Uighur's identity and sense of belonging, can soft power play a role?

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Uighur’s Identity and Sense of Belonging, can Soft Power Play a Role?

Fung Wai King, Winston

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Ting Wai

Hong Kong Baptist University

2014
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of MPhil at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Abstract

This study seeks to ascertain whether Chinese soft power can shape or sway the sense of belonging and identity of Uighurs within the Chinese state. The methodology used for this study will involve surveys and interviews, employing the two primary quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings from this study suggest that Chinese soft power, in the form of education in a controlled environment, does have this ability to sway Uighur to identify with the Chinese state. However, gauging the views of the wider educated Uighur community, indicates that the effectiveness of Chinese soft power is constrained by multiple social, political and economic issues. Based on the analysis of these findings, there appears to be three potential solutions: (i) create a multi-ethnic culture, (ii) incorporate civic nationalism as a component of PRC citizenship and (iii) to reformulate soft power into the form of shared goals that would require cooperation between Uighur and Hans to accomplish.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

National identities form one of the core identities of ethnic groups around the world. This sense of belonging to a larger group identity serves as the foundation for political allegiance to modern nation-states sustained by nationalism. However, in a multi-ethnic state, with complicated ethnic relations, there is often a competition for the sense of belonging and allegiance between the ethnic minority’s own identity and that of the larger state. The state may seek to sway minorities’ allegiance through a complex and multi-strand process of negotiation between the state and the ethnic groups (such that the needs of each particular group can be accommodated in an inclusive overarching state identity). Conversely, the state may regard ethnic minorities as threats to their rule and frame them in a securitized context. The state may seek to suppress ethnic identity by assimilation policies or banning their respective unique cultural or social characters. In other cases, the state may employ a mix of accommodating and suppressive policies in their attempt to shape the minorities’ identity and sense of belonging to their national interest.

Whichever is the case above, the conflict between ethnic identity and their sense of belonging with those of the nation state remains a contested and unresolved issue for many nation-states. Resolving this ethnic group versus nation minority cleavage has thus far produced unsatisfactory results which can only provide temporary solutions. For instance, authoritarian states frequently resort to draconian political control to forcibly unite different ethnic groups. This political
power is used to maintain the cohesion of a multi-ethnic state that otherwise would be difficult to coexist under a single overarching entity. But once that central political control weakens or collapses, the multi-ethnic state often breaks apart into individual ethnic-based states. Soviet Union and the Former Yugoslavia stand as clear examples of this phenomenon. As an authoritarian multi-ethnic state, China also has the potential to confront this possibility. In particular, the persistence of various form of protests (i.e. calls for Xinjiang independence) by Uighur organizations against the Chinese stands as a clear indication of the continued failure by the Chinese state to successfully induced large number of Uighurs into accepting a Chinese nationality. The Chinese state has employed multiple measures and policies to encourage the Uighurs to see the benefits of remaining within a Chinese nation-state. Yet, a significant number of Uighurs still remains unconvinced of this message. Even those Uighurs who do not call for outright independence from China are deeply displeased with their present political rights and situation in Xinjiang.

Thus the central question of our study is to explore the reasons why, despite secured territorial control of Xinjiang by the Chinese party-state since 1949, many Uighurs are still unable to identify with the Chinese nation-state. Existing literature has proposed numerous theories as possible answers. They range from the repressive policies of the Chinese state, irreconcilable cultural and social differences between the Uighurs and Chinese and to various resistant tactics Uighurs have adopted for use against the Chinese state. However, the absence of coercion does not translate into automatic acceptance of the Chinese state by Uighurs. It is well known that even in many Western democratic states, there exist organizations representing ethnic minorities which do not wish to belong to their state (i.e. Basque nationalist in Spain and Parti Quebecois in Canada). It is
therefore critical to find the answer to the question on what the state has offered these minorities to make them voluntarily identify (or not) with the larger state. The continued refusal of many Uighurs to be incorporated into a Chinese state identity is therefore not merely a matter of Chinese repression against their political and cultural rights but it is due to the fact that the Chinese state has thus far failed to offer a set of attributes, which could be political, cultural or otherwise that would sway enough Uighurs to adopt a Chinese identity.

This study will thus propose the use of soft power, which is a concept traditionally used in international relations, within the domestic context to illustrate from new angles the dynamics of the identity relationship between the ethnic minorities and the Chinese-state. Soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye (1990), is the ability to attract or co-opt others to your goal without resorting to coercion (i.e. military threat) or monetary inducement (i.e. bribery). The inherent appeal of culture, values and policies of the nation-state, would voluntarily make others adopt the goal. In our present case, the goal in question is national identity. The study will examine Chinese soft power in relation to whether it can attract or co-opt Uighurs to the Chinese state such that it will identify with the state as citizens.

This study will evaluate the potential and ability of the Chinese-state to use soft power to bridge the Uighurs and Chinese state identities and sense of belonging. It will seek to identify, if possible, any particular soft power factor(s) that strongly appeals to or be disregarded by Uighurs. Doing so will allow us to gain a better understanding of how the Chinese state is perceived by Uighurs and in turn, how that affects and impacts Uighur identity formation. It may also offer a future area for research of the relationship between soft power and identity formation. Rather than the general population of Uighurs in Xinjiang, this study
has focused on Uighurs who have received secondary or tertiary education within or outside of China. Because these educated Uighurs are the people who are most aware of their social situation and are also likely the prime targets of any soft power initiative from the Government.

This is especially significant because of the Chinese state’s emphasis on developing soft power externally in recent years to increase China’s appeal to other actors in the international system. However, the effectiveness of soft power externally depends on the domestic attributes within China; namely its society and people. China’s soft power externally cannot be fully understood without the corresponding understanding of the appeal of the Chinese state to its own citizens. The failure of the Chinese state to formulate a stronger identity and a sense of belonging among the Uighur population to the Chinese state will therefore compromise the credibility and strength of Chinese soft power. Hence soft power’s effectiveness rests on both internal legitimacy as well as external legitimacy. Because in order for Chinese soft power (be it culture, values or some other attributes) to convincingly persuade external parties (i.e. other nation-states, NGOs), it must also convince its own citizens within the internal domestic arena as well.

Conducting a study in this area will therefore assist in illuminating the relationship that exists between national identity and how (or if) it can be shaped by soft power factors. Examining the identity conflict between the Uighur and the Chinese state from a soft power perspective will offer a potentially fresh and innovative analysis to national identity issues.

1.2 Thesis Argument
Findings from this study suggest Chinese soft power does have an ability to sway and influence the sense of belonging among educated Uighurs in China in the form of education in a controlled environment such as schools in Guangdong. The data suggests that the Uighur students who have received education have positive appraisal of Chinese soft power areas of culture and ethnic policies. Our findings have shown that Uighur students do not necessarily see their ethnic and Chinese state identity as an “either-or” proposition. This indicates soft power factor has the ability to cross inter-ethnic division to appeal to Uighurs. However, interviews held with the wider Uighur educated community suggests this potential is severely curtailed by social, political and economic issues that divide the Uighurs from the Hans as well as the Chinese government. In particular, more effective Chinese soft power is conditional upon the Chinese government being able to create a more coordinated soft power strategy and the creation of a shared goal that can unite Uighurs and Hans.

Thus soft power is curtailed by uncoordinated and contradictory government responses as well as Uighur-Han tensions. On the one hand the Government encourages greater sense of belonging through reaching out to Uighurs, but on the other hand, it eliminates any such appeal by its securitized governance and Uighur-Han tensions. Based on an analysis of the survey and interview data, the potential soft power solutions to these issues appear to be concentrated on three key findings which are to transform the Han-based culture into a multi-ethnic culture, incorporate civic nationalism as a component of PRC citizenship and provide a shared goal approach to the lack of a perceived commonality between Uighurs and Hans that placed them in a competitive relation. In sum, the current inter-ethnic relation is characterized by competition for resources and Han prejudice. Without soft power in the form of multi-ethnic
culture, civic nationalism and a shared goal approach, soft power to sway Uighurs will continued to be hampered and prevented from being able to cause a change in the sense of belonging of Uighurs. To understand and explore this argument further, the study will now examine the purpose of using soft power solutions to sway Uighur identity by the Chinese state.

1.3 Purpose

The central aim of this study is to ascertain the role soft power plays in shaping national identities and sense of belonging for the Uighurs and the Chinese state. It will gauge the current impact of soft power in identity formation and analyze future prospects soft power can play in this area. The study will seek to offer a fresh examination at the identity cleavage between Uighurs and the Chinese state through the prism of soft power application within a nation-state.

To begin with, soft power (Nye; 1990, 2004) as a concept has been applied primarily in international relations theories. The crux of the concept lies in the ability of State B to do the bidding of State A without State A applying coercive hard power (military or monetary) on State B. The reason being that State B finds the attributes of State A attractive or appealing and thus, State B will voluntarily on its own initiative accept State A’s aim and goals.

What the study seeks to focus on is how soft power can also be applied internally within a nation-state and in this case, China. For soft power of nation-state to appeal externally, it must also appeal internally for its own citizens.

In particular, the shaping of national identity and the sense of belonging are key examples of soft power within a nation-state. If the Chinese state can successfully wield soft power to appeal to its disaffected minorities, it can then maintain cohesion and strength as well. Conversely, the inability of a nation-state
to wield soft power means the state-minority divide will continue, potentially compromising the integrity of the nation-state.

The focus here is on the Chinese state as the key actor to enable or retard soft power, rather than on the Han ethnic majority as a whole. While no doubt Uighur-Han ethnic relations plays a vital role in identity formation, China remains an authoritarian state. How the Han people view Uighurs is widely impacted by how the Chinese state portray such relations. True, in some cases, different strata and segments of the Han population may differ in their views and policies on Uighurs from the state. Nevertheless, the Chinese state retains a central and determining role in how identity discourse and formation are implemented domestically, the Chinese state thus also controls levers to its soft power potential. Even in areas where the state does not directly create soft power, it certainly can determine the extent to which it can “blossom”. This is because the Chinese state’s power in managing media, communication as well as dictating and implementing different social policies are overall much greater in scope than in a comparative democratic state. It can guide or control soft power variables to a greater extent than that of a democratic state. Soft power, rather than being a variable to some extent independent of government control (as is the case for Western countries’ soft power), is very much determined and influenced by government policies. Consequently, the Chinese state as an actor plays a potentially much bigger role in soft power than a Western democratic state could.

This study thus seeks to explore the relationship between soft power and national identity and how soft power can shape national identity between Uighurs and the Chinese state.

Specifically, the aim of this research is to determine how and to what extent soft power can be used to shape the national identity and sense of belonging of the
Uighurs. It will seek to identify and analyze specific soft power variables that has the potential to enable a greater sense of belonging of the Uighurs to the present Chinese state. It will also seek to identify and analyze which soft power variable is regarded as more influential and more important for the Uighurs. It will also seek to determine which soft power variable is the “weakest” and considered the least important to increase the sense of belonging between Uighurs and the Chinese-party-state and why. By doing so, the study will highlight the current difficulties, in concept and application, of Chinese state soft power towards the Uighurs. It will also illustrate if there are areas for building a preliminary common basis for national identity for both the Ethnic Uighurs and Han population.

The above also raises the question as to why the Uighurs were selected as the subject of study. The Uighurs were chosen because they have retained a strong and distinct sense of unique ethnic identity with distinct customs, religion, culture and language that separates them from the Han majority. Moreover, like the Tibetans, various political groups and a portion of their population have displayed varying degrees of resistance to Chinese rule, from demand for greater autonomy to outright independence. They have received relatively less attention than their Tibetan compatriots in the media, but their situation deserves closer study. Because unlike the Tibetans, Uighurs’ exiled community and political leaders do not appear to share the same degree of cohesiveness, such as the absence of a unifying leader like the Dalai Lama. Likewise, the media attention like their Tibetan counterpart thus may be harder for them to compete for Uighur allegiance. That in turn, would on the surface, appear easier for the Chinese government to mold and shape their identity and sense of belonging compared to the Tibetans.

The fact that the Chinese government has thus far failed to find a persuasive common basis for mutual understanding between Uighurs and the state has no
doubt indicate a failure of existing ethnic policies within the state. But it also reveals an absence of the “necessary ingredients” to bind both the Uighurs and the Chinese state under a common identity for both Hans and Uighurs. This is not unique to China. The lack of a sense of belonging of some ethnic minorities to the larger nation-state that they belong to is a characteristic of many multi-ethnic states, be they democratic or authoritarian. In that sense, the Uighurs are like other distinct ethnic groups, such as the Quebecois in Canada, Catalan people in Spain or the Kachin people in Myanmar. While both the Quebecois and Catalan people lived under Western democratic regimes, Kachin people lived under the authoritarian (although reforming) regime of Myanmar. In the case of the Quebecois and Catalans, a democratic regime allows space for their demands to be discussed with their respective state, even if their demands have not yet reached a satisfactory conclusion for all parties. A space at least exists for negotiation to take place. The opening up of Myanmar however has not resolved the ethnic tensions that exist in that country. Likewise, China resembles Myanmar in one key aspect: being an authoritarian state unable to resolve ethnic identity issues by adopting repressive policies. If China can develop the ability to use soft power to resolve its identity dispute with ethnic minorities such as the Uighurs, then it could distinguish itself from the failed record of prior authoritarian states. It will mean China has found the thus far missing “necessary ingredient” to satisfy the demands of both the Uighurs and the Chinese state as a whole. That is the significance of selecting Uighurs as a case study. Determining whether such a possibility exists is the primary focus of this research.

What then is this “necessary ingredient”? The author is not referring to any specific broad political or policy prescriptions such as “democracy” or “affirmative action”. As this is an academic rather than government policy paper,
it is not the intention of this study to seek particular policy solutions as the “silver bullet” to the identity cleavage between Uighurs and the Chinese state. Rather, for the purpose of this study, “necessary ingredient” is defined as concepts or values that can enhance national identity and sense of belonging to the Chinese state. In particular, the study seeks to determine the potential of soft power as one of the many “necessary ingredients” to narrow the difference between Uighurs and the Chinese state.

Furthermore, the focus will be on ascertaining the educated Uighur respondents’ view on Chinese soft power. As they are the ones most exposed to both Chinese and disaffected Uighur’s attempt at shaping their identity (i.e. education, government policies etc.). They are at the centre of the competition for allegiance and sense of belonging between the Chinese state and the Uighur identity. Likewise, as they are more likely to gain leading government or private industrial positions (given their education), they may also be more likely to influence their fellow Uighurs who may be less well educated. Thus their sense of belonging may have a disproportionate impact on the rest of the Uighur population. Whether they see their identity in zero-sum terms as either ethnic Uighur, National Uighur or National Chinese or whether they think it is mutually compatible; may have a strong bearing on the shaping of Uighur identity as a whole. How they see their identity, sense of belonging and what role soft power can play in that, will thus be the key for this study.

In summary, this study aims to determine what role soft power plays in molding national identity and sense of belonging between the Uighurs and the Chinese state. As soft power is one of the “necessary ingredients” that can bridge the identity the cleavage that exists between Uighurs and the Chinese state. To identify specific soft power variable that can enhance Uighur’s identity and sense
of belonging will be crucial to furthering our understanding of the role soft power plays in identity politics. The focus will be on educated Uighur respondents, as they may have a disproportionate impact on Uighur identity formation and sense of belonging. Conducting a pioneering study in this area will therefore illuminate the relationship that exists between national identity and how it can be shaped by soft power factors. Examining the identity conflict between the Uighur and the Chinese state from a soft power perspective will offer a fresh and innovative analysis to national identity issues.

1.4 Outline

In order to ascertain the soft power attractiveness of the Chinese state towards the Uighur minority, the study will be divided into the following chapters. Chapter Two will be a background overview of Chinese and Uighur construction of their ethnic and national identities through examination of existing literature. This literature review will provide the background to our study and its aim is to serve as an overview of soft power and identity issue to frame the current study in context. It will first examine soft power theories and the current discourse on Chinese soft power. It will also seek to provide a historical outline of ethnic identity formation in China and why China adopts the policies it has towards the ethnic minorities. This will establish a foundation for the later sections on case studies and the survey findings. In particular, it will seek to provide a historical, social and political context to the state of Chinese soft power at present and how it relates to the current patterns of sense of belonging among the Uighurs.

Chapter Three will be a discussion on the methodology of this study. It will involve surveys and interviews on Uighur students in two schools, one in Guangzhou and the other in Dongguan. This survey will present a picture of a
section of current Uighur students’ view of their identity, sense of belonging as well as how they view soft power in shaping the two. This is divided into two sections, a questionnaire followed by semi-structure interviews in a focus group format. Both the questionnaire and interviews will identify the weakest and strongest area of soft power for the Chinese state. It will also reveal whether any common basis for belonging can be developed between the Uighurs and the Chinese state. This will involve not just the Uighur students, but also members of the Uighur diaspora to gauge their views on their identity, sense of belonging and soft power’s impact on shaping the two. It will also present views by ethnic Chinese who have resided in Xinjiang on their identity, sense of belonging and soft power as a comparative analysis to the views held by Uighurs. It will also be used to contrast the findings with that of the Uighur students in China.

Chapter Four will be an examination of the survey findings. From these analyses of Uighur students’ views, the study will gain a preliminary understanding of how soft power influence their identity and sense of belonging. Chapter Five will be a presentation of the interview findings. Chapter Six will be an analysis of the survey and interview findings. This will compare the interview and survey findings, and provide a clearer understanding and illustration of the current situation of Chinese soft power on educated Uighur and how they interacts with the Chinese state. It will be a synthesis of findings from both the survey and interviews of the preceding chapters. It will analyze and determine if (and to what extent) soft power can be used as a basis for developing a sense of belonging between the Chinese state and the Uighurs. This will involve discussion of a multi-ethnic identity, civic nationalism and a shared goal approach to resolve some of the existing weaknesses of Chinese soft power. Chapter Seven will be the conclusion with not only a summary of the findings and analysis but also to
recommend future directions of further research
2. Literature Review

In order to locate our study in the research context, we will now turn to examine the existing literature. A substantial amount of literature has been focused on the analysis of Uighur identity issues with the Chinese state, but so far there has been relatively few analyses examining the Uighur and Han sense of belonging from a soft power perspective. Why then have existing literature on identity theories not sufficiently account for the soft power factor? This is because national identity and soft power literature has thus far occupied separate and distinct fields with little in the way of “cross-pollination”, the potential of soft power in identity theories thus remain largely unexplored. Our study therefore seeks to marry both of these erstwhile disparate fields to offer new insights in identity and sense of belonging. To comprehend this point, there will be a discussion on the literature review on soft power, national identity theories and Chinese national identity theories.

2.1 Soft Power Literature

Soft power has attracted a great volume of academic and popular attention over the past few years. Yet despite the belief of some that China’s soft power ability has risen to challenge that of the US, this view is not shared by many other Chinese scholars. They remain skeptical of China’s actual soft power ability and feels its potential is unforeseeable at the present. The study shall now explore these points in the following section.

To begin with, “power” was defined by Robert Dahl (1957) as the ability of A to get B to do something he would otherwise not. The term “hard” and “soft”
power can be found in the works of Hans J. Morgenthau (1978) and Alfred Thayer Mahan (2010) when they tried to categorize what power a state possesses. But the most notable meaning of “soft power” was coined by Joseph Nye (1990) in his seminal work *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990) to counter Paul Kennedy’s “America in decline” theories. This was further developed in Nye’s later work, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). Nye’s key argument was to distinguish between “hard” power (defined by ability to change what others do on command through coercion or inducement) and “soft” power (achieving the same objective with the “attractiveness” of one’s culture, political values and foreign policies) (Nye, p.7). Whereas hard power is accomplish with the means of forces (i.e. war, sanctions or payment and bribes), soft power is the ability to get the outcomes you want without having to force people to change their behaviour through threats or payments (Nye, p.15). In particular, soft power is exerted through culture (both “high” and “popular”), political values (“universal” values like democracy and human rights) and foreign policies (its legitimacy gives credibility and moral authority to the state).

Nye was not unique in stressing the importance of non-traditional power. Samuel Huntington (1993) has for example, controversially argued that future conflicts would rest on cultural fault lines of “seven or eight” major civilizations (p.25). Likewise, Michael J. Mazarr (1996) has argued that cultural factors will emerge as the major factor dominating international relations (p.174). However, it is Nye’s soft power theory that remains the most influential, as can be seen by a variety of scholars applying Nye’s conception of soft power to analysis. John McCormick (2006) has argued that the EU has successfully used soft power to
emerge as an alternative superpower to the US. Other scholars have examined popular Japanese culture and soft power (Shiraishi, 1997; Leheny, 2006; Otmaigin 2008).

On the other hand, there are also numerous critics of the soft power concept. Fan (2008) claims soft power is but a limited factor in the relationship between nation states which are governed more by geopolitical and strategic concerns. Likewise, the attractiveness of various aspects of American culture does not automatically translate into ability to influence (Joffe, 2006). Others point to the fact that soft power is created by non-state leaders, hence it is unpredictable, intangible and difficult to wield by policy-makers (Treverton and Jones, 2005). The lack of agreement over what constitute “soft power” itself means that the concept is ascertained differently by individual observers, rendering the term meaningless (Breslin, 2011). In addition, others contend that “hard power” should not be underestimated in building and sustaining the liberal international order (Kagan, 2012). Janice Bially Mattern (2005) argued that soft power is constructed as a representational force which is a nonphysical but coercive power. To Mattern, soft power isn’t really “soft” but is a continuation of hard power by different means.

In response to the criticism, Nye (2006) clarified his soft power thesis by arguing that soft power is not necessarily more “humane”, stating it as a description rather than an ethical prescription. Nye (2006) believes soft power is quantifiable by comparing cultural and media resources. He further elaborated

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1 In Europe, the discourse on soft power is somewhat different as it there is a focus instead on a related concept, normative power. As defined by Ian Manners (2002), normative power are a series of principles or norms that are enshrined in the acquis communautaire (EU law), namely peace, liberty, supranational binding law and human rights (Manners, 2002). Like soft power, the EU diffuses these norms to the rest of the international community not by coercive means, but by setting an example. In particular, there is an emphasis on diffusing human rights (Manners, 2006) through conditional clauses with its trade partners.
that the sources of soft power, while independent of government control, can still be useful when initiated in cooperation with public diplomacy. Others have tried to develop the theory more systematically. For instance, Giulio Gallarotti (2011) proposed that soft power can be categorized as deriving from two sources: international sources (foreign policies and actions) and domestic actions (domestic policies and actions) with multiple sub-sources incorporated within each.

For China’s case, scholars have also begun to take notice and examine China’s soft power, particularly over the past 5 years. Joshua Kurlantzick (2007) characterized Chinese soft power as a “broader idea than did Nye…soft power means anything outside of military and security realm, including not only popular culture…but also coercive economic and diplomatic levers” (p. 6). Kurlantzick believed that China can now wield the kind of soft power that the US enjoyed during the Cold War (p.8). Similarly, Joshua Cooper Ramos (2004) proposed that China had developed an authoritarian “Beijing Consensus” to replace the “Washington Consensus” of Western institutions. Ramos defined it as a “ruthless willingness to innovate and experiment, by a lively defense of national borders and interests, and by the increasingly thoughtful accumulation of tools of asymmetric power projection. It is pragmatic and ideological at the same time.” (p.4, 2004). Along similar lines, Stephen Halper defines the Beijing Consensus as “market authoritarianism” (p.32, 2010), of “going capitalist and staying autocratic” (p.32, 2010). In addition, Ingrid d’Hooghe (2011) has noted there is an increasing diversity of public diplomacy actors (p.21), including non-state actors such as academics, NGOs, overseas Chinese communities and friendship communities (p.22) taking part in informal international dialogue with other nationalities (p.22). D’Hooghe believes that the increasing number of such actors
will promote China’s national image (p.23).

