



(RFA, 2017)

Biopolitical Architecture:

THE ARCHITECTURAL PERFORMANCE OF ETHNIC CLEANSING IN CHINA

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THE ARCHITECTURAL PERFORMANCE OF ETHNIC CLEANSING IN CHINA

INTRODUCTION

This Dissertation uses a scalar journey of the built environment to explore, expose and understand the Beijing treatment of religious ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, as processes of ethnic cleansing. The systematic removal of religious ethnic minorities, largely, Uighur entities, is stemmed from the tangibility of Xinjiang's borders through policy, dissected as a biopolitical tool, and unwrapped as a device which succeeded in bringing about the collapse of the region through marginalisation and consequently socio-economic starvation which necessitated aid from the state. The mass migration, brought to fruition a performance of spatial cleansing in Xinjiang, understood through patterns of gentrification, urbanization, and colonisation of the western-most province. In motion towards diluting Uighur identity and influence over the region, structural entities essential to the survival of Uighur social ecosystems were invaded, manipulated, and destroyed in pursuit to securitise the region and suit a Han-Atheist urban way of life. The role of islamophobia in escalating the treatment towards religious ethnic minorities is examined in a reactionary introduction to surveillance architectures used to subdue a population of minorities who were ultimately criminalised for their anthropology. Drawing from Sandoval's methodology of the oppressed to Agamben's comprehension of bio-political architectures, an insurgent space is defined in the survival of these oppressed communities, however, conclusively disseminated by the interiorisation of these resistive bodies. The discourse of interiorisation used to successfully establish holistic bio-political control, is explored through archaic natures of asylum structures, and exposed as existing internment-camp facilities, hosting brutal programmes of indoctrination as 're-education', as well as mirroring the same architectures for religious ethnic minority children. Definitively, securing the termination of religious ethnic identity in future generations, central to the practice of ethnic cleansing.

METHODOLOGY

The process of ethnic cleansing through the use of architecture is understood with the relations each structure has to the spatial arrangements of; Centralisation, Domestication, Circulation, Extraction, Incarceration and Immobilisation (Tayob and Hall, 2019). Adopting these terminologies in my investigation allows a clearer perception of the physical arrangement of power held by a majority race.

Further conceptual tools I have adopted in my investigation is the insurgent nature of 'Counter Architectures' and the social theory of 'Oppositional consciousness' (Tayob and Hall, 2019) (Sandoval, 2000). To distinguish the use of the two, typologies of Counter architectures identify as transgressive forms "In which different circuits of connection, process of validation and alternative ways of inhabiting the world are established" (Tayob and Hall, 2019). The sociological perspective of 'oppositional consciousness' is used to validate the existence of counter architectures such that these same oppressive spaces can be equally assumed to manifest a counteractive element of resistance from its inhabitants. However, an interesting observation to note in this investigation, is that counter architectures cease to exist once the resistive inhabitants are interiorised. The adaptation of inhabitants to being interiorised becomes one of compliance, instead of resistance. As though oppositional consciousness is sure to exist for any oppressed space, in this instance, it is unable to manifest itself into a counter architecture for these bodies to adapt to and survive using. Rather, it forcibly reproduces new people for society, by physically trapping them to comply to their environment.

A secondary conceptual tool which is used throughout this dissertation is the consciousness of islamophobia tied to the hostile global political climate and social attitudes towards Muslim's post 2002. Given that the majority of Xinjiang's ethnic population are Turkic-speaking Muslims, it can be understood that the communist party exploited the global spread of islamophobia post 9/11, as part of a narration for the resistive majority which tampered with the morality of disposing of these individuals. As part of a wider discussion, often the existence of ethnic identity is isolated, and the context of the matter is not presented past being an issue of religious freedom. This dissertation rather explicitly depicts the upcoming of a society, where neither religion or ethnic indifference exists, such that calling to eliminate the threat of Xinjiang's independence would be to eliminate its inhabitants and all its identities.

WHERE IT BEGAN: THE DESTRUCTIVE ARRANGEMENT OF ETHNONATIONALISMS

Xinjiang¹, formally recognised as East Turkestan, has seen a history of colonialist plots and schemes of mass purging of Uighur and Turkic speaking Muslims² by Communist China. The generational obsession to cleanse the region of its ethnic entities can be articulated as an ingrained ideological blueprint which necessitated ethnic cleansing as a means of eliminating the resistance of anti-colonial nationalists, in order to seek the unification of cultural China.

