 2002). Given that my statistical analysis starts from the year 1997, I control for a dummy variable to indicate whether this county had at least one conflict in the previous period (i.e., 1990 — 1996). In addition, I also include non-education spending as a control (total government spending minus education spending). To control for the potential influence of external kin ties, I include the distances from each county in Xinjiang to the largest cities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, respectively. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the top two counties in terms of the size of Uyghur diaspora population. All of these robustness checks do not change my original results.

Finally, it is possible that the result may be contingent on choices of the dependent variable. In the above analyses, the dependent variable is coded as a binary variable: 0 or 1. To address this issue, I also employ the negative binomial model with year fixed effects and the zero-inflated negative binomial model with year fixed effects (Table 8 of the Appendix A). In addition, one could argue that my argument applies more directly to those ethnic conflicts between the state and ethnic minorities. I thus redo the analysis while using a sub-sample of conflicts between the state and Uyghurs (76.2% of all 105

[19] Table 5 of the Appendix A reports these results.

conflicts). Table 9 of the Appendix A reports the results. Furthermore, since the original dependent variable is the presence of a Han-Uyghur conflict, I test the case that the dependent variable is the occurrence of a general ethnic conflict regardless its ethnicity context (results are available upon request).[20] It turns out that the placating effect of education spending is robust to all these alternative models.

Causal Mechanisms

I now examine the causal mechanisms on which my argument relies.[21] The opportunity cost story implies that increased education spending by local government can substantially reduce minority households' education expenses, thereby freeing up the part of household income previously devoted to education. I proxy for the payment of miscellaneous school fees by the primary school enrollment rate. Previous studies demonstrate that the primary school enrollment in China is significantly shaped by the costs of ad hoc school fees, especially for disadvantaged individuals. For example, taking advantage of a quasi-experiment on tuition waiver in China, Chyi and Zhou (2014) find that the tuition waiver improved the enrollment by about 13.8% for girls who were from poorer rural households. Therefore, the opportunity costs argument entails that increased education spending by local governments should lead to higher enrollments through reduced school fees.

Evidence shows that education spending is used to reduce school fees for enrollment. First, the central government transferred 24 million RMB to Xinjiang's local governments in 2001 to provide free textbooks to school students. The central government had further funded Xinjiang's local governments to implement the so-called "*liang mian yi bu*" (two waivers, one subsidy) policy since the early 2000s: the state provides subsidies for boarding school students from poor families. In addition, the state offers free textbooks and tuition waiver to 2,050,000 students living in 56 poor counties (Yu 2005, p.4). This

[20] According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), of all 213 ethnic conflicts between 1990 and 2005, there were 8 events that we are sure they did not involve Uyghurs. Most of these events involved another Muslim minority group – Kazakhs. Someone may argue the pacifying impact of education spending is specific to Han-Uyghur conflicts. So here I test my argument using all ethnic conflict events.

[21] The endogeneity bias concern is addressed in the Section 5 of the Appendix A.

top-down policy change thus explains a drastic increase in per capita education spending since 2001 (see Figure 11). Second, field research also shows that the "*liang mian yi bu*" policy had greatly improved the enrollment rate in Uyghur-concentrated villages. For example, Abdurëhim (2014, p.26) finds that there was a notable increase of the primary school enrollment rate in a Uyghur-dominated village in Kashi prefecture after the implementation of the "*liang mian yi bu*" policy.

Table 13 of the Appendix A shows that those counties with more government education spending were significantly more likely to exhibit higher primary school enrollment rates. The enrollment data are taken from Qiu (2005). This finding suggests that increased government education expenditures at the local level indeed reduces household expenses on education, which results in improved enrollment rates. It provides support for the opportunity cost argument.

With regard to the legitimacy mechanism, unfortunately, the weakness of this argument is a lack of systematic quantitative evidence. However, this causal mechanism is consistent with both a number of surveys conducted in China and the Chinese state's understandings of the causes of ethnic conflict in Xinjiang. For instance, using a nationwide survey, Dickson et al. (2016) find that a better provision of education is positively and significantly correlated with support and trust in local governments in urban China. Michelson (2012) also finds that local states in rural China enjoyed a popularity boost because of significant improvements in public goods provision between 2002 and 2010. Likewise, both Li (2009*a*) and Jian, Ayixian and Chen (2009) show that ethnic minorities in Xinjiang tend to evaluate local states on the basis of public service delivery.[22] In addition, several publicly unavailable government investigation reports show a clear connection between underfunded public education and Uyghur discontent in the region. Unlike scholarly publications, these internal-circulation materials are only available to

[22]Both Li (2009a) and Jian, Ayixian, and Chen (2009) use surveys to measure Uyghurs' opinions on public services provided by local governments. It is reasonable to argue that answers to survey questions about public services was more reliable than answers to more sensitive questions like inter-ethnic relations. However, it is still possible that Uyghurs cannot give honest answers to survey questions in such a politically sensitive environment. Because the legitimacy mechanism is largely based on these surveys, the pervasive preference falsification makes it hard to present solid survey-based evidence for this specific mechanism.

regime insiders. As a result, these materials provide more reliable information to support my argument. For example, between 1997 and 1999, the Xinjiang government had mobilized 34 researchers who were affiliated with local institutes to conduct a series of field investigations on the causes of ethnic violence in Xinjiang. The group of researchers compiled 14 reports on this politically sensitive issue. Two reports explicitly mention that a lack of public education investments exacerbated local Uyghur discontent in Yili and Kezhilesu (Su 1999, p.88 and p.134). Therefore, it is plausible to contend that minority individuals in Xinjiang are more likely to support the local government when they assign credits to the government for providing more social benefits (Berman, Shapiro and Felter 2011; Beath, Christia and Enikolopov 2013).

Finally, an important question is whether an alternative mechanism, the use of minority language in the schools, may underlie two proposed causal mechanisms. One may point out the issue of bilingual education in Xinjiang (Schluessel 2007). Since the recent bilingual education reform in Xinjiang, the government spent more resources privileging Mandarin Chinese over minority languages in education. It is possible that those counties with less education spending may provide fewer resources on Uyghur–language education. Therefore, my empirical finding could be driven by linguistic grievances because of a lack of minority language recognition. However, a closer examination shows that this alternative explanation does not fit the historical fact. The issue of bilingual education only became salient after the middle 2000s. Up until the early 2000s, education in Xinjiang had been largely segregated along the linguistic line: most Uyghur students were taught in their own language in Uyghur-language schools. By 2005, for the 97% of all minority students, Mandarin Chinese was only taught as a secondary language (Ma 2009, p.206). Given the period of my study ends at 2005, suggesting that we can rule out this linguistic grievance argument as an alternative mechanism.

Conclusion

Despite the considerable progress in disaggregating civil conflict during the last decade, the role of subnational governments remains obscure in the existing literature. Providing public goods is one of the core roles of governments. Many scholars posit that public goods expenditure has played an influential role in the onset of civil violence. However, few of these studies explore how subnational public goods provision affects the dynamics of civil violence. This paper fills this gap by offering a rigorous quantitative analysis regarding the effect of governments' public goods spending on ethnic conflict at the local level. This study is also one of the first quantitative studies on the ongoing ethnic conflicts in China. This article contributes to the literature on ethnic conflicts in China by focusing on the role of local governments, which has not been fully explored in the previous research. The goal of this paper is not to dismiss the importance of religious, economic, and political grievances that had been identified by previous researchers. Instead, this paper aims to enrich our understanding of ethnic conflicts in China by showing the under-explored impact of local governments' fiscal behaviors.

It is worthwhile to note that I restrict my findings to the period between 1996 and 2005. This temporal context is important because there had been a drastic change in regard to the penetration of the Chinese state in the region after the 2000s. Although the Chinese government possesses stronger state capacity than many other developing countries, its spatial reach is not evenly across the entire territory. Despite its territorial control, the Chinese state's penetration was particularly weak in peripheral regions such as Xinjiang before the early 2000s. The weakness of state capacity in Xinjiang is largely a result of both the region's geopolitical position and its vast physical size. During the Cold War era, the Chinese government viewed Xinjiang as a buffer region under the shadow of the Soviet invasion (Millward 2007, p.297). Consequently, the state had not invest adequately in Xinjiang's infrastructure until the late 1990s. As recent as the early 2000s, the public transportation network was extremely limited in the region. Northern Xinjiang was not linked to the rail network until 1990 and Kashgar (the largest city in southern Xinjiang) was connected to the national railway system only in 1999 (Millward 2007,

p.297). In fact, "the only fast connection between northern and southern Xinjiang is the southern branch of the national G30 expressway, completed ... in 2010" (Joniak-Lüthi 2016*b*, p.147). In addition to suffering from a weak regional transportation network, local governments' fiscal capacity is fragile in Xinjiang. A commonly used indicator of measuring the state's extractive capacity is the revenue-to-GDP ratio. Between 1994 and 2004, share of local own-source fiscal revenues in the region's GDP was only 5.88% on average, which was lower than the national average (Calculations based on Li and Liu (2007, Table 5-13, pp.128-129)). Moreover, even after receiving fiscal grants from the central government, there had still been a dramatic decline of the expenditure-to-GDP ratio in Xinjiang: it dropped from 30.46% to 17.73% during the period between 1980 and 2001 (Li 2003, p.64). Owing to the widespread fiscal crisis in the region, Xinjiang's local governments struggled to perform their essential functions. For example, in Bortala, a prefecture in southern Xinjiang, the designated budget for public security spending was around 1.8 million in 2004 whereas the actual expenditures were more than 2.4 million. As a result, many local coercive agencies had to incur a large amount of debts to function Li and Liu (2007, pp.98-99). Likewise, public education in the region was largely underfunded in my studied period (Li 2009*b*).

Because of the Chinese state's relatively weak state capacity in Xinjiang during my studied period, local governments themselves were severely constrained in using fiscal tools to pacify unrest Uyghurs. Due to the paucity of the available fiscal resources, county-level governments usually fail to take a swift and effective reaction to incidents by immediately increasing public goods spending.[23] Instead, local governments tend to passively increase public goods expenditures after receiving policy mandates imposed by upper-level governments. Meanwhile, the upper-level government infuses commensurate fiscal transfers to enable local government to implement these mandates. As a result, increases in public goods expenditures are usually caused by a top-down policy change, which tends to be late and slow. Furthermore, because such a top-down campaign is often initiated by the central bureaucratic agencies that lack sufficient local information,

[23]See the Section 5 of the Appendix A. In fact, Table 10 of the Appendix A shows that counties that experienced conflict incidents in the previous year did *not* have more government spending.

it is also likely to be insensitive to county-level conditions.

In short, this paper provides several insights for conflict research. First and foremost, this study makes an important departure from the existing literature that emphasizes structural conditions. Instead of focusing on structural opportunities such as poverty and ethnic heterogeneity, I argue that the agency of local governments is a significant predictor of civil conflicts. This finding has a clear policy implication. The emphasis on structural conditions may lead to a rather grim outlook for many countries suffering from unfavorable structural conditions, given most structural conditions are difficult to change, at least in the short run. Contrary to this, I argue that there is plenty of room left for local governments to contain civil violence by changing their social policies. Second, this paper highlights the pivotal role of local governments. The fledgling disaggregation-oriented approach on civil conflict tends to overlook local government behaviors. Although this line of literature has made significant contributions, we are able to gain important insights by investigating the role played by local states (De Juan and Pierskalla 2015; De Juan 2016; Wig and Tollefsen 2016). Finally, my paper must be viewed as a starting point of future research. It is not clear whether government spending on private goods to buy off local minority elites can appease conflicts as well. So far, few quantitative civil conflict studies have explored the political implications of offering patronage to ethnic minorities. New insights might be gained from unpacking the "black box" inside local governments.

Chapter 5

Money Talks:

Cross-Ethnic Patronage and Ethnic Conflict in China

Likely to be far more important in affecting the identity, cohesion, and mobilization of particular ethnic groups than specific government policies are the selection by governments of particular leaderships, elites, and organizations within an ethnic group as collaborators or channels for the transmission of government patronage.

Brass (1991)

Introduction

Ethnic conflict research has long recognized manipulative elites as the main instigators of ethnic violence (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2000). Case-based studies of Hindu-Muslim riots in India (Wilkinson 2006), ethnic riots in Indonesia (Toha 2017), secessionist campaigns in Russia (Giuliano 2011), civil war in Sri Lanka (DeVotta 2004), and the Rwandan genocide (Straus 2006) have identified the pivotal role of Machiavellian elites. The ethnic instrumentalist argument, which has roots in the in-group vs. out-group literature, suggests that political elites who face mounting unpopularity will provoke ethnic hatred to maintain power (Lake and Rothchild 1996; Brass 2003). The constructionist approach argues that political entrepreneurs can even create ethnic cleavages for this purpose (Gagnon 2006).

However, ethnic violence is relatively rare. As Fearon and Laitin (1996, p.717) notes, "despite the conventional wisdom that ethnic violence is ubiquitous under conditions of cultural pluralism and weak states, the mean figure of actual violent communal events as a percentage of potential events hovers around zero." The implication of this stylized fact is that elites generally facilitate inter-ethnic cooperation and restrain themselves from instigating inter-group conflict.

The question naturally arises – What explains the variation of elite behaviors regarding ethnic conflict? The preexisting literature provides three distinct mechanisms to address this question: electoral competition, domestic diversion, and political exclusion. While illuminating, I contend that all these three approaches leave a big unresolved problem – *within a minority out-group, there are varying elite behaviors vis-à-vis the*

dominant group in the context of authoritarian regimes. I focus on autocracies because although ethnic violence tends to be more severe in dictatorships than in democracies (Gleditsch and Polo 2016), it remains unclear why minority ethnic elites in these countries respond differently to the group in power.

I argue that one of the key causes of intra-group elite-level variations is cross-ethnic patronage, which refers to patronage allocated by the ethnic group in power to reward minority out-group elites. By "patronage," I mean government personnel allocations and related fiscal spending on government employments (Remmer 2007). Both cross-national evidence and case studies show that patronage is linked with a number of political and economic consequences, including the quality of governance (Keefer and Vlaicu 2008), the level of democracy in the sub-national institutions (Gervasoni 2010), voting behavior (Wantchekon 2003), and economic growth (Van de Walle 2001). Previous ethnic politics studies also suggest that the state can pull together a heterogeneous group of elites by dispensing patronage as economic inducements across the ethno-national line (Brass 1991). The existing literature, however, presents little systematic evidence of whether cross-ethnic patronage can affect ethnic violence, especially the impact of subnational level cross-ethnic patronage in autocracies.[1]

In this paper, I examine how cross-ethnic patronage affects ethnic violence in the Xinjiang region of China. The ongoing ethnic conflicts there are mainly between the Uyghurs and the Han Chinese. The advantages of this subnational focus are several. First, this particular setting allows me to use an unusual government fiscal and personnel dataset that includes the ethnic composition of over 220,000 local bureaucrats. On the basis of this novel dataset, I am able to disaggregate the county-level government patronage spending by ethnicity. Second, Xinjiang has considerable county-level variations in cross-ethnic patronage provisions. Consequently, I am able to leverage variations of inter-ethnic co-optation at the local level. Third, Xinjiang is similar to many conflict-ridden countries regarding poverty, inter-ethnic inequality, group concentration, and geographic factors.

Empirically, this study shows that increasing county-level cross-ethnic patronage spend-

[1]Subnational government employment accounted for 31.76% of total government employment in autocracies during the 1990s (Wong and Takeuchi 2013, p.101).

ing significantly decreases the odds of ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang. I argue this reflects two elite-centered mechanisms: (1) receiving government spoils makes minority elites into stakeholders who are less likely to initiate anti-regime mobilization, and (2) the access to patronage gives out-group ethnic elites more incentives to enforce social control. The mobilization mechanism highlights the circumstance under which minority elites are discouraged from actively orchestrating conflicts. The social control mechanism, on the other hand, emphasizes the scenario in which non-elite individuals participate in inter-ethnic conflicts and elites help the state to curb this threat.

This paper thus advances a new understanding of ethnic conflict in several important ways. First, I offer a novel theory of minority out-group elite behaviors with regard to the dominant group in autocracies, explaining how cross-ethnic patronage decreases the risk of ethnic violence. While a substantial body of literature associates ethnic elites with inter-ethnic conflict, few prior studies explore differences of elite behaviors within a particular peripheral group in authoritarian regimes.

Second, this study contributes to recent progresses in civil conflict by examining the influence of local states (Lacina 2014). Although there is a growing analytic shift from cross-national regressions towards subnational analyses, few have explored the linkage between local governments and ethnic violence, especially through a systematic quantitative approach. Departing from predominant cross-national regressions, I use subnational cross-ethnic patronage data that better captures the influence of local states on inter-ethnic conflict.

Third, the empirical findings demonstrate the effectiveness of policy accommodations in terms of the management of ethnic conflict in authoritarian regimes. For dictatorial leaders in multiethnic societies, in addition to the use of force, "authorities have many strategies available ... material or symbolic benefits ... that could be used to address behavioral challenges and establish or maintain political order" (Davenport 2007*a*, p.9). Although a host of works have scrutinized the consequence of state repression in autocracies, the influence of government concessions has not been systematically investigated (Thomson 2017).

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 outlines the existing elite-centered approaches on inter-group violence and their limitations. Section 3 presents my core theoretical framework. Section 4 provides the background, a brief description of the ethnic conflict in Xinjiang. Section 5 discusses the data used, and explains the research design in more depth. Section 6 offers empirical evidence from various model specifications, and corroborates my core argument through checks of robustness; and Section 7 discusses specific causal mechanism. The paper concludes with a summary of the argument, the paper's limitations, and directions for future research.

Elites and Ethnic Violence: A Theoretical Critique

Elites play a crucial role in the onset of ethnic violence. As Brubaker and Laitin (1998, p.433) argue, "inter-ethnic violence is conditioned and fostered by intra-ethnic processes" and manipulative elites often incite violence to promote their own interests. In an overview of relevant case studies on ethnic violence, Fearon and Laitin (2000, p.864) note that half of the authors attribute large-scale ethnic violence to "elite efforts to retain or grab political power."

The literature shows that elites cause ethnic violence by framing provocative ethnic issues to mobilize the masses to attack out-group members. Three principles make this possible: First, a small number of political elites tightly control the access to information of local communities. This effectively facilitates the propagation of the ethnic resentment (for the relevant case of Rwandan genocide, see Yanagizawa-Drott (2014)). Second, political entrepreneurs are skilled at exploiting emotionally charged group symbols and traumatic collective memories (Kaufman 2001). They possess cultural capital that helps them to produce provocative ideologies and discourses. Nationalist entrepreneurs have often blamed out-group members for their in-group grievances, mobilizing co-ethnic masses through ethnic hatred. Or as Tang suggests, "fearful, hateful, and hawkish voices win in the marketplace of ideas" (Tang 2015, p.271). Third, as the political opportunity theory of the social movement literature suggests, the likelihood of ethnic mobilization

can also be viewed as a function of endowed organizational resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977). As this suggests, ethnic elites often occupy central positions of preexisting civic organizations and therefore they have access to a wide array of resources including personal connections with other key social actors. These advantages in terms of organizational capacity allow them to mobilize co-ethnics in a more efficient way. In short, many ethnic conflict researchers recognize the connection between Machiavellian elites and an instrumental use of ethnic violence (Brass 1997; de Figueiredo and Weingast 1997)

Because ethnic violence is relatively rare (Fearon and Laitin 1996), the existing literature presents three theoretical arguments to specify the condition that motivates ethnic elites to orchestrate inter-group conflicts. The first explanation, the electoral competition argument, highlights how electoral incentives induce elites to strategically employ ethnic identity for the sake of gaining votes (Snyder 2000).[2] For example, in India, local leaders have used ethnic riots as a tool to prevent voters from supporting non-co-ethnic candidates (Wilkinson 2006). Despite the explanatory power of this argument regarding democracies, the electoral competition mechanism cannot fully account for elite behaviors in non-democratic contexts in which genuinely competitive elections are absent. However, ethnic violence is especially salient in authoritarian regimes. According to Toha (2017, p.631), nearly 81% of the communal conflicts between 1989 and 2013 occurred in non-democratic countries. In fact, "the countries classified as autocracies and partial democracies have levels of ethnic diversity that are 40–50 percent higher than countries considered full democracies" (Arriola 2013, p.147).

Departing from the electoral competition argument, the domestic diversion approach emphasizes the incentive of political survival for ruling elites in both democracies and autocracies. According to this argument, state leaders are more likely to incite ethnic hatred when they are under domestic pressure such as political challenges or deteriorating economic conditions (Gagnon 2006; Tir and Jasinski 2008). This line of reasoning is

[2] A variant of the electoral competition mechanism is ethnic outbidding (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). That is, "in a context of competitive electoral politics when two or more parties identified with the same ethnic group compete for support, neither (in particular electoral configurations) having an incentive to cultivate voters of other ethnicities, each seeking to demonstrate to their constituencies that it is more nationalistic than the other" (Brubaker and Laitin 1998, p.434).

appealing in explaining behaviors of political elites of the ethnic group in power. However, it says nothing about how minority out-group elites would act. Instead of being a marginal actor, minority elites often take a lead in violent secessionist movements (Hechter 2000), which accounts for about a half of post-1945 civil wars (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

In contrast to above two mechanisms, the third argument, political exclusion theory, directly accounts for how out-group elites behave regarding ethnic conflict in autocracies (Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). According to this argument, when minority elites have the access to executive state power, they are less likely to rebel. However, this mechanism runs into two difficulties. First, a recent study shows that between 1946 and 2010, nearly 60% of the country-years fall into the category of authoritarian regimes that have no power-sharing arrangements (Pengl and Saliba 2015). It thus remains unclear why minority elites in a majority of autocracies respond differently to political exclusion. In fact, given the ethnic exclusion from executive-level state power, there are still considerable variations with regard to the risk of armed ethnic conflicts (Lindemann and Wimmer 2018). More importantly, by assuming each ethnic group is a unitary actor, the political exclusion theory obscures the sizable intra-group heterogeneity (Brubaker 2004). This group-as-a-whole approach therefore fails to answer a crucial question – even within a particular ethnic group, why are some elites more likely to engage in inter-group conflicts than others?

Ample evidence from case-based studies shows that it is highly implausible that all elites of a single ethnic group face identical incentive structures; thus they do not have the same preference of engaging in inter-group confrontations (Gorenburg 2000). For example, Bulutgil (2017) shows that the ruling elites of the ethnic group in power in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russian Empire exhibited fairly heterogeneous views of the minority out-group during World War I. Even in those countries that eventually experienced ethnic cleansing, like Germans and Ukrainians in interwar Poland, there were prominent divisions between the hawkish and the dovish factions within the elites of the dominant ethnic group (Bulutgil 2016, pp.87-108). These within-group differences are also prevalent in minority out-group elites. For instance, communal elites of Israeli Arabs

exhibited quite heterogeneous attitudes toward the Israeli state (Lustick 1980). The intra-ethnic elite-level cleavage among the non-dominant groups has also been identified in the case of Ukraine during the era of the Soviet Union (Laitin 1991), the case of Basque and Catalonia (Medrano 1995), and the case of Inner Mongolia in China (Wang 2015), just to name a few.

To sum up, none of the preexisting theoretical perspectives can account for variations of elite behaviors within a minority out-group in autocratic countries. On the other hand, inter-group violence is acuter in non-democratic contexts, minority elites do play a vital role in the onset of ethnic violence, and intra-elite differences are almost ubiquitous. There is clearly a critical lacuna that needs to be filled.

Theory

My central argument is that an authoritarian state controlled by a dominant group can placate aggrieved minorities by allocating patronage across elites with different ethnic backgrounds. By offering state-sector jobs to minority elites, the autocratic state is able to building a cross-ethnic coalition that incorporates office seekers from diverse ethnic groups. When the state successfully attracts the political loyalty of ethnic elites though an exchange with patronage, the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence dwindles. That is, *in authoritarian regimes, the level of cross-ethnic patronage shapes variations of elite behaviors vis-à-vis the dominant group within a minority out-group.*

3.1 Cross-Ethnic Patronage and Ethnic Inclusion

Despite the shared analytic focus on government jobs, the cross-ethnic patronage argument is different from the political exclusion theory in several important ways. First, in most autocracies, for members outside of the ruling circle, access to government positions is mostly a measure of rent-sharing rather than a form of power-sharing (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006). The cross-ethnic patronage argument essentially stresses the importance of rent-sharing across ethnic lines. On the contrary, the political exclusion theory emphasizes the importance of power-sharing, which refers to substantive ethnic

representation in the decision-making process. As Strøm et al. (2016, p.5) said, "inclusive power sharing" involves "giv[ing] each participant (often an ethnic group) a share in the exercise of political power." In power-sharing arrangements, government positions are used to appease disaffected ethnic minorities by involving them in policy-making. This results in policies that are more responsive to these minority groups, frequently in the form of increasing public goods spending that benefits them (Wimmer 2002). In return, these potential opposition groups are less likely to oppose the status quo. On the other hand, under rent-sharing, the ruling party uses government positions to buy off key minority elites through the allocation of private benefits (Lust-Okar 2005; Blaydes 2010). Generally politically marginalized ethnic elites will compete for government jobs even if they do not offer influence over policies. For example, Côté (2015) finds that in China's Inner Mongolia, Mongols are overrepresented in local government positions even though assimilation pressure from the dominant Han Chinese persists.

The second distinction between the cross-ethnic patronage argument and political exclusion theory is that they imply a different the unit of analysis. Political exclusion theory follows a "groupism" approach and views each ethnic group as a unitary actor (Brubaker 2004), while the cross-ethnic patronage approach focuses on elite individuals within a particular ethnic group. Because political exclusion theory takes a group-as-a-whole approach, it cannot differentiate two channels through which access to official jobs decreases ethnic conflict: (1) increasing public goods spending towards ethnic minorities by including minority members in the policy decision-making process; (2) distributing private goods to minority elites (i.e., co-optation). The cross-ethnic patronage argument thus offers a more nuanced causal chain in its theoretical framework.

Another distinction lies in the fact that political exclusion theory tends to focus on how the executive power of central government is distributed among ethnic groups (Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). In the logic of power-sharing, the emphasis on central government makes sense because office holders in cabinets are more likely to act as key representatives of afflicted groups in the exercise of state power. On the contrary, the cross-ethnic patronage argument stresses the

influence of rent-sharing and therefore it can refer to bureaucrats across different levels of government. As a result, the cross-ethnic patronage approach enables us to conduct a disaggregated analysis using subnational level data.

3.2 Cross-Ethnic Patronage in Autocracies

Cross-ethnic patronage is a common practice among multi-ethnic authoritarian regimes. For example, the Soviet Union was famous for its monumental affirmative action programs. In fact, historians have termed it "the world's first Affirmative Action Empire" (Martin 2001, p.1). One of the core elements of its affirmative action programs was training national elites and institutionalizing a federal system of national territories that appointed ethnic elites as leaders of formally autonomous minority homelands (Hodnett 1978; Jones and Grupp 1984). While it began with visible posts, this so-called indigenization process matured during the Brezhnev era, reaching sensitive areas such as internal security (Roeder 1991, p.204). Burg (1984) has identified a dramatic increase in the number of Muslim cadres in Central Asian republics during the 1950s and 1960s. Beissinger (1988, p.75) also puts the proportion of obkom officials in Ukraine from 1966 to 1985 and the Ukrainian provincial party elite as a whole in 1980 who were ethnic Russians at 14% and 4% percent, respectively.

China shows the same patterns in that by the end of 2007, 70.42% of provincial-level cadres and over 50% of bureau and prefecture-level cadres of the Tibet Autonomous Region had been Tibetan. As well, the proportion of Xinjiang's minority cadres increased from 28.94% in 1978 to 51.25% in 2008 (Xie 2013, p.31).

The usage of cross-ethnic patronage to buy off minority elites is not limited to Leninist regimes, either. Azam (2001) describes a comparable dynamic in the so-called " 'good pupils' republic" in Francophone West Africa. Azam notes that broad representation of the different ethnic groups within each country has created a " system [that is] instrumental in creating the new solidarity networks that can progressively push ethnic links to a secondary role" (Azam 2001, p.438). According to Azam (2001, p.438), many autocratic African states acted as "a system of redistribution between the ethnic group through their elites or via the government budget." To make this system work, the group

in power that controls the state bounty provides education opportunities to other ethnic groups. This policy concession allows elite members from a variety of ethnic groups to become educated urbanites. Once these elites secure their jobs in public sectors because of their human capital, they can share patronage with their co-ethnics who lived in the countryside through remittance. One prominent example of implementing such practice was Nkrumah's Ghana. The government of Ghana devoted a disproportionate amount of fiscal resources to school building projects and education subsidies in the North, which was economically underdeveloped and dominated by ethnic minorities (McDonnell 2016, p.1530). The pervasiveness of cross-ethnic patronage has been identified in a number of Africa autocracies (Duignan and Jackson 1986), including Côte d'Ivoire (Zolberg 1969), Tanzania (Bienen 1970), and Gabon (Vogt 2013). For instance, Vogt identifies a "remarkable ethnic balance" in Omar Bongo's Gabon, "with elites from all major ethnic groups occupying prominent positions in the government, state bureaucracy, and party apparatus" (Vogt 2013, p.163).

3.3 Cross-Ethnic Patronage: Bridging Government and Minority Elite

This section will discuss the mechanisms linking cross-ethnic patronage and inter-group conflict. Cross-ethnic patronage can decrease the risk of conflicts through a top-down channel. That is, minority elites are less likely to invoke anti-regime mobilization when the group in power creates more stakeholders in the continuation of the status quo. Competition over government jobs is often associated with increasing inter-ethnic tension across a large number of cases that draws considerable attention in the ethnic conflict literature (Brass 1991, p.276). The allocation of patronage accommodates the material interest of those ambitious minority political entrepreneurs, which creates vested interests among a key segment within the minority group (Lemarchand 1972; Lemarchand and Legg 1972). Therefore, the sharing of government spoils at stakes give minority elites disincentives to initiate anti-regime mobilization. In other words, they are less likely to cause tension given the lure of lucrative government jobs.

Cross-ethnic patronage can sustain a more peaceful inter-group relationship through a bottom-up approach. This means that patronage sharing across ethnic lines can result in

more cooperative minority elites, which could help the group in power to strengthen social control over the minority population though two channels: surveillance or intelligence sharing and in-group policing.