However, the optimistic view on China’s soft power shared by the above scholars is tempered by significant amount of skepticism in regards to actual Chinese soft power ability. For example, Shogo Suzuki (2009) cautions that many Western scholars on Chinese soft power regard it as a latent challenge to American unipolarity without realizing that China’s “Charm Offensive” has not been as successful as many pundits think (p.791). Similarly, Holyk (2011) showed that when soft power is broken down into its constituent parts with proper survey questions, Chinese soft power is relatively weak in Asia. Nye himself believed that China’s soft power still has a “long way to go” (Nye, 2005), lacking cultural industries and universities that can match America’s. (Nye, 2005).

Indeed, Chinese analysts themselves have noted that while Chinese leaders are well-aware of the importance of soft power, the effectiveness of China’s soft power strategies are limited at best. To begin with, Wang Hongying (2011) has noted that the Chinese state does take into consideration domestic political conditions to project a positive image abroad, trying to sustain its legitimacy in part by raising international status (p.43). Foreign praises would confirm the position of the Chinese state and boost the legitimacy and respectability of the government with the Chinese public (Wang, 2011, p.44). Then President Hu Jintao himself stated that the “increase in our nation’s international status and influence will have to be demonstrated in hard power…as well as soft power” (Li, 2009, p.23). However, such statements belie the weakness of China’s actual soft power assets. The first shortcoming, according to Li Mingjiang (2009), is the belief that China’s soft power lagged behind its own hard power and the soft power of other major powers (p.28). There is a misunderstanding of the concept of soft power in the Chinese government (Li, 2009), seeing media as an extension of
China’s soft power instruments when “very few Chinese analysts realize Western
media outlets...are not submissive tools of their governments, most importantly,
the US media has played a crucial role in bringing down the reputation of the US
government”. (Li, 2009, p.37).

The second issue is credibility. Jian Wang (2011) notes that there is a strong
cleavage between China’s self-image and how it is viewed abroad, with 92%
approval rating from the Chinese (p.5) but with a noticeably poorer ratings from
other countries in Europe and Asia, and only an 8% approval rating of China from
Japan. Such disparity reflects, as Wang Jian (2011) puts it, China’s failure to “do
an effective job in describing and explaining itself to the outside world” (p.7). The
state-led efforts characterized by international expansion of China Central
Television, Xinhua and People’s Daily are handicapped by the fact that these
media outlets enjoy little credibility. Thus Wang (2011) queried how is it possible
for China to gain the trust of international audience in its official external
communication (p.10). Likewise, Zhang Xiaoling (2011) has examined the
international expansion of the CCTV channel as part of China’s soft power
strategy, noting that despite aggressive attempts at targeting an international
audience, CCTV will be unable to win the “hearts and minds of foreign viewers
unless it deals effectively about issues with credibility and government control”
(Zhang, 2011, p.68). In a similar vein, Sheng Ding (2008) argued that due to
“unbalanced soft power resources”, China currently lacks sufficient credibility to
become a capable national image builder (p.164). For Sheng, the lack of political
credibility not only weakens the persuasiveness of China’s foreign publicity but
also makes it difficult to pacify overseas Chinese (p.165).

Third, Chinese-state funded institutions on foreign territories are constrained
by political restrictions which inhibit any soft power potential. For instance,
James Paradise (2009) has analyzed the use of Confucius Institutes which has been created by a partnership between a Chinese and a foreign academic institution (Paradise, 2009, p.651), but the institutes cannot “contravene the laws and regulations of China” and “shall not involve or participate in any activities not consistent with the mission of the Confucius Institute” (p.659). For Paradise (2009), this create potential problems when discussing sensitive topics such as Tibet and Taiwan (p.660) as well as engendering fears among certain quarters of the academia of being a “Chinese Trojan Horse” (p.660).

Fourth, there is the issue of whether soft power can really can be exerted by China in the first place. Zhang Yongjin (2009) has pointed to the inability of China to “set the agenda” using soft power. According to Zhang, the attention devoted to China’s soft power such as the Confucius Institutes or the so-called “Beijing Consensus” are just superficial displays of China’s soft power. The truth is that China has not been able to set any agenda for global or regional institutions (p.54). Rather than use one’s soft power to co-opt others and change other’s behaviour, China has been subjected to the co-optive powers of those dominant in the international community (p.55).

Fifth, Deng Yong (2009) has highlighted China’s “woefully inadequate innovative domestic institutions…and institutions of higher learning, all of which are often associated with soft power” (p.71). The whole notion of exporting the “Beijing Consensus” was rejected by Deng as the Chinese state was more interested in the “Beijing Consensus” to vindicate China’s “self-paced reforms than its applicability to other developing countries” (Yong, p. 71).

Sixth, there are the suggestions for improving China’s current soft power. Wang Yiwei (2008) suggests improving the coordination between various departments and groups (p.264) to enhance long-term strategic arrangements to
practice public diplomacy. In addition, facing a “hegemony of discourse” by the West (p.265), China should take advantage of its own media to carry out media diplomacy and take advantage of the foreign media by allowing unrestricted access to China (p.265). Finally, Wang suggests improvements in the quality of China’s diplomats who are seen as overcautious, lacking creativity and possess little knowledge of international marketing (p.266). Similarly, Ting Wai (2011) has used the example of the Eiffel Tower to urge China to focus on developing innovation and original philosophical thinking as a means to increase soft power. More specifically, Li Xin and Verner Worm (2010) has suggested an “integrative model” of Chinese soft power (p.75). They state that China can build up soft power in six areas: culture, political values, development model, international institutions, international image and economic temptation through formal, economic and public diplomacies (p.75).

From the above survey of soft power, it becomes apparent that the actual efficacy of Chinese soft power is still very much debated in the literature. Hence the importance of exploring this issue further in our present study.

2.2 Identity Theories Literature

Referring to ethnic and national identities as well as nationalism, the literature on the subject is vast and it would be impractical to cite them all here. Nevertheless, several key themes stood out. In particular, there are the artificial and constructed nature of national identity, which is the Chinese identity shaped by ressentiment against Western power as well as the Chinese securitized policy clashing with Uighur’s identity. Ultimately, the literature reveals that if ethnicity can be constructed, then the implication is that it can be altered and changed.

To start, several important works are relevant to consider for this study. First,
there is the question of what constitute ethnicity. The Primordialists such as Clifford Geertz (1963) believed ethnic identity as a “given” of social existence such as kin connection being born into a particular community. Such views were discredited by Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan (1993) as empirically unsupportable (1993). Max Weber (1978) argued that rather than a primordial identity, what characterize ethnic group is a subjective belief in their common descent. Frederick Barth (1969) argued that categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. Barth (1969) argued that ethnic identity is constructed and is not an objective pre-existing identity group. What a majority group identifies as an ethnic group may not be what the group identified themselves.

Focusing on nations and national identity, scholars have pointed to a distinctly political aspect of its definition absent from ethnic identities. Elie Kedourie (1960) defines nationalism as a doctrine which holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government” (p. 9). Anthony Smith (1991) defines national identity as some sort of political community, however tenuous. This “implies at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all the members of the community. It has definite social space, a fairly well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong” (p.9).

However, while different group and communities, each with their own unique culture and history, have long existed in human history, their modern
identities in the political context of today is actually manufactured. Scholars have long agreed on the constructed or artificial nature of modern nations. Eric Hobsbawn (1983) argued that the nation, and its associated phenomena such as nationalism, the nation-state, and national symbols rest on social engineering which is often deliberate and innovative. Likewise, Benedict Anderson (1991) has famously argued that modern nations are “imagined communities” made possible by “print-capitalism”. For Anderson (1991), even if an individual does not and cannot know the majority of people within his nation, he will feel a sense of affinity with them due to modern communication of the printed word (newspapers, books etc.).

Other scholars have examined the creation of nations as a modern phenomenon. Ernest Gellner (1964) argued that modern nations were made possible by industrialization as well as increased literacy and mobility. Industrialization necessitated greater cultural standardization, hence nationalism was born to ensure the state maintained control of the resources (Gellner, 1983). Liah Greenfeld (1992), in her seminal work, “Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity” argued that nationalism was created by ressentiment. She defines it as “a sustained sentiment of existential envy and resentment based on a sense of one's inferiority vis-à-vis the societies from which the ideas of nationalism were imported, and which therefore were originally seen as models” (Greenfeld, p. 250). Historically, the sources of importation were to the west of the importers and, more important, were invariably defined as parts of the symbolic West” (Greenfeld, p. 250).

Moreover, Greenfeld (1992) categorized different types of nationalism, arguing it originated from the period of Tudor England and consist of individualistic and civic nationalism based on equality and free society rather than blood ties. According to Greenfeld, such civic nationalism are a characteristic of many Anglo-Saxon countries today. In contrast, Greenfeld (1995) argues collectivistic nationalism as embodying the nation as single collective will. This collective will is
In sum, the current consensus is that, ethnicity, rather than being a primordial “given” of social existence, is actually constructed. The same constructed nature apply for nations, aided by modern socio-technological trends such as “print-capitalism”. Therefore, if ethnicity is constructed, then it would imply that it can also be altered. The question is how this can be achieved. To explore this further, the study will now turn to examine Chinese and Uighur identities theories.

2.3 Uighur and Chinese national identity theories

If we now turn to Uighur and Chinese national identity and nationalism, the literature reveal several over-arching themes, namely Uighur identity as a modern idea and Chinese national identity as a reaction to Western imperialism revolving around several major themes. This includes historical importation of the concept from the West, its reactionary nature as well as the unfinished and unsettled form of national identity in China today. The review also indicates that Uighur identity is often formed in opposition to official discourse, and despite suppressive attempts, Uighurs have managed to retain their distinct sense of identity. This implies that the Chinese state is still searching for the means to effectively shape Chinese identity.

To begin with, the term “Uighur” can be traced to pastoral nomads who originated from the Lake Baikal region (Uyghurs, 2011). The Uighur Khaganate existed from 745 to 840 AD and at one point stretched from the Caspian Sea to Manchuria (Ibid, 2011). But following its collapse, Uighurs migrated to a region roughly approximating today’s Xinjiang. Thus prior to 1949, 90% of Xinjiang’s population were non-Han with Uighurs making up the bulk of the population there (75%) (McMillen, 1979, p.8). They were split under different competing
kingdoms as well as vassals of larger empires, most notably as part of the Mongol Empire in the 12th century (Uyghurs, 2011). However, despite this history, Uighur as a modern singular ethnic group was a relatively recent invention that only occurred in the 20th century (Rudelson, 1997). The modern notion of a Uighur ethnonational identity was the indirect result of a conference convened by Stalin in 1921 (Bovington, 2010), leading to the official adoption of “Uighur” as an identity in the Soviet Union. This identity was later imported into Xinjiang and institutionalized under warlord Sheng Shicai in 1935 (Bovington, 2010). Before this development, the Uighurs historically did not see themselves as a unified ethnic group within a single territory but divided into three distinct groups based on the regions where they were based (Bovington, 2010). These differences in Uighur self-perception persisted into the 20th century during the Republican warlord period (Forbes, 1986). In particular, tension and rivalries persist within the Uighur community between sedentary and nomadic groups (McMillen, 1979). Ironically, Bovingdon (2010) argues that by closing Xinjiang off from its western neighbours, the CCP has contributed to the formation of a cohesive Uighur identity. Despite the reform period re-opening the regional distinctions and internal divisions within the Uighur ethnic group, Bovington (2010) found that those Uighurs seeking education and employment in Urumqi have strengthened a pan-Uighur identity. To understand how this Uighur identity interact with the Chinese state, we will now turn to examine the development of Chinese national identity and its discourses.

Tracing the historical roots of modern Chinese national identity, Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer (1993) stated that the late Qing was faced with a crisis of “national purpose and state survival. The gap between its identity commitments and identity capabilities widened to the point where the Chinese state could no
longer defend the integrity of its self-identity against the Western onslaught aimed at remaking China” (Kim and Dittmer, p.251). Chinese elites at the start of the 20th century were forced to accept “such Western notions as nations, sovereignty, race, citizenship and identity” (Kim and Dittmer, p.251).

For Wang Gungwu, the recurring theme of Chinese nationalism is one of “restoration nationalism” (Gungwu, 1996, p. 7), characterized by a “recovery of sovereignty, unification of divided territory and national self-respect” (Gungwu, 1996, p.8). He Baoguang and Guo Yingjie (2000) concurs with Wang, asserting that Chinese nationalism was essentially weak and defensive (He and Guo, p.1) a reactionary response to Western imperialism. Wang Gungwu (2002), however, further states that there are several faces to this nationalism, one is a “civilizational face” (Gungwu, 2002, p.114) which emphasize moral and order and rediscovery of traditional values (Gungwu, 2002, p.114), as well as a ‘reactionary face’, which yearns to assert superiority and dominate other peoples and hankers for a glorious past of a great empire (Gungwu, 2002, p.114). These different “faces” of Chinese national identity and nationalism is developed in other works. Peter Gries (2004) argued that Chinese national identity evolves in dynamic relations with other nation and in the past (p.19), that the ways in which the Chinese imagine their “Century of Humiliation” at the hands of Western imperialists in the past have a powerful influence on the nature and direction of Chinese nationalism today (p.19). William A. Callahan (2010) likewise characterized Chinese nationalism and identity as “Pessoptimism”, displaying national pride in China’s ancient civilization combined with national humiliation at past weaknesses and imperialism (p.15). According to Callahan, Chinese identity and security emerges through a combination of modern humiliation and ancient civilization, with China as an innocent victim of foreign aggression,
overlooking the fact that Qing dynasty was a conquest dynasty (p.194). For Callahan, rather than mere instrumental manipulation by the party elite, the state adopted, reworks and redeployed pessimistic discourse as a response to popular protests. Chinese identity thus grew out of a dynamic of reciprocal influence that integrates official policy and popular culture (p.195).

Wang Gungwu and William Callahan’s argument implies the nature and contents of Chinese national identity remains unsettled and contested today, a point developed by others such as Samuel Kim and Lowell Dittmer (1993). In their analysis of the different Chinese responses to the “River Elgy” TV documentary, Kim and Dittmer argued that there is an “absence of national consensus on the core symbols of Chinese national identity…and by implication Chinese national identity can be reassessed, reappropriated and reconstructed” (p.26). Likewise, He Baoguang and Guo Yingjie (2000) has criticized the CCP “for failure to develop a modern notion of the Chinese nation-state. In that sense, China must still be regarded as a nation-less state” (p.6).

Absent from the Chinese nationalist discourse above is the role ethnic minorities play in the Chinese state. Indeed, the lack of discussion of national minorities in nationalist discourse, intentional or otherwise, is another illustration of the incomplete and unsettled state of Chinese national identity. Because neither the Kuomintang (KMT) nor the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were able to formulate a successful ethnic minority policy encompassing the minorities within the greater the Chinese state. James Leibold (2007) has noted that the KMT and CCP were confronted with a key question: how to transform a Qing multi-ethnic empire into a modern multi-ethnic nation-state? The Qing ruled the frontier regions of modern Xinjiang and Tibet using “jimi” (Leibold, 2007, p.5) or “loose reign” policy that left local affairs up to the minorities themselves. This method
was seen as untenable by modern Chinese nationalists (Leibold, 2007, p.5). It was felt by numerous Chinese elites that the state cannot afford to wait for the minorities to be attracted to Han Chinese culture and be transformed into Chinese; rather the minorities must be actively integrated into a centralized state structure (Leibold, 2007, p.5).

Indeed, Zhao Suisheng (2004) has pointed to Sun Yat-Sen’s elimination of his original anti-Manchu platform and accepted the multi-ethnic character of the Qing territory. Sun proposed a “wuzhu gonghe” (Zhao, 2004, p.166) concept (equality of the five ethnicities - Han, Mongol, Uighur, Tibetan, Hui) and propose nationality based on political-territorial terms rather than ethnic terms (Zhao, 2004, p.166). But such policies were unable to last, as Sun’s successor, Chiang-Kai-Shek, was less compromising with the minorities, advocating a “minzu tonghua” (Zhao, 2004, p.166) or assimilation policy. For example, James Millward (2009a) has pointed to Ural-Altaic names being stripped from Xinjiang maps and replaced with Han names (Millward, 2009, p.58). Chiang-Kai-Shek believed China as a singular nation and all Chinese, regardless of ethnicity, shared the same origin; that Han Chinese and Non-Han Chinese were brothers of a single nation (Hsieh, 1994; p.416). Instead of referring to the ethnic groups within China as “nations”, Chiang refer to them as “lineage” stating they are merely brothers within the same family (Hsieh, 1994; p.416). Hsieh (1994) termed Chiang’s policy as Han-ethnocentrism since Chiang states all Chinese must have descended from the common mythical ancestor, Huangdi.

Once the CCP came to power in 1949, their ethnic minority policy proved no better than that of the KMT. According to Warren Smith (1996), the CCP initially claimed to reject KMT policy by allowing self-determination of the minorities. This self-determination right for ethnic groups was modelled on Stalinist Soviet
model (Michaud, 2009). According to the Stalinist model, a nation is defined by common language, culture and territory with a right (in theory) to secede from the nation-state if so desired (Blaut, 1987). The CCP however had no real intention of granting self-rule to any ethnic groups in China. Citing the “concrete conditions” (Smith, 1996, p.342) of China, the CCP after 1949 revoked the right to self-determination and claimed the minorities would be granted ethnic “regional autonomy” in a unitary Chinese state instead (Zhao, 2004, p.177).

Not surprisingly, the CCP ethnic minority policy has generated deep and enduring resistance from ethnic minorities that do not share the CCP’s view of ethnic relations, and the Uighurs are a prime example. Past studies have shown that Uighurs harbour identities that are not only in opposition to official discourse but also publicly expresses such identity in literature, arts, everyday practice and discourse (Rudelson, 1997; Smith, 2000; Cesaro, 2000; Harris, 2001; Beller-Hann, 2001; Bovingdon 2002). It has also been shown that Uighurs’ identity lack representation in the Chinese media beyond local contexts and are still trivialized and left without a voice (Clark, 1987; Gladney, 1994). Nevertheless, through interviews with Uighur artists and entrepreneurs in Beijing, Nimrod Baranovitch (2003) argues that despite such restrictions, Uighurs have been able to achieve an independent public voice that challenges the “orthodoxy representation in national media (p.728).”³

The Chinese state has so far been unable to come to terms with Uighur’s persistence in holding onto their distinct identity and aspirations. Gladney (2004) argues that periods of relative calm (at the time) in Xinjiang does not signify

³ At the same time, it is important to note that while a distinct Uighur identity endures, there is no single Uighur agenda (Davis, 2008). Some Uighur groups prefer a separate Uighur state (Davis, 2008) while others prefer cultural distinction but within an autonomous relationship with China (Davis 2008).
ethnic tension has been resolved. Economic aid and other form of affirmative action had done little to dampen Uighur militancy (Gladney, 2004). While there was a study which suggested the Chinese state has been successful in molding Uighur ethnic nationalism to conform closer to that of the Chinese regime (through influencing popular Uighur music) (Baranovitch, 2007), such conclusion is not the consensus in Uighur studies literature. For instance, Gardner Bovingdon (2010) claims that “the (Chinese) political system exacerbated conflict and deepened Uyghur discontent” (Bovingdon, 2010, p.25) by privileging “territorial integrity” over absolute responsiveness to demands of autonomous groups” (Bovingdon, 2010, p.25). This is reflected by the repeated instances of CCP purges on what they perceived to be “local nationalism”. There was for instance the case of Ziya Samedi (Bovingdon, 2010, p.25) a local Uighur cadre that was purged after he demanded increase autonomous rights for the Uighurs.

Indeed, Kymlicka (2005) contrasts the resistance to substate nationals’ aspirations outside of the West with those in the West. He states that “western countries accept the principle that substate national identities will endure into the indefinite future” (p.111), that a “sense of nationhood/nationalist aspirations” must be accommodated” (p.111). In contrast, he argues territorial autonomy is strongly resisted “virtually everywhere outside the West” (p.117). Instead, Kymlicka (2005) argues substate nationals are “securitized” as internal threats4.

Moreover, Uighur-Chinese state securitized relations are further complicated by the Uighur-Han ethnic dimension of the relationship, namely Han migration into Xinjiang and the unequal status between Hans and Uighurs in social and

4 “Securitization” as a term was coined by Barry Buzan (1991), characterizing it as societal threats that occur within states, with states suppressing or homogenizing sub-state social identities as a response. Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) later elaborated this securitized threat as systemic, principled threats against states that are vulnerable because of a state-nation split (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998: p.158).
economic spheres. Regarding Han migration, Michael E. Clarke (2010) traces the ethnic fault line between Han settlers and ethnic Uighurs from the Qing onwards. Rebellions forced the Qing to abandon the earlier approach of regional autonomy to be replaced by Han settlement. This has continued under the succeeding KMT and CCP regimes (Clarke, 2010). Nicholas Becquelin (2004) argued that the current Chinese state has persistently encourage Han immigration into Xinjiang, especially with the start of reforms, many Hans have migrated to Xinjiang looking for job opportunities, with the Han population growing 31.6% between 1990 and 2000 (Becquelin, 2004, p.55). This does not necessarily improve inter-ethnic relations, as Walker Connor (1994) points out: “the assumption (in this case by the Chinese state) that greater contact among different groups leading to greater awareness is fundamentally erroneous” (p.47). This is compounded by unequal income distribution between Han and Uighurs in Urumqi. As recent studies show, Uighurs earn 31% less than Hans overall in Urumqi (Zang, 2011). In the non-state sector, Uighurs earn 52% less than comparative Hans (Zang, 2011), laying bare the ineffectiveness of government affirmative action to aid Uighurs.

Han migration is further compounded by the advantageous status of Hans in Xinjiang. Cliff Thomas (2012) argued that there is a privileged role of Hans in Xinjiang. Examining the ethnic Han response to the 2009 July 5th riots and the fall of Wang Lequan, Thomas (2012) states that Hans in Xinjiang harbour a view that they are in a “partnership in stability”: “Han mainstream do their part in occupying the border region and by accepting the Party as the best solution for a multi-ethnic, increasingly stratified China…in return, they (Hans) expect that what is being built in Xinjiang in the first instance for them, regardless of the official policies granting special privileges to minorities” (p.100).

What we can see then from the literature above is the unsettled state of
Chinese national identity coupled with a Chinese state that stresses national integrity as a singular priority. Despite some early, perhaps insincere, attempts to grant regional autonomy to the Uighurs, the Chinese state has consistently reject any autonomous demands by the Uighurs, notwithstanding the persistence of a distinct Uighur identity. Therefore, unless the Chinese state can incorporate Uighurs as part of larger Chinese national identity (such that Uighurs voluntarily identify with the Chinese state), the Chinese national identity project will remain incomplete and a work in progress. The issue is how such a project can be completed, or more realistically, enable it to reach closer to “completion” (having Uighurs voluntarily identify with the Chinese state as a Chinese citizen). This study suggest soft power can be explored as one avenue which can bring about and resolve this incomplete state of Chinese identity. As the study has shown, while Chinese soft power’s efficacy is debated in the discourse, it nevertheless is an uncharted area in context of whether it can shape Uighur identity.

2.4 Soft Power and National Identity

As can be seen in the above literature, soft power and identities theories had occupied distinct and separate fields, literature that explores soft power in the context of national identity is sparse. Ting Wai (2009a, 2009b) has recently proposed that the core reason why there exists a lack of belonging among certain ethnic minorities within China towards the Chinese state is because of a lack of Chinese soft power. Zhang (2010) has proposed building the CCP’s soft power in domestic governance as a means to combat internal governance problems such as corruption and reduce reliance on hard power. However, Zhang did not elaborate as to how such soft power implementation should take place. Nor did Zhang detail who are the targets for the soft power approach. But deciphering the exact
relationship between Chinese soft power and the sense of belonging remains unexplored. This study will provide a closer identification of specific soft power factors impacting Uighur and Han’s sense of belonging and identification with the Chinese state.
3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology of this study employed two primary methods, quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative section, a survey questionnaire was issued to the Uighur respondents. This is combined with qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group approach for individual respondents. The researcher believes this combined approach will help compensate for the inherent weakness of each method as well as better cope with the field research difficulties confronting this particular subject area. This chapter will thus focus on elaborating in detail the rationale and the process of this study’s methodology.