In 1949, “The long-running dispute over land and sovereignty” was succeeded in the invasion and violent occupation of East Turkestan, characterised as “the ‘peaceful liberation’ of Xinjiang” (Dillon, 2014, p.15, p.

12); A perversive tone which escalates throughout this discussion, as architectures become more explicit in exercising bio-political control over resistive bodies.

Bio-political control was first exemplified in the timely development of the 1949 political policy³, establishing systems of Autonomy (Figure 1) as a means of solving China’s ethnic grievances for independence. The communist party essentially re-established *solid* boundaries of



Figure 1: China’s systems of Autonomy; Autonomous regions highlighted in green & Special Administrative regions highlighted in orange. (Maizland and Albert, 2021)

¹ East Turkestan was originally annexed in 1877 by mainland China and referred to as “Xinjiang”, understood as “New territory” in Mandarin. (Ala, 2021)

² Turkic speaking people in East Turkestan include Uighurs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, the majority of which identify as Muslim.

³ The policy consisted of two complexities: Autonomous regions and special administrative regions. Regional autonomy and ethno-centric policies were implemented where “ethnic minorities lived in compact communities” (Permanent mission of the people’s republic of China, No date). Though given autonomy, these divisions still responded to central government rule therefore remaining discreetly under direct control.

ethnonationalism's as new *elastic* socio-political spatial boundaries, using a paradox of state power.

The 1949 policy however, as a means of integrating Xinjiang into the Peoples Republic of China, inadvertently formed a stark peripheral boundary of ethnic minorities and centralised China's ethnic majority. This socio-spatial composition can be depicted in a 1967



Figure 2: 1967 Ethnolinguistic map of China, Turkic speaking groups highlighted in yellow; adopting the formation of a margin, Han Chinese highlighted in green; adopting the formation of a center. (University of Texas Libraries, 1967)

ethnolinguistic map (Figure 2), post the implementation of the 1945 policy.

Responding to densities of ethnic groups, the map paints an image of a lack of socio-spatial integration of minorities and an urban design that mirrors racial privileges of importance; “The question of value; what matters and by extension, who matters” (Tayob and Hall, 2019), through the adaptation of margins and centres. Though the Han ethnic majority do not form a ‘centre’ central to China, the ethnic region is a representative form of centrality modelling political, social and economic dominance in housing the governing centre and capital, Beijing.

Following urban practices of centralisation, the physical manifestation of ethnic minorities as marginalised peripheral socio-political boundaries, consequently manufactured the ghettoization of these regions. Adopting an interpretation of America’s minority districts as a representative typology of ghettoization; “geographic concentrations of impoverished ethnic groups in the midst of these productive environments” (Glaeser, 1997). China noticeably imitates this model, as “53.6 percent” of the poor population is condensed in western provinces, with Xinjiang holding “the highest poverty rate” (Unicef, 2017). This is further

illustrated in scenes of Xinjiang’s poverty (Figure 3 and 4), as well as a 2018 rural poverty



Figure 3: ‘Junk salesmen at Hotan Sunday market’, province in Xinjiang (Rhea, 2010)



Figure 4: Poverty alleviation project in Toli, Xinjiang. (Xinhua, 2020)

report of China (Figure 5), exposing the underdevelopment of the ethnically dense minority regions; Tibet and Xinjiang, in comparison to its Han Majority counterparts; Beijing and Shanghai, reflective of the authors’ “productive environments” amidst “impoverished ethnic groups” (Glaeser, 1997).

Consequential of China’s urban design for ethnic exclusion, The ghettoization of ethnic minority regions created and controlled a narrative of an archetypical

relationship between ethnic minorities and regional failure. Subsequently manifesting a neo-colonial complex, to which excused the mass migration and colonisation of the Xinjiang province, a path which was paved from the socio-political elasticity of its borders.

Conclusively, the 1949 political policy was temporarily agreeable in catering to a social climate of nationalists, however succeeded as a bio-political tool which innately brought about the economic collapse of the region, articulated through urban marginalisation and consequently socio-economic starvation, necessitating aid from the state.



