Integration-distinction balance and comparative ethnic regional autonomy in Russia and China

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This article proposes an analytical framework to address why implemented autonomy outcomes may differ across ethno-regions in Russia and China. Using a structural variable, inter-ethnic boundaries, and an agential variable, titular elites' bargaining capacity, the framework is applied to a controlled comparison of two ethno-regions with contrasted autonomy outcomes for the 2010s, Tatarstan (Russia) and Xinjiang (China), and tested to four more ethno-regions. It is argued that an "integration-distinction balance" combining high inter-ethnic integration and robust consciousness of inter-ethnic distinction is conducive to titular elites' representation in the ethno-regional state, which can lead to greater autonomy outcome for the ethno-region.

Keywords: Ethnic regional autonomy, Inter-ethnic integration, Ethnic minority elites, Russia, China

INTRODUCTION

Both the Russian Federation (RF) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) can be characterized as authoritarian regimes. Meanwhile, Russia and China are also both constitutionally multi-ethnic states. Both have been actively reifying ethnic categories and officially categorizing their respective populations in ethnic terms in censuses. Notably, to

reconcile distinct, entrenched ethnic identities and the multi-ethnic state's territorial integrity, both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China established, during the initial decades of respective regimes, formally territorially-based autonomy for certain ethnic minorities, and the present-day Russian Federation inherited the institutional legacies of ethno-federalism from the Soviet Union. In such formally autonomous ethno-regions[1], the ethnic category for whom autonomy is designated is considered "titular" to the ethno-region, and elites of such titular categories are supposed to have guaranteed representation in the ethno-regional state apparatuses, at least proportionate to the demographic weight of the titular population in the total population of the ethno-region. Ideally, ethnic territorially-based autonomy is meant for a type of ethnic institution that favours proportional representation (Norris, 2005, p. 19) over majoritarian rule (Treisman, 2007, p. 238). It provides ethnic minorities with formal opportunities of participating in state affairs, especially in their eponymous ethno-regions.

Intriguingly, although autonomy as prescriptive institution applies to all of such ethno-regions, autonomy as implemented outcome varies conspicuously across different ethno-regions in Russia and China, as demonstrated in Figure 1. Some of these ethno-regions have been more capable of actually exercising the formally promulgated autonomy than others. What can explain the variations across different ethno-regions in terms of implemented autonomy outcome? This article uses ethno-regions as units of analysis and proposes an analytical framework to account for such variations.

I argue that an "integration-distinction balance," or rather, greater inter-ethnic integration combined with robust consciousness of inter-ethnic distinction, is conducive to building the capacity both for elites of the titular category to bargain with the central state and for intra-ethnic

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[1] 21 republics in Russia and 5 autonomous regions in China.

cohesion, which in turn can lead to greater autonomy outcome for the ethno-region. Inversely, a lack of inter-ethnic integration, coupled with sticky inter-ethnic divide, can be detrimental to building the capacity both for titular elites to bargain with the central state and for intra-ethnic cohesion, which in turn can lead to more subdued autonomy outcome for the ethno-region. Several caveats need to be laid out here. First, focused upon implemented outcomes, this article does not theorize about the origins of autonomy arrangements, or why formally autonomous ethno-regions were established at the outset. Second, the agents who exercise autonomy are ethno-regional states and titular elites rather than ethnic minorities *per se*. Third, what underlies my argument is a type of institutional constraint common to both Russia and China, i.e. an incumbent party that has either *de jure* or *de facto* monopoly over access to the state.

Based upon fieldworks that combined elite interviews, participant observations, and oral history from 2015 through 2017[2], this article conducts a controlled comparison of two ethno-regions with strikingly contrasted autonomy outcomes for the first six years of the 2010s[3], the more autonomous Republic of Tatarstan in Russia and the less autonomous Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region[4] in China. Four additional ethno-regions, Bashkortostan and Yakutia of Russia, Tibet and Inner Mongolia of China, are used as shadow cases. Tatarstan and Xinjiang are selected according to the principle of "most similar" cases, since both ethno-regions are

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[2] 37 anonymous interviews in China and 46 anonymous interviews in Russia.

[3] This time frame is selected in light of the relative abundance of data and the possibility for the author to conduct participant observations.

[4] Notably, the governance style of Xinjiang since 2017 can be characterized as coercive, penetrative, and costly, which entails massive social surveillance and forcible "ideological trainings" among the local population of various ethnic categories.

characterized by being among the largest ethno-regions of Russia and China[5], their respective titular population being among the largest of Russia and China[6], robust ethnic consciousness among their respective titular population, close-to-even demographic ratio[7] between titular population and the multi-ethnic state's ethnic majority, and being resource-rich, especially in terms of oil and gas.
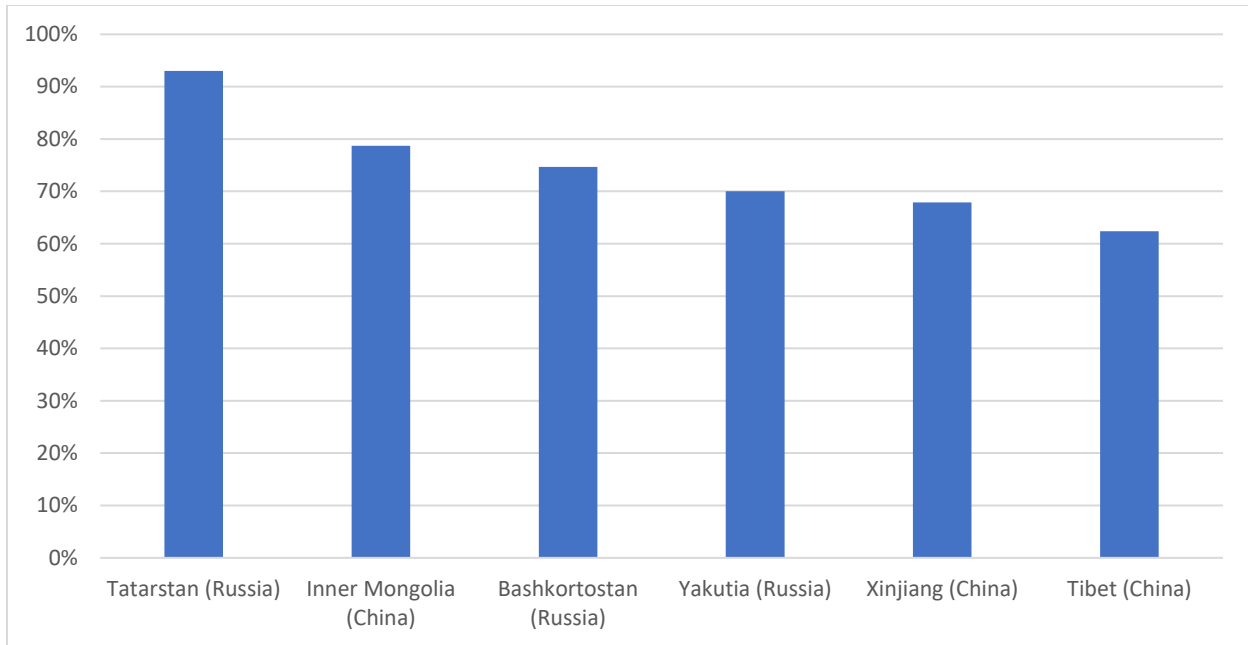
To begin with, the article reviews the existing literature that addresses ethno-regional autonomy and minority political representation. Then it proposes a conceptual framework in which to score and compare implemented autonomy outcome and applies it to Tatarstan and Xinjiang. The subsequent sections develop an analytical framework, consisting of a structural independent variable, i.e. inter-ethnic boundary makings, and an agential intervening variable, i.e. titular elites' bargaining capacity, to explain the contrasted autonomy outcomes across Tatarstan and Xinjiang and tests the "integration-distinction balance" argument to four more ethno-regions. I trace the processes of how inter-ethnic boundary makings shape titular elites' representation in the ethno-regional state, which is a defining attribute of ethnic territorially-based autonomy and a necessary condition for autonomy implementation.