To begin with, conducting research into Uighur issues presented significant methodological challenges due to the political climate and consequent sensitivities as to what type of questions should be asked of the respondents. In particular, there were three main hurdles confronting the researcher of this study. The first hurdle was the willingness of the Uighur respondents to respond to questions regarding their identity and culture in the politically repressive climate of Xinjiang. It was most likely for them to decline or shy away from such questions due to fears of personal repercussions. Thus, it was necessary for the researcher to consider constructing the interview so as to ask the questions indirectly and obtain their answers in this vague method. For example, the researcher could frame the interview in the form of casual conversations discussing issues at first unrelated to this study and then gradually leading the respondent to the questions of the study. However, given time and budget constraints of this study, this method would take
far too long for the purpose of collecting a meaningful sample size. It would also likely be fraught with ethical and validity issues. The second hurdle was the access problem to Uighur respondents. Diaspora Uighur organizations and Uighurs residing outside China were generally more straightforward and easier to contact. However, conducting the interviews with Uighurs within China presented more of a problem. Not only is carrying out the field research difficult within Xinjiang, but there were similar difficulties with regards to the Uighur communities outside of that province in the rest of China. The same problem of willingness to interview occurred. Given the current state of Uighur-Han relations in China, it was not likely for Uighurs to be willing to provide genuine answers, rather than politically correct answers. Furthermore, the researcher, as an ethnic Han, may be greeted with suspicion and distrust from Uighurs, hence posing a barrier to obtaining meaningful responses. This could possibly be resolved by an anthropological approach of embedding oneself within the Uighur community over a prolonged period of time to gain their trust and understanding. However, again, given the time and budget constraint, that is simply not an option for this study. The third hurdle was the pressure exerted on the researcher by the apparatus of the state. The format of the survey forms distributed to the Uighurs groups in the mainland schools were vetted whereby certain questions deemed too “sensitive” were not permitted. Security officials actively discouraged the researcher from pursuing the study and “strongly recommended” the researcher to be “escorted” around Urumqi and Kashgar or wherever field researches were to be conducted.

Thus, in order to resolve the difficulties listed above, the first step in our methodology is to determine the viability of gaining access to Uighur subjects. This involves reaching out to potential Uighur respondents to build a degree of
trust and understanding within the constraints of the study. The next two steps involve a survey questionnaire. Once the researcher has determined that the Uighurs felt sufficiently comfortable to undertake the survey, they were then asked to complete the survey. This survey questionnaire is designed to ascertain Uighur’s views on their present identities as well as the role and degree that Chinese soft power has contributed in molding that identity. This will form the preliminary data findings on which the study will be established upon.

Priority must first be placed on attempting to initially gain access to the interviewees through contacts and then building a degree of trust with the Uighur subjects for them to feel comfortable to discuss their thoughts without fear of repercussions, political or otherwise.

In addition, on the question of potential respondents, the study was chosen to focus on educated Uighurs and Hans, especially those who have receive secondary or tertiary education, either within or outside China. This will therefore biased the response towards Uighurs who have received education rather than the more general population of Uighurs in Xinjiang. However, this study’s focus is on examining ability of soft power to sway Uighurs and educated Uighurs, by virtue of their education and hence awareness of the social condition in Xinjiang and the rest of the mainland, will also likely be the primary target of any soft power initiative by the government. Thus it is logical for this study to be focused on educated Uighur and Hans.

However, obtaining quantitative data from the survey questionnaires alone is insufficient. It will only allow the researcher to form a preliminary understanding of the issues involved. This is because it is difficult to tell how and why the respondents have come to form their opinions. In addition, given the politically sensitive nature of the subject matter, it is possible that some Uighur respondents
may choose what they perceived as politically correct answers rather than select responses they felt best reflect their real thinking. Therefore, to mitigate this potential for self-censorship as well as the limitations of the questionnaire format, a more qualitative approach is also required in the form of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Accordingly, after completion of the survey questionnaire, a representative selection of the survey respondents were then chosen for focus group interviews to determine the reasons behind their selections in the survey. This allowed the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the respondent’s basis for viewing their identity and relations with soft power.

Finally, for the purpose of placing the data collected with the Uighur students in context, the researcher has also seek further interviews from ethnic Uighur adults and ethnic Hans who were raised or have resided in Xinjiang for at least several years. This will assist the researcher in overcoming the limitations and bias of the survey respondents, exposing any contradiction that exists between the findings from this latter group and the survey group as well as determining what such contradiction means. Therefore, the researcher has endeavored to obtain these adult interviewees from a spectrum of different (and in some cases opposing) background in regards to Xinjiang’s political status and future. This included one-on-one interviews with other Uighur subjects (who were raised in Xinjiang) and personnel from the state security apparatus responsible for Xinjiang. In addition, for comparison purposes, ethnic Hans who have resided in Xinjiang were also interviewed. Their answers would assist the researcher in shedding additional light into the role the ethnic divide plays in Uighur identity formation as well as soft power of the state.
3.2 Contacting and Selecting Uighur Respondents

The first step of the field research process involves contacting potential Uighur respondents. This was divided into two stages. The first stage involves a general search for these potential respondents. The second stage focuses on contacting prospective Uighur students for the survey and interview. This also include contacting adult ethnic Uighurs and Ethnic Hans who have resided in Xinjiang and Uighur diaspora organization members.

Regarding the first stage, searching for these potential respondents, this was undertaken first by conducting an internet search on Uighur communities and groups in Guangdong province (relatively accessible by the researcher). A search on the Guangdong education department website identified potential Uighur respondents in the form of Uighur students enrolled in select schools in Guangdong. In addition, by utilizing the researcher’s contact and families’ friends on the mainland who knows Uighurs personally, the researcher attempted to find other Uighurs willing to be interviewed. Finally, the researcher examined the diaspora Uighur community contacts online and sent out emails to request their cooperation and assistance in completing an interview for this study.

For the second stage, this was conducting the survey and interview with ethnic Uighur students currently studying in schools located at the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province. They were sent by the state to Guangdong as part of an overall education affirmative action programme. As such, they are the most direct targets of Chinese state’s soft power and gauging their response could assist in determining the success of Chinese soft power ability to shape their identities. The researcher contacted eight high schools in the Pearl River Delta consisting of ethnic Uighur students of which two schools accepted the researcher’s request for
conducting the survey and interview there. The survey questionnaires were conducted on-site at those two schools in June and September of 2012, with a total of 531 total questionnaires distributed and 426 were valid and used for data processing.  

While the representativeness of Uighur student samples can be raised, (as samples are convenient, rather than random sampling), the researcher nevertheless has endeavour to maintain validity of these samples within the limitations and constraints imposed on this study. For example, the researcher hopes to reduce the possibility of subject contamination by eliminating communication between the respondents and to let them individually respond to the survey. At the same time, to increase reliability, focus group interviews are conducted with selected survey respondents once their survey is completed. This was done by seeking to determine whether their responses were genuine rather than what the respondents think the predetermined answers should be. A selection of those survey respondents were then chosen for focus group semi-structured interviews. This consist of 8-12 respondents per school from Xinjiang, consisting of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang (e.g. Uighur, Han, Kazakh) in accordance with ethnic representativeness of the survey questionnaire. These interviews were designed to probe the respondents’ answers in the survey and determine why they chose those responses. A focus group format was chosen because of the on-site time limitation at the school prevented one-on-one interviews. Follow-up of one-on-one telephone interview were considered as an alternative by the researcher. However, factoring in the reluctance of respondents to speak on sensitive identity matters

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5 Additional attempts by the author was made to contact other areas with high concentration of Uighur students, namely in Shanghai and Xinjiang itself. However, because of budget constraints, a visit to Shanghai could not be realized. Schools contacted in Xinjiang did not reply to the author, therefore permission for school visit in Xinjiang could not be obtained.
over the telephone, the researcher believed that focus group format was the best compromise given the limitations facing the study.

The second stage was to conduct semi-structured interviews with adult ethnic Uighurs who were born and raised in Xinjiang. This group of respondents offered their observations on current Uighur identity and their views on how soft power influenced their identity formation. This group is the closest to being able to offer insights regarding the current situation of contemporary Uighur identity. It can place the findings from the Uighur student respondents in the context of the larger Uighur population. In addition, the interviews assisted the researcher to detect if there were any conflicts between what they said in the interview and in the survey third group. and if so, what that signifies (i.e. telling what the respondent think the researcher wanted to hear vs. what the respondent really believed in.

This stage also included groups such as the ethnic Hans who were raised or had resided in Xinjiang for an extended period of time. Their answers would be used as a comparison to the Uighurs’ answers. The similarities or differences in their responses to the identity and role of Chinese soft power would be illustrative of the ethnic divide as well as indicate how the Han mold their identities which are different to that of the Uighurs.

Finally, the researcher reached out to members of the Uighur diaspora to establish contacts and links. This involves sending email requests for interviews to various overseas Uighur diaspora organizations which had agreed to be interviewed by the researcher. As these groups of respondents had left Xinjiang for some years, their responses would be useful to chart for the purpose of knowing whether Uighur identity has shifted in relation to the Chinese state as well as what that shift signified.
The researcher believed that by obtaining interviews with these groups of respondents, it would alleviate or resolve some of the challenges facing this study. These different respondent groups could also provide a better representation of data sources rather than relying solely on only a single source of respondents (i.e. only interviewing Uighur students in Guangdong province as their particular school environment may bias their responses, hence reducing selection bias and increasing validity.) Contrasting the responses from Uighur students and Uighur adult diaspora will also account for maturation and the possible changes in identity for different age groups of respondents.

At the same time, the researcher recognises that there are still some remaining limitations with these groups of respondents. This study is conducted in a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal manner, hence long-term changes in identity over a prolonged period of time cannot be studied here. In addition, most of the respondents have received tertiary education, thus this may biased against Uighurs who has not received such education. Nevertheless, despite the limitations, the researcher believes that the selection of these group of respondents are the best available choice. As this is a study examining the relationship between soft power and Uighur identity formation, it is a practical necessity for the study to be cross-sectional in nature. Future longitudinal studies can be built upon this present study. Regarding the selection of the Uighur respondents it is because Uighurs receiving secondary or tertiary education are the section of people most exposed to Chinese state policies, coercive or soft power, and usually will result in them leading the rest of their ethnic group in shaping their identities. The focus on Uighurs with secondary or tertiary education group is thus justified.

3.3 Survey and Focus Group Methodology
From the spring of 2012, the researcher contacted 8 schools (see table below) in the Pearl River Delta that included under its registration ethnic Uighur students from Xinjiang:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>廣州市第六中學 Guangzhou No. 6 Middle School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>廣東省廣雅中學 Guangdong Guangya Middle School</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>廣州市協和中學 Guangzhou Xiehe Middle School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>番禺禺山高級中學 Panyu Yushan High School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>東莞市高級中學 Dongguan High School</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>江門市培英高級中學 Jiangmen Peiying High School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>深圳市松崗中學 Shenzhen Songgang Middle School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>珠海市實驗中學 Zhuhai Shiyan Middle School</td>
<td>Decline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the eight schools, two responded positively and accepted the researcher’s survey and interview request, they are Dongguan High School and Guangdong Guangya School at Guangzhou. After email confirmation, the Dongguan School was the first to accept the survey and interview. The visit was conducted on June 12th 2012 at the school. The Guangzhou school was the second to accept the researcher’s request and the visit to the school was conducted on September 9th 2012. Each visit lasted approximately two hours and was divided into two sections. The first section being the individual completion of the survey and was followed by the second section of a focus group interview of selected survey respondents.

The survey questionnaire section lasted 20 minutes. After negotiations with the respective teachers, the students at both Dongguan and Guangzhou completed
the survey in the school cafeteria during lunch hour which was when most students gather in a single location. Prior to the start of the survey, the researcher issued instructions to the students. The researcher stress to each of the respondent to provide answers that they themselves felt were correct rather than providing the answers were “expected” of them. During the survey section, the researcher observed the students and responded to questions they asked to clarify areas of uncertainty, but did not influence their answers by suggesting any preferred answer, direct or implied.

The survey itself is divided into four sections (refer to the appendix for the sample of the actual survey. It is drafted in Chinese, but an English translated version is also provided in the appendix). To prevent confusion and misunderstanding by the respondents, the researcher has avoided unnecessarily technical term and phrases in the survey. Rather, the focus is on dividing soft power and sense of belonging into its constituent parts. By doing so, the researcher can form an initial picture of which particular soft power and sense of belonging variable the respondents find most important and what required the most changes. As such, the survey is divided into four sections: “Appeal Factors” “Importance”, “Sense of Belonging” and “Issues Requiring Change”.

“Appeal Factors” is the section where respondents will rank in accordance to how appealing they find each soft power factor, thereby informing the researcher as to which soft power appeals the most to respondents. “Importance” is where the respondents state how significant they rank each of the variable, thus providing the researcher with an order of importance of variables. “Sense of Belonging” indicates how closely each variable is identified to the respondent’s own values, and hence their current national identity attributes can be known. The final section, “Issues Requiring Change”, indicates as to which particular variable the
respondents are least satisfied with and want to change or improve. This will assist the researcher in determining the current area of weaknesses in Chinese soft power.

Under each section are individual questions which will assess the respondent’s view on a particular variable of soft power and sense of belonging. The first three sections have five such questions on “Han Chinese Culture”, “Ethnic Minority Policies”, “Chinese Core Values”, “Sense of Pride” and “Foreign Culture”.

“Han Chinese Culture” involves aspects of what is commonly considered to be traditional and popular ethnic Han culture, such as social customs, film and television programmes. This was chosen to allow the respondents to assess to what extent they have understood the use of Chinese state’s soft power existing tools in the cultural realm.

“Ethnic Minority Policies” are to establish the respondents’ view of government policies towards ethnic minorities. The researcher did not specify any specific policy because the focus here was to capture the respondent’s general impression of current government policies rather than to test their knowledge of specific policies. Obtaining the respondents’ general impression, is, in the researcher’s view, more relevant, as it can be applied in a broader sense to the overall policy effectiveness of the current Chinese state, and hence the effectiveness of current policies as a soft power tool.

“Chinese Core Values” are the common social values which the majority of ethnic Hans hold such as the Confucian values of filial piety or marriage arrangements. The respondent, either ethnic minority or Han, will then provide us with their understanding of how appealing such values are to them, and how are these values reflected in the composition of Chinese soft power (i.e. the extent to
which effective Chinese soft power incorporates ethnic Han values).

Turning to “Sense of Pride”, this is referring to how closely the respondents identified with, or is proud of, their Chinese state and nationality. For example, this includes whether they display pride as a Chinese national, as citizen of the PRC, as well as pride in their own ethnic group and culture. This question will allow the researcher to determine whether there is any conflict between the respondent’s identity as a Chinese national and as an ethnic minority. And even if there is no such conflict, what that answer will mean.

In addition, “Foreign culture” refers to how respondent view the soft power of Foreign culture, namely American, Japanese and Korean culture. The US, being regarded as a prime exporter of its soft power, will serve as a useful contrast to Chinese soft power in all its aspects discussed so far. Japanese and Korean culture are also selected because those countries are geographical neighbours and fellow East Asian countries. Their soft power can be useful to gauge the position of Chinese soft power relative to those countries. Such “Foreign culture” comparison will also be expanded in the focus group interview section where it is used to gain a preliminary picture for the researcher of how the respondents compared China’s soft power with other countries.

The last section, “Issues Requiring Change”, has three questions on Han’s Chinese culture, ethnic minority policies and areas of Chinese government policy requiring change.

Each of the above questions are divided into variables. For instance, for “Han Chinese culture”, there would be a variable seen as one element of “Han Chinese culture”, such as Chinese film and television programmes. Likewise, the respondents would then be asked to rank each variable on a Likert scale of 1 to 4 (1 being least appealing to 4 being most appealing).
3.4 Interviews

The survey was followed by an interview. The main aim was to allow the respondents to expand their answers in the survey in more detail, thereby providing a more complete picture of their perceptions of identity and soft power. In particular, the focus group was focused on ascertaining factors that shape and mold their identity, how that identity relates to other ethnic groups in Xinjiang and how they perceive the Chinese government’s soft power. The interview section was divided into two main groups. One being the focus group interviews with the survey respondents and the other was the individual interviews conducted on an individual one-on-one basis, and both interviews were in a semi-structured format.

To begin with, in both the Dongguan and Guangzhou schools, the focus group interviews were targeted at the survey respondents. For each school, respondents were selected by an announcement at the end of the survey to seek volunteers to be interviewed. After consultation with the respective teachers in charge at the time of the researcher’s visit, the selected students were then located in a separate room at the school to begin the focus group interview. Given the location of the interview at the school and the presence of teachers, undue influence on the interviewees could be ruled out. However, the researcher had endeavored to minimize such influence by seeking to control the interview process by relegating teacher and other authority figures at the school to be silent observers outside the interview room. The interviewees may still have exercised self-censorship, but the researcher had tried to the best of his ability to

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6 The semi-structured interview format was chosen to provide the best balance between providing greater flexibility and ensuring the interview kept to the topic and focus of the research. This helps to avoid the narrowness and rigidity of a structured interview and also prevents the discussion from going off-topic.
create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere during the interview.

The other interviews (both focus group and individual) were undertaken with a variety of respondents, both Uighur and Hans who were raised or had resided in Xinjiang. The underlying area of similarity of these group of interviewees are their background of university education or position of holding senior government posting in Xinjiang. These groups of interviewees were chosen as they would most likely be the ones in the position to receive and be molded by Chinese soft power directed at Uighurs. While these members may not always be representative of the majority Uighur’s view in Xinjiang as to how they think of their identity and Chinese soft power, they nevertheless are most likely to be in the position to be influenced and shaped by Chinese soft power. Likewise, as educated Uighurs, they would most likely be the target of Chinese soft power initiatives. Therefore, focusing on educated Uighur and Hans will assist the researcher in deciphering the relationship between identity formation and soft power.

Regarding the focus group interviews, apart from the survey respondents, additional focus group interviews were conducted. These were mainly for college level educated ethnic Uighur and Hans who have resided or been raised in Xinjiang. They were selected as a point of comparison with their other Uighur counterparts.

As the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, there was no precisely fixed and repetitive list of questions for each school’s focus group as well as the other interviews. However, there would be a general area of questions which the researcher asked during the interview, both in the focus group and during the individual interviews. The questions covered the following areas:

1. Where have the respondent resided?
2. How long has the respondent resided in Xinjiang?
3. The respondent’s occupation?
4. The respondent’s views on affirmative action for Uighurs?
5. What requires change from the present circumstances?
6. The respondent’s view of Reibya Kadeer.
7. Their present sense of belonging.
8. What would make China as a state more appealing to the respondent?
9. How do the ethnic Hans see affirmative action for Uighurs.
10. Why China has such difficulties when developing a sense of belonging in a multi-ethnic state.
11. How the respondent see the soft power of Turkey, Japan, South Korea and the US.

Regarding the rationale for these set of questions, the first three questions regarding the respondent’s residence and length of stay in Xinjiang will indicate their background experience. Their personal contacts with either Uighurs or other ethnic groups will establish the extent of their comprehension of ethnic issues beyond superficial public campaigns. This will be useful in how they perceive their own identity and status vis-à-vis Uighurs as well as illustrating the differences (if any) regarding the construction of national identity between Han and Uighurs. This relates to the fourth question which is how Han and Uighurs view affirmative action towards Uighurs. Affirmative action is an indisputable part of Chinese state’s soft power, in terms of effectiveness and ability to change the material conditions, both economic and social of Uighurs. How it is seen by the respondents not only demonstrates its effectiveness (or lack thereof) but assists in clarifying the relationship between affirmative action and sense of belonging of Uighurs. For example, we can determine the degree to which affirmative action
molds Uighur’s sense of belonging.

To further draw out the respondent’s perceptions, the researcher needed to ask what areas the respondents think would require to be changed to increase the Uighur’s sense of belonging. This question is kept intentionally vague because the researcher does not wish to set preconditions or frame their responses in overly narrow and rigid categories. Rather, the researcher hopes to seek out issues and areas that may have been overlooked or ignored. With free-flowing responses so a general question may help the researcher.7

The subsequent questions are designed to build on and develop from the previous question of what changes are required. Asking them what they thought of Rebiya Kadeer would allow the researcher to form a preliminary view of their acceptance and influence by Chinese propaganda and may indirectly also indicate how closely they align with the Chinese state’s core national identity construction. Asking the respondents what the “sense of belonging” meant to them may reveal the variables that both Han and Uighurs find relevant to in how they shape their own sense of belonging. Likewise, when the researcher asked what would make China more appealing to them in terms of religion, culture and social customs, the researcher can ascertain which particular aspect of religion, culture and social customs (if any) has a particular bearing on their sense of belonging formation towards the Chinese state, and whether they were positive or negative effects.

The next two questions relate to the respondent’s understanding of how the Chinese state may have impeded its own attempt at appealing to Uighurs and

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7 At the same time, the researcher would endeavor to maintain focus in the interview process and prevent the group from going off-topic by redirecting the discussion if it is deemed to be unrelated to the research topic.
Hans alike by increasing the contradiction between these ethnic groups. When the respondents were queried as to how they see the Chinese state treat Uighurs\(^8\), the researcher was examining whether there were any differences in response between Uighurs, Hans or other ethnic groups in Xinjiang. This may highlight the remaining areas of challenges confronting the Chinese state in their attempts to mold their sense of belonging. It may indicate whether the respondent hold pre-existing prejudices towards Uighurs and how that in turn would impact the sense of belonging of Uighurs. When the respondents were asked on why China faces such difficulty in forging a multi-ethnic state, the researcher is asking the respondent to confront and reflect on their own prior understanding of what it meant to be Chinese nationals and if there were any shortcomings they are aware of.

Finally, the researcher queried as to the extent that the soft power of Turkey, Japan, South Korea and the United States appealed to them. Turkey was chosen because of the ethnic ties with Uighurs. Japan and South Korea were chosen for being geographic neighbours to China as well as being regarded as countries with significant and growing soft power. Asking the respondents how they felt about Japan and South Korea’s soft power factors will allow them to compare it with China’s and provide them with an opportunity to pinpoint the drawbacks and differences of China’s soft power. The United States is naturally also a nation-state to be compared to as it is obviously the preeminent nation-state arguably with the greatest modern soft power in existence in the international order. This will illustrate not only the apparent gap that exists between China and the US in terms of soft power resources, but may also allow respondents to ponder

\(^8\) To avoid overlap and repetition, this excludes the affirmative action area raised in the earlier question
how the US, despite past racial and ethnic issues, remains a relatively successful multi-ethnic state on the contemporary world stage. If the respondents can identify what makes the United States successful in this respect, they may also provide answers (or at least areas to focus on) as to how China can become a successful multi-ethnic state, in their opinion.
4. Survey Findings

4.1 Introduction-Summary of Overall Findings

This study set out to ask whether (and to what extent) soft power can influence the sense of belonging of Uighurs to the Chinese state. The findings suggest a more complicated picture. The findings have revealed that there is a potential for soft power to sway sense of belonging of Uighurs. However, such potential is counterbalanced by a large perception gap between Uighur and Hans as well as the securitized agenda of the Chinese state.

Seen in isolation, a majority of Uighur student respondents’ findings have shown that they have developed a stronger sense of belonging to the Chinese state. They have accepted themselves as Chinese national with no conflict between their ethnic and national identities. They are indeed receptive to the idea of Chinese Han culture and find it appealing. In the survey, the Uighur student respondents reacted positively to Han Chinese culture and traditions. This is reinforced by their teachers (predominantly Hans) who acted as the most direct example of soft power to them. Interviews with the teachers indicated that they placed great efforts in presenting themselves as positive role models to the students. In a sense, they are ambassadors of the Chinese state, and a prime driver for influencing the Uighur students’ sense of belonging through soft power.