Figure 5: ‘National Bureau of Statistics, Poverty Monitoring Report of Rural China, 2018’, A poverty report which depicts the far western ethnic minority regions to hold a higher percentage of poverty (7 to 10%, shaded in dark purple) (National bureau of statistics, 2018)

THE SPATIAL CLEANSING & REMAKING OF XINJIANG

China's performance of spatial cleansing was brought to fruition in 1999, after the launch of a socio-economic development scheme; 'The great leap west', with plans to expand to the western frontier and use increasing capital wealth for the "remaking" of western China (Tibet Information Network, 2000, p. 143). This concluded of the mass migration of the Han Chinese, to which the government stated was "...in the name of national unity and inter-ethnic mingling" (Yi, 2020), However was a physical manifestation of the gentrification, urbanization, and colonization of the western-most province. Patterns of settler-colonialism can be depicted in the cultural city of Kashgar, Xinjiang (Figure 5), to which the city was subjected to urban redevelopment (Figure 6) to accommodate the influx of Han Chinese migrant workers⁴ who settled in the region. Following the increasing size of the Han population in Xinjiang, there were subsequent motivations to readjust where the Uighur population lived, contrary to China's sentiments of Unification and social integration, as Uighur residents were disposed of and displaced in the outskirts of the city (Skinner, 2016).

"In the old city of Kashgar, Uighurs sit out in front of their ancient mud-brick homes and watch Chinese building workers dig huge ditches in front of their doors in preparation for their destruction..."

(The Economist, 2004)

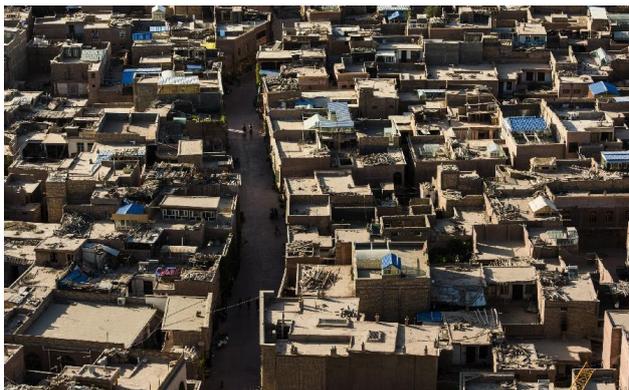


Figure 6: "China's Westernmost City: Old town of Kashgar" Aerial view of Kashgar, Uighur Autonomous region, in June 2015 (*Xinhua*, 2015)



Figure 7: "The scenery of Old City area in Kashgar" Aerial view of Kashgar, Uighur Autonomous region, in October 2017 post re-development scheme (*Xinhua*, 2017)

In the regional development of Xinjiang, Han Chinese influence was intended to "...to dilute

⁴ The outsourcing of Jobs was also contradictive of the government's efforts to aid the impoverished Uighur population.

Uighur influence over the restive province” (The Economist, 2004), evident in the “...expunging of undesired looks” particularly that of Uighur culture (Chang, 2016, *quoted in* Lindner and Sandoval, 2020). To which the ‘Hanification’ of Xinjiang can be derived from the structural cleansing of material that formed Uighur identity, their homes.

Traditional Uighur homes and communities can be defined by vernacular interiors, courtyards and winding alleys formed

over neighbourhoods in the old city. The urban plan organized social networks and connected Uighur communities as one tourist describes the old city in early 2000 to be “... a maze of knife-sellers, bakers, blacksmiths and adobe



Figure 8: A still from the movie, ‘The kite runner’ (The Kite Runner, 2007)

homes that made me forget I

was in China” (Holdstock, 2012). Uighur architectures also characterise heavy influences of neighbouring Islamic architectures, such that the 2007 film, ‘The kite runner’ (Figure 8), was relocated and filmed in Kashgar, after the crew were unable to film in their original setting; Kabul, Afghanistan, due to the wars. However, the differing identity resembled in Uighur heritage intimidates governmental control and the decades of policies sought to unify China. As though the communist party describe Uighur domestics as “backwardness” and “outdated” (Grose, 2020), it is in fact subversive. Uighur social eco-systems relied on connecting courtyards between densely accommodated housing to form neighbourhoods across the entire region. This social network which existed without technologies can be threatening in its ability to not only spread resistance but consolidate it. Additionally, the resemblance of independence seeking Xinjiang to its neighbours, namely Afghanistan, further centralises the possibility of separatism and starkly contrasts against the background of modern Han China. Indicating that the unification of China is no longer sought to integrate ethnic minorities but rather secured by painting over them. This can be depicted in the process of Kashgar’s ‘dangerous housing reform programme’ in 2009 (Unpo, 2011). To which generational homes were replaced by luxury complexes, which were consciously