Figure 1. Autonomy outcome of six ethno-regions in Russia and China (2010-2015)

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[5] Tatarstan is the second largest ethno-region of Russia by population, while Xinjiang is the largest ethno-region of China by geographical area.

[6] According to respective population census in 2010, ethnic Tatars constitute the largest non-Russian ethnic category in Russia, while ethnic Uyghurs constitute the fourth largest non-Han ethnic category in China.

[7] Both the Tatar-Russian population ratio in Tatarstan and Uyghur-Han population ratio in Xinjiang are close to 1:1.

EXISTING LITERATURE

Existing literature tends to analyze ethnic territorially-based autonomy either as a dichotomous

dependent variable[8], or as an independent variable impacting the likelihood of ethnic conflicts

(Bunce & Watts, 2005; Cederman et al., 2015; Siroky & Cuffe, 2015), or as a prescriptive

category to manage ethnic conflicts (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Lapidoth, 1997; Shaykhutdinov,

2010; Hannum, 2011) rather than as an empirical and quantifiable fact. In this sense, the question

as regards "once launched, how and when autonomy actually works" has scantily been

addressed, which results in a lack of readily available analytical frameworks to explain autonomy

as implemented outcome except for Nicholas Sambanis and Branko Milanovic's political

economy explanation of varying "policy autonomy" across regions (2014). In response, I build

on Rahsaan Maxwell's political sociology explanation ("integration trade-offs" theory, 2012),

which posits that social segregation is conducive to political representation, by appropriating one

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[8] About having reached the institutional arrangement of autonomy or not.

structural variable, social integration, and one agential variable, elite representation, to account for implemented autonomy outcomes.

Sambanis and Milanovic's study pioneers in terms of measuring a sub-national-level region's degree of actually-exercised autonomy by employing the "share of regional expenditures that can be financed out of regional revenues" (2014, p. 11) as a proxy for political autonomy. However, formal institutional constraints also need to be considered, since certain regions that are not formally promulgated as "autonomous" can be vested with quite limited formal political autonomy despite relatively high level of financial self-sufficiency (e.g. the Southeastern coastal provinces of China). Moreover, financial self-sufficiency can be treated as just one of many component aspects of a region's implemented autonomy outcome, especially if inter-budgetary revenue redistribution is also considered, since the ability to procure more financial transfers from the central state can also suggest a region's level of political autonomy. The use of relative regional income as an independent variable to account for the political autonomy of regions is also debatable, especially if regional income level is conceptualized as another component aspect of a region's implemented autonomy outcome rather than its cause.

Maxwell's puzzle is predicated upon a tri-dimensional conception of integration (social, economic, and political integrations) and revolves around a "disjuncture" (2012, p. 14) he observes between social integration and other dimensions of integration of ethnic minorities in western democracies: why some ethnic minorities' social integration outcomes may be better than others', while their economic and political integration outcomes may not be as good as others'. To explain that, Maxwell's "integration trade-offs" theory postulates that higher level of social integration may undermine a minority's ability to mobilize, which in turn may hinder its ability to bargain with the state for economic benefits and to be better politically represented in

the state apparatus (p. 4). He bases his argument on the assumption that social segregation can be conducive to the building of group consciousness of collective identity (p. 22), which in turn prepares the minority for group-based mobilization that can improve political or economic integrations. Nevertheless, Maxwell's theory is largely inducted from the experiences of former colonial empires in Western Europe, and it remains dubious how it may travel to majority-minority dynamics in the contexts of ethnic territorially-base autonomy in Russia or China. Indeed, the evidence of Xinjiang and Tatarstan tends to indicate the negation of Maxwell's postulation that social segregation is conducive to political representation.

The "integration trade-offs" theory may not be adequately applicable to the study of comparative ethnic regional autonomy in Russia and China for the following considerations. First, the type of minorities studied by Maxwell are migrant minorities without ethno-regions designated for them while this article focuses on titular minorities with ethno-regions designated for them. Second, the institutional order of former colonial empires in Western Europe differs significantly from that of such colossal, multi-ethnic, and authoritarian regimes as China or Russia. In Great Britain or France, political representation of migrant minorities is usually realized through electoral processes. By contrast, in China or Russia, representation of elites of ethnic minority categories are usually realized through elite networks within an incumbent party, even if the incumbent party's picked candidates may be legitimized through formal electoral processes as well. Third, regarding groupness, higher levels of acculturation and social integration do not necessarily translate into reduced group consciousness, as evinced in the case of Tatarstan. Admittedly, robust groupness tends to be a prerequisite for minority elites' mobilizational capacity. But such groupness does not necessarily come at the cost of social integration. On the contrary, inter-ethnic integration and inter-ethnic distinction can be achieved

at once and combined to improve minority elites' bargaining capacity, as demonstrated in the empirical records of certain ethno-regions in Russia or China (e.g. Tatarstan, Inner Mongolia). Fourth, regarding ethnic minority elites' capacity to mobilize ethnic minority populace, social segregation does not necessarily translate into improved ability to self-organize, as manifested in the case of Xinjiang.

Unlike a conventional wisdom that tends to assume inter-ethnic integration and inter-ethnic distinction as mutually conflictual or even exclusive processes (Gurr, 2000; Horowitz, 1985; Maxwell, 2012; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2014), it is contended that, in authoritarian settings, on one hand, an "integration-distinction balance" is attainable for ethnic minority populations. On the other hand, inter-ethnic integration can be conducive to the long-term maintaining of distinct identities via ethnic minority elites' agency, since higher level of inter-ethnic integration can strengthen the capacity of ethnic minority elites to control more political, economic, and cultural resources as well as to negotiate their distinct political, economic, and cultural interests with the central state.

AUTONOMY AS IMPLEMENTED OUTCOME

Ethnic territorially-based autonomy is conceptualized in two separate modes, "autonomy as prescriptive institution" and "autonomy as implemented outcome." "Autonomy as prescriptive institution" is defined as territorially-based power-sharing arrangements distinguishing an ethno-regional state from the central state, in which a specific territory is formally attached to and designated for a specific ethnic category, usually a minority category, and in which elites of that ethnic category are supposed to be adequately represented in the decision-makings in the ethno-regional state governing that territory. This mode of "autonomy" is usually embodied in the

relevant legally-binding documents that legitimate and delimit the expected roles[9] of both the central and ethno-regional states in terms of how to govern the ethno-region.

"Autonomy as implemented outcome" is defined in terms of how much of what is prescribed in the legally binding documents establishing the formal autonomy for the ethno-region has been empirically implemented in compliance. To measure an ethno-region's level of such compliance, I devise an instrument that scores an ethno-region on three dimensions, political participation among the ethno-region's titular population, economic development of the ethno-region, and cultural promotion among the ethno-region's titular population. Each dimension is assigned a weight of 1/3, generating an aggregate score up to 100%. Scoring is reliant upon both state-generated data, respondents' perspectives, and cross-verifications with the author's observations. Political participation is assessed on ten (Russia) or nine (China) dimensions[10], while economic development is assessed on six (Russia) or eight (China) dimensions[11]. Cultural promotion is evaluated on six dimensions (both)[12].