With regard to surveillance indigenous elites have shared languages and social connections that give them better access to information regarding their local community members than state agents who are out-group members. This makes it easier for them to identify co-ethnic "trouble-makers" and provide their information to the state. Lustick (1980, p.219) shows that this has been effective among Arab elites in Israel, who supply information, especially about members of rival hamulas, in exchange for government patronage. It has also been effective in Xinjiang. Bovingdon (2002, p.48) offers a vivid description of how his Uyghur informants were cautious about talking about politics because there were "so many Uyghur spies around." Bellér-Hann (2012, pp.212–213) indicates that the state is able to monitor local religious practices "because of the financial rewards promised to the informants." It is hard to underestimate the importance of intelligence sharing between minority elites and local governments in the region. Shih and Fu (2010) suggests that the failure to preempt the bloody "7.5" ethnic riot in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang, was partly associated with Uyghur elites' increasing discontent with the local state. Because these Uyghur elites did not report the activities of clandestine secessionist organizations to the state, the local government's intelligence work failed. To improve the capacity of the state to monitor remote rural areas in which a majority of local population was ethnic minority, the provincial government had also doubled the size of local cadres in these precarious regions since 1999. For targeted villages and towns, the state filled two-thirds of local cadres with ethnic minorities (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Government Compilation Committee 2009, p.826).

Besides surveillance, Fearon and Laitin (1996) proposes another theoretical argument that emphasizes how ethnic elites can enforce in-group policing. Fearon and Laitin (1996) views inter-ethnic violence as a consequence of information asymmetries associated with opportunistic behaviors by out-group individuals. When an out-group member that the in-group cannot identify commits an opportunistic action, the best way to avoid a "com-

plete breakdown of [the] intergroup relationship" is through "in-group policing" in which "the other group. . . identif[ies] and sanction[s] the appropriate individual." Local elites are often burdened with the duty to enforce punishments on opportunistic activities by their co-ethnics following inter-ethnic interactions (Habyarimana et al. 2009, p.172). As influential figures of the local community, elites have better access to information about opportunist actors among their co-ethnics. Furthermore, these elites possess necessary coercive or symbolic means to sanction the appropriate individual. On the other hand, vicious cycles between different groups might occur when ethnic elites forsake the policing of their co-ethnic transgressors. As Bellér-Hann (2002, p.62) shows, in Xinjiang, "shared public spaces, particularly in the marketplace and street stalls, are frequently the scenes of open conflicts. When the arguing parties involve a Han and an Uighur differences in opinion over faulty merchandise, high prices, mistaken calculations or wrong change will invariably be expressed in ethnic terms. Such scenes may quickly become a source of violence as more people join in on both sides." Under these circumstances, ethnic elites can act as mediators between the state and the local minority community and thus facilitate the conflict resolution. An unfulfilled funeral protest in Yecheng, which is a Uyghur-dominant county in Southern Xinjiang, on August 1980, illustrates this role of ethnic elites. A People's Liberation Army soldier who was Han Chinese had killed a Uyghur worker. A Uyghur officer persuaded local Uyghurs to abandon plans to organize a large-scale funeral protest in the first place (Li 1992). As the case shows, the ethnic group in power needs the cooperation of minority elites to preempt the escalation of ethnic tensions in advance. If there were personal awards of being cooperative with the regime like patronage, minority elites may be more willing to discipline potential co-ethnic perpetrators.

To reprise, when minority elites get access to patronage in autocracies, the likelihood of ethnic violence will be lower. In particular, there are two conflict-mitigation mechanisms. Cross-ethnic patronage discourages minority elites from provoking ethnic hatred because these elites depend on patronage for their livelihoods. Moreover, this inter-ethnic cooptation allows the state to exert more effective social control over the restive minority

group, with the help of more cooperative minority elites. Either way, the result is a lower risk of inter-group conflict.

Context: Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang

China has witnessed an explosive growth of social unrest in the last several decades, and the Chinese state apparatus has adopted a wide array of tactics to routinize popular collective actions (Chen 2011). While most collective actions in China are basically peaceful, Xinjiang has been arguably the most violent region. According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), of the 213 ethnic conflict events that occurred in Xinjiang between 1990 and 2005, 183 can be explicitly identified as violent (nearly 86% of all conflict events). These events include terrorism attacks, assassinations, gun fights between Uyghur militias and local police, and large-scale ethnic riots.[3] Such intensive violence rarely appeared in other Chinese provinces, even in Tibet.[4]

The Uyghur group is a majority within the Xinjiang province and a minority within China, where the Han Chinese are the majority. They are also a growing minority in Xinjiang: in 1953, 6% of the province was Han Chinese while in 2000 they were 40.6%. During the same period, the share of Uyghur population decreased from 75% to 45.2%. The cleavage between the Uyghur and the Han Chinese is multi-dimensional: religion, language, and other cultural traits (Finley 2013). Most Uyghurs are Muslims, which is uncommon among Han Chinese. The Uyghur language and Mandarin Chinese are not mutually intelligible. Social interactions between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese thus have high transaction costs.

Consistent with the existing civil conflict literature, several factors make Xinjiang particularly vulnerable to ethnic conflicts. First, it is less prosperous than many other Chinese provinces, and the southern part where the Uyghur group is concentrated is poorer than the north. Previous literature suggests that poverty is closely correlated

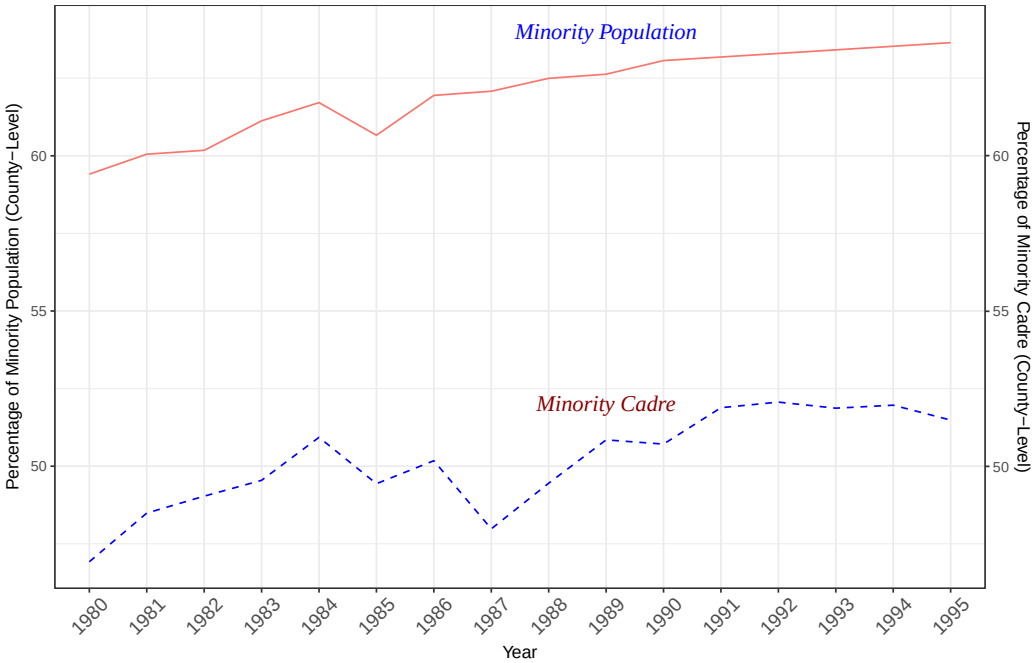
[3] According to Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018), of all 213 conflicts between 1990 and 2005, there were only 8 events that we are sure they did not involve Uyghurs.

[4] According to Barnett (2009), between 1987 and 1996, there were 213 reported political protests in Tibet, most of them basically peaceful.

with civil conflicts (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Second, the Uyghur group faces more disadvantages than the Han Chinese in Xinjiang. For example, Schuster (2009) finds that the infant mortality rate for the Han Chinese is 13 per 1,000, while it is 102 per 1,000 for Uyghurs. In addition, Uyghurs tend to constitute the majority in rural areas and poorer urban areas of southern Xinjiang (Hasmath 2012). These places are also underdeveloped compared to other regions in Xinjiang where the Han Chinese are concentrated (Chaudhuri 2010). Third, Uyghurs suffer from systematic political exclusion. Uyghurs are not represented proportional to their numbers in the region among cadres (see Figure 13). Becquelin (2004) finds Han Chinese officials held most county, municipal, and prefecture level Communist Party Secretaries in 2000. The underrepresentation of Uyghurs within the governing and Communist Party organ enhances their status as a subordinated group, which exacerbates the grievance of local Uyghur communities. Fourth, since the late 1970s, Islam has resurged among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang. The province is geographically close to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and several Central Asian countries, and the radical Islamic movement in these regions has deeply affected Uyghurs (Haider 2005). The salient Islamic identity among Uyghurs may also facilitate collective action for insurgency through the extensive networks of local underground religious organizations (Mackerras 2001). Finally, Xinjiang's geographic factors may play a crucial role in determining the outbreak of conflicts. Xinjiang is China's largest province – the region alone accounts for a sixth of the country's entire land area. The province's vastness hinders a full penetration of the Chinese state apparatus. Moreover, Xinjiang borders eight countries, which offers porous boundaries for insurgents to find sanctuaries in neighboring countries. In addition, Xinjiang has the country's largest oil reserves and rich mineral resources (Starr 2004). Access to natural resources may further encourage the formation of violent organizations.

The factors that make Xinjiang particularly vulnerable to interethnic conflict affect many developing countries. If my theory is warranted in the context of Xinjiang, it is plausible that it can be generalized to conflict-ridden multiethnic countries that resemble the province.

Figure 13: County-Level Percentage of Minority Cadres in Xinjiang (1980–1995)



Data Sources: Xinjiang's county *Organizational History Statistics* and county gazettes.

Research Design and Data

To test the effect of local cross-patronage spending on ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang, I employ logit regressions with ethnic conflict incidents as the dependent variable. I use a panel dataset consisting of 87 county-level administrative units in the Xinjiang province from 1980 through 1995. I chose this time period because my key independent variable, the county-level patronage that was offered to minority elites, is only available within this period. The county-year is the unit of analysis. To control for year-specific shocks, I include year fixed effects. For all results of logit models, standard errors are clustered by county. Finally, to control for the temporary dependence, I follow the method proposed by Carter and Signorino (2010) by including a cubic polynomial.

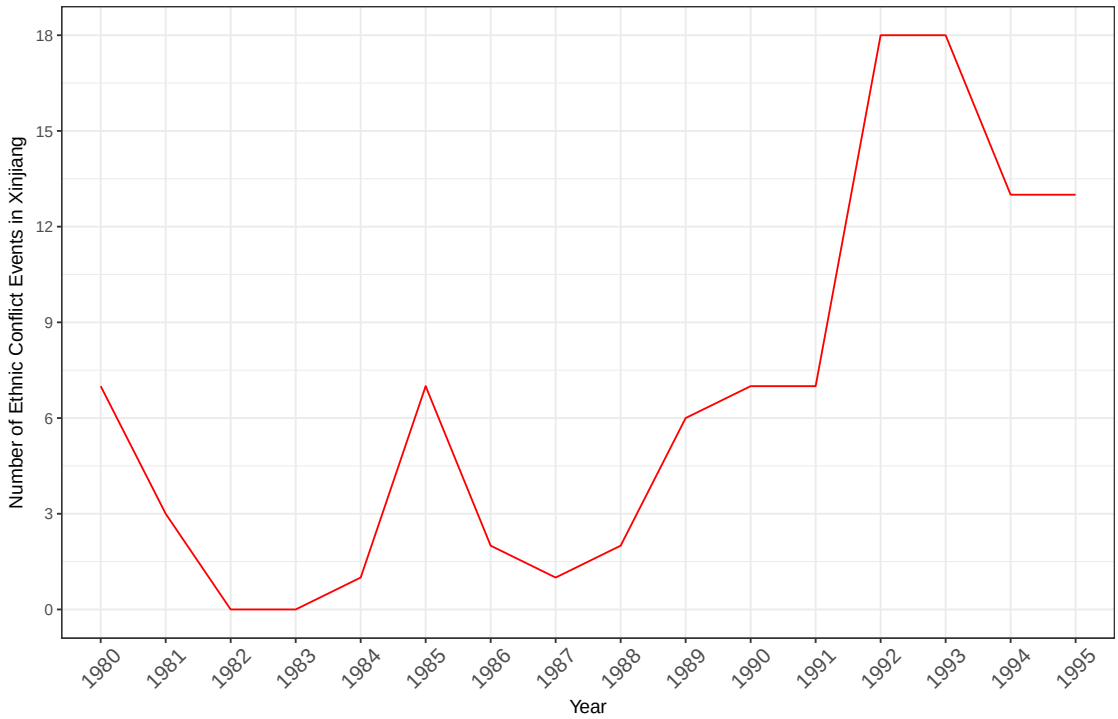
Dependent Variable: Ethnic Conflict Incidents between 1980 and 1995

The dependent variable is whether there was at least one ethnic conflict event for a given county-year between 1980 and 1995. The dependent variable is a binary variable, which is coded as "1" if any ethnic conflicts occurred in a given county-year. Otherwise, this variable is coded as "0." Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) provides a definition

of these events and a detailed summary of these events between 1990 and 2005. Multiple Chinese scholarly sources and internally circulated government documents provide data for 1980 to 1990. In my formulation, an ethnic conflict is a conflict event that involved at least one ethnic minority group. There were 114 ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang between 1980 and 1995.

Figure 14 displays the temporal trends from 1980 to 1995. Ethnic conflicts varied considerably during this period and we see a spike around 1995. Anecdotal evidence based on fieldwork conducted in Xinjiang between 1995 and 1997 shows that Uyghur secessionist organizations believed that the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong might trigger a war between the U.K. and China, and this fomented rebellion (Smith 2000; Bovingdon 2002). This shared expectation acted as a "focal point" for ethnic mobilization (Hardin 1995) and likely explain the spike. I include year fixed effects in statistical analyses to control for such idiosyncratic shocks.

Figure 14: Annual Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang, Provincial Trend (1980–1995)



Key Independent Variables: Local Patronage Expenditure by Ethnicity

To measure local patronage expenditures, I employ the county-level administrative expenses (*xingzheng guanli fei*, or 行政管理费 in Chinese). Raw data regarding this

variable come from two sources: (1) official county gazettes, and (2) the Ministry of Finance (1994–2005). With regard to the latter source, it is widely used in empirical studies on the political economy of China (for example, Lü and Landry (2014)). However, the data taken from the Ministry of Finance (1994–2005) are only available between 1993 and 2005. Therefore I turn to published county gazettes to collect remaining data.[5]

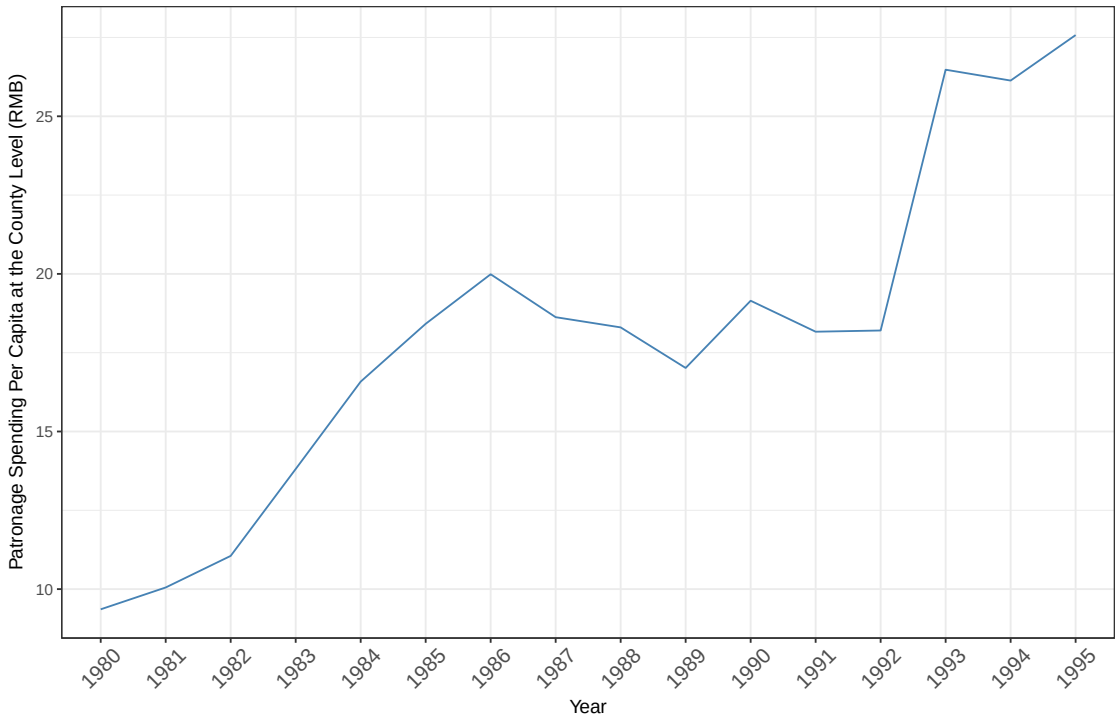
In the context of Xinjiang, administrative expense (*xingzheng guanli fei*) refers to a specific category of government spending. They are paid for two types of government employees: core bureaus (*jiguan danwei*, or 机关单位 in Chinese) and social organizations (*shehui tuanti*, or 社会团体 in Chinese) (Ang 2012). Personnel serving in core bureaus are bureaucrats who work for the Communist Party and government – they are most similar to civil servants in developed countries. Social organizations are mainly government-run social organs like youth league. Neither category includes public service providers such as teachers and doctors or individuals employed in state-owned enterprises. Thus, administrative expense is a more conservative measure of patronage spending than past literature, which tends to use a broader definition of government employment that includes employees working for education, health, and social protection (Gimpelson and Treisman 2002; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Chhibber and Nooruddin 2004; Remmer 2007).

The 1980 price index further deflates the variable. Figure 15 shows the trend of county-level patronage spending per capita over time from 1980 to 1995. As Figure 15 illustrates, in the evolution of local patronage spending within this period, there are two stages that can be easily traced. During the entire 1980s and the early 1990s, administrative expenses only experienced a slight increase. Then, there was a sizable growth between 1992 and 1995.

Administrative expenses encompass two types of spending: (1) personnel spending, or payrolls for party and government bureaucrats; and (2) administration-related expenses such as business trips, holding conferences, and other logistics spending. All of these miscellaneous expenses serve as organizational resources that benefit the state apparatus as

[5]The two sources do not cover every year of the period of interest. I use nearest neighbor interpolation to fill in numbers for missing years under the assumption that administrative expenses tend to accrue slowly.

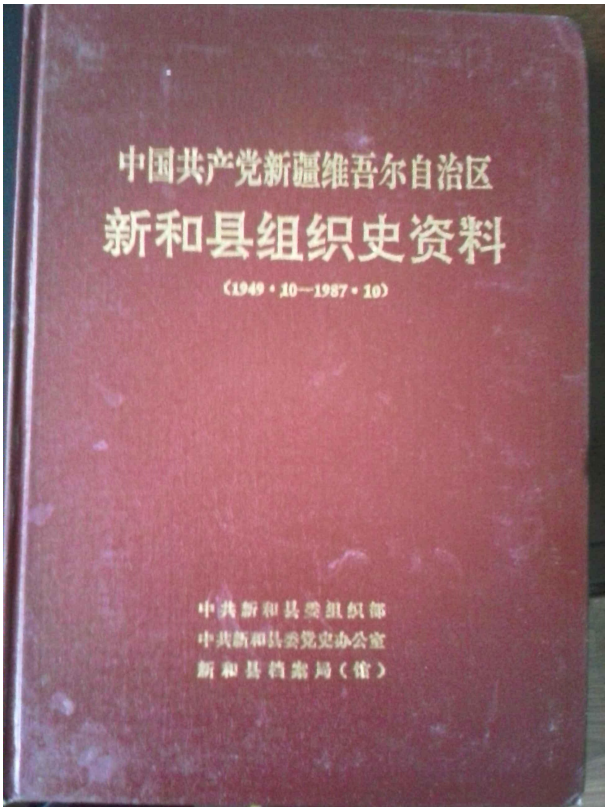
Figure 15: Annual Patronage Spending Per Capita in Xinjiang (County Level) (1980–1995)



a whole. Put in another way, personnel spending can be strictly conceptualized as private goods while administration-related expenses are essentially club goods. But both benefit all individual government employees; personal payrolls provide individual material goods, and administration-related expenses provide status. Note that administration-related expenditures, as a type of club goods, can advance the interest of every member of a bureaucratic organ regardless of his/her specific ethnic background. In Xinjiang, between 1950 and 1985, the split between government officials' payrolls and administration-related expenses was approximately 54%-46% (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Government Compilation Committee 1999, pp.325–328).

A disaggregated measure of personnel spending by ethnicity would be ideal for the current research, but fine-grained micro-level data are not available. Fortunately, county-level Organizational History Statistics (*zuzhishi ziliao*, or 组织史资料 in Chinese), a type of internally published government documents, break down the number of cadres in every county by ethnicity between 1980 and 1987 (see Figure 16). The drawback of this source is that it has not been systematically updated since 1987. To supplement the missing

Figure 16: Organizational History Statistics



精河县干部基本情况统计表(一)

(1977～1987)

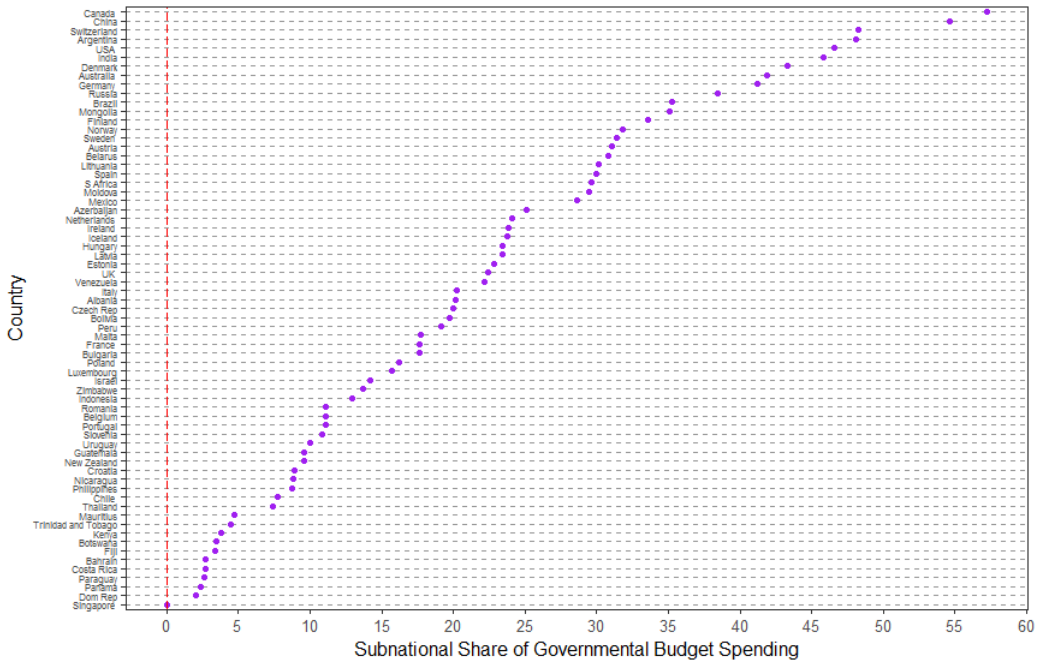
项目 / 统计数 / 年度	总数	性别		年龄							民族					
		男	女	25岁以下	26至30岁	31至35岁	36至40岁	41至45岁	46至50岁	51至55岁	56岁以上	汉	维	哈	蒙	回	其他
1977	1368	988	380	282	358		513		179		36	811	177	227	126	17	10
1978	1446	1025	421	327	372		526		186		35	830	193	252	142	18	11
1979	1482	1063	419		350		539		224		47	831	207	258	156	20	10
1980	1822	1243	579	365	300	221	335	305	141	104	53	1004	238	334	204	30	12
1981	1818	1239	579	321	359	235	295	309	137	119	43	982	257	329	213	28	9
1982	2137	1417	720	538	442	239	275	311	181	108	43	1126	289	396	261	51	14
1983	2504	1665	839	637	494	295	319	386	212	104	57	1352	358	469	275	36	14
1984	2614	1750	864	583	544	327	348	409	246	107	50	1433	374	484	269	40	14
1985	2880	1867	1013	651	562	391	345	466	289	119	57	1578	417	525	293	48	19
1986	2917	1851	1066	592	576	450	332	412	350	135	70	1572	419	544	323	39	20
1987	2995	1946	1049	582	546	512	306	425	396	164	64	1625	434	575	310	32	19

values from 1988 to 1995, I collect data of ethnic compositions of local bureaucrats on the basis of Xinjiang's county gazettes.[6] I seek to operationalize patronage that is specific to ethnic elites by using a proxy: I weight administrative expenses by ethnic minority cadres

[6]To fill in missing values, I use nearest neighbor interpolation under the assumption that this variable changes slowly.

shares at the county level.[7] Figure 17 presents the spatial distribution of this weighted measure that is standardized by the minority population.[8] The figure illustrates, minority elites received much more patronage in some counties than others.

Figure 17: Weighted Patronage Spending Per Non-Han by County (1980–1995)



Control Variables

To estimate the correlation between cross-ethnic patronage and ethnic conflicts, I control for a number of variables that previous literature suggests are determinants of ethnic conflict: population intensity (Raleigh and Hegre 2009), the geographic concentration of minorities population (Weidmann 2009), and county-level GDP per capita (Murshed and Gates 2005).[9] The values of GDP per capita are adjusted based on the 1980 Xinjiang price index.

To control for ethnic fractionalization and polarization (Esteban and Ray 2008*b*; Schneider and Wiesehomeier 2008), I employ ethnic composition data from Xinjiang official county gazettes. I focus on the number of all sizable ethnic groups in 1982: Uyghur,

[7] Figure 2 of the Appendix B presents the degree of ethno-political exclusion by county – the difference between the percent of minority cadre and the share of minority population.

[8] This measure is a valid proxy of cross-ethnic patronage because Han Chinese cadres and ethnic cadres tend to receive the same level payments. Previous research shows that the Uyghur–Han earnings gap is not statistically significant in Xinjiang's public sector (Zang 2011), which is largely because of China's affirmative action policy in the region (Sautman 1998*b*).

[9] Data are from Qiu (2005). I use linear interpolation to fill in numbers for missing years.

Han, Kazakh, Hui, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Sibe, and Tajik. I construct the fractionalization index based on Fearon and Laitin (2003). To calculate the polarization indicator, I follow the method by Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005).

I also ensure that my results are robust to the inclusion of a number of other geographic confounding variables: *the distance to the provincial capital*, *the distance to the prefectural capital*, *a dummy variable indicating whether the county is a border county.* All these variables serve as a control for state capacity, especially as proxies for the coercive aspect of state capacity (Fjelde and Østby 2014). In addition, border distance has been identified as a determinant of civil conflict in the literature (Buhaug and Rød 2006). State boundaries offer porous exits for insurgents to find sanctuaries in neighboring countries.

Many studies have identified a robust linkage between inter-group inequality and the presence of civil conflicts (Østby et al. 2011). To measure local horizontal inequality, I turn to China National Population Census (1982) and China National Population Census (1990). These two databases allow me to construct an inequality index along the ethnicity division on the basis of the individual-level education attainments in 1982 and 1990, respectively. The census data include representative samples by randomly choosing 1% of respondents within each prefecture. I code the variable "Horizontal Inequality" by calculating the prefecture-level difference between the Han Chinese and the largest ethnic minority group in terms of the percentage of individuals 18 and older who have finished their lower secondary school. As the data are available in 1982 and 1990, the missing years are interpolated. The interpolated values should not be problematic since the temporary changes in horizontal inequality are relatively slow (Deiwiks, Cederman and Gleditsch 2012).

Finally, past studies have shown that the abundance of natural resources, especially oil wealth, is associated with the prevalence of civil violence (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). On the other hand, a recent study shows that in Xinjiang, there was a negative relationship between oil productions and the rate of violence (Hong and Yang 2018). To control for this variable, I therefore include a dummy of county-level oilfields in Xinjiang. Descriptive statistics and data sources for all variables used in the regressions are reported in Section

1 and Section 2 of the Appendix B, respectively.

Model Specifications and Results

Table 8 presents the main results of my empirical analyses. Column (1) is the baseline model that only includes the explanatory variable and year fixed effects.[10] Column (2) adds the percentage of minority population, the GDP per capita, the population density, and ethnic fractionalization/polarization. Column (3) reports the model that incorporates measures of geographic factors. Column (4) shows the result after adding all control variables. Note that the coefficient of cross-ethnic patronage is statistically highly significant and negative across all model specifications. The results lend strong support to my argument – cross-ethnic patronage can effectively placate restive ethnic minorities.

Before turning to the main results, I briefly discuss my finding with regard to other controls. As is evident in Table 8, population density and ethnic fractionalization are significantly associated with ethnic violence. The finding related to population density supports many previous studies by showing that increasing inter-group competition over scarce resources driven by population pressure increases rates of interethnic tension. Also consistent with many existing studies, Table 8 suggests that ethnic configuration matters. Across model specifications, for these two predictors, the coefficient estimates and their statistical significance levels are quite similar.

Figure 18 provides a graphic illustration of Column (4) in Table 8. I simulate the change in probability of a county-year experiencing ethnic conflict given a standard deviation from the mean of a covariate, while holding all other variables at their mean values. The rope ladder in Figure 18 are 95% confidence intervals of the simulated probability changes. In substantive terms, one standard deviation increase from the mean of cross-ethnic patronage spending per capita decreases the probability of ethnic conflict in a county-year by approximately 4%. Given that the mean of the binary dependent variable

[10] I do not include county fixed effects because of a methodological concern. When the dependent variable is a binary indicator as in this case, the conditional logit (probit) model with county fixed effects automatically drops all observations in which the dependent variables are constant. In other words, if a county never experienced any conflicts during the studied period, it would be deleted in the sequential analysis (King 2001). This would give a bias to the estimations.