unaffordable for former residents, gentrifying their neighbourhoods and widening their streets. When challenged on the nature of the demolition, The vice mayor retorted “What country’s government would not protect its citizens from the dangers of natural disaster?” (Jianrong, 2009, *Quoted in* Holdstock, 2012), as the mayor sought to justify the homes being too great of a danger in the event of an earthquake. However, centuries old Uighur mud-brick homes in the region had survived major tremors recorded two years before the implementation of the programme. Furthermore, building inspections were not carried out before evictions, and the recorded collapse of buildings in the region by earthquakes were of newly constructed concrete buildings, opposed to traditional Uighur homes. To which the regeneration project can be perceived to have rather performed as a colonialist tool, which not only succeeded in cleansing the region of “indigenous expressions” (Grose, 2020), but stagnated the survival of ethnic minorities in the invasion of their social ecosystems.

The stretching of the original street fabric also overlays as a typology of surveillance architecture, in that the wider remaking of the streets allows the government to survey circuits of connections and resistance. The securitisation of the state around resistance was followed after the furthered socio-economic disparity consequently energised small Uighur insurrectionist movements which grew to political resistance, actualised as the ‘East Turkistan Islamic Movement; A blanket term deployed by the government against all forms of opposition, in pursuit to “...delegitimize Uighur grievances and justify increased repression” (Clarke, quoted in Kashgarian, 2020). Following challenges to regional stability, the communist party have attempted on numerous occasions, to tie Uighur nationalist groups to the Al-Qaeda. Following violent outbursts⁵, the affiliation reached the ears of a wider terror panic climate to which by 2002, “the Chinese government succeeded in labelling Uyghur organizations and personnel as terrorists” (Kokbore, quoted in Kashgarian, 2020), after being blacklisted under the executive order 13224; a US terrorism exclusion list (The US department of State, 2002). The listing was used as a means of escalating the reality of terrorism which would necessitate counter-terrorism technologies and measures for the entire province. The region was heavily scrutinised using check points, heightened borders and biometric technologies to subdue minorities. Antagonistic of the previous neo-colonialist

⁵ “Often, this violence has erupted when peaceful protests have been suppressed by security organs, and much of it can be attributed to violent responses to police brutality” (Roberts, quoted in Kashgarian, 2020)

complex adopted by Communist government, the spatial performance of surveillance fabricates a new asymmetric power relationship established between the surveyed and the surveyor. Such that through securitization, the sovereign state was able to scrutinize, dehumanize, and reduce religious ethnic minorities to criminals. As supported by Figure 9, an annotated copy of a personal data collection form (Chan, 2018), depicts the labelling of citizens as ‘unsafe’ ‘normal’ and ‘safe’, responding to collected data such as religious practice and travel abroad and foreign contacts, which is flagged at every checkpoint as separatist attributes which insinuates a person’s “risk to society” (Chan, 2018), to which is responded with geo-restricted movement for flagged and racialised bodies.

Figure 9: Annotated copy of the police data collection form in Urumqi (Chin, 2017 Quoted in Chan, 2018). The form essentially depicts how ethnically different one is from the Han identity, posing the Uighur identity as divergent and thus a greater threat to society.

The substantial presence of checkpoints and heightened borders coupled with the idea of being criminalised for your anthropology, successfully influences bodies to conform under pressure to the socio-political spaces they are restricted to. As the presence of surveillance architecture serves as a device in the discourse of immobilisation, environmental regulation and governance, in its ability to induce a desired behaviour out of fear.

In order to seize undesirable behaviours from ethnic minorities, the ethnic use of architecture needed to be dilapidated in neighbourhoods, specifically targeting spaces of worship which materialised as substances of transgression. The Australian strategic policy institute reported that “across [Xinjiang] approximately 16,000 mosques have been damaged or destroyed and 8,450 have been entirely demolished” (ASPI Quoted in Ochab, 2020). Adopting the sociological perspective of “counter-architectures” (Steinfeld, 1991), the destruction of

mosques across Xinjiang can be viewed beyond the perspective of aligning with the communist party's atheism and perspective on religious extremism. Much like the original narrow streets of Xinjiang, spiritual interiors are a space for conveying powers, for like-minded individuals to seek validation, and practices which inhabit an alternative way of thinking to flourish, arrangements which all stake a place in pursuit of social justice, in this case, independency (Tayob and Hall, 2019). This is evidenced in the need to severely repress religious bodies by razing mosques across Xinjiang. Making the destruction of mosques a role played in the part of the state's intense mass surveillance campaign; rooting out religious extremism tied to a global assemblage of 'Islamic' terrorism.