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[9] Such expected roles can differ across Russia and China. For ethno-regions in China, relevant legal documents include the PRC Constitution and the Law of Ethnic Regional Autonomy. For ethno-regions in Russia, relevant legal documents include the RF Constitution, the constitutions of ethnic republics, and certain treaties (e.g. Federal-Tatarstan Treaty 2007).

[10] Such as titular elites' representation in those positions of the ethno-regional state reserved for them (both Russia and China), representative offices abroad (Russia), programs supporting co-ethnics outside the ethno-region (Russia), ethnic minority cadre trainings (China), affirmative actions (China), etc.

[11] Such as being a donor region or not (both), relative ethno-regional GDP per capita (both), proportion of expenditures covered by ethno-region's own revenue (both), development of ethno-regional comparative advantages (both), etc.

[12] Such as use of titular language and script in government, education, and public sphere (both), official historiography (both), regulating of religious practices (both), use of ethno-regional state symbols (Russia), etc.

Table 1. Tatarstan and Xinjiang compared in terms of autonomy as implemented outcome (2010-2015)

	Tatarstan	Xinjiang
Titular political participation	10/10 = 100%	6.25/9 = 69.4%
Ethno-regional economic development	5.75/6 = 95.8%	5.75/8 = 71.9%
Titular cultural promotion	5/6 = 83.3%	3.75/6 = 62.5%
Overall	93.0%	67.9%

As summarized in Table 1, the level of implemented autonomy outcome was conspicuously higher in Tatarstan than in Xinjiang for the first six years of the 2010s. Despite continued training and preferential recruitment of ethnic non-Han cadres in Xinjiang, titular elites remained underrepresented in the ethno-regional state and largely powerless towards certain coercive, penetrative practices mandated from Beijing. By contrast, in Tatarstan, not only were titular elites overrepresented in the legislative and executive organs of the ethno-regional state, but the ethno-regional state was also able to maintain representative offices outside Russia and to reach out to ethnic Tatars outside Tatarstan. Tatarstan was consistently contributing more to the budgeted revenues of the federal government of Russia than it was receiving from the federal government in the form of fiscal transfers, whereas Xinjiang's budgeted expenditures were reliant upon fiscal transfers from the central state. Tatarstan's overall level of productivity was higher than the average level in Russia, while Xinjiang's overall level of productivity was consistently lagging behind the average level in China. While Tatarstan was pioneering in Russia in terms of promoting technologically-innovative sectors, Xinjiang's economic specializations had yet to go beyond oil, gas, and agriculture. Difference in terms of the use of titular language

was more nuanced. Tatar was more featured in the sphere of formal instructions in Tatarstan[13] than was Uyghur in Xinjiang, but Uyghur nevertheless tended to be more commonly used in informal, conversational settings in Xinjiang than did Tatar in Tatarstan. Regulations on religious practices among Muslims were considerably more stringent in Xinjiang than in Tatarstan. Meanwhile, state monopolization over historiography also tended to be more conspicuous in Xinjiang than in Tatarstan.

INTER-ETHNIC BOUNDARY MAKINGS

I treat the structural variable, an ethno-region's inter-ethnic boundary makings, as processes in which actors of both the ethno-region's titular category and the central state's majority category relate to existing boundaries by trying either to maintain them or to change them, either to reinforce them or to de-emphasize them in a historical context shaped by previous processes of boundary-makings. Such processes entail both tendencies towards integration and tendencies towards differentiation and are analyzed on three dimensions, i.e. acculturation, social integration, and psychological identification (Rumbaut, 2005, pp. 166-168; Wimmer, 2013, p. 104). Throughout the 2000s and the 2010s, Tatarstan features an "integration-distinction balance," or rather, high level of Tatar-Russian social integration combined with robust consciousness of Tatar-Russian distinction, whereas Xinjiang features an "integration-distinction imbalance," or rather, low level of Uyghur-Han social integration combined with rigid Uyghur-Han divide.

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[13] It was mandatory for all students regardless of ethnicity to learn Tatar in pre-tertiary education until 2017, since when the learning of Tatar has become voluntary.

Acculturation

Acculturation connotes the processes of linguistic/cultural diffusions or changes that result in greater linguistic and cultural similarity (Rumbaut, 2015, p. 167), or continuum, between populations of the titular ethnic category of the ethno-region and the central state's ethnic majority category. This dimension is operationalized in terms of actual and perceived level of fluency in the multiethnic state's *lingua franca* among the population of the titular ethnic category.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, despite that the state authority of Tatarstan has been striving to promote formal use of Tatar and that the ethno-national consciousness among Tatars has been rising, the overall terrain of language use remains Russian-dominated among ethnic Tatars both Russia-wide and in Tatarstan alone. Notably, the percentage of those among ethnic Tatars who knew Tatar demonstrated a trend of declining throughout the 2000s both Russia-wide[14] and at the ethno-regional[15] level, while the percentage of those who knew Russian followed an opposite trend of rising[16]. For decades, ethnic Tatars in the urban areas of Tatarstan have established socio-linguistic patterns of adopting or switching to Russian, especially among younger generations. Even if some ethnic Tatars demand more broadened use of Tatar in government and in public sphere, most of them have long been an integral part of the Russian-dominated linguistic milieu and thus are able to cope with the still-limited use of Tatar

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[14] From 80.8% in 2002 to 69% in 2010.

[15] From 94.2% in 2002 to 92.7% in 2010.

[16] From 96.1% in 2002 to 97.8% in 2010 Russia-wide and from 92.9% in 2002 to 95.8% in 2010 in Tatarstan.

in those spheres. In other words, a common tendency among ethnic Tatars both in and outside of Tatarstan in Russia is to emphasize the necessity of Russian proficiency and to become as fluent in Russian as ethnic Russians.

Among ethnic Uyghurs China-wide, roughly three major types of attitudes towards Mandarin Chinese could be summarized[17]: 1) Learning of Chinese is necessary, but should not be made mandatory but rather conducted on voluntary basis; 2) Learning of Chinese means "assimilation" and destruction of "Uyghur language and culture; to stay "Uyghur", one should choose not to learn Chinese; 3) Learning of Chinese not only is necessary but also should be made mandatory. Urban-based ethnic Uyghurs tend to place emphasis upon bilingual skills in both Uyghur and Mandarin Chinese, while among the rural-based ethnic Uyghurs, Uyghur language dominates, where proficiency in and enthusiasm about learning Mandarin Chinese tend to be low[18]. Ethnic Uyghur bilinguals are largely composed of students, cadres, various professionals, businesspeople, and others who interact with ethnic Han frequently enough to require them to know and to use Mandarin Chinese. The proficiency of Mandarin Chinese among younger generations of ethnic Uyghurs has been rising, owing to reinforced teaching of Mandarin Chinese in schools in terms of the training of qualified teachers, increased course hours, preparation of textbooks, etc. since the 2000s (Ma, 2011, p. 167). In contrast with Tatarstan where an ethnic Tatar speaking Russian fluently is an expectation "taken for granted,"

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[17] From the author's fieldwork.

[18] Due to ineffective teaching and reluctance to learn, knowledge among ethnic Uyghurs of Mandarin Chinese as well as of the Chinese characters used to be very limited from the 1950s through 2000. Interviews in Beijing and Ürümqi (August 7, 2015, March 4, August 2, August 13, 2016; March 31, 2017).

in Xinjiang, an ethnic Uyghur speaking Mandarin Chinese fluently tends to be viewed rather as a "bonus," signaling either adequate educational attainment or urban background.