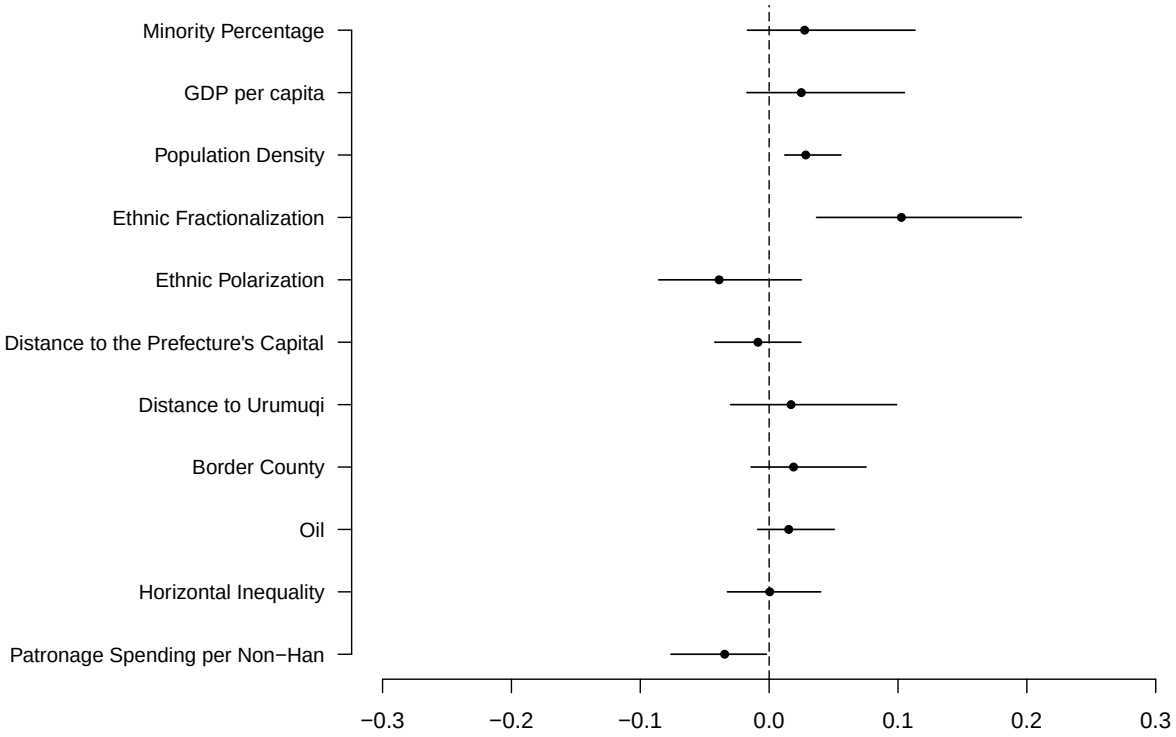
Table 8: Effects of Patronage Spending on Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang, 1980–1995

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending$_{t-1}$	−0.551**	−0.559**	−0.588**	−0.561**
	(0.215)	(0.233)	(0.269)	(0.271)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$		0.976	1.164	0.873
		(0.780)	(1.011)	(1.036)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$		0.197	0.435	0.355
		(0.463)	(0.450)	(0.442)
Population Density$_{t-1}$		0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
		(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Ethnic Fractionalization		3.808**	3.807**	4.045***
		(1.496)	(1.423)	(1.410)
Ethnic Polarization		−2.156	−2.373	−2.338
		(1.544)	(1.660)	(1.648)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital			−0.0004	−0.001
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi			0.0002	0.0004
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County			0.420	0.363
			(0.448)	(0.407)
Oil$_{t-1}$				0.472
				(0.420)
Horizontal Inequality				0.0005
				(0.011)
t	0.103	0.213	0.206	0.233
	(0.287)	(0.278)	(0.278)	(0.284)
t^2	−0.078	−0.097*	−0.093	−0.096*
	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)
t^3	0.004*	0.005*	0.005*	0.005*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−19.473***	−21.810***	−23.393***	−23.022***
	(0.528)	(3.030)	(2.985)	(2.963)
Observations	929	929	929	929
Log Likelihood	−155.702	−148.998	−148.184	−147.708
Akaike Inf. Crit.	349.405	345.997	350.368	353.415

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

is only 0.05 between 1980 and 1995, this finding indicates a strong pacifying effect of cross-ethnic patronage.

Figure 18: Patronage Spending on Predicted Probability of Ethnic Conflict (1980–1995)



Addressing Competing Explanations

Scholars have noted a wealth of explanations for the subnational variation of patronage expenditures. Some of these theories may explain why I find a negative relationship between patronage and ethnic conflict. Table 9 presents the results of a set of models that addresses these alternative explanation concerns. First, it is possible that the unobservable prefectural heterogeneities drive the finding. For example, the Chinese state has established a number of ethnic autonomous jurisdictions that formally grant the associated titular minorities preferential treatments. A recent study shows that titular minorities living in their own autonomous jurisdictions are more likely to attain managerial and professional occupations (Wu and He 2018). Xinjiang has five autonomous prefectures, which account for one-sixth of China's 30 autonomous prefectures. Minority elites may be more likely to achieve cadre status in these prefectures. To address this

issue, I implement the prefecture fixed effects model.[11] Column (1) of Table 9 indicates that results are robust with respect to adding this control.

Second, a rapidly growing political exclusion literature suggests that control over the central government's executive positions has profound implications for the likelihood of ethnic rebellion at the country level: those ethnic groups that are excluded from the access to central administrations are significantly inclined to rebel (Wimmer, Cederman and Min 2009; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010). Presumably, local inter-ethnic power constellations may affect the dynamics of local ethnic violence in the same way as political exclusion in the central government. The argument is that, when ethnic groups are better represented in the government, they have more access to state resources (Wimmer 1997). Therefore, it is possible that the minority group's access to local power as a specific type of political representation accounts for my finding. Note that this political exclusion argument suggests that not only a small group of ethnic elites but also the ethnic group as a whole benefits from state resources.

I present three measures of political representation of ethnic groups to address the alternative political exclusion explanation. First of all, I simply use the minority percentage of cadres as a proxy for the degree of political representation at the county level. Column (2) of Table 9 shows that adding this control does not affect my results. Second, whether ethnic minorities can access local leadership affects the extent to which the group can benefit from the substantive policy decision-making, which may also affect the level of cross-ethnic patronage. In China, previous studies show that "county budget is controlled only by two or three top leaders of a county" (Guo 2009, p.627). County party secretaries, who essentially claim the local executive power, play a vital role in the allocation of fiscal spending (Lü and Liu 2013). Both qualitative and quantitative evidence indicate that the discretion of local party secretaries largely determines the dispersion of patronage (Hillman 2010; Ang 2016). Column (3) of Table 9 shows that the appeasing effect of cross-ethnic patronage remains intact after including the ethnicity of

[11] Note that a common problem in logit models with a number of dummies is "separation." To address this problem, I use a penalized likelihood correction following the suggestion by Zorn (2005). When estimating the penalized likelihood model, I use the *brglm* package by Kosmidis (2011) in **R**.

county party secretaries.[12]

Theoretically, the distinction between political inclusion and cross-ethnic patronage is crucial, despite their close correlation in reality. Political inclusion, or access to government power, entails two types of causal chains in regard to the relationship between the state and ethnic minorities: (1) these incorporated ethnic elites may have more accountability to their co-ethnics and therefore they will increase public goods provision toward the masses (Baldwin 2013); or, (2) politically included ethnic elites might invest more resources in building their clientelism networks of local supporters without increasing the provision of public goods for a broad range of their co-ethnics. Since public goods spending can appease ethnic conflict as well (Burgoon 2006; Thyne 2006; Fjelde and De Soysa 2009; Taydas and Peksen 2012), this confounding variable may drive my finding. Put differently, if minority groups have access to local patronage, they are less likely to rebel not because of more cooperative ethnic elites but due to associated public goods provisions. I thereby including a measure of public goods spending that is specific to ethnic minorities – I use the government's annual education spending, which is the largest type of public services dispensed by Xinjiang's local government. This variable is further weighted by the county-level minority percentage. Column (4) in Table 9 shows that my results are robust to this model specification.

Third, I assess whether a conflated measure of local state capacity drives my results. Patronage spending is highly associated with local fiscal revenue (Remmer 2007; Gimpelson and Treisman 2002; Ang 2016). Previous research shows that revenue-generating capacity is a central component of state capacity that is correlated with a lower likelihood of civil violence (Hendrix 2010). In other words, the measure of cross-ethnic patronage may actually capture the capacity of the state to monitor its population, to extract the resource, and to collect local information. None of these confounding factors are directly relevant to the extent to which local governments successfully buy off ethnic elites. However, Column (5) in Table 9 shows that after adding the measure of local budget revenue, a common used indicator of state capacity, the pacifying effect of patronage spending

[12]For the annual trend in terms of the percentage of minority county party secretaries, see Figure 1 of Appendix B.

Table 9: Effects of Alternative Explanations on Conflict Incident in Xinjiang, 1980-1995

	Dependent Variable						
	Ethnic Conflict						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending $_{t-1}$	−0.247**	−0.337**	−0.263**	−0.401***	−0.484***	−0.365***	−0.233**
	(0.111)	(0.132)	(0.114)	(0.130)	(0.135)	(0.110)	(0.112)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$	−0.251	−0.800	−0.277	−3.070***	−0.313	−0.165	−0.318
	(0.408)	(0.526)	(0.417)	(0.475)	(0.482)	(0.421)	(0.392)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.190	0.222	0.220	0.102	0.160	0.082	0.256
	(0.190)	(0.192)	(0.202)	(0.123)	(0.189)	(0.187)	(0.205)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.0001	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.651	1.013	0.531	8.117***	−0.848	0.332	1.212
	(1.217)	(1.247)	(1.195)	(1.466)	(1.178)	(1.233)	(1.228)
Ethnic Polarization	−0.555	−0.912	−0.433	−3.777***	0.206	−0.129	−0.888
	(0.873)	(0.919)	(0.855)	(0.939)	(0.826)	(0.889)	(0.853)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.00005	0.0001	−0.0001	−0.002	0.001	0.001	0.0004
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.001**	0.001**	0.001**	−0.005***	0.002***	0.002***	0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	0.124	0.076	0.109	0.434*	0.121	0.046	0.128
	(0.172)	(0.177)	(0.165)	(0.246)	(0.186)	(0.183)	(0.171)
Oil$_{t-1}$	0.471***	0.474***	0.571***	1.102***	0.499***	0.508***	0.471***
	(0.169)	(0.171)	(0.169)	(0.133)	(0.164)	(0.167)	(0.172)
Horizontal Inequality	0.009	0.008	0.011	0.005	0.009	0.009	0.010
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Minority Cadre Percentage$_{t-1}$		0.009**					
		(0.004)					
Han Chinese Party Secretary$_{t-1}$			−0.698***				
			(0.236)				
Education Spending per Non − Han$_{t-1}$				−0.381***			
				(0.098)			
Fiscal Revenue per capita$_{t-1}$					−0.001		
					(0.001)		
XPCC						0.691***	
						(0.207)	
Rank of Police Department Staffing							0.151
							(0.113)
t	0.170	0.167	0.187*	0.187	0.151	0.148	0.160
	(0.114)	(0.115)	(0.109)	(0.183)	(0.118)	(0.106)	(0.112)
t^2	−0.051**	−0.051**	−0.055**	−0.027	−0.045**	−0.045**	−0.049**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.034)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.022)
t^3	0.003**	0.003**	0.003***	0.001	0.002**	0.002**	0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Prefecture Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−3.865***	−3.901***	−3.479***	3.658**	−3.885***	−3.467***	−4.547***
	(1.149)	(1.159)	(1.170)	(1.444)	(1.209)	(1.090)	(1.272)
Observations	929	929	929	479	885	929	929

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

remains highly significant.

Finally, it is possible that local governments' repressive power drives the empirical finding. In addition to the ability to extract revenues, state capacity also entails the ability to use repressive apparatuses (Hendrix and Young 2014). To address the concern about state repression, I include two measures of state repression. First, I use a dummy variable that indicates whether the county has at least one division of Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). XPCC is a bureaucratic and paramilitary organization that has administrative authority over a number of military-agricultural settlements in Xinjiang (Seymour 2000). The main objective of these settlements is consolidating the control of strategic regions. In addition, I use a county's place in the administrative ranking of police department staffing. The Chinese state has ranked Xinjiang's county-level units as a three-level hierarchy in terms of the number of designated employees working in the public security bureaus. This ranking thus conveys a hierarchy of perceived internal threats in the eyes of the authorities. The information about this administrative rank is taken from the unpublished draft of the Xinjiang Public Security Gazette. I code an ordinal variable that refers to this measure. Column (6) and (7) of Table 9 reveal that adding the measures of repressive power does not change my main results.

Endogeneity Concern

To address the endogeneity issue, I turn to a set of empirical strategies. The endogeneity concern entails two types of challenges. First, there is a possibility of reverse causality. That means, previous ethnic conflicts lead to a reduction of cross-ethnic patronage in the next year. In this scenario, the state uses patronage spending as a strategic tool to sanction those ethnic elites who are reluctant to cooperate with the local authorities. A strong version of the reverse causality hypothesis implies that counties that experienced conflict incidents in the previous year tended to spend significantly less money on cross-ethnic patronage. To test this hypothesis, I use a lagged value of conflict incidence as an independent variable and cross-ethnic patronage as the dependent variable using OLS models with county and year fixed effects. Table 3 of the Appendix B reports the results. The findings do not support the strong version of reverse causality hypothesis: counties with

Table 10: Patronage Spending and Ethnic Conflict (instrumental variable analysis)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Panel A: Second Stage (Logit Models)			
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending $_{t-1}$	-0.640^{*}	-0.664^{*}	-0.739^{**}	-1.008^{***}
	(0.355)	(0.360)	(0.383)	(0.389)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$	−0.108	−0.186	−0.100	-1.505^{**}
	(0.690)	(0.710)	(0.716)	(0.740)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.316	0.314	0.339	0.283
	(0.214)	(0.218)	(0.218)	(0.214)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.904	1.285	0.999	0.170
	(1.424)	(1.534)	(1.421)	(1.390)
Ethnic Polarization	−0.615	−0.811	−0.565	−0.750
	(0.945)	(0.999)	(0.918)	(0.844)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.003^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.002^{***}	0.002^{***}	0.002^{***}	0.003^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	0.117	0.099	0.092	0.034
	(0.184)	(0.190)	(0.174)	(0.201)
Oil$_{t-1}$	0.433^{**}	0.426^{**}	0.526^{***}	0.567^{***}
	(0.180)	(0.183)	(0.183)	(0.182)
Horizontal Inequality	0.010	0.010	0.013	0.010
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Minority Cadre Percentage$_{t-1}$		0.002		
		(0.004)		
Han Chinese Party Secretary$_{t-1}$			-0.694^{***}	
			(0.237)	
XPCC				1.616^{***}
				(0.349)
t	0.178	0.191	0.196	0.111
	(0.126)	(0.129)	(0.122)	(0.117)
t^2	-0.054^{**}	-0.056^{**}	-0.058^{**}	-0.038^{*}
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.023)
t^3	0.003^{**}	0.003^{**}	0.003^{***}	0.002^{*}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Prefecture Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Panel B: First Stage (OLS)			
Human Capitals in 1949	4.255^{***}	4.259^{***}	4.255^{***}	4.255^{***}
	(0.617)	(0.621)	(0.617)	(0.617)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	792	780	792	792

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

more ethnic conflicts in the previous year did not spend significantly less on cross-ethnic patronage.

However, although conflict incidents do not exert direct impacts on cross-ethnic patronage in the near future, someone may argue that there may be a long-term effect. To alleviate this concern, I conduct an instrumental variable analysis using Xinjiang's pre-communist local human capital as the instrument. If the county-level distribution of cross-ethnic patronage after 1980 is a long-term legacy of pre-communist schooling, we can use an instrumental variable approach to rule out the possibility of a weak version of a reverse causality story. Recent economic history studies have revealed that historical human capital accumulations tend to persist across several generations (Wantchekon, Klašnja and Novta 2014; Rocha, Ferraz and Soares 2017). The persistence of human capital over time has also been identified in the context of China (Chen, Kung and Ma 2017; Wang and Zhang 2018). Those regions with higher human capital accumulations in the previous era are more likely to exhibit higher contemporary human capital outcomes. This geographic pattern thus has a clear implication for our understanding of the post-1980 distribution of cross-ethnic patronage in Xinjiang. Previous research has shown that communist regimes were especially inclined to recruit better-educated individuals as state cadres (Walder 1995). For instance, Lankina, Libman and Obydenkova (2016) find that the Communist Party saturation was significantly higher in Russia's more literate areas before the Bolshevik rule. In fact, in China, the importance of human capital in terms of being bureaucratic cadres increased after the 1980s (Zhou 2001). Because the Han Chinese only accounted for around 5% of Xinjiang's total population in 1941 (Stanley 2004), more literate counties prior to the rule of the Chinese Communist Party should have more minority cadres after 1980 – as a result, there should be more cross-ethnic patronage expenditures in these regions.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Chinese state indeed recruited a large number of traditional Uyghur elites as local cadres after the establishment of the communist rule (Taynen 2006, p.48). Certainly, the better-educated individuals within the Uyghur society prior to 1949 are more likely to be communal elites, as this status makes incorporation

into the local governments more likely. Because of the small percentage of Xinjiang's Han Chinese in 1949, it is safe to assume that a measure of pre-communist human capital largely captures the degree of historical human capital accumulations among the minority population. I thus use the percentage of primary school student standardized by the overall county population in 1949 as a measure of pre-communist human capital among the minority population. The data about the number of primary school students are taken from local gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang. As shown in Figure 3 of the Appendix B, there is a clear linear relationship between the percentage of primary school students in 1949 and the amount of cross-ethnic patronage between 1980 and 1995.

Table 10 presents the results of a two-stage model using the percentage of primary school students in 1949 as the instrument. The findings confirm the results of Table 8 and 9. Note that the impact of cross-ethnic patronage in Table 10, when it is instrumented by the pre-communist schooling, cannot be viewed as a function of the post-1980 ethnic violence. In other words, these findings allow me to rule out a weak version of the reverse causality argument. Of course, the instrumental variable model needs to satisfy the exclusion restriction assumption to make the instrument valid. That means, the percentage of primary school students in 1949 should be significantly correlated with the post-1980 cross-ethnic patronage while not with other potential channels. With this issue in mind, I conduct a set of falsification tests using cross-ethnic patronage, GDP per capita, education spending, and the ethnicity of county party secretaries. Table 4 of the Appendix B shows that GDP per capita, education spending, and the ethnicity of county party secretaries are not significantly associated with pre-communist schooling. Yet it is a significant predictor of the post-1980 cross-ethnic patronage.

Second, it is possible that an unobservable confounding variable causes the correlation between the provision of patronage and the odds of ethnic conflict. In terms of this omitted variable bias, compared with the existing literature, my research design enjoys several advantages. First, in contrast to country-level analyses, this subnational-level approach is less vulnerable to the unobserved heterogeneity. Usually, the country-level heterogeneity tends to be much higher than the within-country variations. Second, by

employing a host of fixed effects models (see Table 9), I show that my basic finding still holds even after ruling out the impact of other time-fixed confounding variables. Finally, the negative correlation between cross-ethnic patronage and the risks of ethnic conflicts is robust to the above instrumental variable approach. The robustness of this significant association enhances our confidence in its internal validity.

Robustness Check

Although Table 8 and Table 9 link increased local patronage spending to a lower likelihood of ethnic conflicts, there are several robustness issues to address. The Section 5 of the Appendix B presents the detailed results of the robustness checks.

First, the results may be vulnerable to the problem of spillover effects. In other words, violent incidents may be contagious and a county's probability of having a conflict event is probably a function of whether violence occurs in its neighboring counties. Therefore, the spatial dependence between the unit of observations poses a challenge to the analysis of conflict. Following Pierskalla and Hollenbach (2013), I construct a spatial lag on the dependent variable, which is an average count, by dividing the number of neighboring counties that had conflict events over all neighboring counties at $t-1$. Table 5 of the Appendix B shows that there is no empirical evidence supporting a spatial contagion of ethnic conflicts during the studied period. Furthermore, my main findings remain unchanged after controlling for the spatial dependence.

Second, it is possible that the results may be contingent on the measures of the dependent variable. In the above analyses, the dependent variable is coded as a binary indicator in each year: 0 or 1. To address this issue, I also employ negative binomial models with year fixed effects. The negative binomial model uses the count of ethnic conflicts in a given year as the dependent variable. Table 6 of the Appendix B shows that the placating effect of cross-ethnic patronage is robust to this alternative model specification.

To assure that my choice of the explanatory variable does not drive my findings, I also test the main findings using another measure of cross-ethnic patronage. Instead of standardizing the weighted patronage spending by the minority population, I use the

county-level GDP as a new denominator. As Table 7 of the Appendix B shows, the significant negative correlation between local patronage spending and conflicts persists in this model specification.

Fourth, I replicate the negative correlation between patronage and conflicts by using a cross-sectional model. In particular, I employ a negative binomial model using average values of both the explanatory variable and other controls. Departing from the above panel analyses, this model specification thus allows me to capture long-term impacts of the variable of interest. Table 8 of the Appendix B indicates that my key finding is robust to a cross-sectional analysis.

Finally, to address further concerns about the missing data issue, I use the multiple imputations approach developed by Honaker et al. (2011). It turns out that my key finding is robust after multiple imputations (results not shown).

Causal Mechanism

This paper has empirically demonstrated that cross-ethnic patronage spending can placate aggrieved ethnic minorities. According to my theoretical framework, cross-ethnic patronage appeases ethnic conflict through two mechanisms: (1) it makes ethnic elites less likely to initiate anti-regime mobilization; and (2) it makes elites in local communities more likely to enforce social control. Although it is difficult to directly examine these mechanisms through statistical analyses, there is suggestive quantitative and qualitative evidence of both mechanisms. Taking a disaggregated approach to replicate Table 8, I scrutinize the narrative of each recorded conflict incident and divide each of them into four types of categories: (1) ethnic mobilization, (2) social control, (3) mixed – a mixture of ethnic mobilization and social control, and (4) other events. "Ethnic mobilization" refers to a variety of collective actions including mass protest, demonstration, strike, and sit-in. "Social control" refers to group-based terrorist attacks like bombing, assassination, assaults on civilians and police, and arson. Most ethnic riots are coded as "Mixed" because the initial actions usually involved mass actions like protest and demonstration.

"Other events" is a residual category. After this categorization, I run a multinomial logit model with year fixed effects that peaceful county-year units are the reference group. As shown in Table 9 of the Appendix B, the pacifying effect of cross-ethnic patronage applies both to those "ethnic mobilization" events and "social control" incidents.[13]

As the next two sections lay out, a wide array of internally circulated investigation reports provide qualitative evidence of the two mechanisms I have identified.

Mobilization-Bsased Mechanism

The mobilization-based mechanism implies that minority elites actively orchestrate political opposition. The literature offers some anecdotal evidence that this phenomenon functions in Xinjiang. For instance, Ma (2002, pp.10–11) shows that among 66 individuals who were involved in two clandestine secessionist groups, 27 were cadres. According to Ma (2002, p.80), "in 1991, there were 31 state cadres and the CCP members participated in secessionist organizations ... in 1992, there were 14 party members and 29 cadres engaged in separatist activities." In addition to organizing covert dissident groups, it appears that disgruntled minority cadres mobilized co-ethnics to challenge the state. For example, according to an internal report, 29 Uyghur cadres directly participated in the Ghulja incident, which was the most severe street violence in Xinjiang during the 1990s (Wang et al. 1999, p.70).

The Chinese state recognizes the mobilization-based mechanism, as well. Although relevant government documents have not been released, a set of internally published investigations emphasized the pacifying impact of cross-ethnic patronage. They explicitly recommended increasing payrolls for minority cadres as a strategy to discourage ethnic mobilization (Li 1999; Wang et al. 1999; Xi 1999). The Chinese government's concerns about the potential elite-led mobilization explain why the party-state had devoted significant material resources to satisfy aspiring educated Uyghurs. Before the early 2000s,

[13] I also test whether the appeasing effect of cross-ethnic patronage works for both peaceful contentious activities such as protest and strike and violent resistance like terrorist and guerrilla attacks. Table 10 of the Appendix B demonstrates that an increase in cross-ethnic patronage result in fewer peaceful contentious activities and violent attacks. To explore whether the pacifying effect is contingent on specific forms of conflict, I classify all conflict incidents into four types: Guerrilla attack, protest/demonstration/strike, riot, and terrorist attack. For those events that cannot be categorized because of a lack of information, I code them as "unknown." Table 11 of the Appendix B reveals that the pacifying effect applies mostly to mass protests and terrorist attacks.

Uyghur college students were the privileged class within their ethnic communities because they were the most likely to be assigned civil servant jobs after graduation, and Uyghur society considers this profession to be highly desirable. Between 1980 and 1996, the Xinjiang government had implemented a set of preferential treatment policies to assure that minority students accounted for over 50% of all college students (Zhu, Chen and Yang 2004, pp.305–308). Although the Chinese state has been gradually dismantling the college student job placement system since the middle 1980s (Yang 2014), the Xinjiang government did not implement this reform until 2003 (Li 2009*a*, p.369). Before that time all college graduates received placement in the Xinjiang government's various agencies. Most of these university students had been assigned cadre jobs in government departments and other public service institutions. Taking the Akesu prefecture as an example, 80.8% of college students between 1995 and 2001 had been assigned jobs in the local government offices and public sectors after their graduation, of which over 70% were ethnic minorities (Li 2009*a*, p.371). This institutionalized inter-ethnic co-optation allowed the regime to prevent a full-fledged elite-led opposition that destabilized the entire region.

Social Control Mechanism

The section offers a couple of qualitative vignettes that provide a more ground picture of the social control mechanism. To maintain the social control of restive ethnic minorities, the state needs to acquire crucial information about clandestine dissident organizations. Xinjiang's local officials were fully aware of the importance of intelligence gathering and recognized the difficulty of getting tips from the minority civilian population. Kuche is Xinjiang's third largest county and has a large Uyghur population. The Party Secretary of Kuche County identified a lack of information about Uyghur-dominated villages as a major challenge to bringing down separatism (Chen 2005, p.76). To extract more information, the state therefore relied on the work of local minority cadres who are better connected with local communities. The state established a community-based surveillance system in Kuche in which minority cadres held regular meetings with Uyghurs who had been incarcerated for endangering state security and closely monitored the actions of these individuals (Chen 2005, p.237).

A number of targeted killings of Uyghur officials in the late 1990s also indirectly illustrates the social control mechanism. These assassinations were conducted by several underground insurgent groups who dubbed the assassinations "bridge burning." That is, they alleged that Uyghur cadres they murdered had served as the "bridge" between the state and the local Uyghur population (Ma 2002, pp.70–71). In other words, insurgent organizations also recognized that local ethnic elites could help the state to impose social control on their co-ethnics.

Given the vital role ethnic cadres play in social control, it is not surprising that the Chinese state offers monetary rewards to minority elites as material incentives. For instance, in 2008, the Xinjiang government increased average payrolls of every village-level cadre by 1,000 RMB (Guo 2012, p.115). Most of Xinjiang's rural cadres are ethnic minorities, especially in its southern part (Guo 2012, p.109). Meanwhile, the state implemented a large-scale surveillance campaign called "*si zhi si qing si zhangwo*" 四知四清四掌握 in Xinjiang's rural regions. This campaign was a house-by-house check designed to gather information about demographic profiles, employment information, and criminal records. It also allowed the state to compile community-level information regarding internal migration, poverty rate, and the number of formerly incarcerated persons. Of the 8,559 villages in rural Xinjiang, 44,000 local cadres visited 5,990 villages (Guo 2012, p.113). The scope of this efforts suggests that the state, sees social control of the minority population as a major purpose of cross-ethnic patronage spending.

Conclusion

In this article, I propose a theory with a focus on cross-ethnic patronage to explain variations of elite behaviors within a particular minority out-group with regard to ethnic violence in authoritarian regimes. Specifically, my main argument is that increasing patronage towards minority elites decreases the likelihood of inter-group violence. It thus presents a theoretical framework that links local state and ethnic conflict. I have investigated this hypothesis using China's Xinjiang region as a case in point. Through a

subnational analysis, I find that patronage expenditures on ethnic elites exert a pacifying effect by discouraging ethnic mobilization and strengthening social control over the minority population.

This finding has important implications for our theoretical understanding of ethnic conflict. First of all, this research highlights the importance of cross-ethnic patronage, which has not been systematically examined in the existing literature. Second, my study extends the elite-centered explanation of ethnic violence by accounting for intra-group variations of minority elite behaviors in autocracies. This intra-group approach therefore enables us to move beyond a dominant "groupism" paradigm (Brubaker 2004). Third, it underlines the key role of local states, which quantitative tests have tended to overlook (Lacina 2014). I argue that the local state can affect civil violence as an active actor by changing its redistributive behavior. Indeed my analysis demonstrates that favorable government fiscal policies targeted at ethnic elites reduce the risk of inter-group conflicts.

Using a refined measure of cross-ethnic patronage at the subnational level, this paper makes another empirical contribution to the literature on civil conflicts. Previous civil conflict studies on patronage tend to employ crude, country-level measures such as corruption and the share of government expenditure to GDP (Fjelde 2009; Fjelde and De Soysa 2009). These measures are vulnerable to a number of construct validity problems. Corruption is far from a valid measure of patronage because it is not clear whether most bribes would be eventually paid for the targeted opposition groups. For studies using the share of government expenditure to GDP, the authors do not distinguish patronage spending from other public goods spending, which masks a neat test of the independent impact of patronage. Furthermore, because ethnic violence is often geographically highly concentrated within a country, country-level regressions may be problematic. Using satellite views of electric lights at night is an innovative way to measure patronage at the subnational level (De Juan and Bank 2015). This variable has also been used to represent local wealth (Weidmann and Schutte 2016), public goods provision (Min 2015), and subnational state capacity (Koren and Sarbahi 2018). Therefore, satellite images of nighttime lights may convey far more confounding information than patronage. Most

importantly, when it comes to analyzing ethnic conflicts, none of the measures employed by these studies allows us to capture the patronage targeting ethnic elites.

