

Culture as a tool for economic growth and Inter-ethnic relations

With understanding borderlands as important contact zones for cultural as well as political interaction, the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor plays important role for the Chinese government to build the New Silk Road as well as make closer contact with western world and other political intent included faster economic growth by developing new silk road and stability in whole country.

The Chinese government for long time has supported Tibet-Mongol ethnic and cultural relations with argument to strengthen minzú tuánjié 民族团结 (translated as “national unity” or “amity between nationalities”), for the construction of a harmonious society in the respective areas. And with the idea to support „the spirit of silk road“ for better peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit.

Educational and cultural dimensions of transnational relations are often targeted as factors shaping economic cooperation. So that, infrastructure projects for developing these areas through education and cultural relationship take a major place for Chinese government to building better surrounding for trade and economic growth. In this point of view we can ask if this tactic could be seen as an example of cultural use of soft power in these areas and enable Chinese government to gain what you want through nonviolence way.

The approach in article „The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the “New Silk Road:” The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands“ by Ute Wallenböck is focused mainly on the Mongols of Inner Mongolia and the Tibet-Mongol interface, however is also dealing with a question how China interacts with various other minority culture(s) in a national and international context and enables us to better understand the dynamics of exactly how cultural innovation becomes possible. Moreover also illuminates why and when people are interested in modifying and reconstructing their particular identities.

If we look back in Chinese history, for Chinese government was important to secure inland political stability and wanted to move towards the better integration of China’s ‘minority nationalities’. Those who had been called ‘barbarians’ in dynastic China were recast as ‘minority nationalities’ and Chinese government make an effort to integrate them into Chinese society often by focusing on economic development. However as I told before culture and education take an important task in building this integration and moreover led to a greater degree of dependence on Han-dominated state power. We can take a look at one of integration programs: “Western Development Programme” with aim to involve China’s ‘minority nationalities’ in the western regions in the economic and cultural development. This program was, by receiving financial and technical assistance from the central government, supposed to develop their economic growth, but also to more integrate the minorities regions under central power. Other culture programs could also have their political aim, and from more pessimistic way of view, various cultural event can be regarded as a tool of soft power and Chinese government can do it with intent to take these activities under government wings and little bit control and adjust them. Attempts to adjust culture could be successful only with pointing to effort of their friendly support.

China by using the term “initiative” (chàngyi 倡议) instead of “strategy” (zhànlüè 战略) could reach even more goal than any other way. And it is well known that dialogues between two civilizations with different culture and historic background on the principles of seeking common ground and not to point on their differences, is much more useful and easier way to gain others trust and cooperation. Only with this partial trust, that Chinese government doesn't want to destroy their culture

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and also with temptation of economic growth and view of better mediactal care and education can chinese intent for integration of minorities be succesful.

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Inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road”

The “New Silk Road” or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global development strategy that the Chinese government came with and which is involving development of infrastructure and investments in more than 150 countries (Kuo, Kommenda, Guardian 2018) and international organizations in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas. “Belt” refers to the overland routes and rail transportation, while “road” refers to the sea routes or the 21st Maritime Silk Road.

This essay aims to illustrate inter-ethnic relations along the BRI on the case of Tibetans, Chinese Mongols, and Uighurs. As there is a long-term mutual contact between Tibetans and Mongols (Wallenböck, 2019), this connectivity is well-used by PRC to show the peaceful and beneficial inter-ethnic relations within the BRI. This paper also includes Uighurs as the cohabitation of Han Chinese and Uighurs is not so representative.

Significant cultural characteristics of Mongols and Tibetans separate them from ethnic Chinese and Chinese government support studies of Tibet-Mongol ethnic and cultural relations under the framework of BRI. Chinese government hold conferences and symposiums on cultural exchanges, few of them have been presented as Mongolia-Tibetan cultural exchanges, but promoted Mongolian culture only and, more specifically, Oirat culture. The program of these conferences is based on elements of cultures which can no longer be found among ethnics living within PRC. Examples of this pan-ethnic manifestation are presented by Wallenböck in her article “The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the ‘New Silk Road’: The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands,” where she says that on Henan conference were shown examples of Mongolian culture which already cannot be found in Henan County, such as “throat singing” or music with the horse-head violin. So even if the Chinese government declared support for both Mongolian and Tibetan culture, Mongols are preferred and main cultural elements that suit most to the BRI.

On one hand China within the BRI support minority-ethnic cultures through conferences and various projects, but on the other, there has been a case of canceling the Naadam Festival - a traditional Mongol sports festival tightly bound with Mongolian history and culture for the sake of international conference (Wallenböck, 2019). This important social, religious and political ceremony with competitions in archery and horseracing, moreover, the highlight of Mongolia’s ancient traditions and symbols were incorporated into the BRI and as the first “Silk Road Nadaam” moved into Gansu province (Wallenböck, 2019) in order to be more associated with the “New Silk Road” project.