Nonetheless, the findings also reveal that there are significant perception gap between Uighur students and their Han counter-parts. The mutual expression of
friendship between Uighur students and their Han counter-parts are not duplicated by findings from the other groups. If anything, there appears to be a psychological segregation characterized by mutual antipathy between the Uighurs and the Hans.

Even if they do not reject Han Chinese culture and traditions, adult Uighur respondents do not find it appealing nor does it influence their sense of belonging. What both Uighur and Hans do share is a mutual nostalgic longing for past where ideological struggle dampen ethnic differences. This suggests that the perception cleavage plays a role acting as a counter-weight to use of soft power to develop a stronger sense of belonging among Uighurs. Soft power effectiveness to sway the sense of belonging of Uighurs cannot be accomplished without some form of partial reconciliation between Han and Uighur’s mutual perception of each other.

This gulf between Han and Uighurs is also highlighted in the findings by their current view of Chinese governance. The findings indicated that both Uighurs and Hans find that they are largely dissatisfied with present Chinese governance in Xinjiang. Yet the respondents, both Uighurs and Hans, often have contradictory responses, with Hans seeing Uighurs enjoying unfair advantages due to China’s affirmative action and yet Uighurs continue to feel being subjected to persistent economic and cultural disadvantages. This suggest that whatever role the Chinese state plays, or wants to play, in nurturing soft power abilities, it is constrained by contradictory demands from both ethnic groups. Balancing both Uighurs’ and Hans’ demands will be the key for the government in fostering an environment conducive for soft power to develop.

Further limiting this potential soft power ability is the securitized agenda of the public order officials. The findings from Chinese government sources and interviews with Chinese public order officials indicated that the government is hampered by an uncoordinated agenda over Uighur policy. The findings have
shown, unsurprisingly, that the public order official focuses on the securitization agenda, with the Uighurs construed as agents of instability against the state. What is more revealing is how Uighur respondents, both students and adults, indicate that they are displeased with such securitized measures. And more important, how this securitized agenda prolong and contribute to the perception gap between Uighur and Hans. The Hans, as beneficial recipients of the security agenda, supports the public order official numerous measures against the Uighurs, further widening the gulf in perception between the two ethnic groups. As such, whatever measures the Chinese state has taken to encourage the conditions for soft power to develop is counter-balanced by the securitized focus of the Chinese state.

Overall, the findings suggest the incipit soft power ability the Chinese state engendered is offset by the mutual gulf in perception between Uighur and Hans as well as the securitized agenda of the Chinese state. To fully understand and interpret these findings, this chapter as well as the following one will be devoted to a detail presentation and discussion of the findings.

To begin with, as the survey questionnaire was the first part of the research that was performed, the study will thus first focus on the findings from the survey questionnaire (undertaken at the Guangdong Guangya High school in Guangzhou in September 2012 and the Dongguan High school in June 2012). The total valid sample size was 426 (138 from Guangzhou and 288 from Dongguan). This chapter will be a presentation of the survey findings. Survey data will be analyzed from the five categories (Han Chinese culture, Ethnic Minority policies, Chinese values, Sense of belonging and Foreign culture) under the 4 dimensions (Appeal, Importance, Identity and Requiring Change). In addition, validity of the data will be examined by looking at the survey data’s correlation and with the use of radar charts to detect commonalities and outliers.
### 4.2 General Findings by Ethnic Groups

The first issue is to determine the respondent’s view on the five soft power categories from the survey. As discussed in the methodology section, these areHan Chinese culture (中國文化), Ethnic minority policies (少數民族政策), Chinese values (中國人觀念), Sense of Belonging (歸屬感) and Foreign Culture (外國文化):

| Han Chinese culture (中國文化) | Chinese traditional culture and customs  
| Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)  
| Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals  
| Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs  |
| Ethnic Minority Policies (少數民族政策) | State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)  
| Current government ethnic group social policy (i.e. affirmative action)  
| Values of the Chinese state (sovereignty under one nation-state, equality of minorities)  |
| Chinese Values (中國人觀念) | Han Chinese family values  
| Han Chinese Filial piety  
| Han Chinese social customs  |
| Sense of Belonging (歸屬感) | Han Chinese sense of belonging (i.e. pride in being Chinese)  
| Sense of belonging as PRC citizen (i.e. PRC civil rights and responsibilities)  
| Sense of belonging to respondent's own ethnic group (i.e. language, culture, customs)  |
| Foreign Culture (外國文化) | US modern culture (i.e. Apple products, Broadway musicals)  
| Japan modern culture (i.e. Japanese automobiles, cartoons, TV shows)  
| Korean modern culture (i.e. Korean TV shows, music)  |

The survey asks the respondents to rank these five categories in order to which appeal to them most, their importance, how much they identified with each
category and which categories required the most change. The overall findings of all respondents (regardless of ethnic group) indicates that “Sense of Belonging” (highlighted in pink—see table below) is the category that the respondents find most appealing, most important, and which they most closely identified with and the category that require the least change. Conversely, (but perhaps not surprisingly), Foreign Culture is the one found to be of least appealing, of less importance and not to be identifiable with. However, of interest is that the category Han Chinese culture (highlighted in red—see table below), appears to be the second least appealing, important and identifiable category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority Policies</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese values</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Culture</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the researcher examined the ranking individually by Appeal, Importance, Identity and Requiring Change. For Appeal, Sense of belonging ranked first, followed by, Chinese values, Ethnic Minority policies, Han Chinese culture and finally Foreign Culture. For Importance, Sense of belonging again ranked first, followed by Ethnic minority policies, Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture being ranked last. Likewise, for Identity, Sense of belonging was also ranked first. This was followed by Chinese values, Ethnic
Minority Policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For the Requiring Change, Ethnic minority policies were ranked first, Han Chinese culture was ranked second and Sense of belonging was ranked third and last.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4</td>
<td>Most important:4</td>
<td>Most closely:4</td>
<td>Most requiring:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.58</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.67</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.63</td>
<td>Ethnic Minority Policies 2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.47</td>
<td>Ethnic Minority Policies 3.61</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.62</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ethnic Minority Policies 3.35</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.57</td>
<td>Ethnic Minority Policies 3.54</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.24</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.43</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.46</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.74</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.53</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.67</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings thus far is however only calculated from the aggregate sample size; the study must also know how individual ethnic groups from that aggregate sample rank these categories. Looking at the survey data by each ethnic group, the findings indicate Sense of belonging is seen by the respondents as the least likely to require change. Conversely, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were considered by the majority of respondents as least appealing, of least importance and least identified with. Analyzing the above point further, the study will begin examining the Ethnic Han group. These are the Han students who were born and raised in Xinjiang. For Appeal, Sense of belonging ranked first, followed by
Chinese values, Han Chinese culture, Ethnic Minority policies and finally Foreign culture. For Importance, Sense of belonging was again ranked first, followed by Chinese values, ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture, and lastly Foreign culture. For Identity, Sense of belonging is ranked first, Chinese values second, Ethnic policies third, Han Chinese culture fourth and Foreign culture last. Lastly, for Requiring Change, interesting enough, it is Han Chinese culture that requires change the most in the opinion of the Han respondents, Ethnic minority policies were rank second and Sense of belonging was deemed to be the least Requiring Change:

**Ethnic Group: Han 漢**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4</td>
<td>Most important:4</td>
<td>Most closely:4</td>
<td>Most requiring:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weakest:1</td>
<td>Least important:1</td>
<td>Least closely:1</td>
<td>Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.64</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.78</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.75</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.53</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.58</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.71</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.20</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.53</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.56</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.13</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.52</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.51</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.27</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.06</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to ethnic Hans, the aggregate sample also included Ethnic Hui (Those who are adherents of the Islam faith). According to the official government designation, with a few exceptions (i.e. the Turkic-speaking groups
such as the Uighurs or Kazakhs), all Muslims in China are classified as “Hui” (Lipman, 1997; Gladney, 1996, p.18-20). The Hui in this sample were those who were born and raised in Xinjiang. The respondent identifies themselves as Hui when they were asked what their ethnicity is. For Appeal, the Hui regarded Sense of belonging as the most appealing, followed by Chinese values, Ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and lastly, Foreign culture. For Importance, Ethnic minority policies was ranked most important, Sense of belonging was ranked second, Chinese values third, Han Chinese culture fourth and Foreign culture last. For Identity, Sense of belonging is again ranked first, Chinese values second, Ethnic minority policies third, Han Chinese culture fourth and Foreign culture last. And finally for Requiring Change, Han Chinese culture was ranked first, Ethnic Minority policies ranked second, and Sense of belonging was rank last:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group: Hui</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4</td>
<td>Most important:4</td>
<td>Most closely:4</td>
<td>Most requiring:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weakest:1</td>
<td>Least important:1</td>
<td>Least closely:1</td>
<td>Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies</td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese values</td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Chinese values</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies</td>
<td>Chinese values</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies</td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture</td>
<td>Foreign culture</td>
<td>Foreign culture</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the Hui, Kazakhs are another ethnic minority residing in Xinjiang, and they too are found within the aggregate sample. For the Kazakh students, sense of belonging was rank the most appealing, important and closely identified with. However, there are some differences for the other categories. Chinese values was ranked as the 2nd most appealing, followed by ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and finally Foreign culture. For Importance, Ethnic minority policies were ranked second, followed by Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and lastly, Foreign culture. For Identity, ethnic minority policies was ranked second, followed by Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. Turning to Requiring Change, Han Chinese culture was ranked first, followed by sense of belonging andLastly ethnic minority policies:

**Ethnic Group: Kazakhs 哈薩克**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4</td>
<td>Most important:4</td>
<td>Most closely:4</td>
<td>Most requiring:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weakest:1</td>
<td>Least important:1</td>
<td>Least closely:1</td>
<td>Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.57</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.73</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.64</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.53</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.70</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.64</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.39</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.61</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.53</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.35</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.39</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.44</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture 3.01</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.70</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the Uighurs students, their ranking of the categories share similarities with the other ethnic groups in that Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture was ranked as the second last and last position for Appeal, Importance and Identity. But there are more variety in ranking for the top ranks. For Appeal, Sense of belonging was ranked first, followed by Chinese values, ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Importance, Sense of belonging came first, followed by ethnic minority policies, Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Identity, interesting enough, Chinese values were ranked first, followed by Sense of belonging, ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Requiring Change, Ethnic minority policies were ranked first, followed by Han Chinese culture and lastly Sense of belonging:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group: Uighurs 維吾爾</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4</td>
<td>Most important:4</td>
<td>Most closely:4</td>
<td>Most requiring:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weakest:1</td>
<td>Least important:1</td>
<td>Least closely:1</td>
<td>Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.54</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.67</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.58</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.40</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.61</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.56</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.40</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.57</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.50</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.23</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.43</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.74</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.53</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, there are also the remaining miscellaneous ethnic groups that are too small within the aggregate sample to be grouped under their own separate ethnic category. All of them were born and raised within Xinjiang like the other groups. For Appeal, sense of belonging was ranked first, followed by Chinese values, Han Chinese culture, Ethnic minority policies, and Foreign culture. For Importance, Sense of belonging was again ranked as the most important. Chinese values was ranked second. Ethnic minority policies was ranked third. Han Chinese culture fourth and Foreign culture fifth. For Identity, Sense of belonging was ranked first, followed by Chinese values, Ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Requiring Change, Han Chinese culture was ranked first, Ethnic minority policies second and Sense of belonging last:

### Ethnic Group: others 其他

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongest:4 Weakest:1</td>
<td>Most important:4 Least important:1</td>
<td>Most closely:4 Least closely:1</td>
<td>Most requiring:4 Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.76</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.80</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.89</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.69</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.73</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.82</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.48</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.71</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.64</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.36</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.55</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.58</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.80</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.22</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.62</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, examining all the ethnic group findings, the pattern shows that...
Sense of belonging rank consistently at or near the top rank for Appeal, Importance and Identity. Sense of belonging is seen by the respondents as the least likely to require change. Conversely, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were considered by the majority of respondents as least appealing, of least importance and least identified with. The Uighur respondents however, differ in choosing which category most required change. Han, Hui and Kazakh respondents felt Han Chinese culture was the most in need of change, but Uighurs felt ethnic minority policies was the one that most required change.

4.3 Validity

Next, the researcher turned to assess the validity of this survey by checking for consistency. Because while this may be a convenient sample, it nevertheless should at least be internally consistent and hence valid. This ensures that the survey was properly designed and conducted, as well as detecting and correcting any errors or incongruities in the responses.

A correlation analysis was thus performed to examine the consistency and validity of the survey responses. A high correlation (closer to 1), indicates stronger consistency in the survey responses, hence its stronger validity. Likewise, the lower the correlation (farther below 1), the less consistency and hence the survey responses will have less validity. In addition, it will also help illustrate the overall pattern in the survey responses and detect any outliers (if any) that exist in the survey. The five survey categories (Han Chinese culture, Ethnic minority policies, Chinese values, Foreign culture), were compared to each other in pairs for each two dimension (i.e. Appeal vs Importance) to check the consistency of the correlation. Organized in such a way, there were a total of twenty-four pairs. Correlation analysis of these pairs were performed using the Microsoft Excel
programme. To illustrate how Excel was used to produce the findings below, an example is given here. The data from two categories (Appeal and Importance) are shown below with the Han Chinese culture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese</td>
<td>[P1-1-1] Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>[P1-1-2] Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[P1-1-3] Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[P1-1-4] Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A correlation analysis is then performed using the Excel function:

"=CORREL (C2:C5,D2:D5)"

"=CORREL (C2:C5,E2:E5)"

"=CORREL (C2:C5,F2:F5)"

With “C” standing for Appeal and “D” for Importance (as they listed in alphabetical order under the Excel column). The Excel then calculates the correlation automatically to produce the correlation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Requiring Change</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that 15 of the 24 pairs are perfectly correlated (correlation="1" or "-1"), in particular, the Chinese values, Sense of Belonging and Foreign culture aspect. 8 out of 24 has a high correlation (0.7-0.9 or
Only 1 pair is moderately correlated (Han Chinese culture and Appeal vs Requiring Change). The generally high correlation indicates that there is good consistency in the responses of the survey and there are no significant outliers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese culture</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic minority policies</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese values</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Requiring change</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign culture</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the researcher performed a correlation analysis on the ethnic minorities found in the aggregate sample. This will assist the researcher in examining the consistency of the responses between the ethnic groups and detect outliers between them (if any). Each ethnic group was thus paired against each other and using Microsoft Excel’s correlation analysis function, the correlation
was then calculated. Again, it shows an overall high degree of correlation. The highest correlation is Hui and Han (0.96) while the lowest is Hui and Uighurs (0.86). This indicates a lack of substantial difference between the ethnic groups over the responses. This may be due to these respondents being in the same school environment and studying under the same curriculum. However, does this mean there are no meaningful difference between Uighurs and the other respondents over their sense of belonging? More analysis is required to determine this to avoid any reductionist conclusion. Thus, the researcher turned to examining average rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han vs. Hui</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han vs. Others</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh vs. Uighur</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others vs. Kazakh</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han vs. Kazakh</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others vs. Uighurs</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hue vs. Kazakh</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hue vs. Others</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han vs. Uighurs</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hue vs. Uighurs</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 Average Rating for all Items under Each Category

Validity can also be examined by examining the survey data from a different perspective, for example, looking at the data by average rating. The average rating shows how the majority of the respondents rank the soft power variable in the survey and is calculated by the total respondents. These findings from the average ratings will show whether it collaborates or contradict the previous survey findings (as shown in the general findings section under heading of 4.2). It will also show which particular subset within in each variable is rank highest (i.e. which subset of “Sense of belonging” is ranked highest). This was calculated
using the Microsoft Excel function as was the case with the correlation analysis.
The average ratings for all ethnic groups indicate that Sense of belonging was ranked the most appealing, most important and most closely identified with. While Foreign culture, in particular Japanese culture was ranked least appealing, important and identified with. This pattern suggests there are no significant contradictions with the previous interview finding by ethnic groups as the average ratings are in general agreement with the findings by ethnic group of section 4.2:

Survey results – average rating for all items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (Sample: all nationality)</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Requiring Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group's culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese family values</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese social customs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese sense of belonging</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging as PRC citizen</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to respondent's own ethnic group</td>
<td><strong>3.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US modern culture</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese modern culture</td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean modern culture</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Another perspective: findings by 4 dimensions

The study also examined the interview finding’s validity by examining the average rating in accordance to each of the four dimensions rather than as an aggregate whole shown above. By examining the four dimensions (Appeal, Importance, Identity and Requiring Change) individually in terms of average rating (rather than aggregate sample average rating for all items), this will allow the study to reveal what the majority of respondents think by each dimension, as well as detecting any inconsistencies or incongruous patterns. In general, the findings by four dimensions was again in overall agreement with the survey findings by ethnic group and average rating. Sense of belonging to one’s own ethnic group ranked highest in Appeal, Importance and Identity. Respondent’s own ethnic culture and Han Chinese culture’s filial piety and respect for elders are either second or third highest in Appeal, Importance and Identity. As was the case with findings by ethnic group and average rating, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were rank second last and last for Appeal, Importance and Identity. To examine these findings by four dimension in more detail, the study will now analyze each of the four dimensions in more depth.

4.5.1 Appeal

For “Appeal”, the average rating reveals that the sense of belonging was ranked the highest. In particular, the Sense of belonging to the respondent’s own ethnic group language (score: 3.7), followed by own’s ethnic group culture. Han Chinese culture’s filial piety and respect and care for the elderly was rank third highest. However, the other aspect of Han Chinese culture was ranked much lower (highlighted in orange, the second lowest as a group except Foreign culture). Chinese modern culture, such as films and TV series were ranked 3.1, other ethnic
minority’s culture was also ranked 3.1, as well as Chinese traditional culture at 3.1. Only Foreign culture was rank lower. American culture was ranked at 3.0, Korean culture at 2.7 and Japanese culture was the lowest at 2.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (sample : all nationality)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to respondent’s own ethnic group (i.e. language, culture, customs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese sense of belonging (i.e. pride in being Chinese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state (sovereignty under one nation-state, equality of minorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese family values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging as PRC citizen (i.e. PRC civil rights and responsibilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese social customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy (i.e. affirmative action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US modern culture (i.e. Apple products, Broadway musicals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean modern culture (i.e. Korean TV shows, music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese modern culture (i.e. Japanese automobiles, cartoons, TV shows)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.2 Importance

For “Importance”, the sense of belonging to one own’s ethnic group language and customs was ranked highest at 3.8. This was followed by Han Chinese culture’s filial piety and care and respect for elders at 3.7 and matched by one own’s ethnic group culture at 3.7. As was the case with Appeal, for Importance, Chinese cultural categories and Foreign culture was ranked second last and last. Chinese traditional culture was ranked at 3.4, matched by other ethnic minority culture at 3.4 and followed by Chinese modern culture at 3.2. At
the bottom were Foreign culture, with American culture at 2.7, Korean culture at 2.5 and lastly, Japanese culture at 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (sample: all nationality)</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to respondent’s own ethnic group (i.e. language, culture, customs)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state (sovereignty under one nation-state, equality of minorities)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese sense of belonging (i.e. pride in being Chinese)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging as PRC citizen (i.e. PRC civil rights and responsibilities)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy (i.e. affirmative action)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese family values</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese social customs</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US modern culture (i.e. Apple products, Broadway musicals)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean modern culture (i.e. Korean TV shows, music)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan modern culture (i.e. Japanese automobiles, cartoons, TV shows)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.3 **Identity**

For Identity’s average ratings, like the previous categories, sense of belonging to one own’s ethnic group language and customs was ranked at the top at 3.7. This was matched by one own’s ethnic group culture at 3.7 and Han Chinese culture’s filial piety and care and respect for elders at 3.6. Likewise, as was the case with Appeal and Importance, Han Chinese culture was rank second last and Foreign culture last. Chinese traditional culture has a score of 3.4, while other ethnic minority culture at 3.4, and Chinese modern culture at 3.3. Foreign culture rankings were the same as in Appeal and Importance’s rankings. American culture was third to last, at 2.9, followed by Korean culture at 2.6 and Japanese culture at 2.5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (sample: all nationality)</th>
<th>Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to respondent’s own ethnic group (i.e. language, culture, customs)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese sense of belonging (i.e. pride in being Chinese)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese family values</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese social customs</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state (sovereignty under one nation-state, equality of minorities)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging as PRC citizen (i.e. PRC civil rights and responsibilities)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy (i.e. affirmative action)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US modern culture (i.e. Apple products, Broadway musicals)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean modern culture (i.e. Korean TV shows, music)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese modern culture (i.e. Japanese automobiles, cartoons, TV shows)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.5.4 Requiring Change**

For Requiring Change’s average ratings, culture and government policies were deemed most in need of changes, while sense of belonging issues were deemed least needed for change. Overall, the scores in Requiring Change were lower than the other categories, with a top score of 3.0. Chinese modern culture, with a score of 3.0, was ranked as the most Requiring Change, while current government policies regarding affirmative action for ethnic minorities was second at 2.7, and general government policy toward ethnic minorities was rank third at 2.6. At the opposite end, Sense of belonging was deemed the least needed for change. The Sense of belonging to the PRC state was ranked third to last with a score of 2.4,
Sense of belonging to the Chinese nationality was equal with 2.4 and the least 
Requiring Change was Sense of belonging to one’s own ethnic group, at 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (sample: all nationality)</th>
<th>Requiring change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy (i.e. affirmative action)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state (sovereignty under one nation-state, equality of minorities)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging as PRC citizen (i.e. PRC civil rights and responsibilities)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Chinese sense of belonging (i.e. pride in being Chinese)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to respondent’s own ethnic group (i.e. language, culture, customs)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.5 Four Dimension Summary

In summary, we see a consistent pattern emerging from the survey data, 
regardless of which method is used to analyze the survey data. The general pattern 
is consistent for each of the methods used. For instance, with the findings by the 
four dimensions, sense of belonging to one’s own ethnic group ranked highest in 
Appeal, Importance and Identity. While one’s own ethnic culture and Han 
Chinese culture’s filial piety and respect for elders were either second or third 
highest in Appeal, Importance and Identity. In contrast, Han Chinese culture and 
Foreign culture were rank second last and last for Appeal, Importance and Identity.
This pattern corroborates the earlier findings by average rating for all items and findings by ethnic groups.

In addition, there are no substantial inconsistencies between Appeal, Importance and Identity in these rankings. This illustrates that respondents have the strongest sense of belonging to their own ethnic group and culture but also identifies closely with filial piety. But in other respects, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were not appealing or important for respondents.

Likewise, for Requiring Change, Chinese modern culture was deemed to be the most in need of change, followed by current government affirmative action to ethnic minorities and general ethnic minority policies of the government. Sense of belonging to the Chinese state, and Chinese citizenship and sense of belonging to one own’s ethnic group was the least in need of change. This indicates dissatisfaction among the respondents to the current state of Chinese modern culture as well as the government policy towards ethnic minorities. The least required change categories reaffirms the strong identification the respondents have for their own ethnic group as well as revealing a well-developed sense of citizenship as Chinese nationals.

4.6 Analysis by radar charts

The data thus far indicates that the category Sense of belonging is strongest (for Appeal, Importance and Identity) for the respondent’s own ethnic group and least strongest for Chinese and Foreign culture. However, the ranking of some of the categories do not differ much in the actual number. Therefore, to better reveal the significance of outliers and commonality in responses, the study will use radar charts to display the data in graphical format.

4.6.1 Radar Chart Analysis by 4 Dimensions
The following radar charts analyzed each of the four dimensions (Appeal, Importance, Identity, and Requiring Change). The charts will cover the main categories from the survey and present the data where all four dimensions will be shown, rather than individually in each column as was the case earlier.