“If one were to remove these ... shrines, the Uighur people would lose contact with earth. They would no longer have a personal, cultural, and spiritual history. After a few years we would not have a memory of why we live here or where we belong.”

(Rahile Dawut, 2012, *Quoted in Sintash, 2019*)

Using this ideological virus, the government were able to eradicate established religious institutions essential to the minority community in order to regulate oppositional behaviour by limiting their access to private spaces. In Sinicizing an entire spiritual utopia under the consciousness of oppositional forces, Uighur minorities fall victim to their systematic oppression being further alienated by a society which wishes to create one-dimensional people in a post-modernist world.

In the discourse of communal destruction, it can be argued that Islamic heritage in Xinjiang has been preserved for the community by the government, as supported by Figures 11 and 12, the entrance of the mosques still stand. However, the integrity of this argument can be questioned, in that the demolition of the rest of the structure still renders the space uninhabitable, and further seizes to actually exist as a conventional prayer space without its walls. Furthermore, the identity of Islam related to these religious structures have been entirely removed, though the entrance archway still remains, minarets and domes; a primary identity of a mosque, have been dismantled. Here we may question as to what purpose does the standing of certain, less distinct features of a mosque serve in the process of the government's efforts to ethnically cleanse the region. The answer lies parallel with motivations behind all colonialist activity; economic gain. Many of the remaining mosques were major tourist destinations in Xinjiang. Therefore it can be suggested that the

preservation of certain exteriors were selected for their location and popularity, allowing tourists to still visit the heritage site, but disabling the function of the site for the use of Muslim minorities.



Figure 10: Original Scenes in front of Hotan Id Kah Mosque, Xinjiang, pre-demolition (Sintash,2019)



Figure 11: Semi-demolished mosque in Xinjiang (RFA, 2018)



Figure 12: semi-demolished mosque in Kashgar City (Sintash, 2019)

Having no access to religious communal spaces, it is interesting to observe how the community not only survived but re-established spiritual spaces within an environment that condemns it. As observed in Figure 13, Uighur men can be seen praying in congregation outside a closed mosque in Kashgar city. Following which, the discovery of this space by local authorities resulted in interrogations, confiscated prayer mats and religious scriptures (Rudolph, 2017). To which the inability to contain religious minorities led to the

appropriation of religious items as “tools of terrorism”, as the surveillance campaign stretched to banning possession of religious materials along with religious activities and teachings (RFA, 2017).

Contrary to the belief that Uighur religious communities



Figure 13: Uighur men praying in congregation outside a mosque in Korla, Xinjiang (RFA, 2017)

are being destroyed without their religious structures, Figure 13, through the lens of the

oppressed, defines an insurgent space between the gaps of the law. This perspective can be further unpacked in Sandovals, ‘methodology of the oppressed’, to which the author presents the concept of a ‘supremacist form’; “Under ‘Supremacism’ the oppressed not only *claim* their differences, but they also assert that their differences have provided them access to a higher evolutionary level than that attained by those who hold social power” (Sandoval, 2000). This ideology guides the perception of Uighurs evolving from their oppressed environments, remaking their spaces to not only secure but assert both their ethnic and religious differences, threatening the competence of the communist dictatorship. As I believe it to be this very rejection to comply with their colonialised environment which led to the solution of confining religious minorities in camps in order to exercise holistic control over resistive bodies.

THE INTERIORISATION OF RELIGIOUS ETHNIC MINORITIES

Encampment cultivates an ideal environment for an oppressor; the validity of law is suspended within the space and biopolitical control can be exercised privately, unethically and excessively. The suspension of law alludes to a space of exception and exclusion, to which it can be questioned as to why camps were chosen to hold this type of space. On reflecting on past discussion, it can be gathered that the communist party were incapable of governing bodies in an environment solicited by state law and terror. Adopting the view that “sovereignty only rules over what it is capable of interiorizing” (Delueze and Guattari *quoted in* Agamben, 2017, p.19), it can be hypothesised that the camps exist as a method of interiorizing resistive bodies, binding sovereignty with constituted power.