As Nye said, the state shows only parts of its history that serves its intension (Nye, 2009). It fits even more for current affairs. Xinjiang in China’s foreign relations functions as part of a new Silk Road, but Uighurs are far from getting PRC support for their own Muslim culture and many significant characteristics that separate them from Han Chinese as it happens in cases of other minority ethnics. Ethnic and religious tensions are still serious in Xinjiang and appear to be intensifying (Mackerras, 2015). Many sources mention practices regarded as human rights abuses, but Chinese leaders aim such practices at the suppression of Islamist-based separatism and terrorism (Mackerras, 2015), but this is not properly documented.

So Chinese provinces can involve in the New Silk Road project to get support for their local needs in the name of the “Silk Road spirit”. China nowadays emphasizes the protection of cultural heritage at local level and support exchanges between China’s culture and others (Liu, 2017) in order to cultivate soft power and gain sympathy for its inter-ethnic culture

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Kommentiert [WU5]: All over China? Specify region/area

Kommentiert [WU6]: Define hat you mean by “ethnic Chinese”

Kommentiert [WU7]: I did not know that there were any other conferences ...

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along the “New Silk Road” project. But in spite of acts of protecting local cultures, there are cases when local traditions and ethnic symbols were sacrificed or transformed for the benefit of the BRI. It can be further said that China uses properly selected minority ethnic such as Mongols, with their significant history which China declared as its own, as a soft power tool that serves promoting its own culture and raising awareness of China as a harmonious society with peaceful inter-ethnic relations along the New Silk Road.

Kommentiert [WU9]: The gap between the previous paragraphs and the last one are too big. Explanation of Soft power in relation to inter-ethnic relations are missing

SOURCES

Kuo, Lily; Kommenda, Niko. "What is China's Belt and Road Initiative?". *the Guardian*. Archived from the original on 5 September 2018. Retrieved 5 September 2018.

Liu, Kuo-Yi (Liú Guóyí) 劉國儀. 2017. “Ruǎn shíli, wénhuà yǔ Zhōngguó juéqǐ 軟實力、文化與中國崛起 [Soft Power, Culture and the Rise of China].” *Modern China Studies*, (Dāngdài Zhōngguó Yánjiū 當代中國研究), 24 (1), pp. 111–121.

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Inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road”

As the author of the article, Ute Wallenböck, says, the Sino-Tibetan borderlands are large and complex when it comes to geography, history and also population. The aim of this paper is to describe inter-ethnic relations among Sino-Mongolian and Tibetan ethnic groups and how they are interacting in terms of the “New Silk Road”.

First of all, it is needed to clearly define what is meant by “New Silk Road” in this paper. In September 2013, the current president of People’s Republic of China (PRC) established the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI refers to building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. According to the official Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative, the goal is to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents, help to set up development strategies among interested parties, enhance cultural exchanges, mutual learning, respect and trust. As China’s economy is closely linked to the whole world’s economy, China wants to stay committed to this policy of opening-up and shouldering more responsibilities and obligations, therefore, make greater contributions to the mankind.¹ Nowadays, Chinese provinces and Autonomous Regions behold the involvement into BRI as a chance to gain support for their local projects.²

From the historical point of view, what was the relations between Mongols and China? Mongols were controllers of the Silk Road(s) and in the 13th century, Mongols created the Yuan dynasty in East Asia. This land, Qinghai province and Kokonor area, was occupied by Mongols until 1723 is called Qinghai province. However, today’s Inner Mongolia and Tiber were under the rule of Qing dynasty (1644-1912). There was a special department of Qing government in order to integrate the Inner Mongolia into the Qing Empire.³

In the 20th century under the law of Mao Zedong, the Mongolian population was no longer considered as a nation, but it was classified as ‘minority nationalities’. As all ‘minority nationalities’ were taken for being ‘barbarian’, therefore, they had to be ‘civilised’ by modern PRC state. In 1978,

¹ Full text: Action plan on the Belt and Road Initiative. The State Council of the People’s Republic of China.[online]. March 30, 2015. [cit. November 9, 2019]. Retrieved from: <http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm>

² WALLENBÖCK, Ute. The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the “New Silk Road”: The Re-Invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands. 2019. Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies, 11, pp. 38.

³ Id. pp. 34-35.