There are two remaining questions that I intend to address in future research. First, local states can select from a basket of options when they face ethnic violence: In addition to buying off ethnic elites, they can employ fiscal instruments to increase public goods spending or simply lift the level of repression. A future study should take the issue of policy substitution more seriously. Second, and relatedly, given a range of policy options that is available to the local state, which one is the most effective tactic to quell ethnic violence and why? While more research is certainly needed, I hope my study will initiate a meaningful line of inquiry in the future.

Chapter 6

Who Becomes a Nationalist?

States matter not simply because of the goal-oriented activities of state officials. They matter because they organizational configurations, along with their overall patterns of activity, affect political culture, encourage some kinds of group formations and collective actions.

Skocpol (1985)

Here is one major difference between researching Chinese economy and researching American economy. In studies of American economy, scholars may debate about the effects of, say, "Reagan tax cuts." In studies of the Chinese economy, the more relevant question would be, Did the government cut taxes in the first place?

Huang (2008)

Introduction

The goal of this chapter aims to shift the attention from the previous macro-level study to specific actors who directly participated in ethnic conflicts. The macro-level approach (what Tilly called an "epidemiological" approach, see Tilly, Tilly and Tilly (1975, p.13)) usually delves into ethnic conflicts by examining the spatial and temporal variations underlying these incidents. This approach often uses aggregated structural factors such as GDP per capita as independent variables. The macro-level study thus fits well with a variable-oriented understanding of ethnic violence: the likelihood of inter-group violence is viewed as a function of a host of socioeconomic and politically relevant attributes varying across time and space. This perspective greatly improves our understanding of ethnic violence, whereas it also suffers from three drawbacks. First, while empirical findings based on aggregated data provide us the context of ethnic violence, it offer little insights into how engaged actors draw ethnic boundaries, their strategies of making claims, and which types of symbols are used underlying interactions between the ethnic group in power and the disgruntled minorities. Put differently, we know very little about individual actors - how they perceive their interests, their forms of contentious action, and their

ways of interpreting collective identity. Second, an "epidemiological" approach faces difficulties in terms of disentangling causal mechanisms. In contrast, a micro-level perspective allows scholars to specify actors' preferences, their information environments, and their strategic actions. Without accessing to micro-level data, it is always risky to interpolate problematic assumptions from the "outsiders" (i.e., researchers) when we discuss how concrete causal mechanisms linking actors' interests and actions to certain political outcomes. Third, a macro-level approach often obscures the sizable within-group variation. In other words, this approach is usually in tandem with a problematic "groupism" understanding of ethnicity (Brubaker 2004). As Brubaker (2004, pp.14-15) reminds us, "although common sense and participants' rhetoric attribute discrete existence' boundedness, coherence, identity, interest, and agency to ethnic groups, these attributes are in fact characteristic of organizations." Instead, a micro-level approach avoids this pitfall by focusing on the protagonists of ethnic conflict rather than the ethnic groups as a whole.

My paper attempts to bridge this macro-micro divide by linking individuals who participate in inter-ethnic conflicts to a state-centric understanding of ethnic violence. Preexisting theories have discussed a set of demographic, economic, and social factors to explain ethnic conflict – my basic claim is that, these factors should be further analyzed through the political context in which they are embedded. My central argument is that we should examine ethnic conflict by exploring "how state shapes the very identities, goals, strategies, social ties, ideas, and even emotions of actors in civil society" (Goodwin 2001, p.39), or what Skocpol called a "Tocquevillian" approach (Skocpol 1985, p.21). More specifically, I argue that state policies profoundly affect which social subgroup within the ethnic group become the protagonists of ethnic conflict, how these actors resort to specific forms of contentious repertoires, and how certain type of ideology evolves to be the dominant discourse of ethno-nationalist movement.

In particular, this study attempts to answer three puzzling questions: First, in contrast to the prevailing finding in a number of cases, why do poorly educated Uyghur peasants become the protagonists of inter-ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang (social class)? Second, why do Uyghur ethno-nationalist organizations recur more to terrorist attacks than

to nonviolent uprisings and guerrilla-like resistance (contentious repertoire)? Third, why do most Uyghur militant groups highlights their Islamic identity as their main rhetoric instead of emphasizing their other identity markers (ideology)?

To answer these questions, I draws on a number of government sources that had been rarely explored to offer an unusually micro-level analysis of Uyghur nationalists. My theoretical framework - a "Tocquevillian" approach – aims at explaining the aforementioned variations within the Uyghur community by focusing on the impact of state practices.

Stylized Facts of Xinjiang's Ethnic Conflict

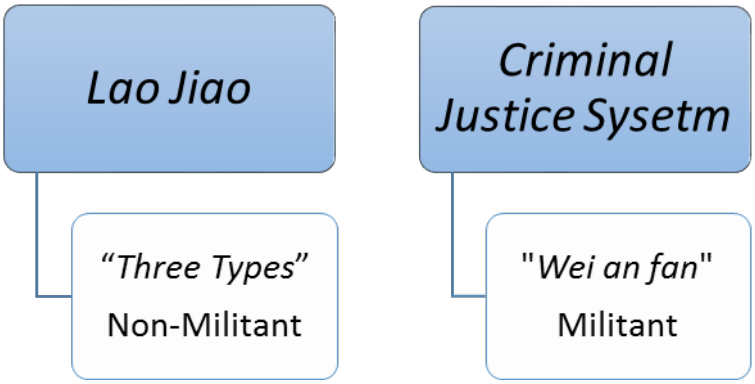
2.1 Social Class of Uyghur Militants

It is extremely difficult to assemble biographical information on individual members of secessionist movements given the poor information environment in most repressive authoritarian regimes. China is not an exception to the rule. Although obtaining prefect data proved difficult, fortunately, we can take advantage of several rarely used reports by prisoner officers in the region. These reports often contain unusual detailed information about sentenced Uyghur nationalists and their socioeconomic profiles. The main problem with the data is that it is hard to count a subtype of ethno-nationalists – "militants." Militant refers to an individual who committed violence or participate in a violent organization. The official reports do not provide adequate information that allows us to differentiate militants from non-militants. To address this problem, I leverage the different treatments between "three types" (*san lei ren yuan*) and prisoners accused of crimes for endangering state security (*wei an fan*) in the region (See Figure 19).

In Xinjiang, persons who once participated in illicit organizations, involving in underground religious activities, or disseminating illegal printings are dubbed as "three types" (*san lei ren yuan*). These individuals can be roughly categorized as Uyghur nationalists while they were not militants. "Three types" are usually penalized through "re-education through labor." "Re-education through labor" (*lao jiao*) is a system of administrative detention to punish individuals accused of these minor illegal activities. In contrast to the

normal criminal justice system, *lao jiao* does not involve judicial procedures. According to Yang (2002), between 1990 and 1995, "three types" detainees accounted for around 5% of Xinjiang's *lao jiao* population. This number further increased to 10% in the next five years when local ethic violence drastically intensified. The fact that *san lei ren yuan* were punished by *lao jiao* indicates that this group of people poses less severe threats to the state. It is also reported that among the "three types" detainees, 91% of them were peasants or unemployed while only 9% of them were previous government employees. In terms of level of education, only 12.8% of these detainees had a high school degree or above, which indicates that Uighur political prisoners were generally poorly educated.

Figure 19: Categorization of Uyghur Ethno-nationalist

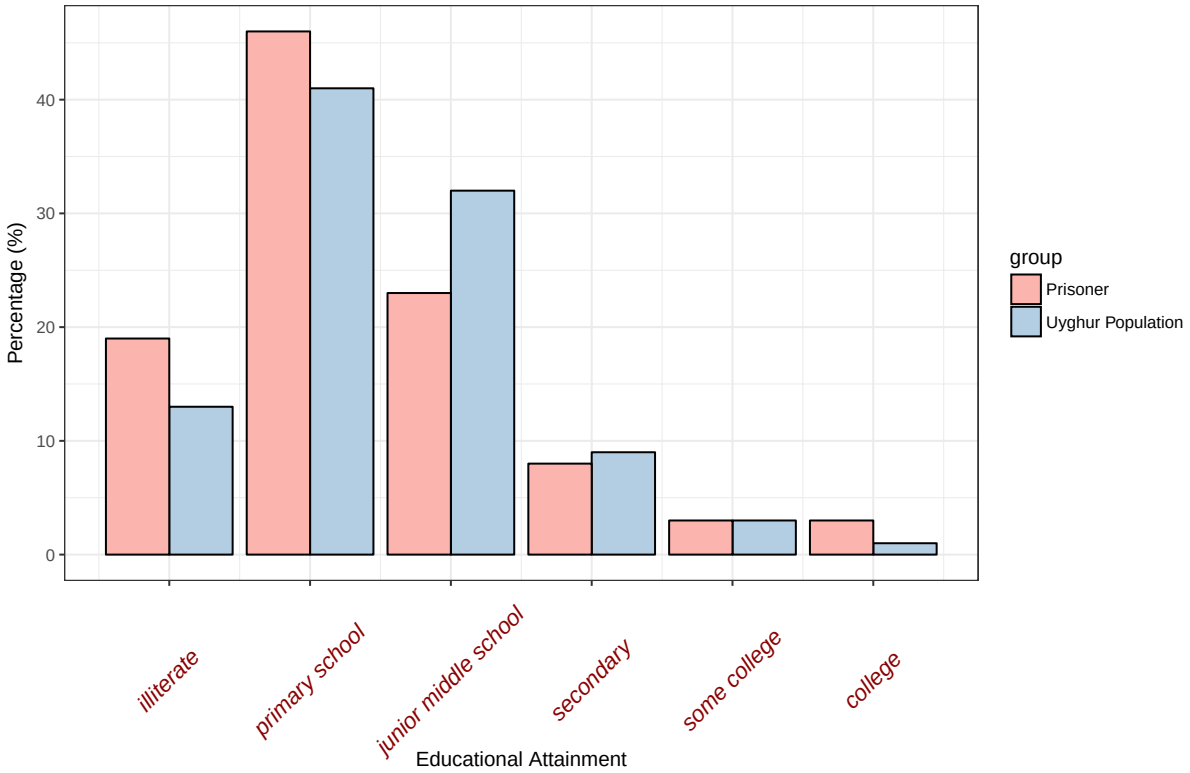


When it comes to prisoners accused of crimes for endangering state security (*wei an fan*), it is a different story. According to Lu (2001, p.125), in 2001, 9.2% of convicted Uyghurs in Xinjiang were sentenced for endangering state security, which accounts to more than 1,000 prisoners. Although not that all *wei an fan* engaged in violence, it is safe to categorize this group as a proxy for Uyghur militants. Those convicts who were sentenced for state security offenses mostly from the lower segments of the Uyghur society. According to Ismail and Ehmetjan (2002), among, 18.84% of them were illiterates, 46.48% of *wei an fan* had a primary school degree, and only 8.01% were high school graduates. Prisoners with college diplomas accounted for merely 3.43% of convicts sentenced for state security offenses. These statistics are especially telling when we consider that ethno-nationalist leaders were overrepresented in this sample – 37.32% of these *wei an fan* belonged to this group of organization leaders (Ismail and Ehmetjan 2002, p.84). In

other words, the average level of education of *wei an fan* would be lower if we also consider rank-and-file members who had not been thrown into jail.

To compare convicted Uyghur militants' educational attainment with that of the comparable population, I turn to the 2000 census data. These data allows me to calculate the distribution of the highest level education attended for Uyghur male between the age 15 and 60. Figure 20 shows the results of this comparison. A key finding is of interest: convicted Uyghur militants were more likely to be poorly educated than the population age group they were drawn.

Figure 20: Educational Attainment of Convicted Uyghur Militants in 2000

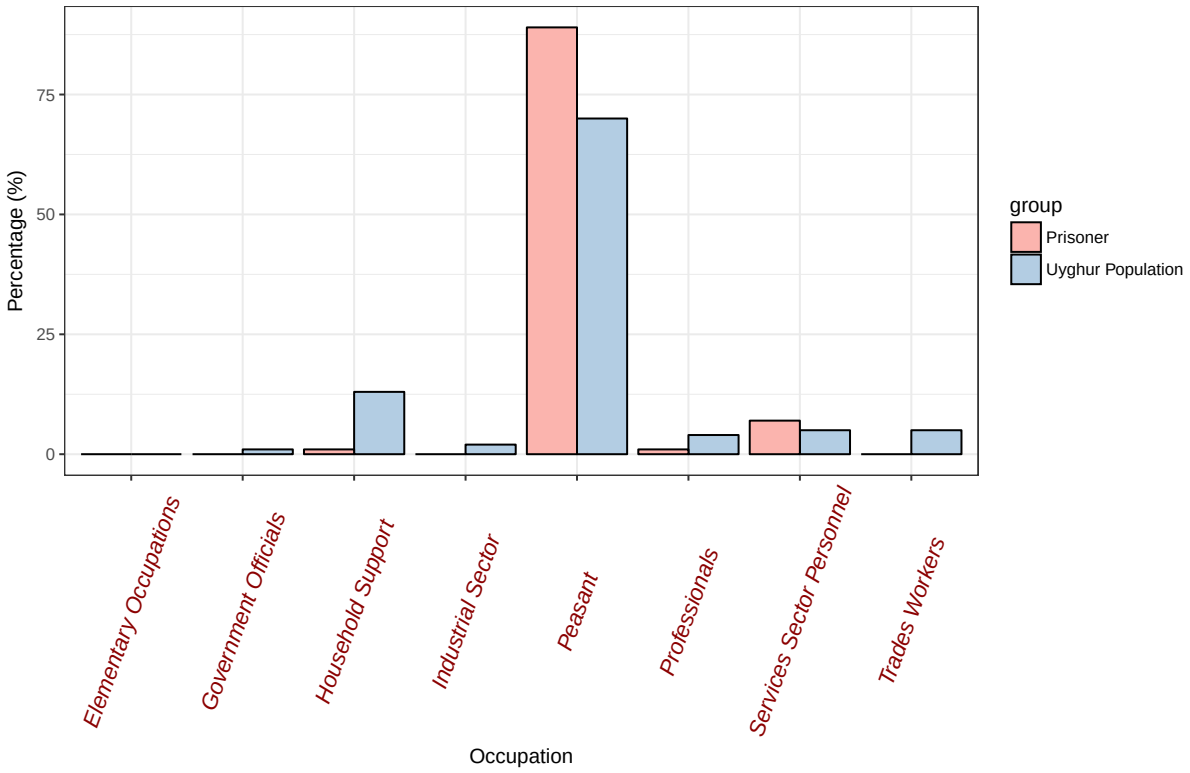


The pattern that most Uyghur secessionist activists were from the lower class remains intact until the first decade of the 2000s. Sun and Shi (2015) shows that of these accused of crimes for endangering state security (i.e., *wei an fan*), 75% were peasants before being prisoners. These political prisoners were poorly educated as well – 40% of these convicts were illiterates and primary school graduates. Most *wei an fan* were from rural areas of southern Xinjiang (Akesu, Hetian, and Kashi) while few of them were from Yili and Tulufan. The authors state that "87% of the 'terrorists' are from southern Xinjiang"

(Sun and Shi 2015, p.884).

We reaffirm the general pattern by consulting local trial records. In Akesu, from 1995 to 2000, there were 270 Uyghur *wei an fan* sentenced for varying levels of penalties. On the basis of compiled statistics, 240 of these prisoners were peasants while there were only 2 government employees (阿克苏地区审判志 Akesu Prefectural Gazetteer Codification Committee (2005, p.156)). Figure 21 shows the socioeconomic differences between secessionist activists and the Uyghur male population between 15 and 60 years in Akesu. Again, we find that Uyghur militants were largely from the lower classes within the Uyghur community.

Figure 21: Occupation of Akesu's Convicted Uyghur Secessionists (1995-2000)



To reprise, Uyghur nationalist militants are largely composed of individuals with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. This finding entails two important implications: first, it shows that education in Xinjiang is negatively related with the likelihood of ethnic violence at the individual level, which is contrast to a recent revisionist argument that education breeds ethnic conflicts (Lange 2012). In fact, my quantitative study of Chapter 4 also shows that county-level education spending exert strongly pacifying im-

pact on inter-ethnic violence.[1] Second, in contrast to the literature on Islamic movement in the Arab world (Binzel and Carvalho 2017), the radical Islam movement in China is not mainly driven by educated middle-class youth but by poorly educated rural Uyghur peasants. In fact, poorly educated peasants are more likely to become Islamist militants.

This finding is especially revealing when it is compared with Islamist militants in neighboring Pakistan. Fair (2014) shows that 44% of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants, one of the most active terrorist organizations in Kashmir, had achieved 10th grade while merely 7% of Pakistan males had reached this level of education during the same period. Fair's finding was support by Saeed and Syed (2016, p.17, Table 5), who find that among those high-profile Sunni terrorists in Pakistan, only 4% of them were illiterate despite that fact that over 30% of working age Pakistan males were illiterate.

2.2 Uyghur Ethno-nationalists' Contentious Repertoire

Recent studies in civil war, terrorism, and contentious politics have revealed the importance of tactical diversity regarding non-institutional political actions (Bueno de Mesquita 2013; Cunningham 2013; Wright 2015; Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017; Carter 2016; Horowitz, Perkoski and Potter 2017). For secessionist organizations, generally speaking, there are three types of available tactics for them: (1) nonviolent campaign such as demonstration, protest, and strike; (2) terrorist violence such as assassination and bombing; and (3) guerrilla attacks such as raids and ambushes against the military. A rapidly growing body of civil conflict literature shows that contentious groups employ different forms of tactics across time and space because of distinct incentive structures they encounter. In addition to these organization-based tactics, ethnic violence can also occur in a form of less organized collective violence – riot (Horowitz 2001).

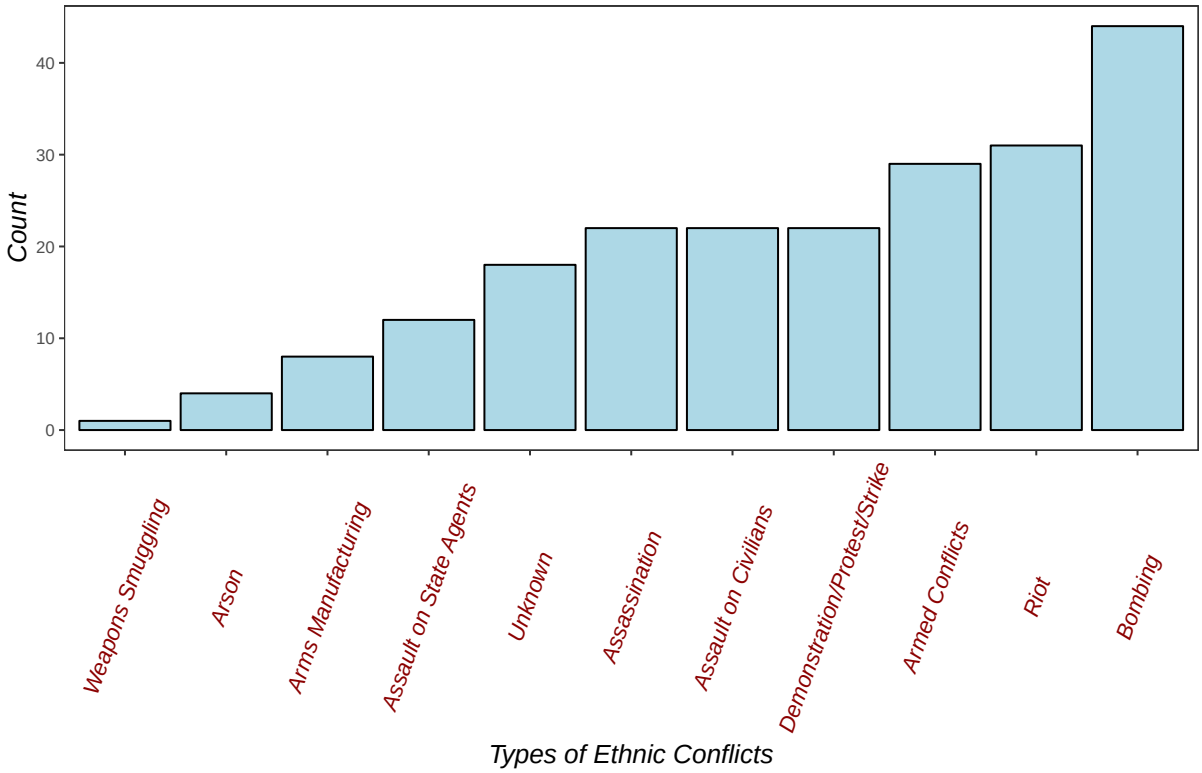
Despite the considerable progresses in disaggregating contentious tactics, the literature on ethnic politics has little to say about tactical diversity. On the one hand, analysts of ethnic conflict tend to bracket various contentious tactics as a whole whereas overlooking how actors decide their concrete repertoire of contention. The theoretical focus is

[1] I also test the proposition that there is a non-linear effect of education spending on the risk of inter-ethnic conflict. That is, both counties received the lowest and the highest levels of education expenditures are especially prone to experience conflicts. However, statistical analyses do not support this proposition (results are available upon request).

mainly around a set of disputes between competing approaches: essentialism, instrumentalism, structuralism, etc. (Kaufmann 2005; Varshney 2007*b*). On the other hand, many scholars tend to focus on explaining a specific form of tactic while failing to consider why this particular tactic comes to dominate over other potential contending strategies (for ethnic war, see Toft (2005); Gagnon (2004); for protest, see Olzak (1994); for riot, see Brass (2003); Varshney (2003); Wilkinson (2006)).

In Xinjiang, the Han-Uyghur tension exhibits in a wide array of social domains, from everyday segregation to more intense ethnic conflicts. In terms of tactics associated with conflicts, it entails a diversity of forms. Although there is a large body of literature on Uyghur resistance, scholars are inclined to view various types of tactics as a monolithic entity. For the preexisting literature, this aggregated approach is also justified by a lack of conflict event data. Without accessing such data, it is impossible to gauge the relative prevalence of each forms of conflict and thereby unlikely developing a comprehensive understanding of ethnic conflict in the region.

Figure 22: Types of Ethnic Conflicts in Xinjiang (1990 - 2005)



To fill this gap, I turn to one of the most informative datasets on Xinjiang's ethnic

conflict by far. In addition to offering time, space, and ethnic profiles of participants, Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) provides a preliminary categorizing of different contentious tactics. Figure 22 shows a distribution of ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang between 1990 and 2005 by employed contentious tactics.

We can draw three basic findings from this figure. First of all, there is a variety of ethnic conflict forms. In fact, we can find all four types of aforementioned contentious actions: peaceful protest, terrorist attacks, guerrilla attacks, and riots. This general pattern corroborates the civil conflict literature's suggestion on disaggregating various contending strategies. Second, in Xinjiang, violent tactics trump nonviolent strategies. If we combine terrorist violence with riots and guerrilla-like actions as the violent strategy, violent actions were more than seven times higher than nonviolent resistance in terms of frequency. Third, within the type of violent tactics, irregular strategies (i.e., terrorist attacks) had been employed much more frequently than conventional ones (i.e., guerrilla attacks).

2.3 Dominant Framing Discourses

Ethnic conflict is well known for involving intense emotions, struggling over symbols, and contesting about collective identity (Ross 2007). As a result, any analyses of such culture-loaded social phenomena would be inadequate if they have little to say about these ideological components. In Xinjiang, a remarkable feature of Uyghur nationalists' discursive practices is their extensive usage of religious rhetoric. This finding is intriguing because the salience of Islamic rhetoric in Xinjiang's ethnic conflicts needs to be explained. As previous ethnographic works demonstrate (Rudelson 1997), Uyghur nationalists should not be treated as a monolithic group. On the contrary, different social segments of the Uyghur community, depending on their specific social standings, exhibited varied degrees of attachment to their Muslim identity.

Before delineating the overall structure with regard to the discursive field of Xinjiang's ethnic conflict, I first situate my position in a broader literature. In particular, I draw on the framing perspective (Snow 2004), which is one of the most influential approaches in the social movement literature that address "the ways in which movements have used

symbols, language, discourse, identity, and other dimensions of culture to recruit, retain, mobilize, and motivate members" (Williams 2004, p.93). According to Zald (1996, p.262), "frames are the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action." In the social movement literature, frames entails two implications for collective actions. First, as a specific type of everyday interpretive frames, these shared meanings, narrative, and symbols help actors to interpret their social worlds and to make sense of the external environment that they encounter. In addition to serving this fundamental constitutive function, frames can also be used to mobilize collective action by understanding and diagnosing a social problem, providing a way of correcting such problem, and justifying the organized action of correction (Snow and Benford 1988). Put differently, frames are strategically employed by political entrepreneurs as discursive practices to persuade followers and bystanders while delegitimizing rivals. Through a successful internalization, collective frames can be viewed as shared consensuses among individuals or as properties of organizations that are beyond individual-level cognitive schema.

In ethnically divided societies like Xinjiang, ethnicity-based frames often fit well with the generic features of collective action frames (Benford and Snow 2000). First of all, a glance of ethnographic evidence shows that Uyghurs widely conceive themselves as victims of the existing political order that unfairly privileges the Han Chinese in both economic and political domains (Bovingdon 2010*a*). The feeling of injustice is pervasive among local Uyghur communities - the underdevelopment of Uyghur communities, the fear of cultural extinction, and the suffering of discrimination against Uyghurs in the job market. In other words, ethnicity-based frames resonate well with ordinary Uyghurs' everyday experiences (Finley 2013). Second, these grievances can be easily attributed to the Chinese government's unjust policies, given the predominant role of the Chinese state across various institutional fields and the Han Chinese's tight control over the state. That means a blame on the out-group as a culpable agent is cognitively simple and it helps Uyghurs to identity the sources of their collective grievances. Put differently,

ethnicity-based frames can work smoothly as prognostic framing. Third, in an era that nationalism is widely accepted as a legitimate political discourse, political entrepreneurs can effortlessly justify their pursuit of secession as a solution of their grievances (Wimmer 2012). Note that ethnicity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses a variety of traits such as language, religion, cultural customs, and phenotype. That is, ethnicity-based frames are usually articulated in different ways that the salience of a specific trait varies considerably across heterogeneous contexts.

Although many social movement scholars are able to draw on interviews and published materials (manifestos, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.) to measure collective frames (Ferree 2003), it is a more challenging task for the students of ethnic violence who usually focus on clandestine non-state groups. One way to get rid of such dilemma is to focus on observable cues that can be systemically gathered. To measure how Uyghur secessionist organizations employ collective frames, I follow the approach by Isaacs (2017). According to Isaacs (2017, p.208), "organizations are coded as using religious rhetoric" if they "include reference to the religious identity of the group in their name." In the case of Uyghur secessionist groups, a group is coded as using Islamic rhetoric if the Islamic identity was mentioned in their names. Likewise, organizations are coded as using the Pan-Turkism identity if they referred "East Turkestan" in their names. To be true, it is possible that these groups might use "East Turkestan" in a way that the Pan-Turkism identity is not pertinent – "East Turkestan" might be mainly viewed as a geographical or political term that is referred to the Uyghur community. However, it is analytically meaningful to differentiate this term from those cases that there was an explicit reference to "Uyghur."

Table 11 shows how major Uyghur nationalist groups made various forms of identity-based rhetoric from the 1980s to the early 2000s. These data indicate that over 60% of organizations used the Islamic identity as their contentious frames. That means, when these Uyghur nationalist groups engaged in ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang, a majority of them tended to emphasize their Muslim identity as ethnicity-based frames to mobilize their co-ethnics. Official sources also show that among rebellious Uyghur ethno-nationalists,

Table 11: Major Uyghur Secessionist Groups and Their Identity-Based Rhetoric

Name of Secessionist Organization	Islam	Pan-Turkism	Uyghur
东突厥斯坦燎原党/东突厥斯坦民族人民解放阵线(1981)		Yes	
中亚细亚维吾尔斯坦青年星火党(1981)			Yes
新疆大学“大学生科学文化协会” (1987)			
天山拯救者党(1988)			
东突厥斯坦民族解放组织（1988）		Yes	
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰改革者党(1990)/伊斯兰改革者党突击队(the early 1990s)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦民主党(the early 1990s)		Yes	
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰党（1989，1992)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦民主伊斯兰党(1991)	Yes	Yes	
东土耳其斯坦伊斯兰真主党（1993)/东突厥斯坦伊斯兰反对党（1996)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦正义党(1994)		Yes	
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰紫外线党(1994)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦民族解放组织/东突厥斯坦民族解放筹备委员会（1996）		Yes	
东突厥斯坦民族党/东突厥斯坦解放组织（1996）		Yes	
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰正义党（1996）	Yes	Yes	
正义民主党(疏附) （1996）			
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰党(1996)	Yes	Yes	
真主党(1997)	Yes		
真主伊斯兰党(巴音郭楞) (1997)	Yes		
东土耳其斯坦伊斯兰解放党（1997)/东土耳其斯坦木加尼提（1997)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦伊斯兰运动(1997)	Yes	Yes	
东突厥斯坦真主党(1998)	Yes	Yes	
兄弟会(the late 1990s)	Yes		
ATT/满月七星(the late 1990s)			
伊斯兰党(墨玉) (1999)	Yes		
伊斯兰党(新源) (1999)	Yes		
真主党(莎车) (1999)	Yes		
真主党(拜城) (2000-2001)	Yes		
$N = 28$	$N = 17$	$N = 16$	$N = 1$

Sources: Ma (2002), Ma and Xu (2006), Chen (2005), Zhang (2009), Jin and Jin (2011)

there was a usually high proportion of *talifu* (students that received their religious education in madrasas[2]) who were enrolled in underground madrasas. For example, in the well-known Baren township incident, 80 of Baren's entire 220 *talifu* participated in the

[2]Madrasa is a college for Islamic instruction, see Ali (2009).

event (Li 2011, p.62). The initial protest occurred during Ramadan, as a response to the local authorities blocking the construction of a mosque and a madrasa (Holdstock 2015, p.50). Notably, the protest began as a collective prayer in front of the township government office building (新疆历史研究论文选编 当代卷 下, Zhang (2008, p.114)).