In sum, despite the slightly higher percentage of ethnic Tatars in the total population of Tatarstan[19] than that of ethnic Uyghurs in the total population of Xinjiang[20], ethnic Tatars are linguistically tremendously more Russified than are ethnic Uyghurs Sinicized.

Social Integration

Inter-ethnic social integration aggregates the processes of interpersonal, socioeconomic, and spatial interactions relevant to the economy, the polity, and the community among the populations of both an ethno-region's titular ethnic category and the multi-ethnic state's ethnic majority category. It can be assessed according to such demographic indicators as levels of urbanization, educational attainments, inter-ethnic marriage rates, as well as residential patterns.

To evaluate and compare the country-wide level of social integration for the titular population of an ethno-region in Russia or China, I use an instrument that scores, relative to the average of the entire population of Russia or China, an ethnic population's level of integration on five dimensions, i.e. urbanization, higher education, illiteracy rate, cross-ethnic marriage rate, and residential concentration within the designated ethno-region. The score of each dimension is assigned a weight of 1/5, generating an aggregate score up to 100%. Scoring is mostly based on census data, cross-verified with respondents' perspectives and the author's observations.

Table 2. Ethnic Tatars in Russia and ethnic Uyghurs in China compared in terms of social integration country-wide (2010)

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[19] 53.2% as of 2010.

[20] 45.8% as of 2010, 49% as of 2014.

	Ethnic Tatars Russia-wide		Ethnic Uyghurs China-wide	
	Location quotient	Score	Location quotient	Score
Urbanization	0.92	0.75	0.44	0.25
	(67.8%/73.7%)		(22%/50.4%)	
Higher Education	0.88	0.75	0.67	0.25
	(24.6%/28%)		(6.4%/9.5%)	
Illiteracy	1.25	0.75	0.7	1
	(0.4%/0.32%)		(3.44%/4.88%)	
Cross-ethnic marriage	2.6	1	0.18	0
	(31.3%/12%)		(0.53%/3%)	
Residential Concentration	0.58	1	1.5	0.25
	(37.9%/65.3%)		(99.3%/64.8%)	
Total score		85%		35%

As summarized in Table 2, as of 2010, the Russia-wide level of social integration for the total population categorized as ethnic Tatars was 85%, while the China-wide level of social integration for the total population categorized as ethnic Uyghurs was 35%. Overall, ethnic Tatars in Tatarstan display greater tendency towards social integration with ethnic Russians. Russia-wide, ethnic Tatars have been tremendously more integrated into the mainstream society than have ethnic Uyghurs in China. Nevertheless, ethnic consciousness among ethnic Tatars in Russia remains robust, even if not as thick as the ethnic consciousness among ethnic Uyghurs in China.

Psychological Identification

Psychological identification is analyzed on two aspects, the degree of thickness (Wimmer, 2013, p. 104, or "stickiness," Chandra, 2009, p. 378) and the salience of an ethno-region's titular ethnic category against massive identity shift into the central state's ethnic majority category (Rumbaut, 2005). The aspect "degree of thickness" reflects the contestations on whether and how ethnic cleavages are supposed to cumulate (Ahuja & Varshney, 2005, pp. 259-264) with other types of cleavages associated with such cultural attributes (Chandra & Laitin, 2002) as language, religion, urbanization, class, place of origin, etc. The more types of non-ethnic cleavages align with ethnically-based cleavages in the construction of group consciousness, the thicker ethnic categories tend to be. Meanwhile, the aspect of salience is intended to capture how contested the meanings and implications of an ethno-region's titular ethnic category tend to be in various issue areas of daily social interactions.

In Tatarstan, the total population of ethnic Tatars rose from 1,765,400 in 1989, to 2,000,116 in 2002, and to 2,012,571 in 2010 (Gaisin et al., 2013, p. 38), which, provided that these numbers are reliable, can allude to a picture of Tatar ethnic consciousness not dwindling since the collapse of the Soviet Union, considering that registration of one's ethnic category was based upon self-identification in RF censuses. With regard to the thickness of Tatar identity, although more ethno-nationally minded Tatars would tend to attach varying extents of emotion to the Tatar language or to being a Muslim, such trends are not nearly dominant in Tatarstan. Ethnic Tatars who have no knowledge of the Tatar language still identify themselves as Tatars, and they are usually perceived as "Tatars who have lost mother tongue"[21] by their Tatar-speaking

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[21] Interviews in Kazan (March 30, April 15, April 27, May 17, June 15, 2016).

"co-ethnics." Ethnic Tatars who do not[22] identify as Muslims still identify themselves as Tatars, and they are also perceived as "non-believing Tatars"[23] by their Muslim "co-ethnics." Overall, Tatar identity tends to be decreasingly tied to many attributes but one, namely, descent. Since RF citizens' ethnicity is no longer indicated on governmentally-issued identification papers, ethnic categories like "Tatar", "Russian", etc. no longer bear formal implications in individual citizens' receipts of governmental services, even if it remains technically possible to tell their ethnicity by looking at their family names or given names. In this sense, Tatar-Russian boundary has become increasingly "de-reified" and de-emphasized with regard to governmental services, education, labor market, etc.

By contrast, in Xinjiang, the Uyghur-Han boundary grows thicker as the simply descent-based cleavage increasingly overlaps with perceived cultural, phenotypical, and socio-economic differences. Consequently, one can rely upon more than one type of clues to tell ethnic Uyghurs from ethnic Han such as naming patterns, languages spoken, accents, etc. Uyghur-Han boundaries in Xinjiang have been socially salient, as they matter in a variety of issue areas such as what language to use and when, where to live, how likely and in what job positions to be employed, whom to interact with and how, what types of education trajectory to traverse, and so forth. The ethnic category marked on one's governmentally-issued identification paper matters tremendously. The category "Uyghur" marked on governmentally-issued ID card often implies extra inspection at security checkpoints or extra wait time in passport applications with additional "proof documents" required[24].

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[22] Including those who identify as atheists, Orthodox Christians, Tengriists, or evangelical Christians.

[23] Interviews in Kazan (March 30, April 15, April 27, May 17, June 15, 2016).

[24] Interviews in Beijing and Ürümqi (August 7, 2015, March 4, August 13, 2016, March 30, 2017).

TITULAR ELITES' CAPACITY

The agential variable, titular elites' bargaining capacity, characterizes their ability to employ

both material and discursive resources to participate in and to influence decision-makings at both

the central and ethno-regional states. Such capacity is analyzed on four dimensions. A first

dimension, elite-level inter-ethnic relations, is analyzed on two aspects, nature of elite-level

relationship and networks of elite-level political alliances. The former aspect refers to whether

titular elites at the ethno-regional level are more horizontally collusive or more hierarchically

related to ethnic majority elites at both the ethno-regional and central states. Meanwhile, the

latter aspect pertains to whether titular elites tend to build their personal and political networks

into the central-state-defined ethnic majority category or within their own ethnic category.

A second dimension, central state's perception of the titular population, refers to the

largely consistent patterns in the central state's perception of both the elites and the masses of the

titular ethnic category. A third dimension, intra-ethnic cleavage structure, entails the political,

economic, and cultural divides between the elites and the masses of the titular population and

addresses the questions as regard what dimensions of cleavages exist and how salient they can be

(Greif & Laitin, 2004, p. 645). Titular elites' potential to mobilize masses irrespective of ethnic

categories derives from such a structure.