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Deng Xiaoping started with a new policy "Reform and Opening-Up", which partly allowed western countries invest into Chinese economy.⁴

At present, highly discussed topic is China's using of soft power. There are many definitions of what soft power means. Basically, when saying soft power in foreign policy **we** understand state's ability to influence other state's interests through cultural or diplomatic methods.⁵ Regarding China's soft power, Xi Jinping established **the "Silk Road Academic Belt" in terms of improving China's outside relations.** **This Academic Belt** consists in founding educational institutions, e.g. Confucius Institutes, or giving 10,000 government scholarships to the relevant countries.⁶

In conclusion, what I see as a problem is classifying Mongols and Tibetans as a minority **nationalities.**

Even though China gave thousands of scholarships to other countries, there is lack of giving money to Mongolia or Tibet for their higher education. The only improvement came in 1980s.⁷ On one hand Chinese government shows to the rest of the world only pieces, e.g. conference in Henan County, sponsored by BRI and "Silk Road Academic Belt" where the performance of Mongolian "throat singing" took place. On the other hand, the Naadam festival, traditional sports festival of Mongolian culture **was forbidden** in 2017 for the first time since 1984, due to this conference.⁸ I would not be afraid point this out and mark it as a tool of Chinese soft power. In coherence with BRI, which is based on cultural exchange, Chinese government put on display only what is convenient at the moment.

A lot of progress is visible since your first essay in this course! Keep working on your writing skills.

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⁴ Id. pp. 35-36.

⁵ Id. pp. 38.

⁶ Id. pp. 39.

⁷ Id. pp. 40.

⁸ Id. pp. 45.

Sources:

Full text: Action plan on the Belt and Road Initiative. The State Council of the People's Republic of China.[online]. March 30, 2015. [cit. November 9, 2019]. Retrieved from:
<http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm

WALLENBÖCK, Ute. The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the "New Silk Road": The Re-Invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands. 2019. *Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies*, 11, pp. 31-59.

“The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the ‘New Silk Road’: The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands.”

The work concerns China’s ambitious project of the „New Silk Road“ and its impact on inter-ethnic relations along the New Silk Road. This project is also known as the One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR). The text describes the ambitious project of the New Silk Roads from two significant approaches. Firstly, the author demonstrates the sociocultural and educational aspect of the „New Silk Road,“ which is often used by CCP as a tool to maintain internal stability of the whole country especially its borderlands and peripheral areas. Secondly the article presents The New Silk Road as a crucial project of international policy and its attempt to increase China’s soft-power. The author’s particular interest is to illuminate the uniqueness of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands. The work explains the specific position of Mongol’s ethnic who always played a key role in the imperial history of China, especially during the 13th and 14th century when China was ruled by the Mongolian Dynasty (1279-1368 元朝). The author has reached a large scale of experience and knowledge during her long-term stay with the local community at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands while she was doing her academic research. The local community of Mongols which are mentioned in the article are those who are considered as descendants of Yuan Dynasty. Author to several sources of Mongol’s historical background and their settlements in China. Text later explains what were the primary forces to transforming and adopting Mongolian ethnics under the PRC.

As we could understand from the text the One Belt One Road Initiative which was firstly presented in 2013 by Xi Jinping is not only ambitious project of infrastructure and economy but the strategic plan to improve relations between China and neighbours as well as communication between the different civilizations. Writer also emphasizes the importance of shared historical and cultural heritage of the involved ethnic groups. The article provides specific point of view for China’s obsession with an idea of harmonious society at the same time it shows the impact of this promoted idea on the inclusion of the ethnic groups in China. The promoted aim of the article was to shed light on how China expands its soft power through the connection of civilizations, along the Sino-Mongolian-Russian Economic Corridor by referring to the Silk Road Academic Belt. As the author mentioned the BRI has not only economic or infrastructure but also Educational and cultural dimension. It is known that level of education among the minorities who lives in the China’s peripheral area is lower compare to majority of Han. The local population of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands has significant cultural and linguistic characteristics that separate them from the Han Chinese majority group within the People’s Republic of China (PRC); at the same time, they share historical and cultural links. (Wallenbock, 2019) The CCP proclaimed that project of One Belt One Road will be beneficial for depth studies of Tibet-Mongol ethnic and cultural relations. As author mentioned the Western and North-western parts of China have received both International and domestic attention, which includes academic but also economic interests. Author shares her personal experience from attending an international conference organised by Mongolian Studies at Northwest Minzu University (Xiběi Mǐnzú Dàxué Měnggǔ Yǔyán Wénhuà Xuéyuàn 西北民族大学蒙古语言文化学院) and the local government of Hénán Mongol Autonomous County in Qīnghǎi Province decided to improve cultural cooperation with and among the Mongol population along the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor and also to prevent against the backdrop of new opportunities offered by the BRI and the “Silk Road Academic Belt”. From author point of

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view „ the coference included elements of Mongolian culture, even if they could no longer be found in Hénán County.“ It is also very clear that conference had a strong political purpose . The CCP is trying hard to proclame internationally that Mongol Tibetans and all the other minorities who live in China are one hand united and conected under the historical glorious chinese culture. But at the same time CCP wants to **put** emphasis the cultural uniuqnes which are welcome to be included into Chinese culture. As an example can be used The representation of Chinggis Khan rekindling a popular memory of the nostalgic version of the historic figure in the museums can therefore be seen as aiming to gen-erate pan-Mongolian as well as Chinese sentiments.