Previous Explanations for Xinjiang's Conflict

3.1 Ethnic Competition

Ethnic competition theory argues that high levels of inter-group competition for jobs and other economic resources lead to ethnic conflict (Olzak 1994). This theory may be able to explain the grievances among Uyghurs. But this theory itself cannot account for the key finding that we have discussed above – most Uyghur ethno-nationalists are from the peasant class and most of them are not proficient speakers of Mandarin – the lack of language proficiency makes these individuals almost impossible to directly compete with the Han Chinese in the same economic niche (Tang, Hu and Jin 2016), which directly contradicts the premise of ethnic competition theory. Another variant of the ethnic competition argument is "sons of the soil" theory (Weiner 1978). According to Weiner (1978), a "sons of the soil" conflict occur when there is a clash between the indigenous group in the region and ethnically distinct migrants from other parts of the same country. The conflict is mainly driven by an inter-group competition over scare resources such as water, food, land, and job opportunities. It could be that increasing immigrants from China proper since the 1990s excited competition between local Uyghur peasants and Han immigrant arrivals for scarce resources. Ostensibly, evidence at a glance seems to support this assertion. The proportion of internal immigrants as a share of Xinjiang's total population increased from 2.25% to 8.21% between 1990 and 2010 (Wu and Song 2014, p.161). However, the geographic spread of immigrant Han population cannot account to the spatial and temporal distribution of ethnic violence for three reasons. First, it is important to note that a high proportion of these immigrants was employed as temporary cotton workers for Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC). For example, in

1996, there were more than 250,000 internal immigrants worked in XPCC's farms, which accounted for around 50% of the entire internal immigrants in Xinjiang (Zhang 2003, p.392). A recent study shows that there is no significant correlation between county-level cotton outputs and the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence between 1995 and 2005 (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018). In addition, as recent as the early 2000s, the public transportation network was quite limited in the region. According to Joniak-Lüthi (2016*a*, p.147), until the late 1980s, "a journey from Urumchi to the city of Hotan in southern Xinjiang could still take about two weeks." In fact, "the only fast connection between northern and southern Xinjiang is the southern branch of the national G30 expressway, completed ... in 2010." Even around 2013, it could take about 24 hours to travel from Yili to Akesu (Joniak-Lüthi 2016*a*, p.148). The insufficient transportation network makes the access to the far south of the region a daunting journey for most Han immigrants. On the other hand, because of Tulufan's geographic proximity to China proper, a substantive share of Han immigrants worked in grape farms owned by Uyghurs in the prefecture. But there was few Han-Uyghur violence in Tulufan between 1980 and 2005 while most ethnic violence tended to concentrate in the southern Xinjiang. Another illustrative example is Urumqi's "7.5" riot, contrary to the expectation of the ethnic competition model, most Uyghur perpetrators were not urban workers and professionals who directly compete with the Han Chinese in the same economic industry but were mainly unemployed Uyghurs with poor Mandarin language proficiency migrated from southern Xinjiang (Li 2012*b*, p.147). Third, there is a steady increase of Han Chinese immigrants after the early 1990s whereas the prevalence of ethnic disturbance varies significantly within the same period.

3.2 Economic Modernization

According to the "conflictual modernization" theories, the process of modernization ethnic conflict (Newman 1991). There are two broad strands of causes of ethnic antagonism suggested by this group of scholars: urbanization and the extension of public sector. A body of "conflictual modernization" literature argues that urbanization facilitates ethnic mobilization through two interrelated mechanisms. Urbanization is usually coupled with the immigration flow from countryside to city. This process empowers a variety of

ethnic organizations because immigrants need both economic and psychological support from their co-ethics when they are in a new social environment (Phinney et al. 2001). Second, Urbanization often results in a labor division alongside the ethnic line, which makes the associated identity markers more socially salient. These cultural differences are often politicized when they are reinforced by considerable socioeconomic disparities between different groups because of the ethnicity-based employment segregation (Hechter 1975).

In addition to this putative impact of urbanization on collective violence, another group of "conflictual modernization" theorists emphasize the impact of bureaucratization. That is, the expansion of the public sector may exacerbate ethnic antipathy. With the growth of state apparatus, the state has extended its reach into a wide array of social spheres in which the presence of state was previously absent. Consequently, the process of administrative centralization activates ethnic boundaries, usually through unintended channels. For instance, when state had successfully appropriated the provision of public goods services from local communities, it became an area in which different ethnic groups compete for resource redistribution (Enloe 1980; Nagel 1982).

Taken together, "conflictual modernization" theorists conceive a positive relationship between the degree of modernization and ethnic conflict. However, the case of Xinjiang also challenges this group of theories. First, it fails to explain why ethnic conflicts occurred in both more urbanized prefectures like Yili and less urbanized places such as Hetian. In addition, Tulufan, the most developed region with a Uyghur majority, experienced few ethnic conflicts between 1980 and 2005. Contrary to the proposed urbanization-violence nexus, most ethnic violence in the region between 1980 and 2005 tended to occur in remote, small, and underdeveloped small towns or villages. Second, the "conflictual modernization" theories cannot explain the temporal variation of ethnic mobilization. As Hu (2003) shows, there had been a growing number of Uyghur immigrants from rural areas to towns since the beginning of the 1990s. The tendency did not abate after that time. However, there was a clear declining trend of ethnic violence after 1999. Third, this macro-structural approach has little to say about the cultural forms of ethnic violence.

For instance, the theory has failed to specify the relationship between urbanization and concrete forms of symbols, narratives, and identity that had been enacted in ethnic conflict.

3.3 Demographic Structure

Nationalist separatism may be more likely to grow as the size of an ethnic group increases (Horowitz 1985, p.267). An increasing size of a group results in more economic and personnel resources at its disposal. Put simply, a demographic advantage could substantively boost the group's political efficacy. Therefore, a growing population may give rise to ethnic movements that challenge the out-group in power. A variant of this demography-oriented theory emphasizes the importance of population concentration. Toft (2005) specifies two mechanisms that link geographic concentration and the level of violence. The first mechanism highlights the importance of the group's attachment to their territory and thus they are willing to fight for the control over their homeland. The latter mechanisms draws attention to the group's capacity of overcoming the collective action problem, which is facilitated by geographic concentration.

This is a plausible hypothesis and it wins some supporting evidence in Xinjiang. Most ethnic violence occurred in southern Xinjiang, where Uyghur group enjoys a numerical majority. However, this argument has three shortcomings: First, this argument would predict that Tulufan, a prefecture with a Uyghur majority, should also exhibit a high level of inter-ethnic violence, which contradicts the available empirical evidence. Second, the demography variable is indeterminate in terms of explaining socioeconomic backgrounds of Uyghur militants – the size of Uyghur population cannot account for which social group is more likely to be the nationalist vanguard. Third, demography per se is insufficient to explain the repertoire of nationalist contentions – why Uyghur nationalist groups are more likely to engage in irregular violence than employing non-violent resistance?

3.4 Cultural Argument

Someone may pinpoint the presumptive role of Islam in explaining incidents of ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang. The religious cleavage strengthens the enmity between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese by imposing a set of religious-related barriers like diet restrictions

on intergroup interactions. Therefore this cleavage reduces the opportunity of everyday intergroup contacts and thus enlarges the information gap between two groups. The intergroup information asymmetry aggravates ethnic tension through two channels: First, initial skirmish can easily escalate into large-scale violence because of misperception and misunderstanding. Second, political entrepreneurs can easily manipulate information such as spreading rumors to generate fear (Brass 2003; Wilkinson 2006). Moreover, given mosques serve as focal points for daily social interactions between Uyghurs, it may be easier for nationalists to exploit these places to mobilize their co-ethics. The shared collective identity as a Muslim may attenuate the collective action problem because the religious symbolic usually entails moral obligations that are beyond a narrow calculation of selective material benefits.

However, this argument does not hold after examining the empirical evidence. First, the level of religiosity and the magnitude of violence do not have a linear relationship. However, in contrast with the conventional views, a recent published paper shows that there was no correlation between the density of officially permitted Islamic organizations and the intensity of inter-group conflicts in the region at the county level (Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei 2018). This finding suggests that the connection between ethnic violence and religiosity is far from straightforward. Second, this culture-oriented explanation obscures the agency of Uyghur nationalists – they are not bound to use religious symbols as their major ideology. A host of ethnic markers distinguish Uyghurs from the Han Chinese: cultural customs, language, and phenotype. They have a lot of leeway when it comes to framing their grievances. Third, instead of treating religion as a constant, a more productive analytic approach is to conceptualize it as a variable: It is possible that an increasing Han-Uyghur animosity induces a surging Islamic religiosity among Uyghurs instead of vice versa. A striking pattern of Uyghur religious landscape during last three decades is the gradual fade of secular influence in both public and private spheres coupled with the rise of more radical Wahhabism ideas (Smith Finley 2007; Harris 2015). The influence of religion on collective action is contingent on the border environment in which these culture practices embedded.

State-Centric Theory of Xiniiang's Ethnic Violence

For the purpose of this chapter, I conceptualize the agency of state along two fundamental dimensions: infrastructure power and ruling strategy. Following Mann (1986), I use "infrastructure power" to refer to the extent to which the state can fulfill all kinds of policy goals and implement these policies against the willing of the society. In addition to this capacity dimension, the strategies through which the state accomplishes its goals also matters. That is, the state can use both coercive and accommodative strategies to deal with the discontented ethnic group. As what I showed in the Chapter 3, these two tactics are not substitutive but complementary to each other when the state is able to exert a tight territorial control. By distinguishing these two basic dimensions, we can account for aforementioned three stylized facts about Xinjiang's ethnic conflicts – social class of dissidents, repertoire of contention, and ideology of Uyghur secessionist movements.

4.1 Carrot and Stick Across Physical and Social Space

The party-state in Xinjiang exhibits an uneven penetration of the physical and social spaces. Before discussing variations across the social spaces, I start with the physical space. First, the state processes stronger repressive power (e.g., policing, surveillance, and supervision) in the urban areas while suffering from a weaker base in the rural regions. As a number of civil conflict studies notes, it is logistically easier for the state to enforce social control over its urban population than sparse rural communities (Kalyvas 2004). In fact, the Chinese state is even able to reconstruct the preexisting urban space to make the city area become more "legibility" in the eyes of the authority (Scott 1998). For example, the Chinese government invested hundreds of millions to resettle Uyghurs residents of the old town of Kashgar. One of the main purposes of this social engineering is to create a "safer" place, thereby mitigating the threat of ongoing ethnic terrorism in the region (Liu 2017). In contrast, as we will see later, the coercive state capacity is more limited in Xinjiang's rural areas, which partly explains the reason why Uyghur peasants were more likely to participate in secessionist organizations.

Second, in terms of the level of cooptation, the degree of state accommodation also

tends to be far more pervasive in city than countryside. Xinjiang's local economic activities are characterized by a predominance of the state-owned sector. Even as recent as 2014, more than 70% of provincial economic activities were still under the control of the state.[3] The presence of state-owned sector is especially strong in the cities. In the early 2000s, state-owned sector accounted for over 50% of urban employment (Wu and Song 2014, p.162). Moreover, the Uyghur private sector is significantly underdeveloped and therefore it cannot provide adequate jobs for better educated urban Uyghurs (Harlan 2016). As a result, the state is the most important employer of Uyghur professionals who overwhelmingly live in cities. According to the 0.5% mini-census data in 2005, among the non-agricultural Uyghur population, about 58% of them worked for public sectors (Wu and Song 2014, p.165, Table 2). More specifically, 43.4% of urban Uyghurs at prime working age were hired by government and public institutions. Such a high rate of being civil servants and public employees among the urban Uyghur population is particularly striking when compared with the case of those Palestinians lived in Gaza Strip and the West Bank. As Lange (2012, p.119) notes, "prior to greater Palestinian self-governance after 1993, the Israeli government denied graduates of Palestinian universities the right to apply for civil service jobs in the occupied territories." Compared with many similar cases of divided societies, the Chinese state had offered more economic opportunities to co-opt Uyghur elites. Uyghur urban dwellers are particularly dependent on the economic support of the state in terms of housing, logistic supplies, and job opportunities. McMann (2006) shows that when it becomes harder to make a living independent of the state, individuals are less likely to challenge the authority. This argument can be generalized to the Han-Uyghur relationship in Xinjiang's cities. Because the Han Chinese is the ethnic group in power and Uyghur urban professionals are largely hired by the state, it is economically costly for the Uyghur middle class to directly confront the government. Uyghur nationalist activists living in cities face a high risk of being retaliated by the state through economic sanctions.

On the other hand, the Chinese state had not devote adequate public resources to

[3]See <http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-10/14/content_2946502.htm>, accessed March 31, 2018.

Uyghur peasants who live in rural areas until the late 2000s. By 2010, the average income in Kashgar (a prefecture in which most residents are Uyghur peasants) was only half of what it was in the northern town of Changji. Likewise, Hotan's average income was only a third of what was in Changji. The per capita GDP of both Kashgar and Hotan prefectures was lower than that of Guizhou, the poorest province in China proper. Although China's rural residents usually suffer from poorer social services and public goods regardless of their ethnicity, this urban-rural cleavage is especially conspicuous among Xinjiang's Uyghur community. For instance, with regard to the infant mortality rate, though "there is only a negligible relationship between infant survival and residency among Han" (Schuster 2009, p.436), the rate of infant survival among Uyghurs was significantly lower in cities than less developed rural areas.

In addition to the varied levels of spatial presence, in terms of governing social spaces, the Chinese state demonstrates more effective capacity of controlling education institutes than religious sites. It is well known that Uyghur students are able to engage in non-violent resistances such as protest, putting up anti-Han stickers, and disseminating nationalist flyers. For instance, in 1988, of the 127 persons accused of disseminating illegal propaganda materials in southern Xinjiang, 104 of them were primary and secondary school students (新疆历史研究论文选编 当代卷, 2008, p.120). However, as we have seen above, students actually tended to be underrepresented in the Uyghur secessionist movement. One reason may lie in the state's strategic usage of carrots and sticks. With regard to state repression, Yan (2014) shows that the state combines a top-down supervision and a bottom-up informant-based system to exert control over China's universities. The top-down tactic includes establishing specific bureaucratic departments to monitor students, scrutinizing student associations to stifle undesirable student groups, and making the Communist Youth League monopolize campus resources. In addition to these top-down measures, the party-state also deploy student informants to monitor and report suspicious college student activities.

Besides intimidating potential student challengers, the Chinese state institutionalized inter-ethnic accommodation regarding higher education throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Between 1980 and 1996, the Xinjiang government had implemented a set of preferential treatment policies to assure that minority students accounted for over 50% of all college students (Zhu, Chen and Yang 2004, pp.305–308). Wait until 2002, despite a gradual change of admission formulas after 1996, more than 45% of college students were still ethnic minorities. During this period, the party-state had also devoted amounts of material resources to satisfy aspiring educated Uyghurs. Although the Chinese state has been gradually dismantling the college student job placement system since the middle 1980s (Yang 2014), the Xinjiang government had not implemented this reform until the year 2003 (Li 2009*a*, p.369). For all college students who graduated before 2003, the Xinjiang government's various agencies "drew up employment plans each year and colleges assigned their graduates to fill these slots" (Yang 2014, p.740). Most of these university students had been assigned cadre jobs in government departments and other public service institutions. Taking the Akesu prefecture as an example - 80.8% of college students between 1995 and 2001 had been assigned jobs in the local government offices and public sectors after their graduation, of which over 70% were ethnic minorities (Li 2009*a*, p.371). In other words, before the early 2000s, Uyghur college students were the privileged class within their ethnic communities because they were most likely to be assigned civil servant jobs after graduation – a type of profession that is widely regarded as highly desirable in the Uyghur society.

Through this institutionalized system of cooptation, the Chinese state had been able to avoid a social pathology that is pervasive in a number of ethnically divided societies – high unemployment rates among educated ethnic minorities. For instance, before the Sri Lankan Civil War, Lange (2012, p.75) notes that by announcing the Sinhala Only Act, the Sinhalese government had systemically excluded Tamils from accessing government jobs - "the percentage of Tamils employed by the state in general clerical service ... declined from 41 percent in 1949 to only 5 percent 30 years later." With regard to Sri Lanka's college admission in the 1970s, "the percentage of Tamils in university plummeted by mid-decade" (Lange 2012, p.80). This discriminatory policy provided a fertile ground for political entrepreneurs to mobilize and inflamed ethnic hatred. In a review of other

diverse countries such as Cyprus, India, and Canada, Lange (2012) shows that limited employment opportunities for educated ethnic minorities promote anger, frustration, and grievance that, in turn, lead to ethnic violence. In contrast to above cases that education contributes to violence through the frustration-aggression mechanism, a recent statistical analysis finds that until the early 2000s, being a Uyghur is a strongly positive predictor of getting a job in Xinjiang's government/institutions when all other personal characteristics are the same (Wu and Song 2014, p.168, Table 4).

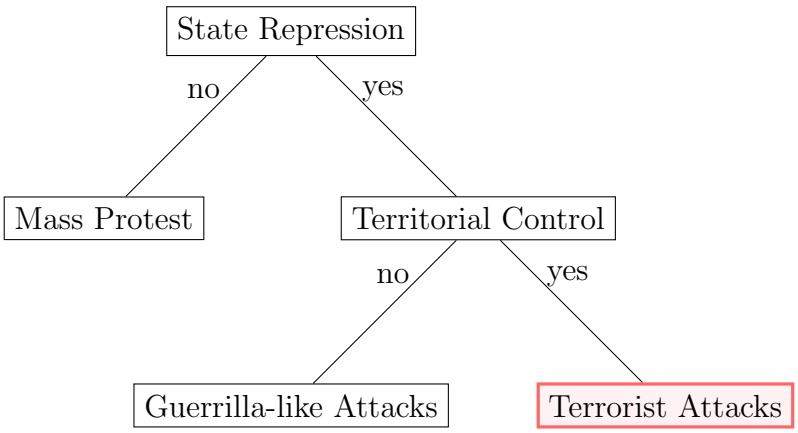
Taken together, the state's strategic usage of carrot and stick explains the reason why intellectuals and other urban professionals had not taken a lead against the Chinese state. To be true, for the most part of Uyghur intellectuals are pan-Turkic nationalists and they do not embrace the Chinese identity (Rudelson 1997, p.117). However, the acceptance of Uyghur nationalism among the Uyghur educated class does not necessarily induce them to becoming secessionist militants or even anti-government protesters.

4.2 Coercion Behavior, Coercive State Capacity, and Territorial Control

I now turn to elaborate three general characteristics of state repression in Xinjiang and how these three structural conditions affect the Uyghur nationalists' contentious repertoire. Before spelling out my main arguments, I start with a disaggregated view of state repression. In particular, I consider state repression as a multifaceted concept that includes three different dimensions: government coercion, coercive capacity of the state, and the degree of territorial control. Government coercion refers to the state's coercive behaviors that target at political dissidents (e.g., arrest, torture, and killing). Coercive capacity, on the other hand, refers to the repressive power of coercive apparatuses (e.g., the number of police, the amount of military personnel, and the budget on public security). Territorial control indicates whether the state can assure its authority over the physical space and thus prevent insurgents creating a parallel sovereignty that imposes governance. This nuanced conceptualization allows me to provide a new perspective on Uyghur dissidents' contentious toolkit.

First, local state apparatuses do not hesitate to use the force to repress discontent Uyghur protestors. Although there has been increased interests in protest policing in

Figure 23: The Causal Sequence Linking Contentious Repertoires and State Coercion



democracies during last three decades (Della Porta and Fillieule 2004; Davenport 2007*a*), few scholars have empirically explored how authoritarian regimes police contentious behavior (Greitens 2016). One primary reason is the difficulty of accessing reliable data. The field of China's contentious politics is not an exception. More comprehensive and systematic empirical works on the Chinese police handling of protest events only appear recently (Cai 2010). Based on a statistical analysis of over 10,000 protest events between 2000 and 2015, Chen (2017) presents a valuable stride into this topic. He finds that the police is more likely to use the force against the protestors when the protests occur in the countryside. Chen suggests the structural weakness of peasant accounts for this spatially uneven use of coercion. For instance, repression in the remote countryside is less likely to be known by outsiders and is less likely to be reported by mainstream media, which gives the local police more discretion in terms of using the force. This information-based reasoning is consistent with the argument of Hess and Martin (2006) and it is further supported by empirical evidence (Sutton, Butcher and Svensson 2014) - political repression is less likely to backfire if the government is able to cover up the damage of repression. In fact, Chen (2017) finds that the degree of urbanization is significantly negatively associated with the magnitude of repression. Particularly relevant to this paper, Chen's findings show that the police is more inclined to repress when the protestors are ethnic minorities.

The case of Xinjiang confirms the general pattern identified by Chen (2017). For

instance, after the Yining protests of 1997, the state responded with mass detentions to repress the oppositions (Dillon 2003, pp.94-97). Amnesty International's report indicated that "between 3,000 and 5,000 people were detained" (Holdstock 2015, p.113). According to Millward (2007, p.334), the authorities also implemented at least 190 executions after cursory trials. The Yining incident is an illustrative example because it started with a peaceful protest and later escalated into a large-scale violent riot after a confrontation with armed police (Millward 2007, p.332). The Chinese state's penchant for employing repression can encourage terrorist violence by stifling nonviolent protests. According to White (1989, p.1281), "repression of peaceful protesters may produce anger among those subjected to it – perhaps enough anger to turn protesters from peaceful methods to violent ones". His finding is further corroborated by Lichbach (1987) and Moore (1998). Both authors argue that severe repression cause a shift from peaceful resistance to violence against the state. When the state apparatuses use the force as responses to peaceful protests, discontent individuals may feel nonviolent action is infertile. Furthermore, state repression may radicalize individuals who have close ties with those victims of repression. Therefore, the positive relations between regression and political violence can explain the reason why violent tactics became the dominant forms of Uyghur's contentious actions.[4]

On the other hand, Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses are severely limited by two constraints. First, owing to the province's vast territory size, it is a logistically daunting task to allocate adequate numbers of policemen across the space. In Xinjiang, there were 8748 police officers employed in 1988 (Xinjiang Provincial Gazetteer Codification Committee 1996, p.335), and the per capita police ratio was 0.57 per thousand. This number is far laggard behind most counties in the world (see Greitens (2017, p.13, Figure 4)). Second, the policing of dissidents requires the state to invest numerous financial resources to hire and train police officers, building up associated facilities, and purchasing enforcement equipment. All of these investments entail considerable government expenditures. However, the daily operations of Xinjiang's local governments are largely dependent on fiscal transfers from the provincial government and subsidies from the center. Under

[4]Using cross-national data between 1971 and 2007, Bakker, Hill Jr and Moore (2016) find a positive relationship between government coercion and terror attacks.

most circumstances, all these intergovernmental monetary inputs are not sufficient for maintaining an efficient coercive bureaucracy. In Bortala, for example, the designated budget for public security spending was around 1.8 million in 2004 whereas the actual expenditures were more than 2.4 million (Li and Liu 2007, p.98). As a result, many local coercive agencies had to incur a large amount of debt to function (Li and Liu 2007, p.99). Put simply, Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses are generally poorly funded, especially in the rural areas. It has been note that many local coercive apparatus were even out of money for local police to hunt fugitive suspects (Li and Liu 2007, p.99). As a result, local states face daunting barriers to discipline potential perpetrators.

There are a couple of anecdotal evidence that demonstrates the weakness of Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses. For example, during the 1990s, there was a flourish underground weapon market in the region. According to Becquelin (2000, p.87), who visited Hetian in 1999, "the town (Hetian) was plastered with posts calling on people to hand in their weapons to the authorities." Suppose local governments effectively penetrated the society, it would suggest a very different scenario in terms of the regulation of weapon market. In addition, there is also ample evidence showing that clandestine secessionist groups were able to procure stock of weapons. For example, from 1990 to 1995, Chinese police captured "10,000 rounds of ammunition, more than two tons of explosives and 248 small bombs" (Hastings 2011, p.902). The limited coercive state capacity in Xinjiang's has a clear implication for understanding Uyghur nationalists' contentious activities. It has now been widely accepted that non-state actors use violent tactics based on strategic calculations of costs and benefits (Kydd and Walter 2006). As Carter (2016, p.136) notes, "Because violent non-state groups are almost always a lot weaker than the state, avoiding potentially debilitating forceful state responses is essential." Due to a lack of strong state coercive capacity in Xinjiang's rural areas, many Uyghur secessionist groups located in the countryside have stronger incentives to initiate violent attacks. For Uyghur ethno-nationalists who lived in the rural areas, it is particularly easier for them to find shelters to avoid detection by the coercive agencies (Zhao et al. 2012). Given nearly 80% of Uyghur population resided in the rural regions during this period, it is thus not

surprising that using violence become a popular tactic for these Uyghur rebels.

Third, despite its relatively weaker coercive power in Xinjiang's countryside, the Chinese state is still able to maintain a tight territorial control over the region. To be true, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, "PLA (People's Liberation Army) forces in Xinjiang are relatively few and spread very thinly" (Shichor 2004, p.123). However, the Chinese state can easily deploy a large number of military troops from the PLA's Lanzhou Military Region to Xinjiang (Shichor 2004, pp.120–121). Moreover, after experiencing social disturbs in the region, the authorities tended to immediately response with an increased police and military presence by bringing more internal security force personnel from China proper. For instance, in 1997, the most tumultuous period in Xinjiang after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government decided to add 2,234 policemen and 2,374 cadres of People's Armed Forces to local coercive agencies (Zhu, Chen and Yang 2004, p.261). In addition to taking this measure, according to Holdstock (2015, p.115), which cites the report of South China Morning Post, the state also moved "an estimated 100,000 additional troops" into Xinjiang. Because the authorities manage to maintain a military advantage over local rebels by bringing massive resources from China proper, Uyghur insurgent groups had never been able to establish territorial control in Xinjiang.

Because of insurgent groups' incapacity of seizing and hold territory, guerrilla-like actions are not in favor with these secessionist groups. Instead of initiating a facility attack, they prefer using terrorist violence such as bombing and assassination. According to De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2012), holding territorial control allows insurgents to extract greater military resources, recruit more members, cultivating stronger bargaining power, all of which makes guerrilla wars more likely. In contrast, for minority rebels who lack territorial control, they suffer from a logistical disadvantage in terms of combat capacity. Therefore, this asymmetry pushes these rebels to act underground. A lack of territorial control thus makes terrorist attack a more appealing tactic. As De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2015, p.797) notes, "when a group is underground, these tactics (guerrilla-like attacks) cannot be sustained due to organizational and logistical limitations. Underground groups will tend to focus on assassinations, selective shootings, bank

robberies, as well as bombings." In the case of Xinjiang, he failure of controlling territory by Uyghur insurgent groups explains the relative prevalence of terrorist attacks in the region's ethnic conflicts.

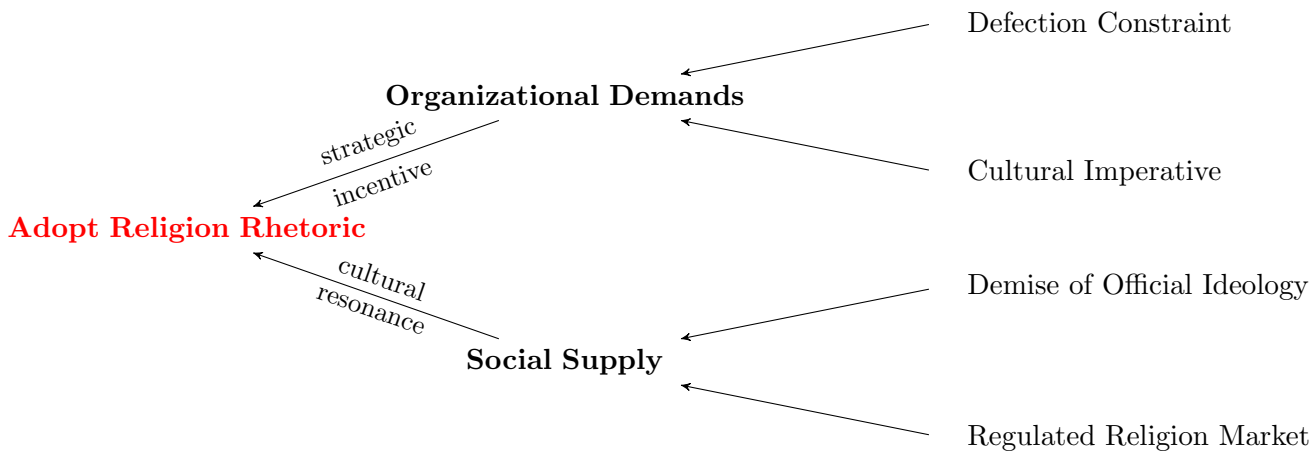
In sum, Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses are inclined to use force to repress contentious activities while it lacks adequate capacity to exert routine control over discontented minorities. On the other hand, insurgent groups are not able to seize territory from the state. This specific structural configuration deeply affects the Uyghur nationalists' contentious repertoire: they are more likely to use terrorist attacks than guerrilla-like actions and peaceful protests, as shown in Figure 23.

4.3 Organizational Demand, Social Supply, and Secessionist Discourses

Why did a majority of Uyghur secessionist groups make their claims by resorting to religion-based discourses? Rather than taking a simple perspective that naturalizes secessionist organizations' semiotic codes, I suggest an alternative state-centric explanation. That is, these group-level cultural practices are shaped by the state with which Uyghur ethno-nationalists confront. This argument is consistent with an institution-based theory with regard to the cultures of social movements, which has been advocated by Swidler (1995). For Swidler (1995, p.37), "different regime type and different forms of repression generate different kinds of social movement with different tactics and internal cultures."

In the same vein of Swidler (1995), I argue that the Chinese state's actions created an environment that is especially conductive to the adaptation of religion rhetoric by Uyghur opposition groups. In particular, this social process is composed of two components: organizational demands and social supply. By the term "organizational demands", it means that clandestine groups face a set of incentives to adopt specific internal cultures stemming from their organizational operations. In addition to organizational imperatives, rebel groups often employ certain ideological frames to mobilize their co-ethnics. To appeal to potential supporters, groups tend to use rhetoric that resonates better with the broader cultural environment in which they embedded. These framing efforts at the organization level are further determined by the social supply – the extent to which certain meanings, narrative, and symbols are shared among members of the ethnic group.