A fourth dimension, level of titular elites' representation in the ethno-regional state and

its most powerful positions, is operationalized by means of calculating and weighting the

quotients of the percentage of titular elites in the key posts of various ethno-regional state

apparatuses divided by the percentage of the population of the titular ethnic category in the

ethno-regional population. Such apparatuses include the formally designated executive, legislature, judiciary, incumbent political party, and coercive organs such as police and military.

In Tatarstan, an "integration-distinction balance" has been conducive to augmenting titular elites' bargaining capacity and representation in the ethno-regional state, whereas in Xinjiang, an "integration-distinction imbalance" has been hampering titular elites' bargaining capacity as well as their representation in the ethno-regional state.

Elite-level Inter-ethnic Relations

In Tatarstan, higher level of linguistic Russification among ethnic Tatars has been a necessary condition for ethnic Tatar elites to build more collusive relationships and cross-group networks of political alliances with ethnic Russian elites both at the central-state and ethno-regional levels. Since the late 1980s/early 1990s, incumbent ethnic Tatar elites of RT have been able to foster and maintain with the central-state elites in Moscow relationships that can be characterized as horizontally collusive. Such collusive relationships were manifested in the exchanges of political or economic favors between incumbent ethnic Tatar elites of Tatarstan and central-state elites.

For instance, the first post-Soviet President of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shəimiev, supported in the early 1990s Boris Yeltsin against a potential chain effect of secessionist movements in ethnic republics vis-à-vis the inchoate Russian Federation. In return, Tatarstan was recognized as a "state united with the Russian Federation" in the treaty signed between Tatarstan and the federal government in 1994 (Graney, 2009, p. 38) and was granted more favorable tax privileges than many other constituent entities of Russia (p. 40). When Vladimir Putin tried to tighten up central-state's control over the constituent entities, Shəimiev was not dilatory in terms of becoming one of the founders in 2001 of the United Russia party in support of Vladimir Putin's

presidency. Not coincidentally, the second and currently incumbent president of Tatarstan, Röstəm Mingnekhanov, is also a member of the United Russia. Moreover, ethnic Tatar elites tend to build their personal and political networks not only with their "co-ethnics" but also with Tatarstan's ethnic Russian elites. Elites of both Tatar and Russian ethnicities involved in such networks have been the primary actors in terms of decision-makings at the ethno-regional level, preparation of cadres, planning of economy, lobbying in the Federal Council, State Duma, and with the President of RF for benefits, favors, or privileges[25].

Such collusive, inclusive relationships are predicated upon an important characteristic of incumbent ethnic Tatar elites: competent Russian-language skills. As a result of decades of linguistic Russification in urban areas and cadre indigenization under the Soviet Union, what has been common to almost the entire Tatar elites in Kazan is their native or close-to-native fluency in Russian. A respondent who can be classified as a member of the Tatar intelligentsia, expressed in Tatar his ambivalence towards ethnic Tatars' Russian-language competency: "although I am not quite satisfied with the extent to which Tatar is being used in Kazan, I can still proudly say that virtually all Tatars in Kazan know Russian as competently as Russians do, sometimes even better…"[26]

Equipped with solid language skills to lobby with elites based in Moscow, incumbent Tatar elites have also been ideologically resilient. As the coercive and fiscal capacity of Moscow under Vladimir Putin grew in the 2000s, incumbent Tatar elites adjusted their rhetoric in such a way as to align with the catchwords of "modernization, innovation, and economic diversification" (Sharafutdinova, 2013, p. 523) promoted by Moscow. Tatarstan-based political

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[25] Interviews in Kazan (March 30, April 15, April 27, May 17, June 15, 2016).

[26] Interview in Kazan (May 17, 2016).

elites have been able to benefit from their rhetorical alignments both financially and politically (p. 517), especially in terms of attracting federal investments, winning contracts to host federally-sponsored projects[27], as well as defending Tatarstan's prerogatives within the federal framework.

Standing in sharp contrast, in Xinjiang, lower level of linguistic Sinicization among ethnic Uyghurs has contributed to less collusive, more hierarchical types of relationships between ethnic Uyghur and Han elites. The earliest ethnic non-Han (e.g. Uyghur, Kazakh, etc.) elites working for the ethno-regional government of Xinjiang were mostly those who participated in the "Three-District Revolution" in the 1940s (Zhu & Wang, 2015, p. 161). However, this group of elites were mostly purged during consecutive political campaigns, and since the founding of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955, Uyghur elites have been continuously underrepresented in the ethno-regional state organs[28]. Such underrepresentation results from two structural conditions that did not change significantly in the past six decades. On one hand, the ethno-regional government is directed by ethnic Han cadres of higher position ranks in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its decision-makings are mostly conducted in Chinese. On the other hand, ethnic Uyghurs tend to be linguistically Sinicized to a very limited degree and perceived as such among ethnic Han. The percentage of ethnic Uyghurs who can effectively communicate in Mandarin Chinese, despite their rising absolute number in the recent years, has barely reached a majority threshold.

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[27] Interview in Kazan (April 27, 2016).

[28] From 1955 until 2005, the percentage of ethnically non-Han cadres in the total number of cadres in Xinjiang never surpassed 50% (Zhu & Wang, 2015).

As an implication of the low level of linguistic Sinicization among Uyghurs, a discursive hierarchy has formed, wherein ethnic Uyghur elites are usually presumed among ethnic Han elites as having limited skills in Mandarin Chinese, therefore as less than competent and should receive additional training to fill governmental positions[29]. Starting the 1980s, there had been calls for greater representation of ethnically non-Han elites in the ethno-regional state organs from among ethnically non-Han elites in Xinjiang. This alarmed certain then-incumbent ethnic Han elites in Xinjiang and prompted them to start framing such calls as "rising local nationalism." Ethnic Han elites lobbied to Deng Xiaoping, through the former military boss of Xinjiang, Wang Zhen[30], and Deng Xiaoping discouraged previous attempts to significantly "indigenize" the ethno-regional government of Xinjiang (Bovingdon, 2010, pp. 62-65). The emphasis upon ethnic Han elites' control of the Xinjiang ethno-regional state has become an informal norm since then.

Perceptions of ethnic non-Han cadres as not sufficiently competent persist not only among ethnic Han elites but also are shared, to varying extent, among ethnic non-Han elites themselves. Most of my respondents shared the perception that qualification profiles, leadership skills, language skills (in particular reading comprehension in Mandarin Chinese), and social embeddedness of ethnic non-Han cadres in Xinjiang were "overall still to improve"[31]. Some respondents pointed out explicitly that Uyghur elites' improved communication skills in

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[29] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, August 10, 2016, March 30, 2017).

[30] 1949-1952 as the secretary of the Xinjiang branch of CCP Central Committee.

[31] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, March 2, August 10, August 13, 2016, March 30, March 31, April 4, 2017).

Mandarin Chinese would be conducive for Uyghur intellectuals both to receive information, to present themselves, and to converse with a much broader audience on a China-wide platform[32].

Central State's Perception of the Titular Population

Solid social integration of ethnic Tatars has been a necessary condition for lower risk of secession and more positive image of Tatarstan as perceived by the central state in Moscow. Since ethnic Tatars are fluent in Russian, widely dispersed throughout the Russian Federation, structurally well embedded in the Russian mainstream society, while intermarrying with ethnic Russians extensively, despite ethnic Tatars' robust consciousness of their identity, the risk for Tatarstan to secede from Russia has become lower.