The first of these charts is the category of culture, including the survey items Chinese traditional culture and social customs as well as Chinese modern culture and the respondent’s own culture. The chart indicates that the dimension “requiring change” scored the lowest out of the four sections while Importance and Identity scores were close to being identical, with Appeal scoring slightly lower. This reflects that the respondents’ view of requiring change as a dimension that is least Importance or in least need of change compared to the other three dimensions:
In contrast, “Importance” and “Identity” had almost identical scores, indicating respondents rank both sections in almost equal importance. Overall, Appeal scored slightly less overall. This illustrates that the respondents rate items they closely identify with as the most important.

Turning to government policies, the pattern is similar. Three items from the survey is compared, namely current government policies towards ethnic minorities, affirmative action towards ethnic minorities and national values such as “united country”. The chart reveals that in Appeal, Importance and Identity, the items rank almost equally, with Importance ranked top, followed closely by Identity and Appeal. As was the case with culture, the “requiring change” rank noticeably lower than the other three categories for all items. The chart thus displays strong commonality with no exceptions for any items on the chart:

The next chart involves Chinese customs. This includes Chinese customs such as family ties and Chinese New Year as the first item, Filial piety as the second
item and other Chinese social customs (i.e. respect for elderly, marriage rituals) as the last item. The scores for these items are identical for the three categories of Appeal, Importance and Identity (Requiring change was not asked for these items in the survey), indicating respondents do not see any difference in weighting these items for the three categories:

Sense of belonging items were analysed in the following chart. There are three items from the survey. They are sense of belonging as an ethnic Chinese, sense of belonging as a citizen and national of the PRC and sense of belonging to one own’s ethnic group. The pattern here duplicates the previous charts, with close-to-identical high scores for Appeal, Importance and Identity. Requiring change scores were substantially lower compared to the other three categories. As they almost rank all three items equally high, this reflects the respondents’ view
that they do not see that the multiple identities of Chinese, PRC citizen and their own ethnic identity are in conflict:

The final chart covers Foreign culture items. American culture, Japanese culture and Korean culture were compared. American culture scored the highest in the three categories of Appeal, Importance and Identity, followed by Korean culture and lastly was Japanese culture. While there was no outlier in the three categories for these items (i.e. Appeal ranking noticeably higher), the scores were lower in the three categories compared to the other charts, indicating general overall low weighting by respondents:
In summary, the charts indicate a high degree of commonality for most items in Appeal, Importance and Identity categories, with requiring change being ranked lower than the other three categories for all items where the respondents were asked this question. This reflects a greater level of satisfaction among the respondents towards the status quo in regards to Appeal, Importance and Identity and less need for change.

4.6.2 Analysis by Schools

What differences that exist within the aggregate respondent sample can be analyzed by several methods. First, we can detect differences by schools. The survey was conducted at two schools with substantial ethnic minority student population from Xinjiang. One is based in Dongguan and the other is at Guangzhou. Overall, the correlation of survey results from Dongguan High School (288 samples) and Guangzhou Guangya High School (138 samples) are
0.98478, which indicates the survey result is highly correlated in the 2 sample groups. The main differences between Dongguan and Guangzhou lies in the higher ranking of Dongguan respondents in the appeal of Japanese culture (2.7 for Dongguan vs 2.0 for Guangzhou), the importance of Japanese culture (2.6 for Dongguan vs 2.0 for Guangzhou) and Sense of belonging to Chinese and their own ethnic identity (2.5 for Dongguan vs 1.9 for Guangzhou). Biggest difference found is in the category of “requiring change”. Dongguan respondents gave higher scores in room for improvement in sense of belonging as a Chinese and their own identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dongguan High School</th>
<th>Guangdong Guangya School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of samples</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of responders</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female ratio</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uighur ratio</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Radial Plot](image.png)
### Top 3 difference by items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Dongguan</th>
<th>Guangzhou</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1-5-2 Modern Japanese Culture’s appeal</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2-5-2 Modern Japanese Culture’s importance</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4-3-3 Requiring Change for respondent’s own ethnic group</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.6.3 Radar Charts Analysis by Ethnic Groups

Radar charts were also used by the study to analyze the survey data by ethnic groups. By doing so, we can ascertain the overall pattern of each ethnic group’s response. Each “P” represents one question in the survey questionnaire. And the sum total of the survey questions represents the circumference of the chart. From the chart, we can see that the overall pattern indicates that there are no substantial differences between the groups in the answers:
### Item Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1-5-2 Mod. Japan culture’s appeal</td>
<td>Kazakh 3.0</td>
<td>Han 2.1</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1-5-3 Mod. Korean culture’s appeal</td>
<td>Kazakh 2.8</td>
<td>Han 2.0</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4-3-1 Requiring change for sense of belonging towards being a Chinese</td>
<td>Hui 2.8</td>
<td>Others 1.9</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2-5-3 Korean culture’s importance</td>
<td>Uighur 2.7</td>
<td>Han 1.9</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4-3-2 Requiring change for sense of belonging towards being a PRC citizen</td>
<td>Hui 2.8</td>
<td>Others 2.0</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turning to differences by ethnic groups, again, there is a high degree of commonality among all nationalities. The top five differences are all above 0.8 correlations. This includes Japanese culture appeal, between Kazakhs and Hans, of 0.97, Korean culture appeal, between Kazakhs and Hans at 0.88, Requiring Change for Sense of Belonging as a Chinese ethnicity, between Hui and others at 0.86, Korean culture importance, between Uighurs and Hans, at 0.84 and Requiring Change for sense of belonging to Chinese national, between Hui and others at 0.81.

#### 4.6.4 Analysis by Age

The study also examined differences by age. The radar chart below categorized the aggregate sample by age. As was the case with the previous chart, no substantial difference between ages was detected, as all age groups roughly provided similar ranking for the item and categories of the survey. One notable exception is the Requiring Change category (The “P4” section of the chart), where older respondents tend to score higher for items Requiring.
Change than the younger respondents. This may indicate that the older the respondent get, the more he is exposed to (or becomes aware of) various social conditions and hence is less accepting of the predominantly official government discourse on ethnic minority identities and policies.

4.6.5 Analysis by Gender

Finally, the study examined differences by gender. From the radar chart below, as in the previous cases, male and female respondents from the aggregate sample did not differ significantly for most item and categories of the survey. However, the female respondents did tend to rank items higher for Appeal, Importance,
Identity and Requiring Change.

4.7 Survey Findings Conclusion

Overall, the respondents in the survey has stated that Sense of belonging is the item that ranks strongest among the four dimensions of Appeal, Importance, Identity and Requiring Change. Conversely, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were ranked second last and last in the four categories. This pattern was repeated when the findings were broken down into individual ethnic groups, indicating that there is no substantial differences in findings between Uighurs and Han as well as between Uighur and the other ethnic groups in the survey. The average rating scores confirmed this finding by indicating the same result, with
Sense of belonging being the strongest item and Chinese and Foreign culture being the weakest item in terms of score. As we shall see, these findings suggests the respondents, regardless of their ethnicity, are comfortable in being identified as an ethnic group as well as being seen as a Chinese citizen. At the same time, the findings also indicate dissatisfaction with existing government soft power policies. To explore these findings further, the study will now examine the above findings in more detail.

To begin with, when checking for validity of these findings, the correlation analysis has shown there is a high correlation between all ethnic groups. The correlation between Uighurs and Hans were 0.9, which is the second lowest correlation score. However, given the highest score is 0.96 and the lowest 0.86, thus the Uighur-Han correlation’s second lowest ranking may not be as indicative as it suggests. The high correlation only indicate that the survey was carried out properly and has high validity.

In addition, the use of radar charts to detect outliers and commonality similarly paint a picture of strong commonality and lack of outliers. Examining the findings by school, ethnic groups and gender did not reveal substantial outliers or differences.

Several differences in responses did emerge. One was that older respondents tended to score higher on the need for the items which require change. Another was that respondents from Dongguan tend to score higher for Foreign culture items as well as Sense of belonging items compared to their Guangzhou counterparts. Female respondents also tend to score higher on all items for all categories.

Overall, this suggests that the findings are valid and does not suffer from internal inconsistencies. Most significantly, there appears to be little conflict
between the respondents’ identity and that of Chinese national identity, suggesting respondents do not see a conflict between having multiple identities among members of their own ethnic group and that of having the identity as a citizen and national of the PRC. This pattern appears across the different ethnic groups, indicating that despite the strong sense of identity to their own ethnic kin, ethnicity does not play a strong role in determining identification.

In addition, as indicated earlier, the survey also revealed cultural categories of soft power as unappealing and do not seem to have a strong bearing on shaping the respondent’s identity. Chinese and Foreign culture items were consistently ranked last and second to last in all four of the categories. This would seem to indicate soft power, here in the guise of Chinese and foreign cultural categories, does not appear to be a strong factor in identity formation for the respondents.

However, before we can conclude that the Uighur respondents here are comfortable with their multiple identities, there are still some areas of questions and uncertainties raised by the survey. For instance, in the “Requiring Change” category, government ethnic policies and Han Chinese culture were the items considered to be the most in need of change. This suggests respondents were dissatisfied with the current state of government policies as well as how Han Chinese culture is presented to them, implying that state institutions are ineffective in promoting Chinese soft power. Furthermore, the radar chart on age revealed that the older the respondent were the more likely they are to score items higher for “Requiring Change”. These issues raise intriguing questions behind the uniformity of the survey results.

In addition, the high correlation between the ethnic groups does not reveal the cause of such high degree of uniformity. Nor does the high ranking of Sense of belonging and low ranking of Chinese and Foreign culture indicate the causative
agent for such a phenomena. In sum, while the survey allows the researcher to capture a snapshot of the respondents’ views on their identity and their relations to soft power and the state, it is not sufficient. The study must also need to know how and why they form these views.

Therefore, the researcher turned to one-on-one and group interviews of the survey respondents to provide complimentary from data from the survey and to hopefully provide answers and insights into the correlation patterns found in the analysis unveiled by the survey here. Thus to make sense of these survey findings, the study will now turn to a presentation and discussion of the findings from the interviews.
5. Interview Findings

5.1 Introduction

The survey findings have provided the study with a glimpse into how the Uighur respondents identify themselves and what role, if any, soft power factors on their sense of belonging. However, to ascertain the motivations and reasons behind such patterns and reveal any discrepancies, it is necessary to explore these findings in the form of semi-structured interviews with the survey respondents. In addition, for the purpose of comparison and placing the respondents’ views in context, additional interviews were conducted with members of the Uighur diaspora and Han respondents who have resided in Xinjiang or played a role in shaping government policies.

Overall, the interview indicates four major findings. One, the reception of Chinese soft power is not uniform but varies and diverges based on the respective respondent’s ethnicity, education and occupation. Second, Han respondents as well as the Chinese state, while acknowledging problems with its own governance, does not recognize their own contradictory perceptions and actions towards the Uighurs. Third, the most effective soft power at present for China seems to be education. Fourth, those three prior findings point to a possibility of a shared goal approach.

The findings from these interviews are presented here. These interviews were structured around the major soft power themes discussed during the surveys. They were culture, religion, identity and ethnic relations, governance, education and perceptions of foreign soft power. The study will first introduce the interviewee
categories followed by a summary of the main findings and finally a later section focusing on an in-depth discussion of the findings by each theme, highlighting the differences in responses based on respondent interviewees and their respective backgrounds.

To begin with, the study will first introduce the interviewee respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dongguan and Guangzhou school students and teacher.</td>
<td>Uighur (except for school teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora respondents (outside of China)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A, Ms. B, Mr. C.</td>
<td>Uighur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinjiang Government Security Official</td>
<td>Han</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Z.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other respondents born or raised in Xinjiang</td>
<td>Han</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Z, and three other Han Chinese respondents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These interview respondents are organized into the following categories (their actual names are withheld at their request). The first category are the Uighur student respondents from the Dongguan and Guangzhou school. These were the respondents who have completed the survey questionnaire. The second category are the Uighur diaspora respondents. This includes Mr. A and Ms. B, both currently working in London as well as Mr. C, a Uighur graduate student studying in Hong Kong (while not technically residing outside of China, for practical purposes Mr. C is considered a diaspora member as he is not residing on Mainland China). Another category are the government security officials charged with overlooking the security of Xinjiang, namely a female Han respondent, referred to as Ms. Z. Finally, there are the Han respondents who are born and raised in Xinjiang (to compare and contrast with Uighur respondents). This includes Ms. Z’s son and three other Han respondents who are a male and two females, and all have received tertiary education in China.
Next, we turn to the soft power themes; these are divided into ten categories based on the interview questions and the themes that emerged from their answers. These ten categories are Culture, Religion, Governance, Education, Soft power comparison, National identity, Sense of Belonging, Uighur-Han perceptions, Solutions, and Historical Narrative:

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Before engaging in a detailed discourse of each theme, the study will first offer a summary of the finding of the themes. The first theme is in respect to culture and it is obvious that a wide cultural gap exists based on ethnic divide. Uighur respondents do not profess to have an interest in Han Chinese culture and they relate that lack of affinity with what they feel as the government’s discriminatory measures against Uighurs. Hans claim to respect the Uighur culture and acknowledges that Hans, even the educated, lack of understanding of the Uighur culture. Han respondents projected a “noble savage” view of Uighurs, viewing them as simple honest people yet prone to “incitement”. Thus, it is very much a circumscribed form of cultural respect, as the Han respondents indicate
the need to control Uighur culture. Despite this divide, some Uighur respondents (Dongguan) profess they are not hostile to Han Chinese culture and it is attractive in the sense that they are familiar with it. These findings imply that to make Han Chinese culture more receptive to Uighurs, the Han Chinese culture require change, and it needs change because it is currently functioning inefficiently as a soft power.

Second, is religion and it should be noted that religious identity exists but does not seem central for Uighurs in terms of soft power. Han see religion as an impediment, but Uighur respondents does not show strong attachment to religion. Han respondent indicate that Uighurs may use their religious identity as reasons for reaction against perceived Han oppression.

Third, in the area of schooling and education, these are used in an instrumental fashion to shape Uighur respondents’ allegiance and identity. Uighur respondents see schooling also in an instrumental manner for equipping themselves with skills for better career prospects after graduation. However, respondents did not indicate this schooling as enhancing their sense of belonging to the Chinese state. In addition, education appear to be efforts that are concentrated on the elite (that is, those Uighurs who have received secondary and tertiary education), so questions as to its effectiveness remain unanswered.

Fourth, in terms of the government’s view of ethnic relations, it emphasized control through “hard” power categories of divide and rule. The government appear to recognized that there are problems to their governance but does not offer or is aware of the solution. A discriminatory attitude is prevalent among the government respondents in regards to how they view and treat Uighurs. Likewise, ethnic Hans recognized to some extent the governance problems of the Xinjiang government but does not comprehend their own discriminatory view of Uighurs.
There is a lack of genuine understanding and comprehensive acceptance between Uighurs, government and Hans. Therefore soft power will need to tailor itself in a more specific fashion to Uighur needs and not merely rely solely on the innate attractiveness of different aspects of Chinese governance. The government and Uighurs seem to talk past one another and not to each other. Each side is eager to present their own views. As an example, there is a contradictory claim by government and Uighur respondents over the ease of foreign to travel highlight division. The 2009 riots harden segregation between Uighur and Hans. Based on the responses, this gulf does not appear to narrow based on current governance. In sum, there is a lack of ownership and responsibility by Han respondents of their own role in the discriminatory treatment of Uighurs. They see themselves in a passive bystander role between the government and Uighurs. Nor do they recognize their own “noble savage” views of Uighurs as prejudicial. As such, the psychological and spatial segregation between these two groups remain strong.

Finally, the only agreement between these two groups is a shared nostalgia during the days of Mao. Both Uighur and Hans’s ethnic identities were submerged under ideological campaigns and class struggles. The respondents, both Han and Uighurs, indicated that during the Maoist era there was a shared sense among them as newly liberated members of the PRC, irrespective of their ethnicity. By contrast, today Uighurs has a strong shared imagined community with Turkey, and Han believes such connection make Uighur associate themselves more with Turkey than China. Such cultural affiliation with foreign power is regarded as a potential source of instability for Han respondents and perhaps the government.

To further explore these findings, the study will now turn to a detailed discussion itemized by each focus group’s response, highlighting any discrepancies and major differences in the responses of each focus group.
To begin with, the study will first turn attention to culture. This first focus group interviewed were members of the Uighur diaspora in London. As mentioned earlier, these respondents did not wish to disclose their identity for personal security reasons. To respect their wishes, the study will use alias in place of their actual names. The first interviewee, a male respondent, is referred to as Mr. A, while the female respondent is referred to as Ms. B. The interview with Mr. A took place in London on October 2012 at his home. He is a Uighur and a graduate from Xinjiang University. He was employed in the Xinjiang provincial government before immigrating to the UK in 1999. He is currently engaged with a Uighur diaspora organization based in London and make periodic return trips to Xinjiang.

When asked on his view of the overall soft power appeal of Han Chinese culture, Mr. A does not express any opposition or resentment to Han Chinese culture in general. However, he does not put much value on its soft power ability. While he does not indicate any aversion to Han Chinese culture, he does not express interest in it either. For example, Mr. A provided the example of his film and television-watching habits. While Chinese language film and TV shows were “translated into Uighur” and broadcasted extensively, he states that: “Korean TV dramas, Hollywood and Hindi films were actually more popular”.

While TV-watching preferences may not necessarily prove lack of appeal of Han Chinese culture as a soft power factor, Mr. A also indicated that wider and more prolonged exposure to Han Chinese culture may paradoxically increase their loathing of Han Chinese culture. He illustrated this with the example of schooling. He claims that a common practice of Uighur parents is “to send one child to a
Chinese-language school and another to a Uighur-language school”. Mr. A claims he personally know of Uighur students who increased their dislike of Han Chinese culture because of increased exposure in the Chinese-language school. This ironically increase the Uighur student’s aversion of Han Chinese culture and in fact: “becomes more nationalistic to their own ethnic group”. Long exposure does not lessen cultural clashes, according to Mr. A. He claims the lack of affinity Uighurs have for Han Chinese culture is not due to the cultural attributes per se, but the discriminatory treatment these Uighur students endured. He cited senior Uighur students in these Chinese language schools who were sent to factories as training and received differential treatment based on their ethnicity.

Ms. B in contrast to Mr. A was a petrochemical engineer. Like Mr. A, She was a Uighur raised in Yili, Xinjiang. She spoke fluent Mandarin as she was educated at Han schools. She was a participant at the 1989 Tiananmen Protests, and later move to London, UK. Like Mr. A, Ms. B make regular return visit to Xinjiang and wish to have her identity hidden for her protection.

When asked on the ability of Han Chinese culture in general as a soft power attribute to influence Uighurs, Ms. B argues that the majority of Uighurs (those not in Chinese language schools or university) had little contact or knowledge with Han people and Han Chinese culture. They see Han Chinese culture as an alien culture, different and incompatible to their own.

As for herself and those like her, Uighurs who have received higher education and has varying degree of fluency in Mandarin, Ms. B states that she differentiates between Han Chinese culture and Han people and the Chinese government. She claims she has quite a number of Han friends but have no issue with Han Chinese culture. The problem she states is government policy and according to her, Hans are fellow sufferers with Uighurs in this respect. Like Mr.
Ms. B argues that: ‘Uighurs suffers from pervasive discrimination in all aspects of life’. She states that if the Chinese government is to rule a minority successfully “the government has to understand the minority culture”. Ms. B claims that under current condition in Xinjiang, there is no conceivable way for “Uighurs to gain meaningful rights or respect from the government”. She argues that the central government wants harmony but: “breeds hatred” and simply do not comprehend “the complex ethnic relations that exist in Xinjiang”. In such an environment, the role of Han Chinese culture as a soft power attribute would be vastly overshadowed by government policy and discriminatory policies.

To corroborate the above views, the author also interview Mr. C, another ethnic Uighur, but based in Hong Kong. He is a graduate student currently studying at City University Hong Kong. The interview was done by phone (as Mr. C did not wish to meet in person) and lasted approximately 45 minutes on November 2012. Like the two previous interviewees, Mr. C requested not to have his identity disclosed.

On the question of Han Chinese culture as soft power attribute, Mr. C indicates that he actually finds Han Chinese culture: “quite attractive compared to the other cultures”, mainly due to his greater familiarity to it compared to foreign culture. However, his attraction notwithstanding, this seems to be outweighed in his considerations of soft power by unequal treatment of his own Uighur culture. Mr. C states that the lack of concurrent respect for Uighur culture greatly diminishes the appeal of Han Chinese culture. He cites examples from his own experience and childhood, when he wondered why: “there are no Uighur movies” and are forced to wear “Han costumes” while Hans do not celebrate: “Uighur holidays”. Mr. C claims that TV programmes in Xinjiang are prohibited from showing programs about Uighur culture.
From these responses, it becomes clear that for the Uighur diaspora respondents, their view of Han Chinese culture as soft power variable to sway to their identity and allegiance is limited. The three respondents did not object to Han Chinese culture per se yet did not at present see soft power factor as a significant factor. Their relative familiarity to the culture has not translate into acceptance, nor did they find it appealing and have the desire to identify with it. Furthermore, the respondents did not place Han Chinese culture in isolation but connect it into the context of discrimination and unequal status between the Han Chinese culture and that of their own Uighur culture.

To explore the role of Han Chinese culture as a soft power factor further, the author conducted focus group interviews with Uighur students from the Dongguan High School. As indicated earlier, these were the respondents from the survey. A sample of them were selected for the focus group interview. There were 9 interviewees, all Uighurs and other ethnic minorities from Xinjiang, and had previously completed the survey questionnaire. The interview took approximately one hour.

While there were minor inconsequential disagreements between the Uighur respondents, they were in general in agreement regarding the following aspects of Han Chinese culture. When asked what elements of a culture they found particularly important, the respondents stated that “history and language” as the most important aspects. Regarding Han Chinese culture as a soft power factor, they professed to like Han culture. They stated that they found Dongguan city and its people friendly and welcoming and more modern and developed compared to Xinjiang. Prior to arriving at Dongguan, they harbored misunderstanding about the rest of China which they claimed was now put to rest.

However, despite their overall professed admiration of various aspects of
Han Chinese culture, they imply several issues they have against the current overall situation of Uighurs. One is government discrimination. A male Uighur student respondent professed anger that during the Beijing Olympics, he: “was not allowed to stay at any hotel, despite being a Chinese citizen”. He does not understand as a Chinese citizen why he was not allow to stay at any hotel during the Beijing Olympics and he states that the hotel declined his stay because of his ethnicity.

Dissatisfaction with the status quo was also detected in other questions relating to the Han Chinese culture. The Uighur student respondents found that there is currently a lack of mutual understanding of ethnic minorities’ culture. In addition, the student respondents indicate that they prefer “less emphasis of Han culture” in their schooling and more focus on minority cultures.

These responses suggest that Dongguan students see history and language as the most important aspect of Chinese cultural soft power but they did agree that personal exposure and contact with Han Chinese culture in the form of schooling at Dongguan to be a positive experience. However, they also recognized that this is only a narrow slice of what form their relationship with the Chinese state. Other issues, such as discrimination and the relative unequal treatment of minority cultures versus Han culture also factor into their perception of China and their identity relationship to it. Given the vocal response by the respondents to the perceived discriminatory treatment during the Beijing Olympics, it is plausible to suggest such issues may outweigh Han Chinese culture in how they factor the appeal (or lack thereof) of the Chinese state.

In conclusion, there is a divergence in response based on the respondent background. The respondents who were members of the Uighur diaspora and Uighur students in Dongguan perceived Han Chinese culture as a soft power
component with opposing responses. Respondents from the Uighur diaspora do not view highly the soft power ability of Han Chinese culture, stating that other cultural soft power from other countries were more popular. Likewise, the first Uighur respondent, Mr. A, felt more frequent exposure to Han Chinese culture by Uighurs ironically increases their dislike towards Han Chinese culture. They do not see Han Chinese culture in isolation but in the context of perceived discriminatory treatment and lack of understanding between Uighurs and the Chinese government. In contrast, the Uighur students from Dongguan High school have a more positive experience with Han Chinese culture, so would schooling and experience in Dongguan be conducive to changing their negative perception about the rest of China. Nevertheless, they shared with the Uighur diaspora misgivings regarding discriminatory treatment by the Chinese state, with inability to stay in Beijing hotels during the Olympics as a notable example.