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„The Sino-Tibetan borderlands are known for both their immensely diverse cultural landscape and complex set-up in terms of socio-cultural, political, and economic spheres. Hence, the Chinese government has to deal with the issue of both internal and external cultural identification through the evolution of cultural policy. During the conference, Mongol culture was ‘used’ to construct a distinct (cultural) identity, to maintain ethnic boundaries in which they are distinct from Tibetans, and to object to the “Tibetanization On one hand In the course of this event, it was shown that the Mongols juxtapose their Mongolness not only against Tibetan and Han culture; they activate it to consolidate an identity that does not have a fixed and presumed meaning, but is open to negotiation and rearticulation both within and outside the context of China. ” (Roche 2015, Wallenböck, Ute. 2019)

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At the same time unity of Chinese minorities under rulling of CCP is now comonly seen as very sesitive topic not obly from political point of view but it is also widely spread in China’s academic discourse where the other cultures are still understand by the way that they has to be gradually sinicized otherwise they will face of extinction.

Check Spelling and grammar before submitting any text! I did not correct the spelling and grammar mistakes.

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Inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road”

This essay is going to analyze inter-ethnic relations along the Sino-Tibetan borderlands which is a large region located in High Asia’s plateau. Inhabitants are mainly (semi-)pastoralists. It has been a significant trading route connecting China, Central Asia and the Middle East, therefore it could be called as a melting-pot of different ethnic groups such as Mongols, Tibetans, Han Chinese and Inner Asian Muslim cultures. Language and culture of inhabitants along the Sino-Tibetan borderlines significantly differs from ethnic Han Chinese of People’s Republic of China (PRC). Tibetans and Mongols developed a close sustained relationship, and this aspect was a very important requirement of the „One Belt One Road“ initiative, which was proposed by president of the PRC, Xi Jinping in September 2013. In addition to that, in-depth studies were conducted on harmonious relations among Tibetan and Mongolian cultures required by the Chinese government.

Tibetans and Mongols during their long-term interaction created a new different culture with their own specific customs and language patterns. It is within this contested socio-political landscape that Tibet-Mongols currently seek to reconcile their ethnic Mongol identity due to their attachment to the territory and patterns of sociocultural behaviour that have sustained them within Tibetan society for multiple generations (Wallenböck 2017b). Except Mongolia, Mongols are inhabiting more areas such as Russia and China. Even though Mongols see themselves as an ethnic group equal to Tibetan or Han Chinese ethnic group, they don’t strive to create a pan-Mongolism state.

Mongols took a big part of China’s history, Mongol Empire had a great influence on improving infrastructure in South China. Mongols owning *pax mongolica* had control over the Silk Road, hereby they controlled trading, coming scholars and import of new technologies. Even though Mongol Empire collapsed during the thirteenth and fourteenth century, they remained in East Asia as Yuan Dynasty. In the thirteenth century, Mongols settled along Yellow river. They ruled to Qinghai province and Kokonor region. In dynastic China, Mongols have always been called „barbarians“.

In twentieth century, the Sino-Tibetan borderlands were incorporated into the PRC and Mongols were categorised as „minority nationalities“. In the following decades, the central government launched strategies to secure inland political stability and move towards the better integration of China’s „minority nationalities“ into Chinese society focusing on economic development (Wallenböck, 2019). Later along with „Western Development Programme“, implemented by Jiang Zemin, the PRC managed to involve „minority nationalities“ in western economic, therefore there were more dependent on government of PRC.

The „New Silk Road“ including „Silk Road Economic Belt“ and „Maritime Silk Road“ should connect the PRC with more than sixty-six further countries. China avoids using term „strategy“ in order to emphasize using a new partly cultural approach to develop new economic and political goals instead of strictly pursuing political goals. Therefore, it could be understood that China is trying to get power across Asia, Europe and Africa. China uses its culture to attract modern society as tool of soft power, so mutual understanding of culture could support economical growth and reaching political goals. Another important step was, when Xi Jinping in his speech at Peripheral Diplomacy Work Conference promoted cultural, educational and academic exchange as a way to develop relations with China’s neighbours.