Since 2014, the incarceration of “racialised, ethnicised and religious ‘others’” have been masked as vocational training centres in Xinjiang, China (Tayob and Hall, 2019). These arbitrary detentions are said to provide “vocational training to nearly 1.3 million workers” (Lau and Lu, 2020), countering terrorism and alleviating poverty, by ‘re-educating’ religious ethnic minorities to suit the forthcoming of an atheist, Han-urban way of life: central to the practice of ethnic cleansing. Though Chinese officials deny allegations of human right infringements, the interiorization and displacement of religious ethnic minorities in these ‘centres’ aligns more with structures of disciplinary domestication and incarceration than an educational institution;

“This was no school. It was a re-education camp, with military rules, and a clear desire to break us.” (Morgat quoted in Haitiwaji, 2021).

This spatial narrative can be supported by drawing parallels between the façade and internal composition of the compounds with existing examples of camp and compound architectures. As the fundamentals of Chinas vocational training systems is understood to rely on the totalitarian functions of contemporary punishment; deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation and retribution. Its architectures can be proven to inhabit these spaces which replicate the design and function of a correctional institution.

Noticeable parallels that can be drawn from the external façade, is that the ‘vocational training centre’, Figure 14, imitates architectural ornaments of internment such as watchtowers, barbed fences and gated security as exhibited by the correctional facility in Figure 15. Coercive measures ill-fitted to that of an adult educational institution in China (Figures 16 and 17).



Figure 14: A ‘vocational skills education centre’ in Dabancheng, Xinjiang (Peter, n.d.)



Figure 15: Marion Correctional Institution (Jelinger, 2020)



Figure 17: Elementary & Middle school Suzhou, China (Shuang, n.d)

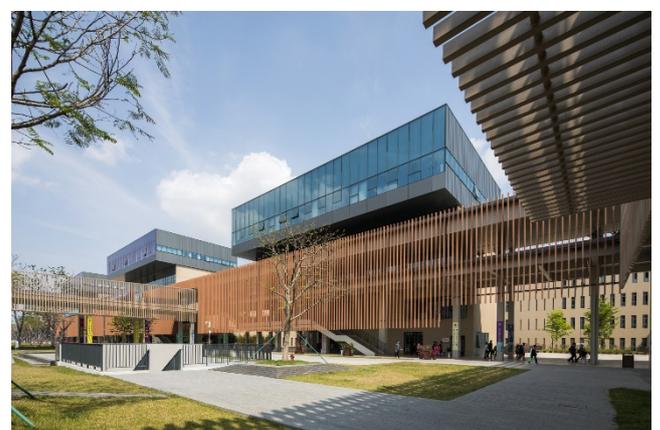


Figure 16: Chinese University of Hong Kong campus (Gonzalez, n.d)

This is further exemplified in Figure 18, satellite imagery of an education camp in Xinjiang, highlights occupied spaces of the camp, mirroring programs typically seen in correctional facilities; such as a visitation area, a hospital and cells.

“They (the guards) first took me to the camp hospital to check my body and the doctor said the lack of sunlight and fresh air made my body develop a full rash. I went from 50 kilograms to 35 Kilograms in those 15 months. On the hospital bed, they tried to take the shackles off my feet but the metal was stuck to my skin.”

(Jalilova Gulkbahar Quoted in Chiu, 2019)



Figure 18: Satellite imagery of an internment camp in Artux, Xinjiang, (Planet labs, 2018)

However these compositions juxtapose the internal narrative of ‘classrooms’ spun in mainstream media.



Figure 19: (BBC news, 2019)



Figure 20: (BBC news, 2019)

Figures 19 and 20 depicts a BBC report of the internment camps, ‘students’ can be seen warmly lit by their classroom environment, without uniforms, performing extracurricular activities, surrounded by highly decorated walls and brightly coloured desks, To which the perception of the internment camps to the world, portrays self-expression and liberty. The government regulated portrayals of the camp’s interior presents an inconsistency against its

exterior and victim accounts, layered against a history of political motivations and sensitivities, it can be hypothesised that the interior of the camps act as a hypothetical set. As the government control the narrative of the camps, the interior shapeshifts between telling a story of students, criminals, and prisoners. Adopting this interpretation, despite a lack of photographic evidence, the consistency between detainee experiences and external facades present a stronger counter argument, validating an imagery of the educational institutions simulating correctional facilities.