5.3 Religion

Religion is not normally considered a soft power factor in the traditional sense. However, given its strong role in shaping Uighur identity, how the Chinese state treat Islam could conceivably impact China’s overall soft power, in either a positive or negative fashion. Therefore, the author also inquired about how the respondent view religion (and Islam in particular) in the context of how it may impact Chinese soft power with Uighurs.

The author first turned to the Uighur diaspora respondents in London. Mr. A does not express a particular position with religion, as he concentrated on other discriminatory issues. Likewise, Ms. B appear to downplay the role of religion in her view, stating that while the Chinese government do not respect the freedom of religion, she did not personally want to see religion play a central role in Chinese
soft power swaying Uighurs. This, according to her, relates to her disagreement with that religion.

In contrast, the Dongguan students did not downplay the role of religion. They state that they were displeased about not being permitted to attend mosques. They did not understand why they were not allowed to attend mosques at Dongguan which was the regular religious and social custom back when they were in Xinjiang.

More importantly, when asked on what they consider the most important right they feel need protection, the Dongguan students indicate that religious freedom was a very important element to them.

In contrast, Ms. Z sees religion in the context of securitization, reflecting her background in the national security field relating to Uighur matters. She argued that one “mistake” General Secretary Hu Yaobang made in the post-Mao era was his policy that “Uighurs should be governed by Uighurs”. Ms. Z claims the byproduct of this policy was a large boom in mosque construction within Xinjiang. She claims that the number of mosques being built during the 80’s exceeded those of Egypt. She also believes that Uighurs who have made a trip to Mecca (as Muslims are required to perform) are held in a reverential position within Uighur society. However, she cast these religious practices in a negative light, claiming religiously-inclined Uighurs are only interested in fighting their “Holy War”.

In summary, the Uighur diaspora respondents were reluctant to discuss religion and tend to downplay its significance to their identity. They did not indicate their views as representative of other Uighurs. It is possible that this is due to their secular education background and Uighurs in other social strata may have stronger inclinations regarding religion as part of their identity. However, further data analysis would be required to examine that view. The Dongguan
students however imply they may value religion stronger as part of their identity as indicated by their disapproval in not being allowed to attend mosques at Dongguan. This may act as a hindrance to their otherwise positive experience at the Dongguan, although the degree of this impact is difficult to ascertain. Finally, Ms. Z’s portrays religion, and Islam in particular, as a security concern for the state. This indicates religion, like other soft power issues, cannot be separated from governance and control. Next, the study will turn the focus on governance.

5.4 Governance

Thus far, Uighur respondents have indicated that their attitude to Chinese soft power is tied to a varying extent on other factors that impinge on their perception of the Chinese state and its attempts to co-opt them, such as allegations of discrimination and unequal treatment between Uighur and Hans. In particular, the respondents have repeatedly discuss at length their view of Uighur-Han relations before, during and after the July 2009 riots. Therefore, one key area to examine is the role of governance and its impact on ethnic relations between Uighur and Hans at present in Xinjiang as well as Chinese soft power. To explore these issues further, the study will now turn to focus on governance and its impact, if any, on Uighur-Han relations in the context of Chinese soft power.

To begin with, we first examine the attitude of the respondents to general governance issues. The Uighur diaspora respondents argued Uighur-Han relations and mutual perception are not only poor but getting worse because of government policies. For instance, Mr. A argues that it is Chinese government policies that is worsening ethnic relations. He cites the example of what he claims as the “daily harassment” of peasants in Xinjiang by Han police at 17:00 each day. They were told not to dress in Islamic fashion while the police inspect their dwellings.
occasion, they may check if Uighurs have more than one child. (While Uighurs are officially exempted from the one child policy, authorities actively encourage one child as a rule for Uighurs). Mr. Z noted that while Han peasants often receive the same treatment from the police but the difference was that there is an ethnic divide in that many of these policemen were Han and the peasants were Uighurs. Mr. A claims the Uighurs in response to such harassment by further enhancing their separate identity, such as wearing more Islamic dress, which Mr. A claims as the only way that Uighurs feel can protect themselves symbolically.

In addition, Mr. A alleges that the Chinese state practices a “divide-and-rule” policy to breed ethnic discord among the minorities within Xinjiang. He claims that often Kazakhs are promoted in work or school before Uighurs.

The “divide-and-rule” idea seem to be a pervading idea, as indicated by other respondents. For instance, turning now to Ms. Z’s view of governance in her role as a member of the security apparatus, she state that: “other ethnic minorities dislike Uighurs” and made the claim that “Uighurs troublemakers will get increased compensation by the Central government, for example if a Uighur is killed, the government will pay $460,000. Of this, $6000 will be paid to Uighurs for property damage” as the Central Government “feared instability” above all else. Because of this alleged “practice”, Ms. Z claims that the government has “spoilt” Uighurs and made the government reluctant to challenge them. This suggests that Ms. Z view Uighurs enjoy preferential treatment more than Hans or other ethnic minorities, thereby devaluing their grievances and placing them as an object of envy and resentment by other ethnic groups within China.

However, despite what Ms. Z claim of Uighurs enjoying advantageous positions in Xinjiang, she does acknowledge governance problems. She cites the example of then Xinjiang governor Zhang Chunxian as a poor example of
governance. Ms. Z states Zhang engaged the service of the police in matters that they should not have been used. She gave the example of labour disputes. According to Ms. Z, Zhang repeatedly (and to a much greater extent compared to his predecessors) uses the police to suppress protests by Uighurs over unpaid wages.

Furthermore, Ms. Z states that the various levels and divisions of the Xinjiang government all suffered from corruption. In particular, she felt the local government units in the Southern part of Xinjiang suffers from endemic levels of corruption. She believes that various bombing incidents over the last few years in Xinjiang were directly or indirectly related to government corruption, abuse and attitude. When asked to clarify what she meant by “attitude”, Ms. Z states that local governments in Xinjiang often tried to suppress reports of disturbances to prevent the Central government from discovering such incidents. Whenever Central government officials would inspect or tour Xinjiang, the local government would, according to Ms. Z, put on a “show” (i.e. Uighur song and dance) to create a false impression of harmony.

Next, the author turned to Mr. C the graduate student in Hong Kong who still plans to return to Xinjiang after his graduation. For him, the Xinjiang provincial government is portrayed in almost exclusively negative terms. For him, being a Uighur meant he had: “no status” in the government, that they simply: “feed Uighurs with propaganda” while they: “grab the land” at the expense of Uighurs. Mr. C however does distinguish somewhat between the Xinjiang provincial government and the Central government. His impression of the Central government was somewhat more positive, stating that it vaguely “thinks” and “cares” about Uighur’s welfare, in contrast to the provincial government which was “not representative” of Uighurs.
In addition, Mr. C also discusses the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Xinjiang. He claims he found the CCP rather mysterious and do not entirely understand its operation in Xinjiang. Nevertheless, he states that the CCP has not been beneficial to Uighurs either, as many of Mr. C’s Uighur’s friends “were forced to join the CCP to obtain job positions or social benefits to elevate their social standing”. From his view, these Uighurs were selfish as they were there to purely gain individual advantages without any concurrent benefits for their ethnic group as a whole.

From what we can see, it seems Uighur respondents, perhaps unsurprisingly, do not perceive governance in a positive fashion. If anything, they claim governance mishaps further strengthen the separation of their identity from the Chinese state. Both Uighur respondent and Ms. Z refer to a “divide-and-rule” concept where Uighur are place in hostile relations with other ethnic minorities within Xinjiang. This potentially reveal a clash in government objectives between security emphasis on control and soft power campaign to sway Uighur’s allegiance. The “divide-and-rule” strategy may potentially clash with any soft power objective to sway Uighurs’ allegiance Since ethnic discord between minority groups may cause Uighurs to stand out more as a unique group separate from others as well as from the majority Hans. Ms. Z does acknowledge governance problems (and corruption in particular), but does not appear to offer solutions to the problem.

With the respondent’s general impression of governance established, the study turn to particular area of governance that may have a large impact on Chinese soft power, namely affirmative action to benefit Uighurs. How does affirmative action factor into the respondent’s view of Chinese governance and soft power? Interesting enough, some of the Uighur and Han respondents were in
agreement as to its ineffectiveness.

Ms. Z, the security official, and Mr. C, the Uighur graduate student in Hong Kong, argued that while affirmative action has allowed some Uighurs to improve their social livelihood than before, it was generally ineffective and did not help the majority of Uighurs in economic or social areas. The problem Mr. C found with affirmative action rests with the Xinjiang government.

For the ethnic Han graduate students, all of them agreed that the affirmative action was unfair as it appears to them that it granted Uighurs unfair privilege. But they also believe it is ineffective in general. The male respondent in particular find that these affirmative programmes benefit only the top echelon of Uighurs while the average Uighurs does not benefit from it. The female ethnic Han respondents do concede that affirmative policies are important if implemented better. One area that she did found affirmative action to be positive and useful was education. Uighurs were not required to pay for education. Likewise, when consulted on the role of education, the teacher in charge of Uighur affairs at Dongguan school states forthrightly that education is a key tool in the battleground for Uighurs allegiance to the Chinese state, with the enemy being the Uighur independent forces.

Thus it seems affirmative action is an area of agreement between Uighur and Han respondents in that it is perceived in general to be ineffective. Its utility as a soft power factor therefore seem rather limited. However, the Han respondents did indicate education, as an element of affirmative action, may be an exception. Likewise, the teacher at Dongguan High School indicate the purpose of education is that it can be used as an instrument to gain the allegiance and identity of Uighurs against what she termed as “independent forces”. Thus while affirmative action in general does not appear to hold strong value from a soft power
standpoint, education may be deemed of greater importance as a soft power factor. To explore this point further, the study will now turn to focus on the role of education as a soft power factor.

5.5 Education

The respondents have indicated that they consider education an important part of the state’s affirmative action; employed in an instrumental fashion to sway Uighur allegiance and identity. As such, the frequent exposure to Han culture and direct personal contacts, not only in a hierarchy relationship between Uighur student and Han teachers but also horizontally between Uighur students and Han students, can potentially play a significant soft power factor. To analyze this further, the study will now examine the role of education as a Chinese soft power factor.

The primary respondent is Ms. Yang, a Han teacher at Dongguan High school, one of the two schools where the survey took place. She is responsible for the general wellbeing of Uighur students at the school as well assisting in setting up the curriculum for them to follow.

Ms. Yang states her challenge stems from her view that many young Uighurs feel greater affinity with Turks and Turkey rather than Chinese and China. According to Ms. Yang, the school is an essential tool to combat Uighur independence forces for the allegiance of her students. This motive was concurred by Ms. Z, the public security official, who states that forcing the mixing of Uighurs and Hans will enhance their Chinese identity and prevent them being exploited by independent forces.

How does Ms. Yang accomplish the above goal? First, she states that the school provide subsidy for school fees. Most of these Uighurs came from poor
villages predominantly in the Southern part of Xinjiang. Ms. Yang claims that each student was invested with an equivalent of 100,000 yuan for a 4 year high school education in Dongguan by the government. In addition, these Uighur students were not charged with school fees. Ms. Yang claims that this was a much better alternative than leaving these students to their own devices. She states that there were no jobs for these young people and they would simply have “loitered around with nothing to do” if they were not sent to school. Betraying her discriminatory views, she states that young Uighurs tend to be “easy to brainwash” and believes that “stealing items from Hans is not considered stealing”.

Second, Ms. Yang claims the school respects Uighur culture. She states that her school respects and honours Uighur culture and traditions and hold “banquets” and “festivals” to celebrate each June. However, she distinguishes Uighur culture from religion, where she states religious practices are not allowed and religious dress (such as female head dress) were not permitted, as per school policy.

Third, Ms. Yang engages in proactive social interaction with the Uighur student’s families in Xinjiang. She states that her duties and those of her fellow teachers at the school are not limited to school activities. Her school arranged visits to the Uighur student’s home villages where the teachers ate and slept at the students’ home and conversed with their parents. In turn, she claims the student’s parents treated them well and presented them with local delicacy such as nann bread. Furthermore, the school arranged for the parents to visit their children at the school, providing transportation and lodging accommodation for them.

Finally, Ms. Yang states that many of her Uighur students had promising futures after graduation. Some became civil servants in Guangzhou, while another became a member of the public security and one married a British national and
migrated to the UK.

Observing her reaction during the interview, Ms. Yang appears genuine in her desire to shape Uighur students’ identity to be that of Chinese nationals through her school’s provision of education subsidy, cultural respect and the promising future which she claims many of her graduates enjoy. However, there are also serious questions raised. At the same time she professed respect for her students, she harbours the discriminatory views of Uighurs being “easy to brainwash”. It is possible that her view may stem from placing herself in the context for allegiance between the Chinese state and the “independent forces”. Thus if she and her school does not intervene, the Uighurs may very well be “woo” by independent forces, given their affinity with Turkish rather than Chinese identity. Nevertheless, by harbouring such discriminatory views, it raises the question of whether Ms. Yang truly respects Uighur culture as she claims.

For instance, Ms. Yang draws a clear line between religion and culture. But does Uighur students draw a similar distinction? Likewise, it is quite possible Ms. Yang only cited the best examples of her graduates. Noticeably absent from Ms. Yang’s examples were how her graduates were regarded by fellow Hans outside the school environment. Even if her school environment has managed to create strong soft power for the Chinese state to sway Uighurs to a Chinese identity, does that still hold once the Uighur graduates enter the larger Chinese society?

In short, while it appears Ms. Yang placed genuine efforts to mold Uighur students with soft power in the form of her school, the long-term implication of this is not certain. While all the respondents agree education is a very important component of Chinese soft power, the effectiveness must be seen when used in relation to in other context of Chinese soft power.
5.6 Soft Power Comparison

The study asked respondents to judge the efficacy of Chinese soft power by examining it against foreign soft power. By comparing Chinese soft power and various foreign soft power, the study can determine the strength and weaknesses of Chinese soft power vis-à-vis foreign soft power, as well as detecting whether there are any discrepancies between the survey results and the interviews.

First there are the views of the respondents towards the US, unquestionably one of the largest and most influential sources of soft power currently. Here the respondents have mixed views.

The Uighur students from the survey did not express direct opinion on US soft power in general or particular aspects of US soft power (i.e. culture). However, some of them did indicate that they do have an interest in US consumer products (i.e. Apple products) as well as enjoy watching Hollywood movies. While these interests in aspects of US culture is not sufficient for the study to show whether they have a positive or negative view of US soft power, it does indicate Uighur students are well cognizant of the power and influence of US soft power.

The Uighur diaspora respondents however did hold definite views on US soft power but they did not present a united view of the US. Mr. A stated positive interest by Uighurs in American culture rank second after Turkish and Islamic cultures. He also found US useful in an instrumental fashion as a base for Uighur activities to be free from Chinese state interference. Mr. A believes Uighurs have more interest in US culture than Han Chinese culture. By contrast, Ms. B, despite her dislike of Chinese government policies, found the US to be “untrustworthy” and in reality an “authoritarian country” with “circumscribed freedoms”.

Furthermore, Ms. B displayed anti-Semitic views when she found the US to be under “Jewish control”. She states that while some Uighurs may believe the “propaganda” of the US, she does not. To Ms. B, the US is a country controlled by “big money”. Although like Mr. A, Ms. B concedes that some Uighurs may have a more positive impression of the US who may want them to encourage them to fight for an independent Xinjiang. Ms. B however thinks the US, being politically realistic, would not aid Uighurs in their struggle for their independent country.

Likewise, the Uighur graduate student in HK, Mr. C, shares Ms. B’s negative appraisal of the US. He argues that the US is not the “land of the free” as it is commonly portrayed, but rather a “country that is not worthy to look up to”. In both Ms. B and Mr. C’s cases, they mention the Iraq war and Guantanamo as reasons for their poor impression of the US, thus reflecting US government policies and actions as the main basis for forming their opinion of the US, rather than US soft power per se.

Turning to the next country with soft power, the interviews focused on Turkey. The Uighur respondents have repeatedly mentioned their affinity with Turkey, thus questions were asked on how they felt regarding Turkey.

There was almost unanimous agreement for all the Uighur respondents that they feel a strong sense of attachment to Turkey in terms of culture and its people. For example, the students from the Guangzhou school stated that they enjoy watching Turkish TV programmes which they can understand and relate to. These students also claim they have strong contact with the outside world as they have family and relatives in Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, but it was always Turkey which these students like the most, as they considered Muslims in Turkey most open and relatable to them.
Likewise, the Uighur diaspora agreed on the affinity with Turkey. Mr. A reiterate that Turkey was what the Uighurs identified with because of ethnic ties (as a fellow Turkish-speaking republic) and history, both of which made Turkey as its country and people relatable to them. Ms. B and Mr. C also cited blood ties as the cause of the sense of kinship Uighurs felt for Turkey. Ms. B stated that Turkey and Xinjiang were “brothers and sisters” with similar “language and culture”. The first time she was in Turkey, she felt like she “was at home”. She claimed the Turks she met in Turkey were all sympathetic to Uighurs. For Ms. Z the security official, the close affinity between Uighurs and Turkey is a security concern because she felt that these external connections could be used by nationalist groups as a base for their activities. She claims many “song and dance” Uighur groups based on foreign countries and were merely a front for Uighur independent activities.

Next we turned to countries closer to China, namely, Japan and South Korea and ask the respondents on their perception of these countries’ soft power. Since both of these East Asian countries are known for exerting a recognizable form of soft power, it would be prudent to assess the views of the respondents on these two countries.

For the Uighur students, perhaps unsurprisingly due to their education, they hold uniformly negative view of Japan and her culture. The students from Dongguan label Japan and South Korea as “born enemies”. The students from Guangzhou, while sharing the negative appraisal of Japan, attempted to articulate a more nuanced rationale for their dislike of Japan. They state that they grew up on television shows and history lessons emphasizing the Sino-Japanese war and the atrocities committed by Japan, so their impression of the country was poor. Even so, some of the students at Guangzhou did admit that Japan was “strong for
a reason” and Japanese culture has aspects which they respect.

Turning to the Uighur diaspora respondents, there were more diverse responses. Mr. A saw Japan as a potential partner for the Uighur independence struggle, being accepting of Uighurs and wanting to challenge China. But he did not profess any positions on the soft power of Japan, culture or otherwise. Ms. B however, saw Japan in an ambivalent light. Like, Mr. A, she saw Japan as useful in their support of the Uighur cause but this was only a hypocritical gesture design to provoke China.

In sum, the respondents’ perception of foreign countries and their soft power varies depending on the country as well as the respondent. For the US, there is a recognition of its strength in soft power by the Uighur students, even if they did not profess a certain opinion on the US. However, some of the Uighur diaspora members hold a distinctly negative impression of the US, derived from their opposition to US government policies and action, which seem to outweigh any potential positive impression from US soft power. It may also reflect their educated backgrounds, as both respondents were university-educated as well as influence from anti-Semitic sentiment from Islamic countries in the Middle East. Turkey however, enjoys uniformly positive perception from the Uighur respondents due to language, culture and ethnic ties. This suggests the affinity with Turkey has less to do with that country’s particular soft power than perceived similarity between the two people, the imagined community, in other words. Finally, Japan was seen merely as an instrument for Uighur cause by the diaspora, having little intrinsic soft power value for the respondents. The student respondents, shaped by their mainland education background, were hostile to Japan, yet some of them do recognize the source of their hostility and admit Japan was worthy of respect.
What these findings seem to indicate is that the value of foreign soft power as a source of “pull” is unclear and they feel stronger identification based on ethnic ties (as is the case with Turkey). For Chinese soft power to be effective, it would seem it will have to address this problem.

5.7 National Identity

Next, after examining some of the soft power factors, our study turns attention towards the issue of national identity, whether the respondents identified themselves as Uighur, Chinese national or both. The Guangzhou and Dongguan students clearly identify themselves as ethnic Uighurs. Yet, at least within the school environment, they indicate their identity is not an obstacle or barrier to establishing friendship and other positive social relations with Hans. Perhaps not surprisingly, they do not indicate their ethnic identity in a dichotomous relationship with a Chinese nationality. Yet at the same time, they harbor a strong sense of distinct ethnic identity. The Guangzhou students for instance, state that they will talk in their native language, Uighur, among themselves when given the opportunity despite their school frowning upon this. While this may not be particular strong evidence, it does indicate that Uighurs retain elements of their unique identity, which in this case, is their native language.¹⁰

To compare and contrast these responses from the Uighur students regarding national identity, the study turned to focus on ethnic Hans who grew up in Xinjiang. We asked them how they view Uighurs, whether as a distinct national

¹⁰ These findings confirm earlier studies on Uighur ethnic consciousness. Herbert S. Yee in his previous studies published in 2010 and 2003 found that Uighurs manifest strong ethnic and local identity and that there is deeply rooted mutual distrust between the Uighurs and Han Chinese. Likewise, Zang Xiaowei (2013) in a more recent study in 2013 discovered that Uighurs retain a strong sense of ethnic consciousness, based on cultural and psychological properties rather than instrumental sentiments. Zang (2013) also found that educated Uighurs maintain a stronger sense of their ethnicity than less educated Uighurs, in part due to educated Uighurs greater exposure to Han Chinese. Absent from those prior studies however is how their ethnic consciousness can be influenced or shape by Chinese soft power, which this study will attempt to answer.
identity (ethnic or otherwise) or a mere subgroup of a Chinese nationality.

These Han respondents were all born and raised in Xinjiang. They were born in Xinjiang because their families were sent to Xinjiang as part of the PLA garrison that settled in the province. The male respondent has recently graduated with a postgraduate degree from a Hong Kong university and is employed in the financial industry. The other two respondents are female and still studying for their postgraduate degree at this time. Like Mr. Z, these Han respondents are, in some ways, part of the social elite, the exception being they are not part of the official government apparatus as is with Ms. Z. The male respondent did not classify ethnic groups as races, but merely ethnic groups, implying their relative lack of importance from the view of Hans. The first female respondent felt that Uighurs did not see themselves as Chinese but had a strong “Turkish identity”, nevertheless, in her own view, she saw Uighurs as Chinese nationals who are not different from them. Likewise, the second female respondent agree that Uighurs did not see themselves as Chinese, although she personally did not know whether Uighurs were actually Chinese. This may indicate a confusion on her part of whether the Uighur identity constitute a separate group entirely or whether a distinct ethnic identity which still falls within a greater Chinese identity.

In sum, the Uighur students appears to retain a sense of their own identity as Uighurs, but one that does not conflict with their belief as Chinese nationals. However, this was only in the context within the school. The question remains to be seen in the wider society as to whether these respondents would hold the same view. The Han respondents gave differing responses. Some felt Uighurs were merely a subcategory of a larger Chinese nationality, while others felt Uighurs did not seem to be Chinese but they should be Chinese nationals while there were some who considered Uighurs to be Chinese. This suggests the issue of identity
remains unclear among respondents. To clarify these findings on identity, the study would also need to focus on what contribute or form their identity, namely their sense of belonging.

5.8 Sense of Belonging

The respondents’ view on their own identity seems inadequate and does not provide a clear view of their sense of allegiance. Therefore, it is prudent that we also delve into how their identity is formed by looking at their sense of belonging. By examining why they have this sense of belonging will also provide clues as to how they shape their identity.

When asked about their sense of belonging, the Uighur students would reply without hesitation that they are Chinese citizens. Yet when asked as to where they felt at home, their reply is still Xinjiang. Moreover, most of the students at Dongguan stated they that will return to Xinjiang after graduation, possibly indicating a strong sense of attachment to their homeland (cultural, economic, religion etc.)