China hold conferences as soft power tool, where is emphasized the importance of the shared historical heritage if the past and try to create a new image of reinvention old Silk Road. Pastoral Mongol society has already adopted Tibetan culture, but they can still recognize their Mongol identity. On the conference in Henan, there was their culture was used as an example how different identity can maintain ethnic boundaries and differ from other ethnics.

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Kommentiert [WU38]: Is this your opinion? Why do you think so?

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Kommentiert [WU41]: Where do you get the idea from that they ruled the Qinghai area in the 13th century? Read teh text more carefully!

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References:

Wallenböck, Ute. 2019. "The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the 'New Silk Road': The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands." Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies, 11, pp. 31–59.

In some parts of the essay PLAGIARISM!

Check spelling and grammar before submission.

Lack of structure of the text

Why is promotion of inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road” in PRC so important?

The Chinese president Xi Jinping introduced the concept of OBOR/New Silk Road in September 2013 in Kazakhstan. That time, he specifically mentioned the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’— a road and rail construction along a route roughly following the ancient trade route connecting China with Europe via Central Asia. Weeks later in Indonesia, he proposed construction of ‘Maritime Silk Road’ linking China’s eastern ports to Europe via Southeast Asia. The Maritime Silk Road would pass along the Indian subcontinent, going back around the Bay of Bengal then across the Indian Ocean, reaching the east coast of Africa before heading straight up through the Suez Canal. After an intensive coverage by the Chinese state media and further promotion by Chinese government, the whole world started to discuss China’s New Silk Road or OBOR, and the real intention of PRC hidden behind this initiative.

However, not only infrastructure development is being stressed, development of relationships is often highlighted as well. As Md Nazirul Islam Sarker and co-authors in their article „One Belt One Road Initiative of China: Implication for Future of Global Development“ suggest that the vision of OBOR is to connect the people over the world in terms of political dimensions, economic dimensions and cultural dimensions. The major goals of the OBOR initiative are achieving policy coordination among partners, building infrastructure for the improvement of connectivity, trade promotion, motivating financial integration and improvement of the relationships among the people of partner countries.”⁹ Even PRC’s Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative from 2015 places importance on dialogues among different civilizations on the principles of seeking common ground. Therefore, the aim of this essay is to examine why the promotion of improving relationship, specifically inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road” in the PRC, is so important. The second goal is to describe how promotion of inter-ethnic relations fits into the bigger picture of China’s foreign policy. The emphasis will be on the article by Ute Wallenböck, *The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the “New Silk Road:” The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*, which explains how China uses international conference to establish the image of a new emerging China along the

Kommentiert [WU46]: First time mentioning OBOR, you should write as following: “One Belt One Road (OBOR)”

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hat gelöscht: specifically

hat gelöscht: to

hat gelöscht: of

hat gelöscht: “

hat gelöscht: ”

Kommentiert [WU47]: What kind of relationship, especially in which context?

Kommentiert [WU48]: “et al”

Kommentiert [WU49]: I suggest referring to the primary source, not to rely on secondary literature. The primary source is in this context, the Action Plan

hat gelöscht: improving

hat gelöscht: promoting trades

Kommentiert [WU50]: “Even” is the wrong term since the Action Plan is the first document talking about this plan/initiative ... the paper you quote before was even published later than the Action Plan— in 2018.

Kommentiert [WU51]: Same comment as to OBOR in first sentence

hat gelöscht: improving

hat gelöscht: is

hat gelöscht: used

⁹ SARKER, M.N.I., HOSSIN, M.A., YIN, X.H. and SARKAR, M.K. One Belt One Road Initiative of China: Implication for Future of Global Development. *Modern Economy*, 9, p. 623-638. 2018. At: <https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2018.94040>

Silk Road while at the same time, **China** generates positive social impact for the local communities.

hat gelöscht: to

Firstly, it is necessary to introduce **the** evolution of inter-ethnic relations in **the** PRC and Chinese policy towards ethnic minorities in **the** past. China was always a little bit obsessed **by** the unity of nation. For example, **the** concept of *Zhonghua minzu* (中华民族) introduced by Liang Qichao in 1902 **is a proof**. He used the **term** to refer to all the nationalities within China and later, when the Republic of China was established in 1912, **the** government recognized five ethnic groups within the country: the Han, Hui (i.e. Muslims), Mongols, Manchus, and Tibetans. During those times, Dr Sun Yat-sen himself argued that China must merge all the nationalities in China into one Chinese nation. This concept was then used to reinvent Chinese history for nation-building purposes, because according to *Zhonghua minzu* (中华民族); Xinjiang, Tibet, Mongolia and Taiwan are considered integral parts of China. Moreover, thanks to the adoption of this ideology, Manchus, as a member of the *Zhonghua minzu*, were not longer characterized as a "conquest regime" or a "non-Han".¹⁰ In my opinion, it is quite understandable why China deliberately focused on unity. I assume that unified nation with ethnic minorities living in symbiosis can be considered as modern and has potential to prosper, possibly look stronger in the eyes of neighbouring countries.

hat gelöscht: with

Kommentiert [WU52]: Proof for what?