On further investigation, the internment camps are compatible with the design intent of an asylum, to which, in a wider theoretical discussion, the similarities between an asylum and a prison are often emphasised as much as it is debated to be differentiated by its architectural specificity. In this instance however, the alignment of an asylum, a prison, and an ‘educational’ facility in Xinjiang “... offer evidence of a society grasping for ways of managing difficult populations” (Yanni, 2007, p. 11). To ally these typologies, they can be observed to exist as extensions of containment, corresponding in their likeness of emulating ones “vision of a proper society” (Yanni, 2007, p. 11), through the shared function of interceding between an individual and their society. This affair however diverges at intent, as the nature of the internment facilities advances to present itself as a type of architecture designed to treat mental illness;

“Members of the public who have been chosen for re-education have been infected by an ideological illness. They have been infected with religious extremism and violent terrorist ideology, and therefore they must seek treatment from a hospital as an inpatient. ... The religious extremist ideology is a type of poisonous medicine, which confuses the mind of the people. ... If we do not eradicate religious extremism at its roots, the violent terrorist incidents will grow and spread all over like an incurable malignant tumour”

(Communist party audio recording, *Quoted in*, Samuel).

From this excerpt, the characterisation of internment as a facility proposed to treat an “ideological illness” can be conceived to adhere to the historical building type of a Jacksonian ‘insane’ asylum, opposed to the pretence of a hospital. Though an asylum is a predecessor of a modern-day psychiatric hospital, the adaptation is antiquated due to the parallels drawn from ‘nineteenth-century thinkers’ who “...clearly believed the environment could not only influence behaviour but also cure a disease” (Yanni, 2007, p. 8).



Figure 21: An etching of a 19th century asylum scene; The chaos of distressed, hopeless and malnourished looking individuals in the foreground can be observed to portray the idea of insanity in the 1800's. The etching further portrays dependants as well as religious symbols in the midground; an ode to societal 'deviancy', and those ultimately not affected by the 'insanity'; the ones in control, depicted as the observer and keeper of keys in the background. (Merz, 1834)

The architectural discourse of this bio-spatial theory in the nineteenth century, was warped around the prevalence and misconceptions of ‘insanity’ and ‘mental disease’, characterised to be symptomatic of a deviated society; “American environment had become so particularly treacherous that insanity struck its citizens with terrifying regularity. One had to only take this dismal analysis one step further to find an antidote. Create a different kind of environment,”; “Incarceration in a specially designed setting, not the medicines that might be administered or the surgery that might be performed there, would restore health” (Rothman, 2017). This belief can be theorised to have administered fear which inaugurated ‘insanity’ as a ‘disease’, innovating the asylum as a device that could control and re-organise the social climate, using spatial narratives of containment and isolation of the ‘insane’.

Using this architecture however, individuals were inevitably able to recognise and distinguish themselves, not only by those who were ‘sane’ and ‘insane’, but as those who were ultimately ‘wanted’ and ‘unwanted’ by society, as the asylum was used "... to be rid of the deviant and dependent, to put them out of sight and out of mind, and in that regard the asylum was a notable success, functioning ever so effectively" (Rothman, 2017, p. 47). Though Rothman’s analysis of Jacksonian asylums identifies this sequence to be familiar to “that of the penitentiary”, the use of an asylum was never justified as an extension of punishment but reiterated as a regimen for ‘cure’, distorting fear of insanity to be conducted as a plague,

which ultimately provoked and necessitated a social reform, later established as the ‘mental hygiene movement’; “The entire thrust of the mental hygiene movement, after all, was to make insanity into a disease like all others, to make asylums into hospitals and psychiatrists into doctors” (Rothman, 2017, p. 327). The similarities drawn from Jacksonian asylums to our contemporary analysis of ‘re-education’ camps, can be framed by the same abstract perception of ‘deviancy’ and ‘insanity’, manifested as religious belief, cloaked as an ‘ideological illness’ and ‘disease’, which succeeds in necessitating the isolation and containment of these atypical individuals as a structural ‘antidote’ that could ‘methodically correct the deficiencies of the community’ (Rothman, 2017) (Williams, 2017). The social settings for our architectures eclipse at the theory of ‘environmental determinism’ (Meyer, 2017), more specifically, ‘architectural determinism’, in the shared belief that these structures can function as a disassociated environment that could re-determine the social behaviour of ‘undesirable’ individuals, to create more ‘desirable’ characteristics of a model society. Furthermore, these structures synchronise in their social performances as ‘hospitals’, mollifying the design of incarceration as an amenity, such that the internment of religious ethnic minorities, as unwanted individuals, can exist as a ‘progressive’ structure, in convincing the wider nation that these ‘re-education’ camps, are comparatively an act of public service, under the social, political and environmental reform of ‘fighting religious extremism’ (Permanent mission of the people's republic of China, 2021).