However, after talking to the Uighur diaspora, the sense of belonging to Xinjiang becomes more apparent. Mr. A felt there was no sense of belonging to China by Uighurs like himself. Mr. A holds the strongest opinion, stating there is no sense of belonging whatsoever, as there is nothing in common between Uighurs and the Chinese state. According to Mr. A, this lack of sense of belonging justifies separation (politically), or at the very least, exemption from applicable policies. He also mentions the Chinese version of “cricket test” which he claims to be a useful measure to gauge the sense of belonging of Uighurs. This “cricket test” was the controversial proposal by British conservative party member Norman Tebbin in 1990 to test the loyalty of migrants in the UK. He argued that if
these migrants support the countries of their origin over those of the UK in a cricket match, this indicates that they have not integrated into the UK.

While an actual “cricket test” may be rather questionable methodologically and ethically if used as an actual apparatus to measure the sense of belonging, nevertheless, it is important to ask respondents how they felt regarding symbols of Chinese state and identity. Do they feel a sense of belonging to various Chinese state symbols? We asked these questions to Mr. C, the Uighur graduate student in Hong Kong. We first asked him how he felt about various Chinese state symbols to gauge his sense of belonging.

When asked on the central government, Mr. C felt he was “forced” to admit it is his government, yet does not feel much sense of attachment to it. Mr. C states the central government considers the Uighurs as “someone else”, due to the unequal treatment meted out to Uighur and Hans, rather than equal and impartial treatment as expected, since they are both Chinese citizens. Thus it was not difficult to understand why he felt alienated from the government. Likewise, he did not share any sense of patriotism towards China nor Chinese achievements in sport events such as the Olympics. Mr. C stated he “did not feel proud at China winning gold medals at the Olympics”. Furthermore, Mr. C felt the PRC flag was not “his” flag and he simply did not identify with it. Finally, regarding the CCP, Mr. C felt he also had no loyalty to the party nor any kind of sense of belonging. Those Uighurs who joined the CCP were, in Mr. C’s view, selfish. It is Mr. C’s belief that Uighurs who joined the CCP were solely for their own benefits and social standing among Hans.

Overall, there is a clear division in the sense of belonging for the Uighur respondents. The Uighur students do not see a conflict or contradiction between having a sense of belonging to the Chinese state and their own ethnic identity
while for the Uighur diaspora, there is little to no sense of belonging to the Chinese state. For Uighur students, it may very much be due to the positive school experience with Han students and authority figures (namely teachers, who are representations of the government in that environment), indicating Chinese soft power is effective to the extent in molding a captive school environment. However, the Uighur diaspora see their sense of belonging to China as negligible. It is telling that one respondent, Mr. C, states that if the state treat them differently (in a negative discriminatory sense), then how can Uighurs such as him have a strong sense of belonging to the state? This implies discriminatory treatment exerts a substantial impact on the sense of belonging and soft power. Therefore the study will next turn to focus on Uighur-Han mutual perceptions.

5.9 Uighur-Han Perception

This issue of perceived mistreatment to the Uighurs raises the question of the negative “drag” on Chinese soft power, namely the discriminatory treatment of them by the government as well as the attitude of fellow Hans to Uighurs in terms of their ethnicity and culture. If Chinese soft power is to have any effect for Uighurs, then awareness of how the majority of Hans and the government perceive Uighur culture would be essential in producing an effective soft power campaign. The study therefore turned the next interview focus onto the government and Han’s perception of Uighur general practices, habits and culture. There were two main types of respondents, Han government officials in Xinjiang and Han university students who were raised or had spent a significant amount of time in Xinjiang. Both groups would have the most contacts with Uighurs and given their education background, would likely be indicative of how the social elite and policymakers form their opinion of Uighurs and any potential soft power
directed at them.

The first two Han respondents have both resided in Xinjiang for a substantial period. Ms. Z, the first Han respondent, is a Chinese government security official who oversees and manages Uighur relations. As such, she reflects the national security thinking of the government in regards to Uighurs. The second Han respondent is Mr. Z, Ms. Z’s son who was born and raised in Xinjiang. They represent the positions of government officials directly or indirectly charged with handling Uighur ethnic affairs in Xinjiang.

The author began by asking Ms. Z on her overall impression of Uighurs and their culture. Ms. Z states that she felt that the majority of Uighurs were “good”, law-abiding citizens, but they are easily “incited” by other Uighurs with “ulterior” motives. Regarding Uighur culture, Ms. Z notes that there are often cultural misunderstandings between Uighurs and the central government. She cited the example of what she termed Uighur’s “proclivity for staging frequent parties with outsiders”, which the central government fears can be an excuse for foreign forces to “intervene”. In addition, Ms. Z claims that Uighurs are disliked not just by members of the Han ethnic majority, but also by other ethnic minorities that resides in Xinjiang, including Hui and Kazakhs who harbours the idea that: “Uighurs disturb the peace and they want to kick them out of Xinjiang”.

When asked how she thought Uighurs regard Hans, Ms. Z states that Uighurs retain a strong ethnic identity and set a clear demarcation between themselves and the Hans. She states that many Uighurs have no interest in Han Chinese culture and is more preoccupied with their own cultural items such as Uighur fashion and accessories. Nor, as claimed, are Uighurs keen on learning Mandarin. She alleges that Uighurs who speak Mandarin or maintain close relations with Hans were ostracized by their own Uighur community as being “neither Uighur nor Han”.

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She also provided the example of what she claims as Uighur marriage customs as an example of how Uighurs maintain their differentiation from the Hans. She claims that as a general practice Uighurs do not marry Hans. Even if they do marry, it may only be a second marriage and those Uighurs who are married to a Han: “dare not walk on the streets” or be seen.

Furthermore, Ms. Z claims that the Uighurs like to contact the West through the guise of non-political cultural groups such as musical organizations to gain their “understanding” and fundings. It is her belief that Uighurs often claimed themselves as Uighurs and not Chinese. This applies even for CCP Uighur members, who, according to Ms. Z, will exaggerate their own “plight in front of foreigners to gather their sympathy by complaining about issues such as human rights”.

The author then turned to Ms. Z’s son, Mr. Z, to inquire about his views on Uighurs and their culture. Mr. Z states that he finds Uighurs in general to be: “honest yet simple-minded”. Unlike her mother, Mr. Z believes Uighurs are willing to send their children to Mandarin-language schools because this will help improve their future career prospects. He distinguishes Uighurs by classes in the form of education. Mr. Z believes Uighurs, who had received tertiary education, tend to be more receptive to Western culture while those, who had not, tend to “reject other cultures” and “just attend mosques”. They “prefer their own songs and dances” and are not interested in Han Chinese culture.

Like her mother, Mr. Z believes Uighurs are easy to be “incited” and believe Uighurs view Hans as: “stealing their resources”. Mr. Z alleges that the younger generation of Uighurs think it is trendy and modern to argue for Xinjiang’s independence and thinks seeing Xinjiang as part of China seems “backward” or “old”. Surprisingly, despite Mr. Z’s tertiary education, he also felt that: “Uighurs
Several issues can be seen in regarding Ms. Z and Mr. Z’s responses. First, both Han respondents acknowledged the strong cultural identity of Uighurs in opposition to Han culture. They recognized that Uighurs do not hold strong positive perception towards Han Chinese culture, although Mr. Z tried to expound a more nuanced view that education will improve Han Chinese culture’s draw to Uighurs. Second, there appears to be again a “divide and rule” aspect to how Ms. Z see Uighur culture, arguing that other ethnic minorities within Xinjiang do not seem to appreciate Uighurs and their culture. Third, both respondents frame their view of Uighur culture through the prism of the “noble savage” construct which seem to permeate both respondent’s thinking. Both view Uighurs as honest yet simplistic in their mentality, with them being prone to “incitement”. They do not express opposition to their culture but appear to imply their culture needs control, such as Ms. Z’s suspicions regarding Uighur’s cultural groups as a front for subversive activity in association with foreigners. Absent in their responses were how Han Chinese culture could be made more appealing to the Uighurs.

To corroborate (or challenge) Ms. Z and Mr. Z’s views, the study also interview the Han respondents born in Xinjiang regarding mutual perception. The male Han respondent provided the most extensive answer. He differentiates between educated and “ordinary” Uighurs (those without tertiary education). He states that he sees no social, cultural or ideological differences between educated Uighurs and Hans in Xinjiang. Beyond that however, the male respondent had little to say about this particular group of respondents.

In contrast, the male Han respondent has much more negative perceptions about those whom he termed as “ordinary” Uighurs, which are those that have not received education. The respondent states his lack of comprehension regarding
ordinary Uighur’s lives but yet branded them to be: “wild and violent”. In terms of Uighur-Han relations, the respondent states that overall relations were “getting worse” and “mutual trust was lacking” as there was no “respect between the two groups”. He finds religion as a key barrier to better understanding and relations between the two groups. Furthermore, he believes there is a “psychological segregation” between the two groups, with Uighurs who feel more connected to the Turkish people than to the Chinese. He alleges that many Hans felt a “lack of safety” and wanted to “leave Xinjiang”. The key demarcation point for this worsening of relations, according to the male respondent, was the July 2009 riots. He felt actions by Uighurs during that time was “unforgiveable” and relations between many Hans and Uighurs were “cut off” after the riots, hence the psychological segregation. The male respondent felt the government was perfectly correct to crackdown on the rioters and that Uighur and Hans held diametrically opposing views on the riot.

The author then queried the second Han respondent who is a female. Her impression of Uighurs were that they were “honest yet simple-minded”. She believes Uighurs think they are being bullied by the Hans who were out to steal their resources, as she thought Hans had “higher IQ” than Uighurs. She felt that Uighurs tend to be very religious yet suffers from hostile relations both within their ethnic group as well as with the opposing Hans. She implies that ethnic relations were especially fraught in Southern Xinjiang where local government officials were allegedly charging high agent fees for jobs and travel. As for the 2009 riots, she felt that the Uighur rioters were just following what their brethren’s would do (echoing Ms. Z’s view that Uighurs were easy to “incite”) and that the rioters had an “ulterior motive”, although she was unwilling to discuss further on this.
The third Han respondent, another female, differ from her other two respondents in attempting to offer reasons for such views held by her two colleagues. She acknowledges problems existed due to economic inequalities. She cited for example that compensation to Uighurs for expropriated land were often insufficient for Uighurs to maintain their livelihood. However, at the same time, the third female respondent also view Uighurs as: “lazy” and believed that Uighurs can earn $500 for rioting.

From what we can observe, the three Ethnic Han respondents were broadly similar in their perception of Uighurs as Ms. Z and Mr. Z. Despite their educated background, they all harbor clearly prejudicial and discriminatory views toward Uighurs. Moreover, the respondents indicate a lack of regular contact with Uighurs (despite growing up in Xinjiang) and, particularly in the case of the first respondent, showed a lack of interest and desire to want to know them on a personal level. In fact, it appears mutual perception has worsened (and continue to be worsened) since the 2009 riots, as typified by the male Han respondent use of the term “psychological segregation” to describe Uighur-Han relations since the riots. The only notable difference from Ms. Z’s view was that there was somewhat less emphasis on the need for control of the Uighurs. Thus on the inter-ethnic relationship level, soft power appears to be non-existent. It would seem that Chinese soft power in other aspects would have limited utility if Uighur-Han mutual perception is not addressed.

In summary, these are the findings with regards to the efficacy of Chinese culture as a soft power variable. The respondents from the Uighur diaspora argues that Han Chinese culture hold little appeal to them, placing it into the context of discriminatory treatment Uighurs receive and argues that under more exposure to Han Chinese culture would simply make the Uighurs increase their dislike of Han
Chinese culture. In contrast, Dongguan student respondents have a more positive experience with Han Chinese culture but also highlight issues with discrimination, implying that everyday treatment of Uighurs by Hans could potentially outweigh any positive effect of their experiences with Han Chinese culture.

What does the above dichotomy in the responses between respondents from Uighur diaspora and Uighur students in the schools indicate? It may be due to the wider social exposure (and hence greater number of encounters with discriminatory treatment) of the Uighur diaspora compared to the Uighur students. It may also be due to the fact that respondents from the Uighur diaspora being of an older generation and hence did not receive the affirmative action for their benefit in the form of having attended the schools like the Uighur students. In any case, this dichotomy may reflect that Chinese soft power’s efficacy may have different strengths and impact depending on the background of these Uighurs. Finally, the Han respondents acknowledges the strong dichotomy separating Uighurs and Han Chinese culture, yet at the same time display discriminatory attitudes towards them in the form of “noble savage” view, in that they have to be controlled and monitored.

5.10 Solutions

Thus far the respondents have indicated a range of issues and concerns which seems to hinder any potential soft power to sway over the Uighur’s allegiance. From worsening Han-Uighur relations to persistent government discrimination, these issues seem to be inseparable for the respondents. Therefore, it is logical to ask the respondents what solutions, if any, they see in addressing these obstacles to effective Chinese soft power.

For the Uighur students, many of them felt greater mutual understanding
through contacts with Han student seems to be the solution. They indicated they found Guangzhou fascinating and state they have a desire to see the outside world beyond Xinjiang.

In contrast, the Uighur diaspora respondents were more divided. They focused on governance solutions. Mr. A states that Chinese soft power is more or less useless as Uighurs and Hans have “nothing in common” and the solution would be a separate and independent Xinjiang. Ms. B’s solutions seem to be less drastic, (although arguably unrealistic), stating democracy could be used to solve current problems. She also advocated that Xinjiang should enjoy real autonomy with a devolution of powers. As such, she stated that Xinjiang should be like Scotland, Hong Kong or Taiwan. In fact, Ms. B feels quite close to Taiwan’s situation and feels that Xinjiang is politically not different from Taiwan, so Xinjiang should be a self-governing territory like Taiwan.. The key, she felt regarding Chinese governance and soft power, was that there should be satisfaction with the status quo. Thus, if one is satisfied with the system, they would not want more changes.

Turning to the ethnic Hans who have grown up in Xinjiang, they offered a variety of solutions which were not specific but rather general in their responses. The male respondent felt Uighurs require greater equality with Hans in the social and economic spheres. The female respondent felt education and economic aid would help, although she did not indicate how that would distinguish from the current affirmative actions.

Ms. Z, the security official emphasized governance by tackling corruption at the local levels within Xinjiang. She stated the root cause of poor governance is at the local level, and that is the area which requires the greatest reform and focus in order for a shift in Uighur’s allegiance to the Chinese state.
Finally, Ms. Yang, the teacher responsible for Uighur students, states her school’s proactive visits to the parent’s homes help sway their views that their children’s education will improve and change their hometown for the better. She adds that the Uighur students in Guangzhou has grown accustomed to the faster pace of life in the city compared to the slower pace of life and low efficiency of local governments back in Xinjiang. Arranging more students to study in major Chinese cities would be the solution, according to Ms. Yang.

Thus, from what we can observe, each group of Uighur respondents offer different solution based on their respective experience and priorities. The Uighur students advocating greater personal contact between Uighurs and Hans is not surprising, given the generally positive inter-ethnic relations they have at the school. However, the question remain whether they will continue to advocate this solution once they graduate and enter the workforce and encounter more varied and possibly hostile response from the general population of Hans. The Uighur diaspora however tend to emphasis political solutions, implying improved governance as the key area. They appear to be less interested in Chinese soft power per se but rather how Uighur rights can be better respected. As such, the solution to Chinese soft power appears to hold relatively less interest for them.

For the ethnic Hans who grew up in Xinjiang, they suggested areas such as equality in economic and social areas. They were not specific, possibly because they might not be so certain themselves regarding the solutions and also because they may be aware that their solutions were contradicting their discriminatory attitude. In short, these respondents fail to openly acknowledge their own discriminatory attitude towards Uighurs even if they recognized that the current treatment of Uighurs is problematic. This contradictory stance would imply that Chinese soft power will also have to change the attitude of Hans in Xinjiang.
towards Uighurs in addition to being directed at Uighurs. Ms. Yang seem to offer the most concrete example by offering her school program as one solution. She demonstrates the benefits of her student’s education to their parents in their homes. Furthermore, she suggests soft power does have an impact on the students by indicating a shift in the mentality of the Uighur students after moving to Guangzhou. However, the question again raises how long lasting this shift will be.

5.11 Historical Narrative

Collective memory and historical narrative are not often discussed as a soft power in the usual sense. However, collective memory and historical narrative, real or imagined, are important components in shaping national identity and nationalism. Particularly so if otherwise divided groups happen to share a similar sense of history, as is the case with Uighur and Han respondents. Therefore we need to also examine the role of historical narrative and how it shapes the respondent’s sense of identity and how they view the present ethnic issues. During the interview, a recurring theme occur for both Uighurs and Han respondents, despite their sharp divide on how they view Chinese soft power and their mutual perception, they both shared a nostalgia for a past where ethnic divisions were lessened and both Uighur and Hans pursued a shared goal. Namely, this was the Maoist era when ethnic issues were subsumed under ideological campaigns. Despite being arguably repressive against Uighur’s culture, the Uighur respondents were positive in their regard for the Maoist era, as there were no ethnic divide. The same applies to the Han respondents.

Mr. A, the Uighur respondent based in London, states that Mao’s days were preferable in that Mao, as he claimed, stopped “Great Hanism” or Chinese nationalism based on Han ethnicity. He claimed that prior to the 1980’s, there was
little to no Han migration into Xinjiang, in fact, according to him, there was less than 100,000 Hans in Xinjiang prior to 1949. Mr. A contrasted Maoist period with the present day, whereby, as he claims, Uighurs were generally not respected. Uighur language is not used in schools as all schools are taught in Mandarin and the Chinese government simply does not listen to public opinion. Mr. A claims that particularly after the “hard strike” campaigns in the 90’s, there was a change in opinion of the Hans and the Chinese government, whereby Han migrants attack and discriminate against Uighur culture, religion and education.

Ms. B gave a more nuanced response to the historical narrative, stating that while Mao did promise Uighurs genuine autonomy, he “went back on his word”. For her interpretation of history, she states that Mao will grant Uighurs real self-determination in return for them supporting the CCP to “kick-out” the KMT from Xinjiang. But Ms. B claimed that Mao “did not keep his promise”, as she alleges that Mao staged “the murder of 12 Xinjiang leaders in a plane crash”.

The government official, if he or she is a Uighur, is of little value to Ms. B because the one with real power, a CCP member, will always be a Han. For Ms. B, there was a brief “taste of freedom” for Uighurs but that changed in the 90’s. She states that there is no hope for Uighurs in China as there is entrenched discrimination against them. She claims that in the crackdowns following the 1997 Yili riots and the 2009 Urumqi riots, any Uighurs expressing disagreement with Hans were sent to prisons and sometimes over minor disputes with Hans.

Surprisingly, the Han respondent who also responded on historical questions agreed with Mr. A. Ms. Z, the security official, argued that Uighur-Han relations were stable during the Cultural Revolution period because everyone, regardless of

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11 Ms. B did not offer corroboration for her claim of Mao’s alleged murderous acts, but the point here is not whether Mao actually committed such acts, but Ms. B’s belief in him doing so and thereby shaping her opinion of Mao and his era in Xinjiang.
Uighur and Hans, were equal. Yet this changed in the 80’s, when according to her, the relaxed social controls allowed Uighur intellectuals to move towards independence or conduct what she claims as “anti-CCP” activities. She blamed Huo Yaobang who advocated “Uighurs should govern Uighurs”, unleashing Uighur nationalism. Concurrently, Ms. Z stated that during the 80’s many party cadres left Xinjiang due to the lack of promotion opportunities and this allow for the rise of Uighur nationalism being unchecked.

Unfortunately, the respondents did not elaborate in further detail what other aspect of this Maoist period they found to be worth sharing nostalgia for. This raises the question of why during the Maoist era both Uighurs and Hans enjoy relatively amicable mutual relations. In addition, it also raises the question why there were no similar ability by the Chinese state now to attract and gain the support of a substantial number of Uighurs for their allegiance. An educated guess can be attempted to ascertain the reasons behind this shared nostalgia. In particular, there may be three reasons as to why there is this shared sense of nostalgia. First, for the Uighurs, this may relate to the swing in state policy during the Maoist period. During the initial period of CCP rule in Xinjiang, from 1949 to 1956, the CCP was cautious in implementing its collectivist and other ideological campaigns in Xinjiang just like it had applied them on the rest of China (Rudelson, 1997). Religion and the role of Islam was not substantially curtailed as it later would (Ibid, 1997). Thus perhaps some Uighur respondents may have a sense of an “imagined past” whereby they feel their culture was better respected in an early period when Xinjiang was relatively lightly-touched by the collectivization

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12 Hu Yaobang was appalled by the poverty of Tibetans while on a trip to Tibet in 1980 (Bovingdon, 2004). Upon becoming the CCP General Secretary, he advocated for “genuine” autonomy, economic initiatives to suit local conditions, renewal of cultural and scientific projects and transferring ethnic Hans away from Tibet (Bovingdon, 2004). A similar policy was applied to Xinjiang over vocal opposition from hard-liners within the CCP. When Hu was purged in 1987, most of these policies were terminated or reversed in both Tibet and Xinjiang.
campaigns. Likewise, Han respondents, given their vague responses, either are ignorant or from personal perception may have little knowledge about this period in Xinjiang history and hence may believe it was relatively peaceful in terms of Uighur-Han relations.

Second, during this initial period, the CCP was careful in suppressing “Great Han Chauvinism” (Han discrimination towards ethnic minorities) by instructing CCP Han cadres to respect their minority counter-parts, respect local customs and beliefs and implement party policies according to local cultural and environmental conditions (McMillen, 1979, p.89). Likewise, the CCP were careful to prevent large scale Han migration into Xinjiang upsetting the demographic balance. With the exception of the Production and Construction Corps (PCC-composed of demobilized Han PLA troops and their families), the CCP tried to prevent large scale Han migration into Xinjiang. Granted, such cultural tolerance was very much circumscribed and the influential position of the Uighur Muslim clergy for example were gradually curtailed, their mosque land confiscated (Rudelson, 1997) and with their Islamic courts replaced by People’s Courts. Nevertheless, the focus of the CCP on creating a “united front” with Uighurs meant discrimination from Hans was relatively suppressed, insulating Uighurs from any assimilationist pressure that other minorities in China may have been subjected to, thereby again creating this nostalgia for this “imagined past”.

Third, is the shared sense of victimhood and equality for both Hans and Uighurs from Mao’s ideological campaigns, as alluded to earlier by some of the respondents. Starting from the Great Leap Forward and cumulating with the Cultural Revolution, the previous accommodationist policy towards Uighurs was reversed, with increasing emphasis on assimilationist pressure. Islam was attacked as a “backward custom” (Bovingdon, 2004) and hundreds of thousands of Hans
move to Xinjiang to avoid starvation (Ibid, 2004). This swing toward radical policies resulted in the suppression of what the CCP termed “local nationalism” (i.e. Uighurs advocating for greater autonomy or independence) (McMillen, 1979; p.92). As an example, during the anti-rightist crackdown in the aftermath of the Hundred Flowers Campaign, Salfudin, an ethnic Uighur and chairman of the Xinjiang Autonomous region, reiterated that secession or independence of Xinjiang was reactionary and that opposition to any Han migration into Xinjiang would be considered sabotage and enemies of the people (McMillen, 1979; p.93).