Kommentiert [WU53]: Which term?

Kommentiert [WU54]: Chinese characters only needed the first time you mention the term

Currently, there are 56 distinct ethnic groups recognized in mainland China, where the Han majority represents 92% of the total population. Ethnic minorities and their cooperation have always been important elements in the history shaping, contributing **manpower**, material resources and even human lives. In **the central part** of the south, ethnic minorities in Hunan Province like the Tujia, Hui and Bai, actively took part in the famous "Long March." It is **confirmed** that 6900 minority people in Longshan County, 300 in Tujia and Miao in Baojing County and 3,700 in Cili County joined the Red Army and moved north to resist Japanese troops. In 1938, 8,000 Miao soldiers marched up to the front line in Hubei and launched a fierce fight which resulted in a complete victory. During the Mao era, it was believed the essence of ethnic reality is class struggle, in accord with general principles of Marxism/Leninism. Hence, no credit was given to ethnic distinctions or contributions. Additionally, Han chauvinism,

Kommentiert [WU55]: Humanpower

Kommentiert [WU56]: Source?

Kommentiert [WU57]: Confirmed by who? Source?

¹⁰ KALLIO, Jyrki. HOW THE MINORITIES ARE BEING MERGED INTO ONE NATION. FIIA *Briefing paper*.p.3-4 2009. ISBN 978-951-769-604-3.

disrespecting ethnic customs and traditions and, in some cases, abolishing those customs and traditions, harmed indigenous peoples during those times.¹¹

Secondly, it is necessary to emphasize that PRC keeps promoting importance of harmonious relationship with ethnic minorities and often highlights key development of their culture. Wallenböck mentions Jiang Zemin's "Western Development Programme" which aimed to involve China's 'minority nationalities' in the western regions in the economic as well as cultural development of their regions by receiving financial and technical assistance from the central government. The goal of the New Silk Road is, in fact, the same, supporting local projects under the framework of the BRI. I fully agree with Wallenböck's statement that China nowadays promotes exchanges between China's culture(s) and other cultures basically in order to build a favourable cultural image of itself.¹² Actually, it makes sense that the PRC builds its positive image on promoting inter-ethnic relations along the "New Silk Road". It's crucial for the Chinese government to demonstrate that the PRC has positive social impact on the local communities to make foreign countries believe they can have positive impact for international communities as well.

In 2017, during the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Xi Jinping declared that during the last four years, the people-to-people connectivity has been significantly strengthened. He also said that friendship, which derives from close contact between the people, holds the key to sound state-to-state relations. It is obvious that PRC is very attentive when it comes to stressing connectivity, mutual relations and cooperation. Moreover, it makes sense that they advocate and support studying/ promoting inter-ethnic relations in order to make its culture and politics attractive to everyone, the outside world as well as domestic population. However, it's nothing else than a demonstration of using soft power. But how does the specific example of promoting inter-ethnic relations along the "New Silk Road" look like? Here it finally comes to the event described by Wallenböck: A conference titled "Historical and Cultural Links between Mongolia and Tibet" within the Framework of the State Programme 'One Belt One Road' was held in Hénán County in July 2017.

¹¹ HE, S. H. (2017). An Overview of China's Ethnic Groups and Their Interactions. *Sociology Mind*, 7, 1-10. 2016. Available at : <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/sm.2017.71001>.

¹² WALLENBÖCK, Ute. "The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the 'New Silk Road': The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands." *Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies*, 11, pp. 31-59. 2019. Available at : <https://doi.org/10.2478/vjeads-2019-0002>.

hat gelöscht: Ute

hat gelöscht: in her work *The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the "New Silk Road": The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands*

Kommentiert [WU59]: In this regard, refer to the western development program itself, not to a secondary source

hat gelöscht: Ute

hat gelöscht: for

hat gelöscht: people-to-people connectivity

Kommentiert [WU60]: ???

Kommentiert [WU61]: In academia nothing is obvious, you always have to explain why ...