Although the performance of incarceration can be observed to have been exclusively critical and consequential of ethnic cleansing; in moralising internment, exercising complete bio-control over bodies, and facilitating behavioural modifications. The internment system, under the scope of achieving long-term social control, uniquely falls short in its solo performance of being able to cultivate the entirety of the processes of ethnic cleansing, as the camps exclusively occupy adults, leaving a generation of youth behind, whom may call for retribution, if not managed and contained.

SECURING THE TERMINATION OF RELIGIOUS ETHNIC IDENTITY IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

“Beijing’s strategy to subdue its restive minorities in Xinjiang is shifting away from internment and towards mechanisms of long-term social control. At the forefront of this effort is a battle over the hearts and minds of the next generation.”

(Zenz, quoted in Kuo, 2020)

The architectural performance of ethnic cleansing in China reaches its culmination in procuring spaces which assists in the isolation and ‘re-education’ of religious ethnic minority children. China’s system of mass internment succeeds in separating parents from children, systematically necessitating orphanages, which figuratively function by communicating the erasure of an entire generation, meanwhile performing as small-scale internment systems for children.

To understand the method of which the communist party are able to achieve the termination of religious ethnic identity in children, we must first to critique the nature of an ‘orphanage’ to be malleable such that any architecture sheltering ‘orphaned’ children can be interpreted as, though not designed to be; an ‘orphanage’. This technicality opens up the interpretation that allows the communist party to readily subject children to ‘re-education’, as children are housed in educational facilities which imitate the convention of an orphanage in sheltering ‘orphaned’ children; “a Bitter Winter report about Huocheng County (Ili Prefecture) states that a child of detained parents lives full-time at a boarding high school...Another report by this outlet suggests that in Lop County (Hotan Prefecture), nearly 2,000 children of “double-detained” parents have been placed in specially established nurseries and preschools, often with euphemistic names such as “Kindness” (pre-)schools. Some, apparently fewer in number, are in orphanages, and “shelter houses”” (Zenz, 2019). This report sustains the understanding that children of detainees, are in fact not housed in actual orphanages, but rather disposed in institutional destinations which simulate the similar processes of ethnic cleansing conveyed in adult internment camps. This can be exemplified in the skeletal repetition of using borders and barbed wires, to which identifying the reiteration of an external fabric, can communicate the potential to interiorize similar spatial narratives.



Figure 22: "...children play outside the entrance to a school ringed with barbed wire, security cameras and barricades near a sign which reads 'Please use the nation's common language' indicating the use of mandarin..." (Guan, 2018)



Figure 23: A heavily barricaded entrance of a school in Peyzawat, Xinjiang. (Guan, 2018)



Figure 24: The entrance of a Middle school in Kashgar, Xinjiang, bordered by security, and plastered in propaganda slogans reading 'Study hard to realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', "Kind Learning, Kind Thoughts, Kind Actions" and "Pursue Knowledge" (Guan, 2018).



Figure 25: The entrance of a 'Kindness Kindergarten', fenced in barbed wire, in the city of Hotan, Xinjiang (Guan, 2018).

It is only with what I refer to as the weaponization of education and social care systems that the region's hair-raising political re-education and transformation drive is achieving its terrifying degree of seamless comprehensiveness.

(Zenz, 2019)

CONCLUSION

Having reached the end of this scalar journey, it can be concluded that the Beijing treatment of religious ethnic minorities through architectures coincides and unfolds as an elaborate and calculated performance of ethnic cleansing in Xinjiang, China. Having examined the success of each architectural discourse in relation to control exercised over spatial scales; from national to local, it can precisely be determined which of these oppressive modes were successful in culminating holistic bio-political control. Though these processes were denominated by their success, each architectural typology for control interweaved as products of the past and performed as a gateway for the next. The discussion inherently concludes two denominating factors; The re-education camps and The state run orphanages, which sought the typology of interiorisation to not only successfully cleanse the region of its religious ethnic minorities, but securely terminate these identities in future generations, central to the practice of ethnic cleansing.

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