Figure 24: The Causal Mechanisms Linking Religious Rhetoric and State Practices



Instead of viewing organizational demands and social supply as exogenous variables, I contend that these two factors are deeply shaped by state practices. More specifically, with regard to organizational demands, they are affected by groups' considerations on defection constraint and cultural imperative, both of which are molded by state repression. In terms of social supply, this factor is largely influenced by the demise of official ideology and the state regulation of religion market. Again, the state plays a vital role in explaining the contour of social supply. Figure 24 visualizes the causal sequences that link state behaviors and the Uyghur dissidents' adaptation of religion rhetoric.

4.3.1 Organizational Demand

As we have seen above, Xinjiang's local governments are inclined to use the force to repress minority dissidents and therefore Uyghur ethno-nationalist groups are pressed to act underground. These clandestine organizations are extremely vulnerable to defection, namely leaking information to government agents. Because of the asymmetry between the opposition groups and the state in terms of their combat capacity, the latter can easily defeat the former if the state can successfully discover organized dissidents. This organizational constraint has been recognized as a fundamental challenge for most underground groups across the ideological spectrum around the world (Berman 2009; Della Porta 2013; Shapiro 2013). To prevent defection among their comrades, leaders of underground groups thus have strong incentives to recruit rank-and-file members with whom they can assure their loyalty. After reviewing a number of historical and con-

temporary cases, Berman (2009) shows that religiously-motivated groups are especially immune to defections. This is mainly because members of these religious organizations are embedded in a dense network of reciprocity that maximizes the costs of defections. This organizational advantage in terms of stopping defections thereby creating incentives for group leaders to recruit members through shared religious-oriented social networks and also adopt associated religion rhetoric.

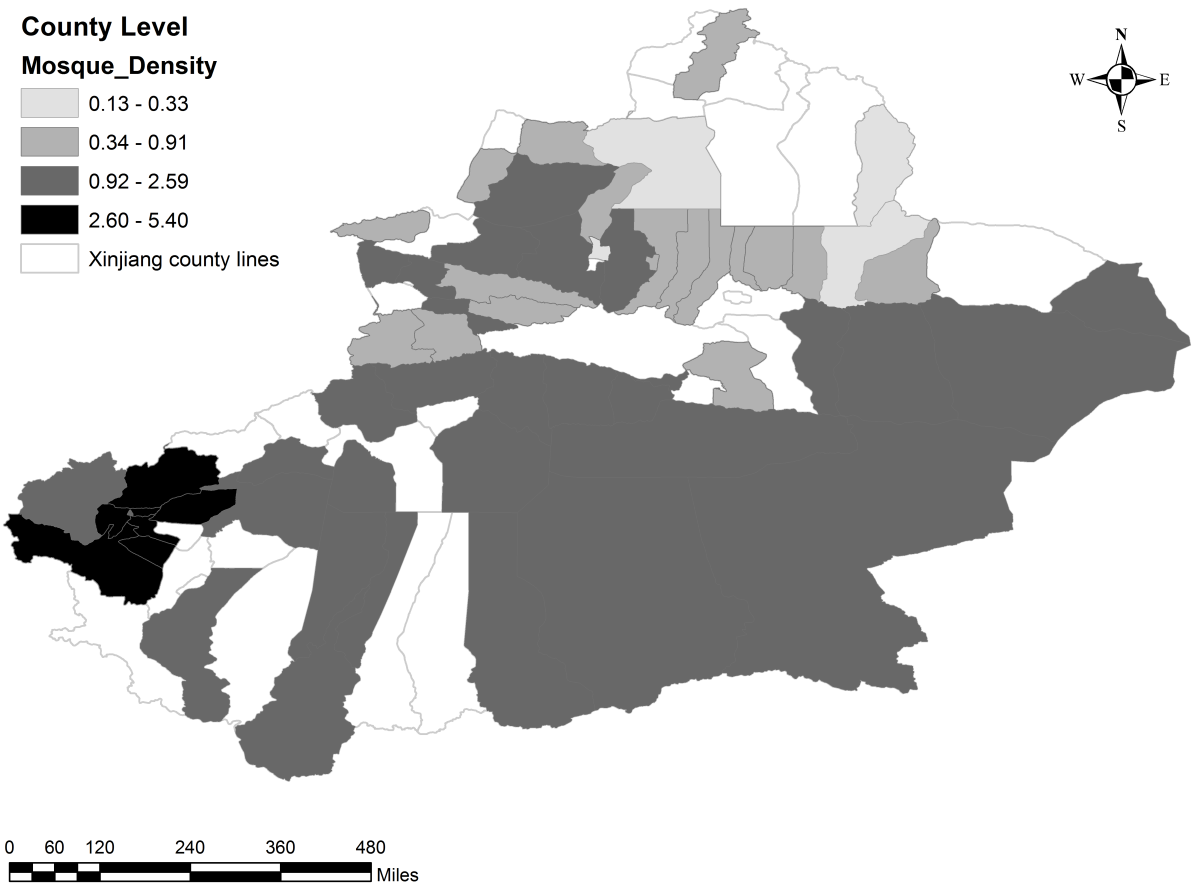
In addition to overcoming defection constraint, there is another organizational imperative for insurgent groups to employ religion-based claims. This factor is organizational culture, namely "the pattern of assumptions, ideas, and beliefs that prescribe how a group should adapt to its external environment and manage its internal structure" (Legro 1994, p.115). Underground groups operating under the shadow of state repression take extraordinary risks of being severely punished by the authorities. To survive in such a precarious environment, clandestine organizations need to develop a type of organizational culture that encourages commitment, provides justification, and boosts morale among comrades. Otherwise, these dissident groups would easily perish in the face of the adverse external environment. A strand of literature demonstrates that religion plays a large part in fulfilling these organizational functions for armed groups (Hassner 2016). More specifically, religion produces a uncompromising form of commitment to a moral and religious cause by denigrating a certain type of blasphemous enemies and viewing collective struggles as justified sacred obligations for true believers (Brubaker 2015*b*, pp.7-10). As a result, in the eyes of opposition leaders, appealing to the language of religion is particularly valuable because it can act as an indispensable organizational culture in repressive countries.

Overall, by affecting organizational demands, state repression exerts a profound impact on how Uyghur ethno-nationalist groups frame their political claims. The strategic considerations on preventing defection and developing suitable internal cultures motivate Uyghur political entrepreneurs to employ religion rhetoric.

4.3.2 Social Supply

Uyghur secessionist organizations, as well as other ethno-nationalist groups, strive to win some degree of social support among their co-ethnics. If the baseline level of support

Figure 25: Mosque Density in Xinjiang (1990s)



they enjoy from their ethnic community was low, these groups were more likely to fail. To expand their social base, Uyghur secessionists thus seek to persuade as many co-ethnic bystanders as possible. One way to achieve this goal is to use a frame that resonates well with the broader cultural environment. Benford and Snow (2000) have elaborated the idea of "resonance" that they had introduced into the study of social movement culture in 1988. To be a persuasive frame, it has to resonate with "the existing cultural sets within the bounded legitimate culture" (Williams 2004). In particular, the level of resonance is a function of two conditions: credibility and salience. Credibility refers to whether the frame content is viewed as believable. Salience refers to whether the frame content is close to the lives of targets of the movement. In post-Mao Xinjiang, religion-based frames easily satisfy these two conditions. By designating certain objects as sacred, this form of cultural beliefs entails a sense of moral order, the ultimate authority, holiness,

or "worthy of awe and veneration" (Aminzade and Perry 2001, p.156). In other words, religious symbols, rituals, and scripts are viewed as highly credible representations in the eyes of ordinary Uyghur believers. Moreover, because Uyghurs engage in daily religious activities such as Salah (prayer) and weekly congregations in the local mosques, the Islam-relevant meaning become highly palpable in their everyday experiences. Put simply, a religion-oriented frame is also qualified as salient. It is important to note that although the size of the Uyghur population only increased from 5.995 million to 9.235 million between 1982 and 2005, there was an eightfold increase in the number of mosques during the same period (Li 2014). Figure 25 presents the spatial distribution of mosque density based on Xinjiang's county gazettes. Given the popularity of Xinjiang's Islamic faith in the post-Mao era, it is thus not surprising that Uyghur ethno-nationalists found that a religion-oriented frame resonated well with the cultural environment.

My argument is that the prevalence of religious practices in post-Mao Xinjiang is largely molded by the Chinese state, especially the shift of official ideology and religion regulations. These evolved state practices created a fertile ground for the expansion of Islamic influences in the region. First and foremost, since the late 1970s, a notable change in Xinjiang's discursive field is the dissolution of Maoist ideology. A number of investigations conducted by scholars affiliated with the Xinjiang Academy of Social Science in the 1980s found that the bankrupt of Maoist discourses – atheism, class struggle, and mass liberation – had dramatically changed the way of how local Uyghur elites perceived the moral order (南疆脱贫问题社会学调查, Xu (1991, pp.98–102); 新疆农牧民社区田野调查, He (2007); 研究与探索文集, Li (2011, pp.83–100); 求是文集, Liu (2011, pp.394–414)). These investigators noted that many Uyghur cadres in southern Xinjiang lost their faith in Communism and now began to actively participate in communal religious services – it is mainly because once predominant Maoist ideas lost their moral superiority, persuasiveness, and legitimacy in the eyes of these minority elites. These political elites' shifting behaviors had a far-reaching impact – by following their more prestigious co-ethnic leaders, other ordinary Uyghur individuals were more likely to accept the legitimacy of Islamic practices and viewed these activities as morally and politically justified.

Therefore, this ideological vacuum fertilized a thriving Islamic revival.

In face of increasing Islamic influences, the party-state strictly restricts the supply of legal religious organizations and sanctioned religious activities, especially the training and recruitment of new clerics. The opening of the first officially permitted Islamic seminary in Xinjiang would wait until 1987 and the Quran was not translated into Uyghur until the same year. Moreover, the state rigidly restricted the enrollment of religious students in officially sanctioned seminaries. From 1987 to 2004, there had been only 330s graduates from this seminary. After adding graduates from other prefecture-level Islamic seminaries, there had been 1668 students educated at legal religious institutes by the year 2003. Note that the state also allowed co-opted clerics to educate 1,700 *talifu* (Wang, 2014, p.258). However, these numbers are pale when they are compared with more than 24,000 mosques in Xinjiang. The undersupply of officially permitted religious professionals creates an increasing demand for unsanctioned religious professionals and underground madrasas. Although the state pursues a repressive religion policy, it lacks sufficient state capacity to implement its strict regulation, especially in the rural areas. In China, there are two types of local departments in charge of religious affairs. United Front Work Department (UFWD), an organ of CCP, is granted the discretion over local religious affairs. In addition, Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), which is a government agency, also control over religious activities. As Sun (2017, p.1695) notes, "The UFWD is responsible for dealing with religious leaders as individuals, and the RAB with religious associations as corporate entities." However, these administrative organs are usually understaffed and thus incapable of curbing unsanctioned religious activities within their jurisdictions. According to Sun (2017, p.1709), "the national average of a county-level RAB was only 1.07 in 1995 and 1.67 in 2012." The case of Xinjiang is not an exception to the general pattern of China. For example, there were only 6 UFWD staffs in the Huocheng County to regulate 285 mosques located in the same county (UFWD of the Yili Party Committee, 2007, p.317). In addition, most local UFWDs were severely unfunded. By the end of 2003, for all counties subordinated to the Yili prefecture, none of their UFWDs had been equipped with office computers (UFWD of the Yili Party Committee,

2007, p.318). Because these ineffective regulatory agencies are not able to supervise local religion markets, underground mosques and madrasas

Due to the Chinese state's repressive and inefficient religious regulation, there is a bifurcated religious market in Xinjiang: legally sanctioned Islamic activities and clandestine madrasas. It was reported that in 1989, there were more than 665 boarding madrasas in southern Xinjiang with 7,081 *talifu* (新疆历史研究论文选编 当代卷 下, Zhang, 2008, p.119). In the early 1991, taking Xinjiang as a whole, there were 938 underground madrasas and 10,742 *talifu* (Zhu, Chen and Yang 2004, p.222). To be true, the popularity of underground madrasas does not imply a causal relationship between underground madrasas and the level of violence during this period. Otherwise, we would observe a much higher level of ethnic violence given the putative positive effect of clandestine madrasas on ethnic conflict. Wang (2010, p.312) 民族宗教统战理论政策在新疆的实践与研究 indicates that Uyghur secessionists only accounted for nearly 10% - 12% of *talifu* in southern Xinjiang. Simply put, although a disproportional percent of Uyghur ethno-nationalist was *talifu*,[5] most of these seminar students did not seek a violent overthrow of the Chinese state in the 1990s. Although a majority of unofficial madrasa graduates did not become Uyghur militants, the flourish of clandestine madrasas in the region created a dense network of religious activists across different localities (Li 2012*a*). The presence of such a underground platform makes involved individuals more receptive to radical religious ideas. First, because of their secrecy, it is safer for certain spiritual leaders to preach more radical messages in these religious schools. Second, these madrasas can serve as a socialization channel through which a more extreme ideology can spread without the monitoring by the state.

In the end, the state's religion regulations are counterproductive in two aspects: (1) it failed to deter the expansion of Islamic influences in the Uyghur population; (2) it facilitated a growing underground religious market in which religious radicals can find like-minded individuals through a network of underground madrasas. As a result, these

[5]For example, the government agents found that of all arrested Uyghur secessionists between 1990 and 1994, 30.6% of them were *talifu* (Qi 2002, p.73). On the other hand, roughly 0.15% of the total Uyghur population were *talifu* in 1991.

factors contribute to a cultural environment in which adopting religion rhetoric by ethno-nationalists is promising.

Conclusion

Existing research has made an impressive stride in terms of revealing how the structural condition affect ethnic conflicts in Xinjiang (Bovingdon 2010*a*; Finley 2013). Despite significant progress, the micro-dynamics of inter-group conflicts in the region remains unclear. In this chapter, I argue that state practices exert profound influences on the behavior of Uyghur individuals who directly engaged in ethnic conflicts. Namely, I follow what Skocpol called a "Tocquevillian" approach to explore how the Chinese state shaped the class structure, strategies, and identities of Uyghur dissidents before the late 2000s. To support my argument, I leverage a set of original datasets, including the demographic profile of over 1,000 Uyghur militants, the frequency of contentious repertoires, and organizational use of religion rhetoric.

The findings of this chapter speak to studies of ethnic violence in other parts of the world. First, much research has shown that most protagonists of ethnic conflict tend to be better educated than the general population (Lange 2012). This chapter has pointed out that this pattern is conditioned on whether the state successfully co-opts these educated elites in the first place. Second, this article extends the existing research on rebel tactics by showing how the combination of a repressive state with a weak coercive capacity leads to the dominance of terrorist attacks (Bueno de Mesquita 2013). Finally, my study offers new causal mechanisms underlying the complex interaction between state practices and the salience of religion in ethnic conflict (Isaacs 2017).

The findings of this study are also of significant policy implications. It shows that a more accommodative government policy towards ethnic minorities should reduce the inter-ethnic violent incidents. In particular, a more inclusive economic policy would improve the Uyghur peasants' well-being and thereby decreasing their motivations of joining insurgent groups. Similarly, a less restrictive religion regulation would dwarf the

market share of underground madrasas and thus mitigate the risk of radicalization among Xinjiang's lay Muslims.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Findings

This dissertation began with the puzzle of why certain geographic and social subgroups within a particular marginalized minority group are more likely than others to participate in inter-group conflict. Although ethnic conflict constitutes the most prevalent form of civil conflict after World War II, scholars know little about the cause of these within-group differences. Chapter 2 argues that intra-group variations in the propensity to participate in ethnic conflict result from differences in how local states treat subordinated minorities. To appease restive minorities, local states controlled by the ethnic group in power can offer fiscal concessions to minority members. If some geographic and social subgroups within the ethnic group received fewer state accommodations, they are more likely to engage in contentious actions. Chapter 3 presents a game-theoretical model to show the conditions under which the state is willing to offer fiscal concessions to restive ethnic minorities; after receiving concessions, these minorities are less likely to rebel. The model shows that the appeasing effect holds even considering (1) the presence of state repression and (2) the strategic interaction between the state and the dissident group.

To test the theoretical argument, I use a mixed-methods approach to explore the ongoing Han-Uyghur conflict in the Xinjiang region of China, which poses arguably the most imminent threat to China's internal security. Chapter 4 analyzes a geo-coded database of yearly ethnic violence incidents in Xinjiang from 1996 to 2005 and demonstrates considerable variation in terms of participation in ethnic conflict even in those prefectures with a Uyghur majority. I test the appeasing effect of county-level education spending as an example of public goods. Chapter 5 shows that county-level patronage targeted at minority elites results in a lower likelihood of inter-ethnic conflict in Xinjiang between 1980 and 1995. I complements these quantitative analyses with a set of interviews with Xinjiang experts, government employees, retired government officials, and local businesspersons. Chapter 6 examine the demographic profiles of over 1,000 Uyghur prisoners sentenced for endangering state security to show systematic variation in propensity of social subgroups within the Uyghur group to participate in inter-group violence.

Overall, my dissertation challenges the conventional approach in current quantitative

studies of ethnic violence – viewing each ethnic group as a unitary actor – and contributes to an emerging literature on how local states affect civil conflicts. Because the case of Xinjiang resembles ethnic violence in other developing countries in terms of ethnic grievances and geographical contexts, I expect my results generalize to other countries and groups.

Implications

2.1 The Importance of Elite-Mass Interaction

The findings of this dissertation directly challenge "groupism" in the quantitative inquiries of inter-ethnic conflict during the last decades – "the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (Brubaker 2004, p.8). Although "groupism" may serve as an intuitive starting point to explore ethnic struggles, this commonsense view also obscures a number of crucial phenomena that simply cannot be analyzed if we follow such everyday primordialism.

By reifying objects of study as "internally homogeneous" and "externally bounded" entities (Brubaker 2004, p.8), "groupism" hinders our ability to ask a host of questions that are important for a comprehensive understanding of ethnic conflict. One of these questions pertains to intra-group heterogeneity – why are certain geographic and social subgroups within a particular ethnic group more likely to participate in inter-group conflict than others? By definition, "groupism" cannot account for these witin-group variations because it treats an ethnic group *itself* as a unitary substantial entity.

Moving beyond "groupism," my dissertation unpacks intra-group heterogeneity by bringing attention to elite-mass interaction within a particular minority group. With regard to the onset of ethnic conflict, the extant literature has highlighted the critical significance of belligerent elites (Gagnon 2004), hostile masses (Kaufman 1996), sequences of actions of elites and masses (Stroschein 2012), and the condition under which the mass public responds to nationalist leaders (Giuliano 2011). In addition, scholars have

also proposed different theories to explain why some elites (Wilkinson 2006) and some ordinary people (Varshney 2003) are more likely to participate in inter-ethnic conflict.

My study advances the preexisting research on elite-mass interaction in two ways. First, it suggests an integrative framework that accounts for both elite-level and mass-level variations in the propensity to participate in conflict. In particular, changing levels of cross-ethnic patronage/public goods spending result in varying probabilities of involving in ethnic conflict for minority elites/masses. Therefore, my fiscal concessions theory makes precise predictions regarding both the *top-down* and *bottom-up* channels underlying the process that leads to inter-group conflict.

Second, the fiscal concessions theory also accounts for the relative salience of elites and masses in terms of their roles in the onset of ethnic conflict across time and space. Given the budget constraint, the state has to prioritize one type of fiscal expenditures over another in practice. Consequently, lower classes are more inclined to be chief protagonists of conflicts when the state gives priority to cross-ethnic patronage. On the other hand, minority elites are more likely to be leading actors of nationalist movements when the state devotes relatively more fiscal resources to public goods spending.

2.2 The Importance of Material Interests

My research sheds new light on ethnic conflict by presenting systematic evidence for the importance of material welfare in explaining the onset of inter-group conflict. This research thus contributes to a major debate about the independent impact of ethnic identity on the likelihood of ethnic conflict (Brass 1997; Fearon and Laitin 2000; Mueller 2000; Kalyvas 2003; Kaufmann 2005; Chandra 2006; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013).

Although most scholars explicitly or implicitly accept the idea that ethnic identity is a part of utility that human strive to maximize (Hale 2008, pp.31-32), the debate is mainly about the relative importance of material interests over communal attachments in explaining inter-group conflict across time and space. According to a group of scholars, ethnicity is "means by which people struggle for more mundane goods" (Hale 2008, p.25), especially material benefits. As a result, ethnic identity is incidental to inter-ethnic con-

flict (Lustick, Miodownik and Eidelson 2004). For example, Kalyvas (2001) argues that conflicts "on the ground" are often driven by parochial cleavages such as factional struggles or score-settling rather than "master cleavages" that highlight impersonal collective grievances. Put simply, according to Kalyvas, for many intrastate conflicts labelled as "ethnic conflict," regarding them as group-level confrontations along ethnic fault lines is misleading. In contrast, another camp of scholars contend that once constructed or reconstructed, ethnic identity is intrinsically valuable – people value ethnic identity for itself and therefore they would act on behalf of their self-identified ethnic group accordingly (Kaufman 2001).

However, as Chapter 1 has discussed, communal attachments are endogenous to both conflict process in the short term and material structural changes in the long run. In addition, it is extremely difficult to measure levels of attachment to ethnic group in localities that are vulnerable to ethnic conflict. Because of a lack of panel data that take seriously with subjective aspect of ethnic identity over-time (Lieberman and Singh 2012*a*, pp.261-263), it is hardly possible to directly assess the influence of ethnic identity by itself on the risk of ethnic conflict. Likewise, few proponents of materialist arguments have directly examined the influence of material incentives on the risk of ethnic conflict. Widely-used proxies such as GDP per capita, literacy, or measures of inter-group economic inequalities employed by quantitative research are usually susceptible to various interpretations. Therefore, without using fine-grained measures of material incentives, it is hard to tease out alternative explanations stressing the significance of communal attachments.

My study contributes to this fundamental debate by providing a rigorous estimation of the impact of material incentives on intra-group diversity in regard to inter-group conflict. The importance of material welfare is borne out by the statistical evidence. Instead of encountering an intractable problem of evaluating whether the intensity of communal attachments affects the likelihood of ethnic conflict, my approach thus shows that at least a materialist perspective is a useful theoretical tool to analyze ethnic conflict.

More importantly, this materialist argument thereby accounting for a *dynamic* interaction between the state and the ethnic minority group that ends up with an everlasting

bloody ethnic war. In the first stage, the government does not provide adequate state resources across all regions of a country, which makes ethnic minorities in the peripheral region receives few material benefits from the central government. This austere fiscal policy thus causes ethnic resentments that result in sporadic protests and ethnic terrorist attacks. The state then responses to an increasing discontent among minorities with violent repression and tightens its control over minority cultural practices. Inter-ethnic conflict and associated state repression further strengthen ethnic boundaries between the minority and the ethnic group in power. Simultaneously, the reinforcement of the minorities' collective attachments to their communal identity increases *material costs* for the state to gain their political loyalty. As a consequence of this vicious cycle of dissent and repression, fiscal concessions become gradually more costly and less effective over-time.

2.3 The Importance of Fiscal Concessions

As Lasswell famously proclaimed, politics are about "who gets what, when, and how." Ethnic politics is not an exception. Hale (2008, p.33) makes a witty remark, "ethnicity is primarily about uncertain while ethnic politics is mainly about interests." It is hard to deny that ethnic conflict is mainly about competition over the control of resources. As a consequence, modern state occupies a central position in determining inter-ethnic conflict because it acts as an increasingly important role in distributing resources in this era (Wimmer 1997; Fan 2008). The core fundamentals of state actions thus bear on fiscal expenditure. As Mann (1993, p.361) writes, "expenditure reveals state functions." Strikingly, few studies have theoretically stipulated and empirically test the mechanisms linking the state's strategic choices in its fiscal concessions and ethnic conflict.[1] To be true, the preexisting literature on how state affects ethnic conflict emphasizes three different roles played by state. However, without articulating the impact of fiscal concessions, all of them leave a key aspect of state behavior unexamined.

The first approach highlights the state as a crucial agent of categorization. Both colonial powers and communist regimes had acted as such "identifiers" to make ethnic

[1]Important exceptions include Azam (2001) and Azam and Mesnard (2003). Thyne (2006), Fjelde and De Soysa (2009), and Taydas and Peksen (2012) explore the impact of state spending on civil war while not focusing on ethnic conflict per se. Burgoon (2006) examines the influence of welfare spending on terrorism as a whole but he does not single out how these social welfare policies affect ethnic terrorism.

boundaries by choosing certain ethnic markers as criteria to regulate social interactions among subjects (Cohn 1996; Kertzer and Arel 2002; Posner 2003; Hirsch 2005; Pandey 2006; Mullaney 2011). By inscribing people onto a "classificatory grid" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, p.15), the state thus creates a system of institutionalized ethnic cleavages (Lieberman and Singh 2012*b*). Through routinizing ethnic categorization, this boundary drawing thereby generating ethnic violence by provoking group comparison and ethnic resentment (Lieberman and Singh 2017).

Extending the first classification scheme approach, the second group of scholars emphasizes the institutional bases of ethnic conflict, especially the importance of "ethnofederalism" (Bunce 1999; Cornell 2002; Roeder 2007). Compared to the preceding approach with a focus on psychological sources of nationalist sentiment, this theoretical perspective pays more attention to how state institutions facilitate ethnic mobilization. In particular, it contends that "the creation of ethnically defined federal subunits or autonomous regions furnishes ethnic leaders with institutional resources necessary to mount a secessionist challenge to the common state" (Anderson 2014). In the same vein of the resource mobilization theory in the social movement literature, this approach is more about how political entrepreneurs acquires symbolic, financial, and organizational resources to mobilize followers. In short, it has been argued that ethnofederalism provides the institutional capacity for secessionists to enhance their probabilities of success.

The third approach focuses on the state's coercive behaviour, which directly adds the costs to status quo challengers. Note that the second ethnofederalism approach stresses how state affects the probability that ethnic mobilization will achieve a desired goal. Departing from the focus on the chances of success, the coercion-based argument draws attention to the costs that ethnic minority members will incur from participating in ethnic conflict (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). However, the way in which state repression influences mass mobilization (that includes ethnic conflict) has not been settled yet (Davenport, Johnston and Mueller 2005).

My fiscal concessions theory advances the state-centered framework and complements above approaches in three ways. First, the fiscal concessions theory accounts for the

timing of ethnic conflict. Both the classification scheme approach and the ethnofederalism approach do not address the timing of conflict. For example, the Soviets did not experience large-scale ethnic conflicts until the late 1980s although the Soviet Union had officially institutionalized both ethnic boundaries and ethnofederalism since the 1930s. The fiscal concessions theory provides a better explanation. When state resources are depleted, the state can no longer afford the burden of providing fiscal concessions to ethnic minorities. As a result, the likelihood of ethnic conflict explodes. This fiscal concessions argument fits well with the historical pattern of ethnic mobilization in the late Soviet Union (Roeder 1991, pp.212-214).

Second, the discussion of state behavior toward secessionists would be incomplete if it miss the crucial role of state accommodation. Studies of state repression on the ethnic group behavior should be complemented by an investigation on how state accommodations affect the risk of ethnic conflict. As Lustick, Miodownik and Eidelson (2004, p.223) contends, rigorous repression may inhibit ethnic mobilization "at great cost and without eliminating the threat of secessionism." On the contrary to a focus on broader institution-based accommodations such as federalism and other forms of decentralization (Kohli 1997), my disaggregated approach examines the influence of more specific fiscal policies on the propensity to seek secession.[2]

Third, the fiscal concessions theory explains the *social composition* of nationalist dissidents or members of insurgent groups. Treating nationalist movements as single entities, aforementioned three approaches fall short of providing a full causal account of the kinds of actors that engage in ethnic conflict. On the contrary, my fiscal concessions theory predicts precisely *which* social subgroup is more likely to join in the inter-ethnic conflict. More specially, when the state prioritizes cross-ethnic patronage spending over public goods expenditures, status quo challengers are more likely to be those individuals from the mass public rather than privileged subgroups.

2.4 Implications for Understanding Xinjiang's Ethnic Conflict

In addition to theoretical contributions, what are policy implications of this disser-

[2]For another example of how Turkey's central government uses fiscal incentives to prevent secession, see Yörük (2012).

tation for the ongoing Han-Ughur conflict in Xinjiang? First, it shows that fiscal accommodations *did* mitigate the risk of local ethnic conflicts in the region, which casts doubts on the effectiveness of scaling down minority-targeted accommodations. Among the many reasons for the resurgence of ethnic violence in Xinjiang after the Mao era was the under-investment of state fiscal resources throughout the 1980s and 1990s. A strand of literature on the political economy of China has documented a severe deficiency of local public goods provision in most parts of the country during these two decades (Bernstein and Lü 2003; Minxin 2006; Tsai 2007). In Xinjiang, even after receiving fiscal grants from the central government, there had still been a dramatic decline of the expenditure-to-GDP ratio: it dropped from 30.46% to 17.73% during the period between 1980 and 2001 (Li 2003, p.64). Owing to the widespread fiscal crisis in the region, Xinjiang's local governments struggled to perform their essential functions in providing public services. As a result, the Chinese state's inability of making fiscal concessions caused an increasing tension between Uyghur communities and Han Chinese.

This dissertation also suggests an alternative explanation for the Chinese state's strategic choice before the 2000s. Xinjiang experts have noted that the provincial government implemented a more conciliatory approach towards local minorities between 1980 and 1997 (Millward 2007; Finley 2013). Scholars tend to attribute this more liberal policy stance to the Hu Yaobang factor – Between 1981 and 1987, Hu was a top CCP leader who preferred a permissive approach towards ethnic minorities in China. In contrast to the leader-centered perspective that Hu played a determining role, my theory highlights the Chinese state's tactical considerations about making policy concessions. Most of the policy accommodations during this period were about *symbolic goods* – a greater tolerance on religion, increasing freedom of expression among Uyghur intellectuals, and a more inclusive language policy. None of these cultural policies required the Chinese state to devote a large amount of fiscal resources to the minority population. Given the state's shrinking resource base,[3] symbolic goods were easier to concede than material goods. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the state, it was financially cheater to buy off

[3]From 1980 to 1995, in China, government revenues as a percentage of GDP had decreased from around 25% to about 10% (Yang 2004, p.71).

a small number of Uyghur elites than providing adequate public goods to the mass public. As a consequence, the state had institutionalized a system of cross-ethnic patronage to co-opt Uyghur elites. This strategy unintentionally resulted in a group of mainstream Uyghur elites who had strong vested interests in reinforcing the ethnic boundaries between Uyghurs and the Han Chinese because these Uyghur elites received state resources – jobs, education opportunities, and payrolls – mainly based on their cultural capital (Laitin 1995). Therefore, conciliatory cultural policies were largely in line with the interests of Uyghur elites who mostly worked in Xinjiang's state institutions. In return, taking advantage of their previledged positions, these educated professionals actively promoted the Uyghur national identity and resisted the pressure of cultural assimilation by the Chinese state (Rudelson 1997, pp.121-142).