Kommentiert [WU62]: Who is "they"??

hat gelöscht: -

hat gelöscht: conference that

As explained in her paper, the event was organised in accordance with the concept of the “Silk Road Academic Belt” initiative with the main purpose of the establishment of an cooperative education platform among the various academic institutions along the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, and additionally, to contribute to the common development of ‘civilisation’ and for future collaboration in higher education. The conference’s rich cultural programme consisted of various elements of Mongolian culture, even though they couldn’t be found in Hénán County, for example, “overtone singing” or “throat singing,” or music with the horse-head violin that is no longer played in Hénán County. This intentional construct of “interesting and rich Mongolian culture” clearly reflects PRC’s strategy to create attractive “Chinese” culture. Furthermore, another example of Chinese soft power was mentioned, such as the two new museums in Hénán County that were built to serve the ideological and pedagogical purpose of highlighting the distinctive Mongolness of Hénán. Museums that are reflecting the narratives of unbroken continuity in the development of Chinese civilisation are very sophisticated way how to shape someone’s perception of history, memory and identity of the local population. But why Chinese government decided to draw attention on culture of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands?

I assume that it is because this area can be described as melting-pot of multiple ethnic groups, lying on the crossroads between Mongol and Tibetan cultures, as well as Han Chinese and Inner Asian Muslim cultures. Local culture of this place is very different and specific; hence it is a perfect project for showing how China promotes, supports and creates ‘harmonious society’ along the Silk Road. I firmly believe PRC wants to spread the message that if they can accept something so distinctive as Mongolian culture of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, they are ready to accept and cooperate with any civilisation/culture in the world.

In conclusion, I think that PRC is promoting inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road” simply because it wants to create positive image and attract different countries. By drawing attention to unique Mongolian culture, Chinese government wants to show that Chinese society is harmonious and ready to establish cooperation with any civilization. Organizing international conferences and building museums are just other tools of Chinese soft power which are supposed to reinforce and spread the spirit of New Silk Road initiative.

hat gelöscht: held

hat gelöscht: and

hat gelöscht: was to

hat gelöscht: establish

hat gelöscht: C

Kommentiert [WU63]: Is this a quote because of the ""? If so, give reference .. otherwise make it clear that this is your viewpoint

Kommentiert [WU64]: Try to avoid “new terms” in the conclusion ... you should have referred to the “harmonious society” before

Kommentiert [WU65]: If this is. A conclusion, you should explain the meaning of “harmony” in the Chinese context too.

SOURCES:

1. SARKER, M.N.I., HOSSIN, M.A., YIN, X.H. and SARKAR, M.K. One Belt One Road Initiative of China: Implication for Future of Global Development. *Modern Economy*, 9, p. 623-638. 2018. At: <https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2018.94040>
2. KALLIO, Jyrki. HOW THE MINORITIES ARE BEING MERGED INTO ONE NATION. FIIA *Briefing paper*.p.3-4 2009. ISBN 978-951-769-604-3.
3. HE, S. H. (2017). An Overview of China's Ethnic Groups and Their Interactions. *Sociology Mind*, 7, 1-10. 2016. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/sm.2017.71001>.
4. WALLENBÖCK, Ute. "The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the 'New Silk Road': The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands." *Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies*, 11, pp. 31-59. 2019. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2478/vjeas-2019-0002>.
5. MURPHY, David. *ONE BELT ONE ROAD: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS*. ANU Press, 2016. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1rqc934.23>.

The inter-ethnic relations along the “New Silk Road”

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) program and the idea of a harmonious society, China seeks to extend its influence through its soft power to the border of China along the New Silk Road section. With reference to the Silk Road Academic Belt, China seeks to influence local ethnic groups with other cultural roots than the main ethnic Han. What areas does the New Silk Road define in this work, what ethnic group inhabit this area and which ethnic groups are targeted by the Chinese initiative? How do they manifest themselves and what features have inter-ethnic relations concerning to the “New Silk Road”?

hat gelöscht: and w

hat gelöscht:

The work by Ute Wallenböck, from which I draw, geopolitically presents the area of today's Chinese province of Qinghai, where many cultures clash in the past and it was a place of Tibetan-Mongolian relations, not only business but also cultural. In addition to the influences of Mongolian and Tibetan culture, there are also influences of Muslim cultures from neighbouring areas and the culture of ethnic Han. By meeting different cultures, customs and languages, a new specific culture is created over time.

hat gelöscht: of author

Kommentiert [WU66]: Why „clash”? The term clash has a negative connotation

Kommentiert [WU67]: Not to neglect the Muslim and Chinese in this area

The author also mentions that the socio-political area of cultures is not limited to the geopolitical boundaries and, for example, the Mongolian ethnic group with its customs is not only in Mongolia, but also reach into Russia and China. Therefore, Mongolian groups have developed differently in certain areas.