Post-Soviet incumbent political elites in Moscow tend to view Tatarstan as one of the most important constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Politically, Kazan-based political elites have consistently been trying to present themselves as allies not only for Boris Yeltsin but also for Vladimir Putin, especially in the event of presidential elections, legislative elections and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014[33]. Economically, Tatarstan is considered vital for Russia due to its solid, industrially-based economic contours that feature oil extraction/refinery and automotive industry, soft and controlled transition to market economy, innovative investment policies, and trade ties both within and outside Russia. Tatarstan's incumbent president, Röstəm Mingnekhanov, can be characterized as most-of-the-time speaking only Russian, skilled in terms of lobbying for capital investments from Moscow to Kazan, and capable of having the contracted projects effectively carried out (Sharafutdinova, 2013, p. 526). Symbolically, Tatarstan

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[32] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 10, 2016, March 30, March 31, 2017).

[33] Interviews in Kazan (April 15, April 27, May 12, May 17, June 15, 2016).

represents the diverse, multi-ethnic aspect of Russia, and its political stability and economic prosperity are considered pivotal in terms of setting up a model for other ethnic republics of Russia while enhancing Russia's international image[34], especially in terms of hosting capital-intensive mega-events[35].

By contrast, in Xinjiang, low level of social integration of ethnic Uyghurs has been a necessary condition for higher risk of secession and less positive image of Xinjiang as perceived by the central state in Beijing. PRC central state's lack of trust in ethnic Uyghur cadres has largely persisted since the early 1980s, which are considered a period of potential power devolution proposed by more liberal-minded central-state elites such as Hu Yaobang. Since the Barin incident in 1990[36], the central state's policy focus with regard to Xinjiang shifted from economic development to cracking down upon resistance framed in terms of "separatism". It has become a conventional practice that ethnic cadres are required to declare their positions[37]. Ethnic Uyghur cadres become more likely to be viewed as not only "lacking Chinese-language skills" but also "not sufficiently loyal and reliable with fluctuating positions and preferences"[38].

Since the Ürümqi inter-ethnic clashes in 2009, discontent among both ethnically non-Han and Han cadres can be felt with regard to the growing inter-ethnic divide as well as the widening socio-economic inequalities not only between ethnic Uyghurs and ethnic Han but also between Xinjiang and the rest of China. Central-state elites in Beijing became increasingly concerned

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[34] Interviews in Kazan (March 30, April 15, April 27, May 12, May 17, June 15, 2016).

[35] 2013 Universiade, 2015 World Aquatics Championship, 2018 FIFA World Cup.

[36] Violent clashes between radicalized militants and state armed forces in Kyzylsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang.

[37] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, March 2, August 10, 2016, March 30, March 31, April 4, 2017).

[38] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, March 2, August 2, August 10, August 13, 2016).

with what they perceived as ethnic Uyghurs' lack of social integration into the mainstream

polity, economy, and culture of China. Such lack of integration has been associated with

perceivedly strong consciousness of being ethnically distinct and framed as one of the "major

challenges"[39] for the governing of Xinjiang. In response, two "Xinjiang Work" forums were held

in 2010 and 2014 successively in Beijing and covered a variety of issues, in particular economic

development, bilingual education, and minority cadre trainings in Xinjiang[40].

Intra-ethnic Cleavage Structure within the Titular Population

In Tatarstan, greater tendency towards Tatar-Russian social integration coupled with robust self-

identification as ethnically distinct among ethnic Tatars has been separately necessary and jointly

sufficient for higher level of intra-Tatar cohesion and Tatar elites' capacity to mobilize.

Throughout the 2000s, the socio-economic stratification pattern of ethnic Tatars and ethnic

Russians both Russia-wide and in Tatarstan carried on the trend of becoming similar that started

in the final decades of the Soviet Union. In Tatarstan alone, by the end of the 2000s, a significant

stratum (close to 30%) of ethnic Tatars in Tatarstan tended to bear similarly elevated socio-

economic profiles not only to their co-ethnics but also to ethnic Russians (also close to 30%). In

this sense, the ethnically-based cleavage between ethnic Tatars and ethnic Russians tends to

increasingly crosscut with socio-economically-based cleavages both Russia-wide and in

Tatarstan. Nevertheless, ethnic consciousness among ethnic Tatars remains robust, and

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[39] Xinhuanet, "Xinjiang Work Forum was held, where Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao delivered important speeches," *Xinhuanet*, retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-05/20/c_12125041.htm.

[40] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, August 10, 2016, March 30, 2017).

individuals in Tatarstan continue to interact with one another and to act socio-politically in ethnic terms.

Higher degree of social integration translates into internally less differentiated, less polarized socio-economic/cultural cleavage structure among ethnic Tatars. This leads to increased economic, social, and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 2004, pp. 168-181) among a significant stratum of ethnic Tatars as well as to increased possibility of upward social mobility encouraging ethnic Tatars from lower social strata to identify with or to become themselves elites, which in turn promotes intra-ethnic cohesion and titular elites' mobilizing capacity. Less differentiated intra-ethnic cleavage structure interweaves with more crosscutting inter-ethnic cleavage structure in Tatarstan and can even be conducive to incumbent Tatar elites' capacity to reach out to ethnic Russians who reside in Tatarstan.

Against the backdrop of the less polarized intra-Tatar cleavage structure and of the more crosscutting Tatar-Russian cleavage structure with class-based cleavage structure in Tatarstan, a "monocentric" (Sharafutdinova, 2010, p. 84) oligarchical system under Mintimer Shəimiev emerged in the 1990s and the 2000s, underpinned mostly by the informal networks led by ethnic Tatar political and economic elites who were originally from rural areas. In the 1990s, privatization, close ties to top incumbent elites, and entrepreneurship (p. 87) allowed such elites to attain control over key economic assets such as state-owned enterprises. The attainment of control by the Shəimiev-centered network over the major economic assets in Tatarstan was conducive to integrating the political system, which facilitated a controlled process of economic transformation and a redistribution system aimed at maintaining the political legitimacy of the incumbent regime by using resources from more lucrative sectors to subsidize less lucrative ones (pp. 90-91).

By contrast, in Xinjiang, despite the highly thick and salient consciousness of "Uyghurness", greater tendency towards social self-segregation from ethnic Han has been contributing to lower level of intra-Uyghur cohesion and Uyghur elites' diminished capacity to mobilize. Throughout the 2000s, the socio-economic stratification pattern of ethnic Uyghurs and ethnic Han both China-wide and in Xinjiang carried on the trend of becoming more and more differentiated. In Xinjiang alone, by the end of the 2000s, merely less than 10% of ethnic Uyghurs in Xinjiang tended to bear similarly elevated socio-economic profiles[41] not only to their co-ethnics but also to ethnic Han (close to 20%). In this sense, Uyghur-Han ethnically-based cleavage tends to nearly but not completely overlap with socio-economically-based cleavages in Xinjiang. Meanwhile, ethnic consciousness among ethnic Uyghurs remains thick and salient, and tendency to socially self-segregate translates into internally highly differentiated, highly polarized socio-economic/cultural cleavage structure among ethnic Uyghurs. This leads to restrained economic, social, and cultural capitals among the majority of ethnic Uyghurs, especially those in rural areas. It also leads to muted possibility of upward social mobility encouraging ethnic Uyghurs from lower social strata to identify with or to become themselves elites, which strains elite-mass relations and hampers intra-Uyghur cohesion and the mobilizing capacity of the socially and culturally more integrated elites.