Third, my theory suggests the importance of *timing* in regard to making fiscal concessions. As Chapter 5 shows, the Chinese state did not massively invest in education in Xinjiang, especially the rural areas in which Uyghurs constitute a majority of local population, until the early 2000s. Put otherwise, the Chinese state had missed a window of opportunity in the 1980s and 1990s.[4] The deficit of state provision of material resources over the course of the 1980s and 1990s increased the risk of ethnic conflict in this period. In return, inter-group violence and accompanying state repression in the 1990s had greatly strengthened ethnic boundaries between Uyghur and Han Chinese, which made the conflict even more intractable (Smith Finley 2007). Therefore, an increasing futility of offering fiscal concessions to attenuate ethnic violence may account for the Chinese state's recent preference for suppression over accommodation to manage the turmoil of Xinjiang after the late 2000s.

Future Prospects

3.1 A Comparative Perspective on Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang

Additional research is needed to determine how local states' fiscal concessions shape

[4] Smith (2000, p.197) indicates that "since the late eighties and early nineties, Uyghur identity has experienced radical changes. This decade has seen both the rapid strengthening of the Uyghur national identity in urban areas and the development of its ethno-political element among certain social groups."

the patterns of ethnic unrest outside of the context of Xinjiang. First, whether the framework presented in this dissertation can help us understand the differences between Xinjiang and other minority regions of China in regard to the frequency and intensity of inter-group conflict? Second, how does this fiscal concession theory explain intra-group variations with regard to inter-ethnic conflict in China's other minority-concentrated regions?

This empirical study of the appeasing effect of fiscal accommodations in Xinjiang provides some insights to answer these questions. First, it suggests that regions in which local minorities receive more fiscal concessions from the local governments would experience fewer ethnic conflicts. We know that Xinjiang suffers a higher level of ethnic conflict than Tibet while Mongols in Inner Mongolia are less politically contentious than Tibetans (Han 2013). In terms of fiscal concessions, there are substantial differences across these three regions. For instance, with regard to the access to cross-ethnic patronage, Tibetans are much better represented in government jobs than Uyghurs (Barnet and Akiner 1994; Fischer and Zenz 2018). On the other hand, Mongols are even better represented in government agencies than Tibetans (Côté 2015, p.365).[5] Moreover, Tibet's average education expenditures for each student have been always higher than Xinjiang (Chung 2018, p.134, Table 9.1). This pattern is thus consistent with a predicted negative relationship between the levels of fiscal concessions and relative intensities of inter-ethnic conflicts across Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia.

Second, in addition to accounting for intra-group diversity of Uyghur society, my fiscal concession model also provides a new explanation for within-group variations in Tibet. As Barnett (2009, p.11) notes, during the 1980s and 1990s, political and governmental Tibetan elites rarely involved in nationalist protests against the Chinese state in Tibet. This phenomenon can be accounted for by a predominance of Tibetan cadres in Tibet's urban state-sector employment. For example, in 2000, Tibetan cadres constituted 72 percent of total cadres employed in the Tibet Autonomous Region (Fischer 2013, p.59). In contrast, the Tibetan public was treated far worse than their elite counterparts regarding

[5] Victor, Liu and Zhang (2007, pp.17-18) shows that cross-ethnic patronage has also been widely used in Hui Muslim regions to co-opt Hui elites.

the amount of material benefits allocated by the state. Deficiency in public education is a striking example of such an uneven distribution of state resources across social classes of Tibetan society. According to the 2000 census, "the illiteracy rate for all Tibetans in China was 45.5 percent" whereas it was merely 7.3 percent for Han Chinese (Fischer 2013, p.63). The stark difference between cross-ethnic patronage and public goods provision thereby explaining why Tibetan elites were less likely to engage in nationalist movements than their disadvantaged co-ethnics.

3.2 Beyond China

Using Xinjiang as a case in point, my dissertation suggests that the way in which local states allocates fiscal concessions plays a critical role in determining substantial within-group variations in the propensity to participate in inter-ethnic conflict. Additional empirical research is needed to explore the extent to which my theoretical argument can be generalized to regions other than China.

Previous studies have shown the prevalence of intra-group diversity in a host of cases. Within a single ethnic minority group, some geographic segments are more likely to engage in inter-group violence. Reinares (2004, pp.478-479) demonstrates that approximately half of ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*) members originated from Guipuzconas, which is a province that accounts for only 25 percent of the Basques in Spain. Sociological profile of PRIA (Provisional Irish Republican Army) members also suggests a disproportional share of ethnic militants originated from certain counties of Ireland (Gill and Horgan 2013, p.447, Table 7). In addition to this geographic aspect of intra-group variation, research also reveals considerable within-group differences in the propensity to join in inter-ethnic conflict across social classes. For example, Lange (2012, pp.93-95) shows that the educated Greek elite class rather than the general public played a vital role in sparking the separatist movement in Cyprus.

Several case studies on ethnic violence lend support to the explanatory power of the fiscal concession theory. Wimmer (2002) finds that the ethno-nationalist movement in Chiapas was led by educated segments of the indigenous population. One of the primary reasons motivated these minority elites to initiate ethnic mobilization was the Mexican

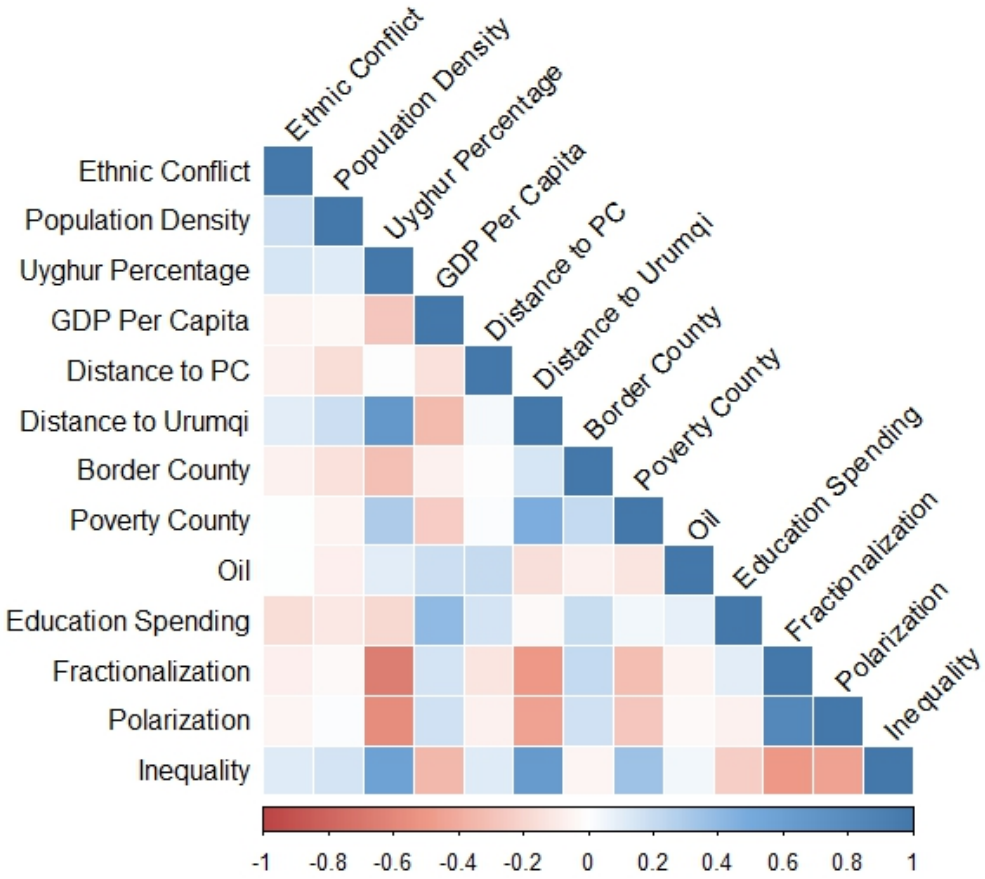
state's inability of providing adequate cross-ethnic patronage to buy off these aspiring individuals. Similarly, for the case of ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, Lange (2012, pp.75) shows that the failure of guaranteeing the access to white-collar jobs in the public sector for Tamils agitated the violent separatism. In short, it seems plausible that the fiscal concessions theory would apply to other contexts as well. I hope my dissertation proves a useful springboard for further research.

Appendix A

Complementary Information for Chapter 4

1 Correlation Matrix

Figure 1: Correlation Matrix



2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Summary Statistics Without Missing Data (1996–2005)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Conflictual Event	870	0.080	0.272	0	1
Han-Uyghur Conflict	870	0.076	0.265	0	1
Number of Han-Uyghur Conflicts	870	0.116	0.505	0	6
Spatial Lag	890	0.090	0.167	0.000	1.000
Uyghur Percentage	866	41.775	38.540	0.156	99.453
GDP per capita	848	0.309	0.425	0.052	5.780
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	910	96.593	93.595	0	406
Distance to Ürümqi	920	540.826	338.227	0	1,241
Border County	1,020	0.304	0.460	0	1
Poverty County	1,020	0.245	0.430	0	1
Oil	1,020	0.137	0.344	0	1
Population Density	848	11.832	1.561	7.200	17.071
Ethnic Fractionalization	866	0.389	0.171	0.011	0.754
Ethnic Polarization	866	0.556	0.220	0.022	0.970
Horizontal Inequality	960	33.075	17.920	−8.659	62.850
Education Spending per capita	779	10.319	6.625	0.015	58.914

3 Data Sources

Table 2: Data Sources for Controls

Variables	Source
Uyghur Percentage	*Xinjiang 50 Years* (Qiu 2005)
GDP per capita	Same as above
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	Google Map
Distance to Ürümqi	Same as above
Border County	<http://www.gov.cn/>
Poverty County	<http://www.cpad.gov.cn/>
Oil	*General Chronicles of Xinjiang: Oil Industry*(1999)
Population Density	*Xinjiang 50 Years*
Ethnic Fractionalization	Statistical Yearbooks of Xinjiang
Ethnic Polarization	Same as above
Horizontal Inequality	*Xinjiang's* 1% *1990 Census Data*

4 Robustness Checks

Following Escribà-Folch, Meseguer and Wright (2015), Table 3 reports the results after controlling for the respective unit means for each independent variable. Compared with the fixed effects model, this approach enjoys a unique advantage. When the dependent variable is a binary indicator as this case, the conditional logit (probit) model with the fixed effects automatically drops all observations that their dependent variables are constant. In other words, if a county never experienced any conflicts during the studied period, it would be deleted in the sequential analysis (King 2001). Since nearly 44% of all observations in my study would be dropped by taking a fixed effects model, this would greatly bias the result of estimations. By conditioning the respective unit means for each independent variable, I am able to get an approximation of fixed effect model without dropping any observations (Wooldridge 2010, p.487).

Table 4 also runs a conditional logit model with the county fixed effects. Table 5 deals with the prefecture-level heterogeneity by including prefecture fixed effects. These model specifications only include time-varying covariates. Table 3–5 provide additional evidence to show that my analysis is robust to unit heterogeneity.

Table 6 shows that the pacifying effect of local education spending persists when we use an alternative measure of the independent variable. The evidence reported in the table suggests that my findings do not change even if we change the measure of independent variable.

In Table 7, I redo the main analysis while controlling for the presence of previous conflicts, external kin ties, and non-education spending. Table 7 shows that my findings do not change with the addition of the new control variables. As shown in Table 8, the main result is unchanged when I use different count models: the negative binomial model with fixed effects, and the zero-inflated negative binomial model with fixed effects. It suggests that my findings are not driven by the specification of dependent variables.

Given that my theoretical framework focuses on the ramification of government spending, in Table 9, I thus restrict the sample to those conflicts between the state and the Uyghur group. I have classified the dependent variable (i.e., an ethnic conflict incident) on

the basis of the attacked target: If the targets were civilians, these events were identified as inter-communal conflicts. On the other hand, if the targets were government officials, local police, or government facilities, these events were labeled as anti-government conflicts. Of the total 105 conflict events occurred between 1997 and 2005, 23 of them were inter-communal conflicts (21.9%), 80 of them were conflicts between the state and Uyghurs (76.2%), and other 2 cannot be classified because of missing information on targets (1.9%). Table 9 redoes the analysis while using the occurrence of an anti-government conflict as the dependent variable. As evident from the table, the placating effect of education spending is robust to this model specification.

Table 3: BTSCS Model by Conditioning the Unit Means

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.637^{**}	-0.593^{**}	-0.642^{**}	-0.629^{**}
	(0.268)	(0.261)	(0.259)	(0.255)
Spatial Lag		0.875		0.529
		(0.702)		(0.857)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.443^{**}	0.470^{**}	0.363^{*}	0.387^{*}
	(0.211)	(0.212)	(0.197)	(0.204)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	-8.520^{**}	-8.982^{**}	-8.200^{**}	-8.576^{**}
	(4.039)	(4.253)	(4.010)	(4.230)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	−0.0002	−0.0003	0.001	0.0004
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	−0.001	−0.001	-0.002^{**}	-0.002^{**}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	−0.007	0.045	0.069	0.104
	(0.349)	(0.344)	(0.345)	(0.344)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	0.214	0.233	0.582	0.534
	(0.407)	(0.356)	(0.449)	(0.440)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	1.003^{**}	1.043^{**}	1.473^{***}	1.458^{***}
	(0.444)	(0.479)	(0.450)	(0.481)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.638	−0.690	-0.841^{*}	-0.847^{*}
	(0.482)	(0.477)	(0.503)	(0.499)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$			−15.442	−16.171
			(11.288)	(13.001)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$			6.127	6.708
			(5.872)	(6.646)
Horizontal Inequality in 1990			0.035	0.035
			(0.029)	(0.031)
t	0.033	0.099	0.104	0.143
	(0.557)	(0.556)	(0.581)	(0.576)
t	−0.246	−0.257	−0.260	−0.264
	(0.233)	(0.234)	(0.237)	(0.235)
t	0.027	0.028	0.029	0.029
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Constant	−2.269	−2.864	-4.558^{*}	-4.649^{**}
	(1.981)	(1.962)	(2.376)	(2.086)
Observations	670	670	670	670
Log Likelihood	−125.633	−123.778	−122.750	−121.368
Akaike Inf. Crit.	285.265	285.557	289.500	290.736

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4: BTSCS Model: Two–Way Fixed Effects Models

	Dependent Variable	
	Ethnic Conflict	
	(1)	(2)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.480^{**}	-0.098^{**}
	(0.213)	(0.047)
Spatial Lag	0.308	−0.320
	(0.289)	(0.301)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.065	0.192^{***}
	(0.050)	(0.047)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.212	0.385^{***}
	(0.157)	(0.078)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	−3.094	−0.093
	(2.699)	(0.291)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	-7.797^{***}	4.291^{***}
	(2.520)	(1.587)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$	3.559^{***}	-1.944^{**}
	(1.207)	(0.860)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.253	-14.010^{***}
	(5.959)	(4.454)
t	0.134	0.551^{***}
	(0.156)	(0.164)
t^2	−0.057	0.013
	(0.041)	(0.046)
t^3	0.007^{**}	0.0004
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant	30.974	−2.048
	(27.193)	(3.071)
County Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Observations	295	295
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 5: BTSCS Model: Prefecture Fixed Effects Models

	Dependent Variable		
	Ethnic Conflict		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.258^{***}	-0.250^{***}	-0.269^{***}
	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.090)
Spatial Lag	0.124	0.155	0.118
	(0.325)	(0.326)	(0.324)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.504^{***}	0.477^{***}	0.565^{***}
	(0.126)	(0.134)	(0.109)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.002^{***}	0.002^{**}	0.003^{***}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.001	0.001	0.001^{*}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	-0.026	-0.044	-0.067
	(0.198)	(0.195)	(0.198)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	-0.043	-0.108	-0.056
	(0.229)	(0.234)	(0.225)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.277^{***}	0.268^{***}	0.301^{***}
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Oil$_{t-1}$	-0.407^{*}	-0.381^{*}	-0.435^{*}
	(0.230)	(0.224)	(0.236)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.598		2.192^{*}
	(0.522)		(1.119)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$		0.068	-1.179^{*}
		(0.315)	(0.698)
t	-0.261	-0.265	-0.282
	(0.221)	(0.220)	(0.217)
t^2	0.056	0.056	0.062
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.063)
t^3	-0.002	-0.002	-0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Constant	-4.258^{***}	-3.995^{***}	-4.431^{***}
	(1.172)	(1.183)	(1.155)
Prefecture Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	567	567	567
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 6: Effects of Public Goods as % of GDP on Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang, 1997–2005

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Education Expenditure / GDP$_{t-1}$	-0.615^{**}	-0.587^{**}	-0.580^{**}	-0.648^{**}
	(0.248)	(0.252)	(0.267)	(0.264)
Spatial Lag	0.316	0.392	0.440	0.361
	(0.638)	(0.641)	(0.634)	(0.647)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.036^{***}	0.033^{***}	0.030^{***}	0.033^{***}
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.824^{***}	0.796^{***}	0.877^{**}	0.943^{**}
	(0.293)	(0.288)	(0.351)	(0.361)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.004^{**}	0.003^{*}	0.002	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	−0.001	−0.001	-0.002^{*}	-0.002^{*}
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	0.526	0.547	0.563	0.522
	(0.461)	(0.461)	(0.438)	(0.422)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	0.290	0.174	0.124	0.183
	(0.471)	(0.482)	(0.474)	(0.507)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.558^{***}	0.549^{***}	0.530^{***}	0.527^{***}
	(0.138)	(0.136)	(0.143)	(0.145)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.702	−0.682	−0.638	−0.645
	(0.464)	(0.458)	(0.451)	(0.459)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	0.979			2.105
	(0.976)			(1.704)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$		0.244		−1.271
		(0.630)		(1.103)
Horizontal Inequality in 1990			0.022	0.024
			(0.021)	(0.022)
t	−0.477	−0.489	−0.481	−0.460
	(0.582)	(0.583)	(0.585)	(0.592)
t^2	0.009	0.012	0.008	−0.002
	(0.203)	(0.203)	(0.205)	(0.210)
t^3	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.006
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Constant	-10.348^{***}	-9.889^{***}	-9.872^{***}	-10.057^{***}
	(1.972)	(1.876)	(1.650)	(1.836)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	848	848	838	838
Log Likelihood	−152.869	−153.149	−152.073	−151.635
Akaike Inf. Crit.	353.739	354.297	352.147	355.270

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7: Effects of Previous Conflicts, Non-Education Spending, and External Kin Ties on Conflict Incident in Xinjiang, 1997-2005

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.417^{***}	-0.417^{***}	-0.423^{***}	-0.506^{***}
	(0.118)	(0.123)	(0.110)	(0.100)
Previous Conflict	1.929^{***}	1.873^{***}	1.971^{***}	2.071^{***}
	(0.135)	(0.128)	(0.125)	(0.151)
Spatial Lag	0.223	0.231	0.234	0.278
	(0.345)	(0.324)	(0.311)	(0.304)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.009^{*}	0.009^{*}	0.013^{**}	0.010^{**}
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.517^{***}	0.479^{***}	0.470^{***}	0.341^{**}
	(0.103)	(0.111)	(0.106)	(0.149)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.0001	0.0004	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.00004	0.00004	−0.0002	0.0001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0005)
Border County	-0.329^{*}	-0.311^{*}	−0.199	−0.314
	(0.188)	(0.179)	(0.202)	(0.198)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	−0.020	0.060	−0.049	0.040
	(0.230)	(0.232)	(0.227)	(0.223)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.132^{*}	0.138^{**}	0.173^{**}	0.148^{**}
	(0.075)	(0.070)	(0.087)	(0.065)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.398	-0.407^{*}	-0.436^{*}	−0.397
	(0.247)	(0.237)	(0.227)	(0.271)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$		−0.455	0.926	−0.149
		(0.778)	(1.065)	(0.789)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$		0.647	0.015	0.343
		(0.511)	(0.704)	(0.570)
Horizontal Inequality in 1990		−0.002		
		(0.009)		
Distance to Bishkek			−0.002	
			(0.003)	
Distance to Almaty			0.003	
			(0.003)	
Non − Education Spending$_{t-1}$				0.373
				(0.276)
t	−0.136	−0.124	−0.111	−0.100
	(0.233)	(0.227)	(0.226)	(0.224)
t^2	0.017	0.016	0.023	0.008
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.070)	(0.071)
t^3	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	-3.492^{***}	-3.704^{***}	-4.856^{***}	-4.816^{***}
	(0.922)	(0.909)	(1.618)	(1.276)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	763	754	718	763
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: Count Models: Effects of Education Spending on Conflict Events in Xinjiang, 1997-2005

	Dependent Variable	
	Number of Ethnic Conflicts	
	negative binomial	*zero-inflated count data*
	(1)	(2)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.705^{**}	-0.705^{**}
	(0.285)	(0.321)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.033^{***}	0.033^{***}
	(0.009)	(0.010)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	1.260^{***}	1.260^{***}
	(0.331)	(0.334)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.003	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	0.212	0.212
	(0.429)	(0.458)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	0.731	0.731
	(0.460)	(0.485)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.548^{***}	0.548^{***}
	(0.124)	(0.123)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	2.754	2.754
	(1.867)	(1.826)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$	-0.388	-0.388
	(1.318)	(1.324)
Oil$_{t-1}$	-0.631	-0.631
	(0.499)	(0.489)
Constant	-9.200^{***}	-9.200^{***}
	(1.950)	(1.965)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Observations	763	763
Log Likelihood	-177.071	-176.071
θ	0.820^{**} (0.346)	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	394.142	
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 9: Effects of Education Spending on Ethnicity-based Conflicts between the State and Uyghurs, 1997–2005

	Dependent Variable	
	Anti-government Ethnic Conflict	
	(1)	(2)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$	-0.802^{**}	-0.293^{***}
	(0.396)	(0.107)
Spatial Lag	0.819	−0.023
	(0.845)	(0.354)
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.003	−0.001
	(0.008)	(0.003)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.575	0.577^{***}
	(0.561)	(0.108)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.0002	0.002^{*}
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.002	0.002^{*}
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Border County	0.275	0.092
	(0.365)	(0.194)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	−0.627	−0.374
	(0.491)	(0.251)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.317^{***}	0.280^{***}
	(0.101)	(0.057)
Ethnic Fractionalization$_{t-1}$	−2.649	0.682
	(3.011)	(1.094)
Ethnic Polarization$_{t-1}$	0.746	−0.754
	(1.691)	(0.647)
Oil$_{t-1}$	-0.936^{*}	-0.530^{**}
	(0.516)	(0.228)
t	0.008	−0.133
	(0.423)	(0.192)
t^2	−0.092	0.064
	(0.147)	(0.057)
t^3	0.008	−0.004
	(0.012)	(0.004)
Constant	-4.968^{**}	-3.945^{***}
	(2.149)	(1.144)
Prefecture Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Observations	763	763
Log Likelihood	−141.164	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	342.328	
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

5 Endogeneity Bias Concern

A plausible concern is the endogeneity of the key independent variable, here local public goods provision. Essentially, the endogeneity problem is composed of two issues: (1) reverse causality and (2) the omitted variable bias. For the first issue, the strategic interaction between the state and the local minorities may shape the pattern of local fiscal spending. It is possible that the state may punish those areas with more intensive insurgencies by cutting off the budget of public goods spending. Consequently, severer ethnic violence actually causes a decreasing level of public goods investments. Using economic sanction as a trick to weaken the support base of political oppositions has been identified in many other cases (Magaloni 2006). To address this issue, I directly examine how previous violence affects local public goods spending. The reverse causality hypothesis implies that more conflict-ridden counties tended to spend significantly less money on education. I argue that it is not the case. To directly test this hypothesis, I use a lagged value of ethnic conflict as an independent variable while using the education spending as the dependent variable. The results from an OLS model with year fixed effects are reported in Table 10. The data do not support the reverse causality hypothesis: counties with more ethnic conflicts did not spend significantly less money on local education.

The more challenging concern lies in the second issue. It is possible that an unobservable confounding variable causes the correlation between the provision of local public goods and the odds of ethnic conflict. In terms of this confounding variable problem, compared with the existing literature, my research design enjoys several advantages. First, in contrast to country-level analyses, this subnational-level approach is less vulnerable to the unobserved heterogeneity. Usually, the country-level heterogeneity tends to be much higher than the within-country variations. Second, by employing a set of fixed effects models, my basic finding still holds even after ruling out the impact of other time-fixed confounding variables. Finally, the negative correlation between education spending and the risks of ethnic conflicts is robust to a range of competing explanations. The robustness of this significant association enhances our confidence on its internal validity.

In order to further deal with this endogeneity issue, I also estimate my model using

an instrumental variable (IV) approach. Specifically, I use the education spending of "average nearest neighbor" as the IV: it is constructed by dividing the overall education expenditures of neighboring counties over the number of these neighboring counties. I use this variable as my IV on the basis of the well-documented political economy literature on personal incentives of local leaders in China. County-level inter-jurisdiction competition is very prevalent in China (Lü and Landry 2014). Local officials have strong career incentives to impress their senior leaders for the purpose of promotion. That means they have to outperform their competitors who are usually neighboring counties' leaders. Qualitative evidence also shows that county-level leaders in Xinjiang are evaluated by upper-level governments in terms of a set of education-relevant indicators: literacy rates, school enrollment rates, and the implementation of compulsory schooling laws (Li 2009*b*). As a result, a leader from a county that is surrounded by counties with more education spending tends to invest more on public education. It is plausible to argue that this IV satisfies the exclusion restriction. One may argue that this variable exerts another indirect effect by affecting the spatial lag of conflict. However, as above tables show, this postulated contagion effect is limited and non-significant.

Table 11 reports the results based on this IV strategy. The first column, which is the first stage of the estimation, shows that my IV is a significant positive predictor of education spending. The F-statistic of "average nearest neighbor"'s coefficient is 270.13, suggesting that it is a strong instrument (**?**). The second column, which is a probit model in the second stage, lends more empirical support for the appeasing effect of education spending.

Table 10: Effects of Prior Ethnic Conflict on Education Spending, 1997–2005

	Dependent Variable
	Education Spending
$Ethnic\ Conflict_{t-1}$	-0.0001
	(0.0004)
$GDP\ per\ capita_{t-1}$	0.009^{***}
	(0.003)
$Population\ Density_{t-1}$	-0.001^{***}
	(0.0003)
$Poverty\ County_{t-1}$	-0.001
	(0.001)
Oil_{t-1}	0.001
	(0.001)
$Ethnic\ Fractionalization_{t-1}$	0.010^{***}
	(0.003)
$Ethnic\ Polarization_{t-1}$	-0.006^{**}
	(0.002)
$Government\ Expenditure\ /\ GDP_{t-1}$	0.0003^{***}
	(0.00004)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Constant	0.010^{**}
	(0.004)
Observations	847
R^2	0.792
Adjusted R^2	0.788
Residual Std. Error	0.003 (df = 829)
F Statistic	185.710^{***} (df = 17; 829)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 11: Instrumental Variable Approach: Effects of Education Spending on Conflict Events in Xinjiang, 1997-2005

	Dependent Variable	
	Education Spending	Ethnic Conflict
	First Stage	*Second Stage*
	(1)	(2)
IV: Average Nearest Neighbor	0.662***	
	(0.040)	
Uyghur Percentage$_{t-1}$	−0.00003***	0.004
	(0.00001)	(0.006)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.007***	1.424***
	(0.0005)	(0.434)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	−0.00000	0.001
	(0.00000)	(0.001)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.00001***	0.001
	(0.00000)	(0.001)
Border County	−0.001*	−0.044
	(0.001)	(0.250)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	0.0001	0.349*
	(0.001)	(0.197)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	−0.002***	−0.054
	(0.0002)	(0.153)
Oil$_{t-1}$	0.001**	−0.375
	(0.001)	(0.330)
Education Spending$_{t-1}$		−0.150**
		(0.073)
t		−0.271
		(0.272)
t^2		−0.016
		(0.088)
t^3		0.005
		(0.007)
Constant	0.021***	−0.292
	(0.002)	(2.185)
Observations	762	677
R^2	0.547	
Adjusted R^2	0.541	
Log Likelihood		−97.228
Akaike Inf. Crit.		220.457
Residual Std. Error	0.005 (df = 752)	
F Statistic	100.828*** (df = 9; 752)	
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 12: Effects of Prior Ethnic Conflict on Government Spending, 1997–2005

	Dependent Variable			
	Government Spending		Government Spending Per Capita	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
$Ethnic\ Conflict_{t-1}$	0.247	−0.015	0.006	−0.012
	(0.192)	(0.019)	(0.096)	(0.017)
$GDP\ per\ capita_{t-1}$	0.459**	0.006	0.427***	0.036
	(0.222)	(0.071)	(0.112)	(0.077)
$Population\ Density_{t-1}$	0.147***	−0.061	−0.184***	−0.103
	(0.025)	(0.129)	(0.032)	(0.108)
$Poverty\ County_{t-1}$	−0.138*	−0.606***	0.063	0.773***
	(0.081)	(0.232)	(0.090)	(0.210)
Oil_{t-1}	0.179	1.017***	0.077	−1.293***
	(0.128)	(0.200)	(0.126)	(0.167)
$Ethnic\ Fractionalization_{t-1}$	−0.729**	−0.326	0.564	−0.466
	(0.288)	(0.375)	(0.358)	(0.380)
$Ethnic\ Polarization_{t-1}$	0.372*	0.162	−0.043	0.236
	(0.198)	(0.177)	(0.252)	(0.178)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County Fixed Effects		Yes		Yes
Constant	6.112***	8.442***	−2.118***	−2.902**
	(0.323)	(1.521)	(0.428)	(1.288)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

6 Causal Mechanism

Table 13: Effects of Education Spending on Primary School Enrollment Rates in Xinjiang

	Dependent Variable	
	Primary School Enrollment Rates	
	(1)	(2)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	7.495	0.603
	(5.886)	(0.521)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.349	1.569*
	(0.272)	(0.873)
Poverty County$_{t-1}$	1.356	4.502***
	(0.859)	(1.571)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.670	−0.274
	(1.589)	(1.610)
Cumulative Average of Education Expenditure / GDP$_{t-1}$	3.652***	0.758**
	(1.291)	(0.357)
County Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Constant	22.111***	−1.635
	(3.536)	(10.272)
Observations	708	708
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

7 Local Coercive Capacity in Xinjiang

In Xinjiang, the Chinese state's coercive capacity was limited during the 1990s and the early 2000s. First, there was a relatively small number of the regular police force in the region. In Xinjiang, there had been 8748 police officers by the end of the 1980s (Unpublished Xinjiang Public Security Gazette, p.335), and the per thousand police ratio was only 0.57. This number is far laggard behind most counties in the world (see Greitens (2017, p.13)). Throughout the period in which Wang Lequan ruled as Xinjiang's Party Secretary (1994-2010), the size of police recruitment was much smaller than its size after the 2009 Urumqi riot (Zenz and Leibold 2017*b*, p.22). Second, the regional presence of People's Liberation Army was also weak at that time. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, "PLA (People's Liberation Army) forces in Xinjiang are relatively few and spread very thinly" (Shichor 2004, p.123). Third, Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses were poorly funded, especially in the rural areas. It has been reported that many local coercive apparatus were even out of money for local police to hunt fugitive suspects (Li and Liu 2007, p.99). As a result, local states face daunting barriers to deter potential perpetrators. There is a couple of anecdotal evidence demonstrating the weakness of Xinjiang's coercive apparatuses before the mid-2000s. For example, during the 1990s, there was a flourish underground weapon market in the region. According to Becquelin (2000, P.87), who visited Hetian (a major town in Southern Xinjiang) in 1999, "the town (Hetian) was plastered with posts calling on people to hand in their weapons to the authorities." Furthermore, there is also ample evidence showing that clandestine secessionist groups were able to procure stock of weapons. For example, during the early 1990s, Uyghur secessionist organizations were able to gain "10,000 rounds of ammunition, more than two tons of explosives, and 248 small bombs" (Hastings 2011, p.902).