As a part of the One Belt One Road initiative presented by Xi Jinping in 2013, China aims at strengthening national unity, which is the idea of Zhou Enlai in 1957 (Wallenböck 2019, pp 33), with intention to engage the Sino-Tibetan borderland in China's social and economic development. Referring to the successful history of international trade and cultural exchange during the Han Dynasty, Beijing uses the name Silk Road as it was defined by Ferdinand von Richthofen in the 19th century (Wallenböck 2019, pp 37), referring to a group of routes over which silk and other valuable commodities was transported. In this spirit, China seeks to extend its reach to countries outside its geopolitical borders and to areas that are part of China. The term New Silk Road according to the National Development and Reform Commission include regions of Shanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia and Inner Mongolia, where it focuses on economic and cultural development (Wallenböck 2019, pp 38). By using this initiative, the ruling party seeks to extend its influence by the national soft power, which can be strengthened by managing cultural diplomacy, educational programs, art, religious diplomacy, etc.

hat gelöscht: to

hat gelöscht: made

Kommentiert [WU68]: Here you could have referred to one of the papers we read in the beginning of the course

Kommentiert [WU69]: Rather refer to the original/primary source

hat gelöscht: U

For this reason, a program focusing on cultural, educational and academic exchanges has been set up, called Silk Road Academic Belt, as a part of the thirteenth five-year plan of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to build long-lasting friendships (Wallenböck 2019, pp. 39). In the program, which has been implemented in a lesser extent in the past, currently involves around 135 universities participating in various cultural and research events. As part of deepening relations between ethnic minorities in China and building a harmonious society, academic programs for researching Tibetan-Mongolian relations are being developed, which are sponsored by the Chinese government. These are often accompanied by various conferences and cultural events where the customs and traditions of ethnic groups are presented.

Due to the successful opening of the Sino-Mongolian-Russian Economic Corridor, the Chinese government is also trying to develop higher education in Qinghai location. One of the goals is the “establishment of a rich, civilized, harmonious and beautiful” Qinghai, set out by the Party Secretary

of Henan (Wallenböck 2019, pp 44). Referring to the history of Henan Province, the Chinese government points to a successful fusion of Tibetans and Mongols, their cultures and communities that have created a harmonious society within China. With the contribution of the Chinese side, a variety of cultural events are organized to present ethnic customs, such as throat singing, horse-head violin or horse-riding mastery. Apart from these cultural events, the Mongols identify with the history when the Mongol Empire was at its peak and to the legacy of Chinggis Khan (Wallenböck 2019, pp 48). By linking Mongols to their cultural habits and history, pan-Mongolian thinking and society is formed, according to which Mongols consider themselves to be another ethnic group, different from Han and Tibetan people, and try to return to their Mongolian identity. At the same time, it should be noted that the Mongol domination during the Yuan Dynasty is considered as an integral part of Chinese history, and the Han consider the Emperor of that time as their own. This is best reflected in the sentence: "the Chinese Communist government even turned Chinggis Khan into a figure of identification of the Chinese people" (Wallenböck 2019, pp 48).

From the above, it can be seen that the main initiative is led by the Communist Party of China under its Belt and Road Initiative program. By presenting a harmonious multi-cultural Chinese society, it strives to strengthen its position in its territory and in international relations. Based on historical data, China identifies itself historically with Mongolian culture and considers Mongolian culture, as well as Tibetan-Mongolian relations, as one of its historical part. Ethnically, it is the relationship between the Han, Mongols and Tibetans in the Sino-Tibetan border region, where the leaders are Han, who on the one hand give the impression of a decent work in the field of unification and building a harmonious society, but on the other hand point to their important role in education at backward areas and ethnic groups. I see it as expanding China's soft power by using education, which must above all be in line with the ideas of the ruling party, it also reminds me the historical concept of understanding the world by Chinese Han, with the Chinese Empire at the centre of the world and the surrounding barbarian states and peoples need to be educated in accordance with the Chinese thought in order to be developed.

Brief explanation of soft power is missing, especially in terms of inter-ethnic relation.

I did not check grammar and spelling mistakes

Sources:

Wallenböck, Ute. The Cultural and Educational Dimension of the "New Silk Road:" The Re-invention of Mongolness at the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands. *Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies* [online]. 07 October 2019, vol. 11 [cit. 2019-11-06], pp 31-59. Available from WWW (DOI): < <https://doi.org/10.2478/vjeas-2019-0002>>. ISSN 2521-7038.

Kommentiert [WU70]: What were the circumstances of this statement? You should at least mention that this was stated during the opening speech of a conference which was held under the Framework of OBOR

This, in fact, is a direct quote... you have to highlight this as a quote, otherwise it is plagiarism