Urban-rural cleavage remains the most acute and durable intra-Uyghur socio-economic cleavage in Xinjiang, as close to 80% of Uyghurs still reside in rural areas as of 2010. While urban-based political, economic, and cultural elites may interact with ethnic Han on a daily basis, rural population tend to have limited to zero knowledge of Mandarin Chinese and to be more susceptible to the ideas of vernacular ideologues. The type of ethnic Han with whom rural

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[41] Level of higher education is used as a proxy for socio-economic attainments.

Uyghurs may most often interact are the "cadres stationed in the villages." As rural Uyghurs bear highly differentiated education and socio-economic profiles from their urban-based elite co-ethnics who tend to have higher degrees of formal education, such elites are sometimes perceived as "culturally overly Sinicized" by those more ethno-nationally-minded or as "figureheads with little real power", or corrupt, "indifferent to the needs of those in the rural areas" by the more populist-minded[42]. Accordingly, the prestige afforded to ethnic Uyghur cadres among Uyghur populace tends to be low, which is exacerbated by a lack of emotional, affective ties[43]. Even urban-based ethnic Uyghurs can also be divided according to their places of origin, relations to the state authority, understandings of their identity, educational and occupational profiles, etc. which tends to erode intra-Uyghur elite-level cohesion[44]. Ethnic Uyghur cadres who explicitly call on[45] co-ethnics to improve their knowledge and skills of Mandarin Chinese and to participate more competently in the mainstream economic and cultural milieus of China would risk their reputation among the populace.

Titular Elites' Representation in the Ethno-regional State and Its Most Powerful Positions

To assess titular elites' level of representation in the most powerful positions of the state apparatuses of an ethno-region in Russia or China, I use two instruments that take into account

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[42] Summarized out of the accounts of respondents of various ethnicities.

[43] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, March 2, August 10, August 13, 2016, March 30, 2017).

[44] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, August 10, 2016, March 30, 2017).

[45] Nur Bekri, "It is a matter of course for citizens of PRC to learn Mandarin Chinese," *Huanqiu*, retrieved from http://china.huanqiu.com/roll/2010-03/736730.html.

the distribution of decision-making power across different state or party apparatuses. I base my understanding of how decision-making power is distributed on what is stipulated in relevant legal documents and respondents' perceptions. The information on which individuals filled which positions is obtained from the official websites of various state or party apparatuses. As summarized in Table 3, towards the end of the first six years of the 2010s, ethnic Tatar elites were overrepresented in the ethno-regional state of Tatarstan and its most powerful positions. Meanwhile, ethnic Uyghur elites were underrepresented in the ethno-regional state of Xinjiang and its most powerful positions.

Table 3. Titular elites' representation in the ethno-regional state of Tatarstan and Xinjiang compared (2015)

	Number of those occupying the most powerful positions who are of the titular ethnic category	Number of all those occupying the most powerful positions	Representation-by-Population quotient[a]	Weight assigned
Tatarstan (Titular category: Tatar)				
Executive organs	26	32	1.5	35%
Legislative organ	9	12	1.4	25%
Tatarstan-branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RF	4	7	1.1	20%
Judicial organs	3	4	1.4	15%
Tatarstan-branch of the United Russia party	6	10	1.1	5%

Overall			1.36	
Xinjiang (Titular category: Uyghur)				
CCP Xinjiang Committee	4	14	0.6	50%
Executive organs	5	11	0.9	20%
Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps	0	3	0	15%
Legislative and advisory organs	8	27	0.6	10%
Judiciary	2	2	2	5%
Overall			0.64	

[a] If the quotient is higher than 0 but no higher than 1, under-representation of titular elites is implied; if the quotient is 1, proportional representation of titular elites is implied; if the quotient is higher than 1, over-representation of titular elites is implied, considering ethnic Tatars' percentage in the total population of Tatarstan at 53.2% as of 2010 and ethnic Uyghurs' percentage in the total population of Xinjiang at 49% as of 2014.

In Tatarstan, ethnic Tatar elites' collusive relations with central-state elites, overall positive perceptions of Tatarstan among Moscow-based central-state elites, and relatively high level of intra-Tatar cohesion in Tatarstan have been jointly sufficient for the persistent pattern of ethnic Tatar elites' overrepresentation in the ethno-regional state organs and their most powerful positions.

When the central state in Moscow was relatively weak both financially and discursively, intra-Tatar cohesion bolstered incumbent Tatar elites' mobilizational capacity. In the 1990s, taking advantage of the fledgling federal government, Tatarstan attained more autonomy by means of mobilizing and co-opting ethno-national movements, declaring "sovereignty" while negotiating bilateral treaties with the federal government. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, unlike many other constituent units of Russia, Tatarstan followed a moderate marketization

approach[46] which laid the foundation for Tatarstan's more pronounced developmental outcome while solidifying the support base for the incumbent elites.

As the central state in Moscow has been growing relatively strong both financially and discursively, collusive relations between the Putin-led central-state elites and the Kazan-based ethnic Tatar elites and the perception of Tatarstan as an "economically prosperous ethno-region" have been conducive to perpetuating ethnic Tatar elites' overrepresentation in the ethno-regional state. As incumbent Tatar elites are perceived more as "important allies" of the central state than as its "fungible agents," their overrepresentation has translated into substantial decision-making power at the ethno-regional level[47].

As opposed to Tatarstan, in Xinjiang, ethnic Uyghur elites' more hierarchically-oriented relations with ethnic Han elites, central state's consistently less-than-positive perceptions of both ethnic Uyghur elites and masses, and intra-Uyghur political, economic, and cultural cleavages have been jointly sufficient for underrepresentation of ethnic Uyghurs in the ethno-regional state organs and their most powerful positions.

In Xinjiang, the underrepresentation of ethnic Uyghur elites in the party-state apparatuses has remained a sensitive topic. Within the Xinjiang cadre system, it has become an informal practice to discourage discussion of this issue, and official data of cadre numbers are supposed to be listed only in two categories, Han versus minority, and not to be tabulated along ethnic lines[48]. Ethnic Uyghur cadres are recruited and evaluated according to their political reliability, Chinese-language skills and leadership skills of a multi-ethnic staff. Party-state cadres, regardless of

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[46] Entailing subsidizing major agricultural and manufacturing sectors, maintaining some level of control over prices, and delaying the process of privatization (Sharafutdinova, 2010, p. 76).

[47] Interviews in Kazan (March 30, April 15, April 27, May 17, June 15, 2016).

[48] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, August 9, 2016).

ethnicity, are expected to dissociate themselves from religious practice. Internal, fixed quotas[49] for proportional representation of major ethnic populations in Xinjiang is used in the events of electing representatives to the ethno-regional People's Congress as well as in filling the top positions in ethno-regional party-state apparatuses, despite that relative population weights of different ethnic populations in Xinjiang can change.

SHADOW CASES

This section succinctly tests the ability of my argument to explain or to predict autonomy as implemented outcome in four other ethno-regions, i.e. Republic of Bashkortostan and Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of Russia as well as Tibet Autonomous Region (Xizang) and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Nei Mongol) of China. Though similar in terms of robust consciousness of distinct identity among their titular populations, these four ethno-regions are selected not out of the principle of "most similar" cases but rather in light of their distinctive demographic, geographic, or historical significances. Accordingly, instead of a controlled comparison of these ethno-regions, I employ the congruence method (George & Bennett, 2005, pp. 181-204) while assessing their levels of inter-ethnic integration, titular elites' representation, and autonomy outcomes according to the instruments I applied to Tatarstan and Xinjiang.