This situation changed dramatically after the 2009 Urumuqi riot. Since then, the Chinese state had drastically expend its repressive power in Xinjiang by increasing the number of regular police officers and Special Police Units (Zenz and Leibold 2017*b*). The state repression has further intensified after Chen Quanguo assumed power as Xinjiang's Party Secretary in 2016 (Zenz and Leibold 2017*a*). Zenz's recent study shows that Chen

escalates the level of repression by promoting massive "re-education campaign" to an extreme degree (Zenz 2018).

There is ample empirical evidence showing that state repression ignites anti-state violence in the context of ethnic conflict (Asal, Early and Schulzke 2017, pp.489-491). In particular, when a state engages in repression against minority oppositions, the opposition organizations are more likely to use violent tactics (Asal and Phillips 2018). Because more autocratic countries are more likely to use coercion against dissidents (Davenport 2007*a*), ethnopolitical organizations are more likely to use violent measures to pursue their political goals in authoritarian settings. In Xinjiang, despite their relatively weak coercive power before the mid-2000s, local state apparatuses did not hesitate to use the force to repress discontent Uyghur protestors. The Yining protests of 1997 is an illustrative example - it started with a peaceful protest and later escalated into a large-scale violent riot after a confrontation with armed police (Millward 2007, p.332). The Chinese state's penchant for employing repression can encourage violence by stifling nonviolent protests. This may explain why a majority of Uyghur contentious activities tend to be violent in Xinjiang. On the other hand, ethnic conflicts in more democratic contexts may be more likely to manifest in nonviolent forms.

Appendix B

Complementary Information for Chapter 5

1 Summary Statistics

Table 1: Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Conflictual Event	1,548	0.052	0.221	0	1
Number of Conflicts	1,392	0.075	0.347	0	4
Explanatory Variable					
Patronage Spending per Non-Han	1,004	19.076	16.093	0.733	205.195
Control Variables					
Minority Percentage	1,264	0.643	0.281	0.034	0.995
GDP per capita	1,344	1,620.127	2,080.051	28.000	30,223.000
Population Density	1,296	66.375	313.174	0.110	2,683.000
Ethnic Fractionalization	1,404	0.374	0.205	0.019	0.740
Ethnic Polarization	1,404	0.588	0.271	0.037	0.970
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	1,452	96.860	93.567	0	406
Distance to Ürümqi	1,468	539.602	337.803	0	1,241
Border County	1,628	0.305	0.460	0	1
Oil	1,628	0.085	0.280	0	1
Inequality	1,596	24.234	17.314	−8.659	62.850
Percent of Minority Cadre	1,253	59.026	22.696	5.286	100.000
Han Chinese Party Secretary	1,388	0.910	0.286	0	1
Fiscal Revenue per capita	1,233	52.069	83.823	−16.292	710.841
Education Spending per Non-Han	618	23.614	11.777	0.496	83.238
XPCC	1,632	0.098	0.297	0	1
Rank of Police Department Staffing	1,408	1.341	0.601	1	3

2 Data Sources

Table 2: Data Sources

Variables	Source
Conflictual Event	Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) and unpublished draft of Xinjiang Public Security Gazette
Number of Conflicts	Cao, Duan, Liu, Piazza and Wei (2018) and unpublished draft of Xinjiang Public Security Gazette
Patronage Spending per Non-Han	National Prefecture and County Finance Statistics Compendium Local Organizational History Statistics and gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang
Minority Percentage	*Xinjiang 50 Years* (Qiu 2005)
GDP per capita	*Xinjiang 50 Years* (Qiu 2005)
Population Density	*Xinjiang 50 Years* (Qiu 2005)
Ethnic Fractionalization	Local gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang
Ethnic Polarization	Local gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	Google Map
Distance to Ürümqi	Google Map
Border County	<http://www.gov.cn/>
Oil	*General Chronicles of Xinjiang: Oil Industry* (1999)
Horizontal Inequality	*Xinjiang's* 1% *Census Data (1982 and 1990)*
Percent of Minority Cadre	Local Organizational History Statistics and gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang
Han Chinese Party Secretary	Local gazetteers of each county in Xinjiang
Fiscal Revenue per capita	National Prefecture and County Finance Statistics Compendium
Education Spending per Non-Han	National Prefecture and County Finance Statistics Compendium
XPCC	Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps Statistic Yearbook
Rank of Police Department Staffing	unpublished draft of Xinjiang Public Security Gazette

3 Xinjiang's Local Political Exclusion

Figure 1: County-Level Percentage of Minority Party Secretary in Xinjiang (1980–1995)

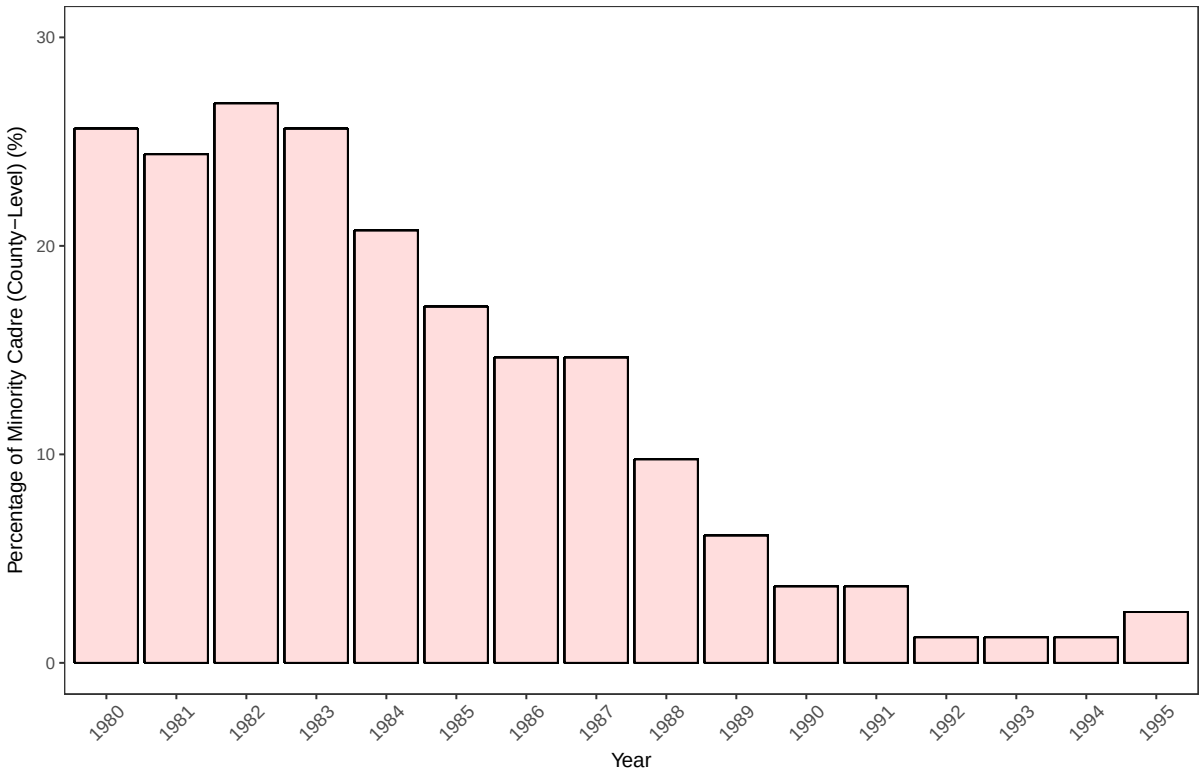
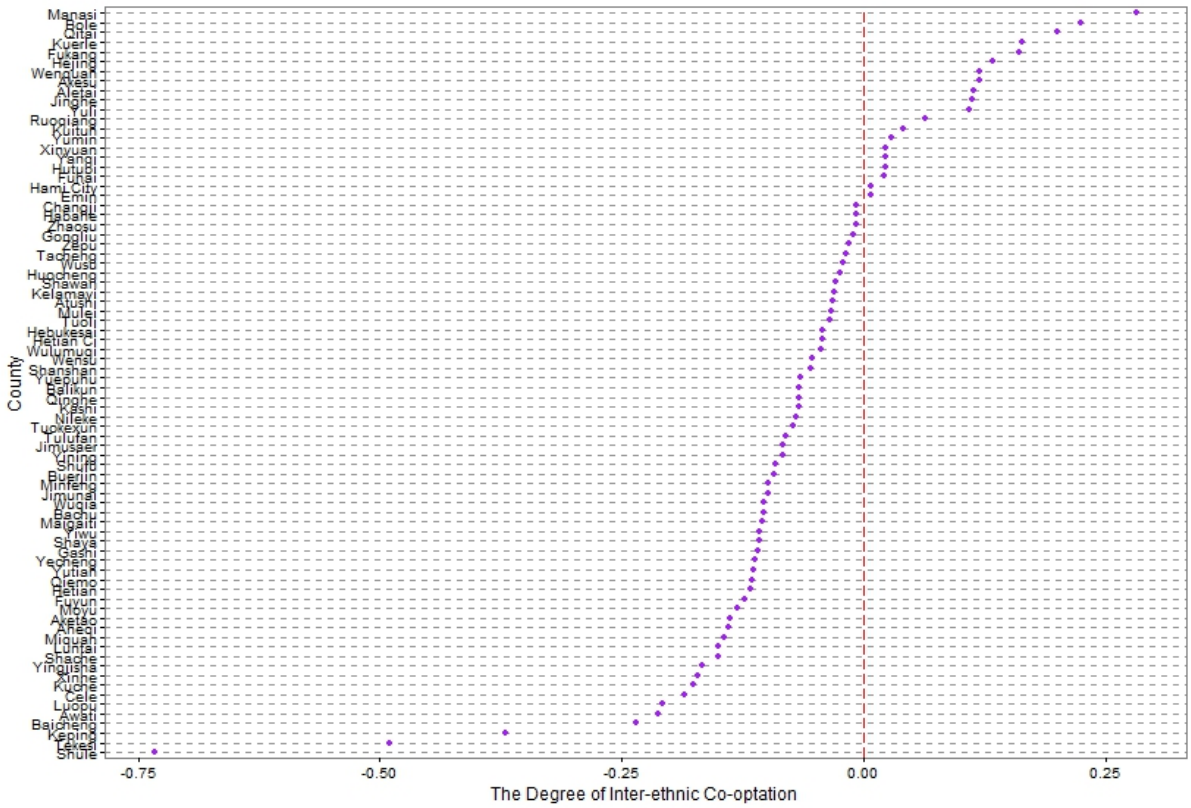


Figure 2: Difference between Minority Population Percentage and Minority Cadre Percentage by County (1980–1995)



4 Endogeneity Concern

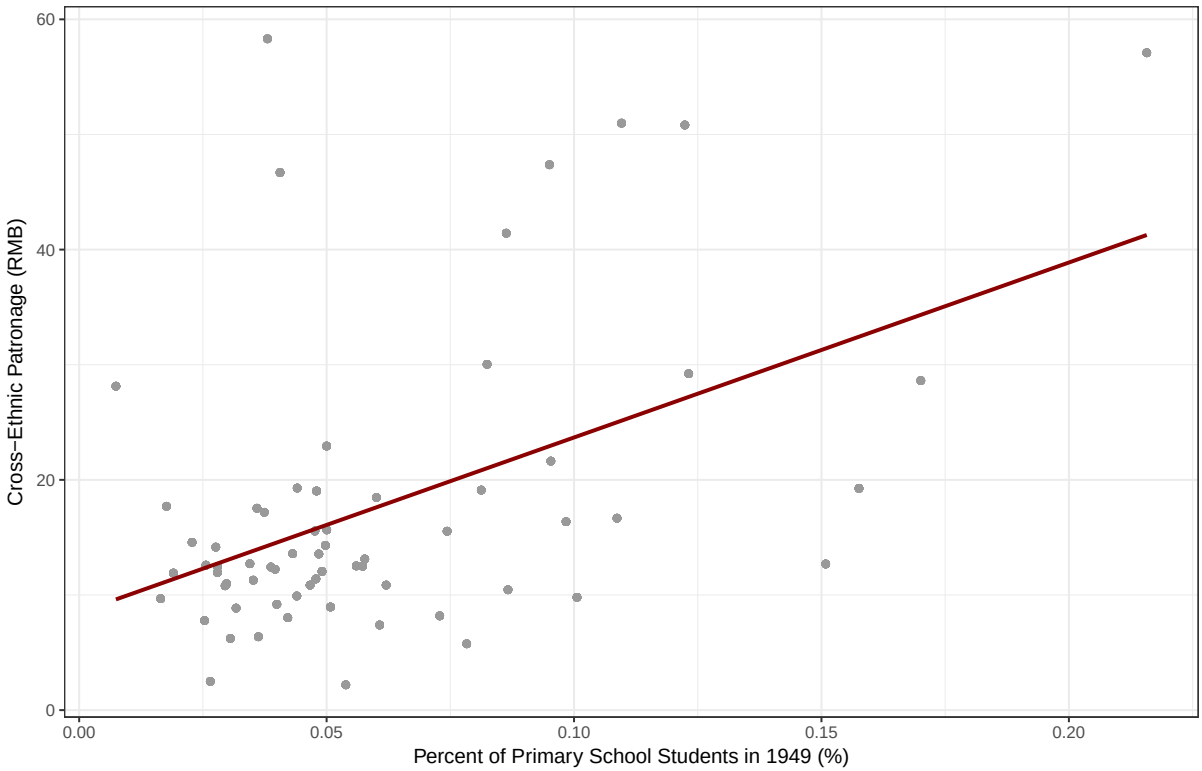
Table 3: Test for Reverse Causality

	Dependent Variable			
	Cross-Ethnic Patronage Spending			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ethnic Conflict$_{t-1}$	0.002	−0.013	−0.012	−0.014
	(0.042)	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Fiscal Revenue per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.002	−0.003*	−0.003*	−0.003**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$		−1.078	−0.766	−0.942
		(1.279)	(1.175)	(1.205)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$		0.134	0.130	0.129
		(0.090)	(0.087)	(0.086)
Population Density$_{t-1}$		−0.0002***	−0.0002***	−0.0003***
		(0.00005)	(0.00005)	(0.0001)
Ethnic Fractionalization		8.218***	−7.906***	−7.823***
		(0.271)	(1.323)	(1.247)
Ethnic Polarization		−13.636***	4.351***	4.201***
		(0.730)	(1.159)	(1.100)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital			−0.004***	−0.004***
			(0.0005)	(0.0005)
Distance to Ürümqi			0.0002	0.0004
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County			1.966***	2.010***
			(0.172)	(0.170)
Oil$_{t-1}$			0.117**	0.117**
			(0.056)	(0.056)
Horizontal Inequality				−0.001
				(0.002)
County Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	3.332***	7.038***	2.183**	2.252**
	(0.033)	(1.528)	(1.061)	(1.067)
Observations	910	910	910	910
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4: Effects of Pre-1949 Human Capital on Contemporary Variables (Tests for Exclusive Restriction)

	Dependent Variable			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Cross-Ethnic Patronage	GDP per capita	Education Spending	Han Chinese Party Secretary
Human Capital in 1949	4.255**	−0.608	1.832	−1.363
	(1.837)	(0.589)	(1.255)	(5.103)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$	0.937*	−0.406	0.941**	−0.638
	(0.549)	(0.271)	(0.401)	(1.076)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.018		0.065	−0.314
	(0.126)		(0.067)	(0.467)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.0001	−0.00001	0.0001	−0.0002
	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0003)
Ethnic Fractionalization	2.147	−2.110***	1.362	−14.096***
	(1.859)	(0.740)	(0.861)	(4.998)
Ethnic Polarization	−0.568	2.035***	−0.411	9.499***
	(1.239)	(0.479)	(0.607)	(3.073)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.001	−0.0004	0.001*	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.0004)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.001	−0.0003	−0.0001	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.0004)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Border County	−0.113	−0.277**	0.316**	0.440
	(0.196)	(0.113)	(0.136)	(0.450)
Oil$_{t-1}$	−0.151	0.019	−0.169	1.546***
	(0.105)	(0.141)	(0.104)	(0.283)
Horizontal Inequality	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.046***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.008)
Prefecture Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−0.044	6.078***	0.926*	1.737
	(0.897)	(0.339)	(0.549)	(3.144)
Observations	857	1,020	502	1,020
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 3: Pre-communist Human Capital and Cross-Ethnic Patronage (1980–1995)



5 Robustness Checks

Table 5: Potential Spill-over Effects of Conflict

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending$_{t-1}$	−0.594***	−0.590**	−0.597**	−0.591**
	(0.221)	(0.239)	(0.271)	(0.275)
Spatial Lag$_{t-1}$	−1.362	−1.462	−1.624	−1.657
	(1.157)	(1.265)	(1.306)	(1.333)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$		0.999	0.923	0.902
		(0.771)	(0.992)	(1.019)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$		0.165	0.352	0.385
		(0.447)	(0.434)	(0.439)
Population Density$_{t-1}$		0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
		(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Ethnic Fractionalization		3.653**	3.891***	3.913***
		(1.495)	(1.362)	(1.369)
Ethnic Polarization		−2.096	−2.325	−2.336
		(1.510)	(1.607)	(1.592)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital			−0.001	−0.001
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi			0.0005	0.0004
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County			0.406	0.445
			(0.441)	(0.398)
Oil$_{t-1}$			0.431	0.415
			(0.413)	(0.412)
Horizontal Inequality				0.003
				(0.011)
t	0.073	0.201	0.220	0.212
	(0.299)	(0.280)	(0.281)	(0.286)
t^2	−0.071	−0.094*	−0.092	−0.091
	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.057)
t^3	0.004	0.005*	0.005*	0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−19.253***	−21.366***	−22.722***	−22.956***
	(0.576)	(2.961)	(2.935)	(2.995)
Observations	929	929	929	929
Log Likelihood	−155.057	−148.350	−146.929	−146.911
Akaike Inf. Crit.	350.113	346.700	351.859	353.822

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6: Alternative Specification: Negative Binomial Model

	Dependent Variable				
	Number of Ethnic Conflict Events				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending$_{t-1}$	−0.765***	−0.659***	−0.726***	−0.653***	−0.669***
	(0.198)	(0.207)	(0.214)	(0.216)	(0.210)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$		1.279	1.697	1.115	1.110
		(0.848)	(1.056)	(1.074)	(1.051)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$		0.059	0.597	0.484	0.475
		(0.398)	(0.433)	(0.405)	(0.390)
Population Density$_{t-1}$		0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
		(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Ethnic Fractionalization		2.428	3.059**	3.528**	3.187**
		(1.481)	(1.554)	(1.532)	(1.486)
Ethnic Polarization		−1.073	−1.895	−1.825	−1.698
		(1.449)	(1.503)	(1.468)	(1.422)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital			0.001	−0.0003	−0.001
			(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi			0.0003	0.001	0.001
			(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County			0.837**	0.700*	0.748**
			(0.351)	(0.383)	(0.370)
Oil$_{t-1}$				0.847**	0.786**
				(0.384)	(0.369)
Horizontal Inequality				0.004	0.005
				(0.012)	(0.011)
Spatial Lag$_{t-1}$					−2.302**
					(1.091)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−35.341	−37.481	−41.062	−40.558	−40.455
	(9,460,848.000)	(9,412,463.000)	(8,731,254.000)	(9,092,292.000)	(9,204,164.000)
Observations	929	929	929	929	929
Log Likelihood	−210.896	−198.918	−195.282	−192.906	−190.693
θ	0.379*** (0.146)	1.007 (0.680)	1.065 (0.719)	1.504 (1.274)	3.974 (8.898)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	453.792	439.836	438.564	437.813	435.386

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7: Alternative Measure of Cross-Ethnic Patronage: Ratio of GDP

	Dependent Variable			
	Ethnic Conflict			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending as % of GDP_{t-1}	−0.528**	−0.558**	−0.532*	−0.555**
	(0.234)	(0.266)	(0.271)	(0.274)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$	2.070**	2.293*	1.945	2.020
	(1.011)	(1.305)	(1.350)	(1.337)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	−0.334	−0.128	−0.196	−0.193
	(0.496)	(0.431)	(0.439)	(0.430)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
	(0.0002)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Ethnic Fractionalization	3.942**	3.949***	4.177***	4.058***
	(1.493)	(1.408)	(1.393)	(1.353)
Ethnic Polarization	−2.063	−2.282	−2.254	−2.247
	(1.571)	(1.676)	(1.668)	(1.615)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital		−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to Ürümqi		0.0002	0.0005	0.0005
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County		0.411	0.340	0.416
		(0.450)	(0.409)	(0.400)
Oil$_{t-1}$			0.487	0.435
			(0.421)	(0.412)
Horizontal Inequality			−0.0004	0.002
			(0.011)	(0.011)
Spatial Lag$_{t-1}$				−1.597
				(1.331)
t	0.209	0.203	0.234	0.214
	(0.278)	(0.278)	(0.283)	(0.285)
t^2	−0.097*	−0.093	−0.097*	−0.092
	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.057)
t^3	0.005*	0.005*	0.005*	0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	−22.966***	−24.571***	−24.040***	−24.024***
	(3.072)	(3.195)	(3.128)	(3.166)
Observations	929	929	929	929
Log Likelihood	−149.328	−148.499	−148.000	−147.261
Akaike Inf. Crit.	346.656	350.999	354.000	354.522

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: Alternative Specification: Cross-Sectional Analysis

	Dependent Variable				
	Number of Ethnic Conflict Events				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Cross-Ethnic Patronage Spending	-1.096^{***}	-0.986^{***}	-1.172^{***}	-0.589^{**}	-0.843^{***}
	(0.237)	(0.263)	(0.372)	(0.295)	(0.318)
Minority Percentage		0.538	1.119	0.135	0.594
		(0.837)	(0.966)	(1.115)	(1.161)
GDP per capita		0.313	0.949^{*}	0.534	0.555
		(0.866)	(0.527)	(0.536)	(0.498)
Population Density		0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}	0.001^{***}
		(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Ethnic Fractionalization		1.418	1.198	2.427^{*}	2.453
		(1.940)	(1.609)	(1.406)	(1.653)
Ethnic Polarization		-0.878	-1.442	-1.356	-1.690
		(1.972)	(2.017)	(1.794)	(1.947)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital			-0.001	-0.002	-0.002
			(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Distance to Ürümqi			0.0001	0.0002	0.0001
			(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Border County			1.023^{**}	0.728^{*}	0.934^{*}
			(0.463)	(0.428)	(0.505)
Oil				1.149	0.755
				(0.909)	(0.913)
Horizontal Inequality				0.022	0.020
				(0.023)	(0.021)
Spatial Lag					-10.275
					(7.866)
Constant	3.070^{***}	-0.046	-4.515	-3.530	-2.396
	(0.647)	(6.075)	(3.461)	(3.664)	(3.702)
Observations	75	75	75	75	75
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

6 Mechanism Analysis

Table 9: Effects of Cross-Ethnic Patronage Spending by Conflict Types

	Dependent Variable			
	Social Control	Mixed	Ethnic Mobilization	Others
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cross − Ethnic Patronage Spending$_{t-1}$	-1.170^{***}	1.829	-0.699^{*}	−0.829
	(0.441)	(1.210)	(0.369)	(0.671)
Minority Percentage$_{t-1}$	5.444^{***}	-7.025^{***}	−1.171	4.292^{***}
	(2.049)	(0.366)	(1.826)	(0.798)
GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	0.374	-5.567^{***}	2.327^{***}	−0.062
	(0.275)	(0.772)	(0.210)	(0.320)
Population Density$_{t-1}$	0.002^{***}	0.006^{**}	−0.0002	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.860	18.075^{***}	10.655^{***}	-2.837^{***}
	(0.986)	(0.731)	(0.823)	(0.781)
Ethnic Polarization	1.325	-27.598^{***}	-5.786^{***}	5.559^{***}
	(0.964)	(0.702)	(1.088)	(1.384)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.003	-0.027^{**}	0.003	−0.013
	(0.003)	(0.013)	(0.003)	(0.009)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.0001	-0.007^{**}	0.0004	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Border County	0.770	4.510^{***}	1.091^{*}	−0.293
	(0.718)	(1.701)	(0.640)	(1.183)
Oil$_{t-1}$	1.540^{**}	-4.753^{***}	−1.745	-10.644^{***}
	(0.659)	(0.0004)	(1.300)	(0.00002)
Horizontal Inequality	−0.021	−0.073	0.041^{*}	−0.023
	(0.022)	(0.049)	(0.024)	(0.033)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	-15.658^{***}	29.954^{***}	-24.888^{***}	-17.095^{***}
	(0.333)	(0.064)	(0.304)	(0.149)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	523.209	523.209	523.209	523.209

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 10: Effects of Cross-Ethnic Patronage Spending by Conflict Types

	Dependent Variable	
	Peaceful Event	Violent Event
	(1)	(2)
$Cross-Ethnic\ Patronage\ Spending_{t-1}$	-0.087^{***}	-0.057^{**}
	(0.033)	(0.023)
$Minority\ Percentage_{t-1}$	-0.509	3.256^{**}
	(1.464)	(1.453)
$GDP\ per\ capita_{t-1}$	1.646^{***}	0.481^{**}
	(0.199)	(0.192)
$Population\ Density_{t-1}$	-0.001	0.002^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Ethnic Fractionalization	5.985^{***}	3.399^{***}
	(0.860)	(0.711)
Ethnic Polarization	-0.698	-2.294^{***}
	(0.950)	(0.762)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.003	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Border County	1.141^{**}	0.755
	(0.555)	(0.562)
Oil_{t-1}	-0.952	1.238^{**}
	(1.138)	(0.565)
Horizontal Inequality	0.042^{*}	-0.029
	(0.023)	(0.018)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Constant	-28.317^{***}	-67.987^{***}
	(0.231)	(0.240)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	421.389	421.389
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 11: Effects of Cross-Ethnic Patronage Spending by Forms of Conflict

	Dependent Variable				
	Guerrilla	Protest	Riot	Terrorism	Unknown
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$Cross-Ethnic\ Patronage\ Spending_{t-1}$	-0.143	-0.076^{**}	0.029	-0.110^{**}	-0.157^{**}
	(0.126)	(0.035)	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.076)
$Minority\ Percentage_{t-1}$	-2.778^{***}	-1.192	3.565^{***}	7.064^{***}	8.188^{***}
	(0.031)	(1.831)	(0.489)	(2.388)	(1.219)
$GDP\ per\ capita_{t-1}$	-5.836^{***}	2.438^{***}	-0.533	0.641^{*}	-0.027
	(0.414)	(0.193)	(0.451)	(0.356)	(0.398)
$Population\ Density_{t-1}$	0.0002	-0.0002	0.002^{*}	0.002^{***}	-0.044^{*}
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.025)
Ethnic Fractionalization	5.904^{***}	9.508^{***}	9.022^{***}	-1.934	-2.813^{***}
	(0.176)	(0.905)	(1.740)	(1.202)	(0.795)
Ethnic Polarization	6.042^{***}	-5.194^{***}	-8.410^{***}	3.160^{**}	7.837^{***}
	(0.135)	(1.024)	(1.310)	(1.284)	(1.669)
Distance to the Prefecture's Capital	0.002	0.003	-0.014	0.003	-0.014
	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.009)
Distance to Ürümqi	0.010^{**}	0.001	-0.004	-0.0002	0.009
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.006)
Border County	-3.270^{***}	1.245^{**}	1.356	-0.414	-2.180
	(0.902)	(0.617)	(1.246)	(1.043)	(1.588)
Oil_{t-1}	5.487^{***}	-2.024	-12.814^{***}	0.728	-6.934^{***}
	(1.011)	(1.371)	(0.00000)	(0.857)	(0.001)
Horizontal Inequality	-0.098	0.027	-0.016	-0.054	-0.111^{**}
	(0.072)	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.052)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	7.442^{***}	-25.851^{***}	-8.081^{***}	-17.888^{***}	-21.116^{***}
	(0.132)	(0.289)	(0.149)	(0.423)	(0.192)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	570.233	570.233	570.233	570.233	570.233

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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