As shown in Table 4, my argument has been able to predict the 2010-2015 levels of implemented autonomy outcome for four additional ethno-regions in Russia and China. In Russia, as compared to Tatarstan, both Bashkortostan and Yakutia feature lower level of social integration for the titular population (2010), lower level of political representation for the titular

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[49] Interviews in Ürümqi and Beijing (August 7, 2015, August 9, 2016).

elites (2015), and lower level of implemented autonomy outcome. In China, as compared to Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia features higher level of social integration for the titular population (2010), higher level of political representation for the titular elites (2015), and higher level of implemented autonomy outcome, whereas Tibet features lower level of social integration for the titular population (2010), lower level of political representation for the titular elites (2015), and lower level of implemented autonomy outcome.

Table 4. Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Yakutia of Russia and Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia of China compared in terms of titular integration (2010), titular representation (2015), and autonomy as implemented outcome (2010-2015)
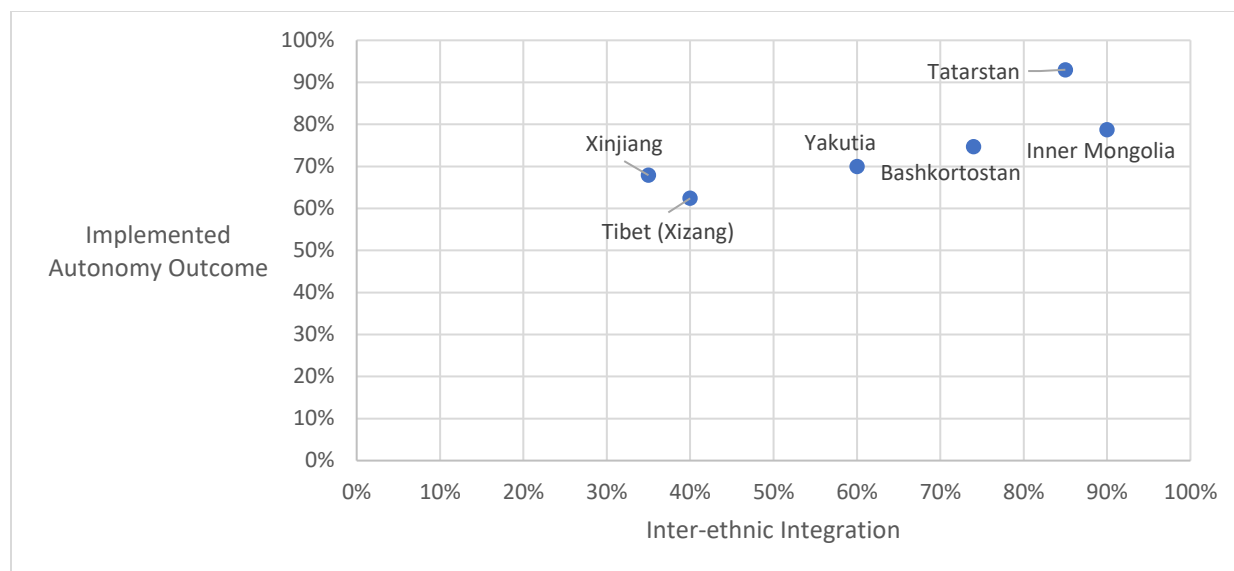
Ethno-region	Titular integration	Titular integration compared to Tatarstan or Xinjiang	Predicted titular representation	Observed titular representation	Predicted autonomy outcome	Observed autonomy outcome
			Russia			
Tatarstan	85%			1.36, overrepresentation		93%, high
Bashkortostan	74%[a]	lower	<1.36	1.02, proportionate representation	<93%	74.7%, moderate
Yakutia	60%	lower	<1.36	1.34, overrepresentation	<93%	70%, relatively low

China

Xinjiang	35%			0.64, underrepresentation		67.9%, low
Tibet	40%	comparable	≈0.64	0.56, underrepresentation	≈67.9%	62.4%, low
Inner Mongolia	90%	Significantly higher	>0.64	2.12, overrepresentation	>67.9%	78.7%, relatively high

[a] I view "Bashkir" and "Tatar" as two ethnic categories artificially imposed during the Soviet period upon a shared landscape of cultural continuum and treat ethnic Bashkirs and ethnic Tatars combined as the titular population of Bashkortostan.

The formal institutional designs of ethno-federalism in Russia (featuring center-periphery power-sharing) and Leninist party in China (featuring state's subordination to party) tend to respectively constitute an institutional opportunity in Russia and an institutional constraint in China. As Figure 2 illustrates, the three ethno-regions of Russia tend to have been more autonomous overall than the three ethno-regions of China, which may imply the impact of different institutional orders across the two multi-ethnic states. Nevertheless, institutional opportunities or constraints do not determine an ethno-region's implemented autonomy outcome but merely either amplifying or inhibiting it, since ethno-regions vary conspicuously in terms of autonomy as implemented outcome within Russia or China despite common institutional orders.

Figure 2. Integration and autonomy outcome: six ethno-regions in Russia and China

CONCLUSION

This article first proposes a conceptual framework that comprehensively assesses and compares

implemented autonomy outcomes across six ethno-regions in Russia and China. It then proposes

an analytical framework that traces the processes of how differing patterns of inter-ethnic

integration can lead to differing autonomy outcomes by conducting a controlled comparison of

two "most similar" cases. Ethnicity is treated as relational, dynamic processes of inter-ethnic

boundary-making processes and analyzed on three aspects, acculturation, social integration, and

psychological identification. They mold three aspects of titular elites' capacity, i.e. elite-level

inter-ethnic relations, central state's perception of the titular population, and intra-ethnic

cleavage structure, which jointly shape a fourth aspect, titular elites' representation in the ethno-

regional state's most powerful positions. In such processes, the key for titular elites to heighten

their political representation in state apparatuses and their capacity to practice formally

promulgated autonomy is to achieve an "integration-distinction balance," or rather, titular

population's ability to socially integrate while maintaining distinct identity simultaneously. Unlike a conventional wisdom that ethnic minorities' distinct identity can be better maintained and their political representation better enhanced through social segregation, I argue that inter-ethnic integration and inter-ethnic distinction can be attained at once and that if attained, such a balance is a sufficient condition for titular elites' representation in the ethno-regional state, which is a necessary condition for improved autonomy outcome for that ethno-region.

To clarify, "integration" hereby does not refer to types of state practices (e.g. assimilationist policies) but rather tendency in inter-ethnic boundary making processes. To improve minority elites' bargaining capacity, certain extent of minority-majority integration and less rigid inter-ethnic divide may be necessary. The socially more integrated sections can protect the space in which expression of distinct identities can be tolerated. Otherwise, rigid inter-ethnic divide can be used by the central state to justify highly coercive practices.

As demonstrated in Figure 2, for the six ethno-regions in Russia and China, there appears to be a pattern of correlation between inter-ethnic integration and implemented autonomy outcome. However, the statistical significance of such correlation awaits testing in future research that may use a much larger sample and control certain institutional orders (e.g. ethno-federalism, Leninist party). Future research can also explore how my analytical framework can travel to explain autonomy outcomes of ethno-regions in democratic regimes. Even in democratic regimes, an "integration-distinction balance" can also contribute to titular elites' political representation, since they need to effectively reach out to non-titular voters in electoral campaigns in order to keep themselves represented in the ethno-regional state.

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