During the Cultural Revolution, McMillen (1979) states that the Red Guards were more concerned with the attitude of Wang Enmao (the party official in charge of Xinjiang) and his colleagues towards the conduct of nationalist policies rather than with the minorities themselves. Nevertheless, “excesses” occur when radical policies on the Cultural Revolution were implemented in Xinjiang13 (McMillen, 1979; p.268). Minority cadres, intellectuals and cultural representatives were gathered in 1970 for intense mass criticism and indoctrination sessions (Ibid, p.268). Uighur intellectuals, like their Han counter-parts, were persecuted, one notable example being Ibrahim Muttai, a Uighur linguist scholar responsible for creating a multi-lingual Uighur-Chinese dictionary was tortured (Bovingdon, 2004). Red Guards also intimidated ordinary Uighurs to give up their traditional dress and culture to adopt Mao suits (Ibid, 2004). This shared sense of being victims of Mao’s ideological campaigns, can be what united Uighur and Hans. But it is not nostalgia. Rather, this shared nostalgia

13 According to McMillen (1979), during the initial onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 in Xinjiang, Wang Enmao was successful in containing the more radical elements of the revolution from impacting Xinjiang. However, with arrival of Red Guards in September 1966, there began a struggle for control between Wang’s faction and the radical Red Guards. Wang subsequently lost this battle and was purged in 1968 (Ibid, p.249). His successor, Long Shujin, implemented policies more in line with the radicals. Eventually, after the end of the Cultural Revolution and the arrest of the Gang of Four, Wang was rehabilitated and restored to his former position in 1985 by Deng Xiaoping.
maybe the sense that during these Maoist campaigns, Uighur identity and ethnicity was not the source of tension as it is today, when they were in a sense equal under this communist ideology.

It is therefore possible that the ideological campaigns during the Mao era united both Uighur and Hans in a common goal (in this case most likely the various class struggles) that either downplay or render their ethnic identity as irrelevant. This is not surprising as society was re-oriented along class lines instead of ethnic lines. But based on the interview findings we have seen in this study, it also became apparent that once this Maoist control was ended, this unity ended. Into this vacuum it seems there appears to be the awakening of ethnic identities. However, it does not seem to be simply a matter of one thing replacing the other or one thing causing the other. Absence of a unifying identity does not automatically translate into a strong and separate ethnic identity and lack of allegiance of belonging to the state. In this case, it may be more likely that the underlying soft power never existed to shape and retain the loyalty of ethnic minorities, in this case, that of the Uighurs.

In summary, while there is a sharp divide between some Uighur and Han respondents over many soft power issues, they do come to a surprising agreement in a shared nostalgia for a Maoist past where ideology trump against ethnic issues for Mr. A and Ms. Z. Ms. B by contrast is more hesitant about Mao, stating he did not keep his word to provide self-determination for Uighurs. One can argue that Mao’s promise was unrealistic to begin with, but the issue is even Ms. B had acknowledged that Mao had promised Uighurs self-determination. Therefore, there appears to be a perception that the Maoist era was “better” for both Uighurs and Hans. The divergence in perception since then (Ms. Z’s lack of sufficient government oversight vs Mr. B’s repressive policies against Uighurs) seem to
imply a continuous downward spiral of Uighur-Han mutual perception. Combined with the other soft power factors discussed, there does not appear to be an “uptick” or improvement in relations since the end of the Maoist era in 1976.

Thus if the nostalgia shared by Uighur and Han respondents were to indicate a shared purpose during the Maoist era, it also possibly indicate a dearth of soft power values offered by the Chinese state. It should also be noted that despite this shared nostalgia, the Maoist era was also arguably a period of repressive policies and purges against various groups. It is possible that rather than the Maoist period offering a “soft power” of its own to unite Uighurs and Hans, it was merely an ideological period that overwhelmed all other identity aspects of Uighurs and Hans, such that it render them unimportant. One can argue that there never was real “soft power” that Uighurs and other ethnic minorities found appealing to sway their identity and sense of belonging during the Maoist period. Nor did the Chinese state really tried at the time. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that once Maoist controls and class struggles ended, there was little for Uighurs to find they can identify with in the post-Maoist China.

The question remained however, if Uighurs do not find existing Chinese soft power attempts effective in causing them to identify with the Chinese state, what other possibilities exist for Chinese soft power, in whatever forms, to mold Uighurs to identify with the Chinese state.

5.12 Conclusion

Overall, the findings from the interviews reveal several trends regarding Chinese soft power.

First, the reception of Chinese soft power is not uniform but varies and diverges based on the respective respondent’s ethnicity, education and occupation.
For instance, when discussing culture, the respondents from the Uighur diaspora saw Han Chinese culture as holding little appeal for them while Dongguan student respondents have a much more positive experience with Han Chinese culture. This can possibly be traced to their personal experience and treatment. The Uighur diaspora has linked their evaluation of Han Chinese culture with the discriminatory treatment they received while Dongguan students emphasized their positive interaction with Han students help shaped a more positive view of Han Chinese culture.

Likewise, while the Uighur diaspora respondents were reluctant to discuss religion and tend to downplay its significance to their identity, it is also conceivable that other Uighurs in other social strata could have a stronger inclinations regarding religion as part of their identity. As an example, the Uighur students have implied their displeasure in not being able to attend mosques at Dongguan, reflecting a divide with their Uighur diaspora counter-parts.

Moreover, the difference in background of Uighurs determining their perception extends also to how they shape their sense of belonging. The Uighur students did not see their sense of belonging in a conflictual relationship, as in choosing between their own ethnicity and that of a Chinese national. The two relationship coexist peacefully for them. And for the Uighur diaspora, there is no sense of belonging to the Chinese state, reflecting their more varied experiences in interacting with the Chinese state as well as ethnic Hans.

In sum, this indicates that any Chinese soft power factor, to be effective, has to account for the variation in the background of its intended audience and how that in turn will impact on how it will be perceived. Even for the relatively small Uighur sample of this study, there were already diverse responses. Thus far, there appears to be no attempt by the Chinese state to shape a form of Chinese soft
power that would be accepted by a broader and diverse group of Uighurs.

Second, the Han respondents as well as the Chinese state, while acknowledging problems with its own governance, does not or could not recognize their own contradictory perceptions and actions towards the Uighurs. While ethnic Hans and the Chinese state officials are not necessarily one and the same, in these findings, they do share two common trends, admitting problems in governance and treatment towards Uighurs yet failing to grasp their own discriminatory attitudes or counter-productive policies towards the Uighurs.

To illustrate an example, the study can turn to Uighur-Han relations. All Han respondents in this study hold clearly prejudicial and discriminatory views toward Uighurs. Not only have they indicate a lack of regular contact with Uighurs (despite growing up in Xinjiang) but also displayed a lack of desire to know Uighurs on a personal level. Furthermore, the Han respondents indicated that mutual perception has worsened (and continue to be worsened) since the 2009 riots.

Moreover, the Han respondents are not ignorant to the discrimination faced by the Uighurs. For instance, while they claim Uighurs enjoy advantages over Hans thanks to affirmative action on the part of the state, they also think it is ineffective in helping Uighurs to achieve greater equality in social and economic spheres. Likewise, Ms. Z, the security official, also faults governance for endemic corruption at the local government level.

Yet the Han respondents do not appear to accept Uighur’s concerns. They view Uighur as easy to “incite” and prone to violence. Their belief that Uighurs enjoy unfair advantages is not corroborated with evidence yet they are unwilling to question such views. There is a lack of ownership and responsibility by Han respondents of their own role in the discriminatory treatment of Uighurs. They see
themselves in a passive bystander role between the government and Uighurs. Nor do they recognize their own “noble savage” views of Uighurs as prejudicial. As such, the psychological and spatial segregation between these two groups are strong.

Furthermore, while professing concerns, Ms. Z, as a government representative of the Chinese state, often indicate a contradictory attitude against Uighurs that is counter-productive towards establishment of effective soft power. As an example, Ms. Z repeatedly alluded to a “divide-and-rule” strategy to control Uighurs within Xinjiang. She has stated Kazakhs within Xinjiang also share a “dislike” of Uighurs. Whether such a broad statement can be corroborated is highly questionable, but what matters here is that this was reflected on the securitized agenda of the Chinese state to maintain control of the ethnic minorities within Xinjiang.

However, the state’s securitization agenda to control Uighurs may also conflict with Chinese soft power attempt to “entice” Uighurs to identify with the Chinese state. The emphasis on security control may have an alienating impact on Uighur’s perception to the Chinese state. As indicated by the Uighur respondent’s unhappiness at fear of being under surveillance, these measures do have an impact on their perception of the Chinese state, potentially negatively impacting any soft power directed at them. In order for Chinese soft power to function effectively, it is therefore likely that the Chinese state must prioritize and coordinate their various initiatives directed at Uighurs. Does the government want to emphasis “hard” or “soft” power? Clearly, the present mix of “hard” and “soft” power is ineffective in swaying Uighurs identity.

Third, the most effective soft power at present for China seems to be education. While there were diverse responses between Uighur diaspora and
Uighur student respondents over their perceptions regarding many different soft power factors, many of those differences can be traced to their different personal experiences. In particular, the Uighur students appear to have a much more positive interaction with Han students and teachers at their school and that invariably affects their perception of Chinese soft power overall.

Likewise, while both Uighur and Han respondents generally agree that governance ability was lacking and affirmative action in particular was unsatisfactory, they do agree that education may appear to be the most effective measure to win over Uighur's allegiance, or at the very least, placate their demands.

Indeed, Ms. Yang the school teacher has offered the most concrete example of her school’s soft power initiative. She outreach ed to not only her Uighur students but also to the families when she traveled to the Uighur students’ homes and explained her school programme to the student’s parents. The fact that these relatively poor families could have this experience was thanks to the state’s provision for their children’s school fees and transportation cost, which may induce a positive image of the Chinese government. Furthermore, the possibility that their children could enjoy brighter future prospects after graduation (as indicated by Ms. Yang in her examples of successful graduates) will no doubt also have exerted a positive impact. Granted, the inducement of positive social and economic benefits through education, as stated by Ms. Yang, may not necessarily be classified as “soft power” as such. Nevertheless, it also possible that through inoculating these students with the values of Han Chinese culture and other attributes of Chinese soft power, these students have developed a different identity and sense of belonging. This can already be seen, to an extent, given the Uighur students’ stronger identification and sense of belonging with the Chinese state
compared with the Uighur diaspora respondents.

Of course, there may be an issue of sample bias here, and it is quite possible there are other effective soft power measures that have not been covered. However, given the fact that other respondents have not mention an equally concrete example of effective Chinese soft power, it can be concluded that education, as demonstrated by Ms. Yang’s case, is at least one relatively more effective measure to mold Uighur respondents to identify with the Chinese state.

Fourth, the shared nostalgia among some Uighur and Han respondents point to the possibility that a shared goal between Uighur and Hans is possible to overcome ethnic divide and the lack of allegiance among Uighurs, but it should be one that is entirely of a different nature to the Maoist ideological campaigns.

While neither the Uighurs nor Han respondents point to a specific event during the Maoist era, they were clear that Maoist era were preferable to now in terms of relatively improved ethnic relations between the two ethnic groups as well as the lack of upheaval between Uighurs and the government. Even Ms. B, who was more ambivalent regarding her evaluation of Mao’s period, did acknowledge Mao promised Uighurs self-determination, something that clearly is not acceptable to the current Chinese state.

There is little doubt that returning to an era of Maoist ideological campaigns (with China’s societies re-orientated along class lines) is most unlikely for the foreseeable future in China. Nevertheless, the concept that a shared “supra” goal that transcend ethnic (or culture and religious) divide is one that has saliency if a modern replacement can be found for the Maoist campaigns that can achieve the same goal of uniting all ethnic groups in Xinjiang with a common identity and sense of belonging.

The problem is that, unlike the Maoist campaigns, this new shared goal
would have to be more of an enduring character and not of a mere transient nature. For the Maoist era, once it ended and was replaced by economic reforms, and on opening up, that previous perception of bond that united both Uighurs and Hans ceased and any common identity and sense of belonging faded. To be therefore successful, this new shared goal would likely have to be able to weather changes in government policies and be less sensitive to short-term changes.

Moreover, there is the issue of whether such a goal is feasible. And even if it is, how that can be achieved. Gone is the time when Chinese authorities simply can shape a goal and identity that would be automatically adopted by all groups within China without question. The reality today is that, depending on the type of goal, it will have to compete against a multitude of competing objectives and identities that may appear more appealing to the target audience in question.

Finally, from the interviews we can glimpse a decidedly mixed picture of the effectiveness of current Chinese soft power. For a specific and targeted audience in the form of the Uighur students, Chinese soft power does appear effective to the extent that it appears that they value the various Chinese soft power attributes higher than the Uighur diaspora respondents. The Uighur diaspora respondents appears to value Chinese soft power much less, if at all. From the interviews, they place much greater weight on governance and political issues than Chinese soft power. In other words, Chinese soft power’s efficacy as it exists now is extremely low to non-existent to Uighur diaspora respondents.

For the Uighur students, the interviews have shown that they are in, general, much more receptive to various elements of Chinese soft power. For instance, they displayed more positive response to Han Chinese culture compared to the Uighur diaspora respondents, who states that they have “nothing in common” with the Hans. Likewise, when Uighur diaspora respondents were asked on the
solutions to the current dearth of Chinese soft power, they offered primarily political and governance issues, indicating they do place Chinese soft power as an important consideration to sway their identity and sense of belonging. It also indicates that the effectiveness of Chinese soft power depends in part on the resolution (or more realistically, progress) on other Uighur issues mentioned in the interviews (i.e. discrimination and poor mutual Uighur-Han perceptions).

Our study focuses on the efficacy of Chinese soft power on Uighur’s identity and sense of belonging, but from the interviews, it becomes clear that if the various issues mentioned in the interviews did not experienced some degree of progress or resolution, it may be seen as a “drag” on any effective Chinese soft power measure. Eventually, it may matter little if a truly effective Chinese soft power does exist. If other problems (i.e. discrimination) persists, then Chinese soft power alone may never truly be able to function at an optimal level because this whole variety of other issues, even if they are unrelated to Chinese soft power per se, will have a detrimental impact on the ability of Chinese soft power to sway Uighur’s identity and belonging. How these other issues can be tackled or resolved is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that for Chinese soft power be allowed to function as intended, it must function in an environment that is relatively unimpeded by other Uighur issues.

The divergence in Uighur diaspora and student response to Chinese soft power also raises another question. How strong do the Uighur students in fact hold on to their views? As indicated earlier, they generally seem more likely to be swayed by Chinese more soft power than the other respondent groups. But how consistent are these positive attitudes? Are they providing them genuinely or because they believe these were the “correct” answers? The interviews have shown that while Uighur students are more receptive to Chinese soft power, they

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also share with the Uighur diaspora concerns about other issues such as discrimination. Therefore, to test the internal consistency of the Uighur students’ response between the survey and interview and draw out the key findings of this study, we will now turn to an analysis of the Uighur student’s response between the survey and interview.

By analyzing the survey and interview findings, four key findings can be drawn from the study. First, education is effective as a soft power within the confines of the school environment as experienced by the Uighur students in Guangdong. Second, addressing the weaknesses of existing Han Culture as a Chinese soft power requires the Chinese state to adopt a multi-ethnic culture approach. Third, a multi-ethnic culture approach will in turn necessitate the PRC citizenship to incorporate aspects of civic or liberal nationalism. Fourth, a shared goal approach will overcome the remaining issues and difficulties raised in the survey and interview. To understand and interpret the above key findings, this chapter will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of each of these four findings. We will begin by examining why education is an effective soft power by comparing the survey and interview data.

6.1 Comparison Between the Survey and Interview: Education as the Key

By comparing the interview responses to the survey responses, the study can inspect the validity of the survey findings. This comparison between the survey and the interview findings does not seek to ascertain whether the Uighur hold the same ranking in the interview regarding the four survey dimensions of the survey. Rather, the comparison’s aim is to ascertain and detect any discrepancies, contradictions or corroboration with the survey. Moreover, it can assist the study in ascertaining the reasons and thinking behind how the students reach those findings. As such, the comparison will illuminate a clearer and more compelling picture of the findings of this study.
Overall, regarding the Uighur students, there are no major discrepancies and contradictions between the interview findings and the survey findings. There are no major areas of contradiction. Findings from the interview have, in most areas, corroborated the survey findings. The comparison also revealed that their education and personal experiences are the main factors influencing how they come to form their perceptions, and hence the findings. In particular, it offer some clues as to how specifically their education and personal experience shape and impact their perceptions regarding the various elements of Chinese soft power. That may in turn, provide us with a better understanding of how Chinese soft power function as a process. To explore this point further, the study will now turn to focus on each Chinese soft power factor and how it compares between the survey and the interview.

To begin with, let us recall that the Uighurs’ finding in the survey has the following pattern. Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were ranked as the second last and last position for the following dimensions of Appeal, Importance and Identity. For Appeal, Sense of belonging was ranked first, followed by Chinese Values, Ethnic Minority Policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Importance, Sense of Belonging again came first, followed by Ethnic Minority Policies, Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. Turning to Identity, interesting enough, Chinese values were ranked first, followed by Sense of Belonging, Ethnic Minority Policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For Requiring Change, Ethnic Minority Policies were ranked first, followed by Han Chinese culture and lastly Sense of Belonging:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th><strong>Appeal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Importance</strong></th>
<th><strong>Identity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Requiring Change</strong></th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<td>Least important:1</td>
<td>Least closely:1</td>
<td>Least requiring:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.54</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.67</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.58</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 2.65</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.61</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 3.56</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.40</td>
<td>Chinese values 3.57</td>
<td>Ethnic minority policies 3.50</td>
<td>Sense of belonging 2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.23</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.43</td>
<td>Han Chinese culture 3.45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.74</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.53</td>
<td>Foreign culture 2.90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now turning to comparison, if we examine where Sense of Belonging rank in the survey, it ranks firsts in both Appeal and Importance for the Uighur students. Examining the corresponding interview responses, the study does not detect any meaningful contradictions and discrepancies. What the comparison did reveal was what the Uighur respondents meant by placing sense of belonging in first place in the survey. As indicated earlier, the Uighur students did felt at ease with a strong sense of belonging as Uighurs to Xinjiang and as we to China as Chinese citizens. They were comfortable holding both identities as ethnic Uighurs as well as Chinese citizens. The fact that the survey ranks this sense of belonging as the most appealing and of greatest importance indicates that this dual sense of belonging was considered of importance to the respondents.

More importantly, the top ranking of Sense of Belonging and the importance
the respondents placed in upholding this dual Sense of Belonging also implied that Chinese soft power was successful in shaping the Uighur respondents’ identity to the extent that they see themselves as both Uighurs with strong attachment to Xinjiang as well as Chinese citizens of the PRC. Their environment within the school, likely carefully nurtured and developed by teachers such as Ms. Yang, in all likelihood played the key role in allowing these Uighur respondents to see having two identities as natural. As such (and in the absence of other factors offered by the respondents), it can be inferred that Chinese soft power, in the form of education, played the deciding role in inducing the respondents to place their Sense of Belonging as the most appealing as well as the most important and allow them to be comfortable in having a dual identity as being an ethnic Uighur and Chinese citizen.

The ease with their dual identity can again be seen when the Uighur respondents place Chinese values as one they are most closely identified with. Their familiarity with the Chinese values through interaction with Han students and teachers could have led to their positive appraisal of Chinese values. Indeed, this may confirm Ms. Yang’s testimony. Her outreach not only to her Uighur students but also to the families when she traveled to the Uighur students homes and explained her school programme to the student’s parents may possibly inoculate these students with the values of Han Chinese culture and other attributes of Chinese soft power. In other words, the close identification with Chinese values may be due to the examples and behaviour of the respondents’ teachers and Han students, as observed by Uighurs.

Second, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture were ranked consistently the second lowest and the lowest in terms of appeal, importance and identification. This indicates they value culture as relatively unimportant as a soft power factor.
However, the question remains as to how they view the cultural aspect and why they ranked it at the bottom as a soft power factor. The comparison illustrates that the low ranking of culture stems from education on the part of Foreign culture and dissatisfaction with the cultural status quo, rather than an intrinsic dislike of Han Chinese culture. In addition, relatively more positive view was held towards Turkey as a foreign soft power, illustrating the role of ethnic ties in how Uighurs perceive Foreign culture.

As an example, for Foreign culture, several Uighur students stated in the interviews that foreign countries, specifically Japan and South Korea, to be “born enemies”. The cause for their negative outlook can be attributed to their education. Dongguan students in particular states that they were “taught” to hate Japan, thus again pointing to evidence that the education curriculum plays an important factor in the low ranking of Foreign culture.

Conversely, perceived ethnic familiarity and affinity to a large extent determines the Uighur’s view towards Turkey. The Guangzhou school student states they enjoy watching Turkish TV programmes which they can understand and relate to. They claim it was always Turkey which these students most like, as they found “Muslims in Turkey most open and relatable to them”.

Turning to Han Chinese culture, it can be seen that the Uighur respondents see Han Chinese culture in a positive fashion. They found Dongguan the city and its inhabitants “friendly and welcoming and more modern and developed than Xinjiang”. The Uighur’s low positioning of Han Chinese culture as a soft power factor is not due to their dislike, real or perceived, of Han Chinese culture. Rather, it appears that Han Chinese culture, as a soft power value do not hold appeal for Uighur even if they are personally fond of it. This raises the question as to why, if they do not harbour a loathing of Han Chinese culture, why then do Uighur
student respondents rank Han Chinese culture as the second lowest before Foreign culture?

The low ranking of Han Chinese culture may be traced to some of the respondents’ discontent at the status quo. Their positive experience with Han Chinese culture notwithstanding, Uighur student respondents in the interview state there is a lack of mutual understanding of the different ethnic group culture. In addition, respondents indicate that they prefer “less emphasis of Han culture” in their schooling and more focus on minority cultures. This reflects two points. One, dissatisfaction is due to a perception among the respondents that their own Uighur culture is not adequately respected by Hans, and two, they still place strong attachment to their own culture. Hence, if culture is to play a stronger role as a Chinese soft power, it must be able to address these issues. Current Han Chinese culture must not only reflect the values and practices of the dominant ethnic group (the Han), but also incorporate the culture of ethnic minorities such as the Uighurs. Ethnic minorities should be given a voice to shape and participate in the culture and not be a mere passive recipient.

Third, in the survey, the Uighur students list ethnic policies as the soft power in most need of requiring change, reflecting the respondents’ dissatisfaction with the present state of ethnic policies. It must be established as to which particular area of ethnic policies do the respondents feel most dissatisfied with. From the interview, their dissatisfaction may relate to their personal experiences, specifically encounters with discrimination to themselves as well as their religious practice.

For instance, the male Uighur student respondent expresses anger that during the Beijing Olympics, he was not allowed to stay at any hotel, despite being a Chinese citizen. He does not comprehend why, as a Chinese citizen, he was not
allowed to stay at any hotel during the Beijing Olympics, and concluded that the hotel declined his stay because of his ethnicity. While this particular hotel’s refusal incident may not necessarily reflect official government policy, it is also true that the government did not put in measures to prevent such incidents from occurring. Likewise, another Uighur student expresses her incomprehension as to why she was not allowed to attend mosques as she would have done at home in Xinjiang. This ban on religious practice may not specifically be aimed at Uighurs as it also applies to Hans. However, the fact that the Uighur respondents mentioned this indicates that religion to them may hold a more important place among some Uighur respondents, and not being allowed to practice their beliefs may cause a degree of displeasure at such restrictive measures.

Thus discriminatory treatment experienced by Uighur student respondents can potentially account for at least one cause for the Uighur respondents to believe ethnic policies require change. It also reflects the substantial gulf that needs to be bridged for the government, in terms of ethnic minority policies in order for it to become a more effective soft power factor. It is quite possible that the discriminatory treatment meted out to the Uighur respondents in the Beijing incident is merely the “tip of the iceberg”. Beyond the confines of the school environment, it is likely that Uighur student respondents will face greater incidents of discrimination, and with the survey and interview findings, reflect a pressing need for the government to address this area, if ethnic minority policies is to be effective as a soft power factor.

In summary, there are no meaningful contradictions, discrepancies between the survey and interview. What the comparison did reveal was the possible rationales and causes that led to the respondents to rank the soft power factors as it was in the survey. In particular, it revealed the relative success of education as a
soft power factor in shaping the respondent’s identity as both ethnic Uighur and Chinese citizens. In addition, the low ranking of Han Chinese culture in turn was not due to an inherent dislike of the culture by Uighurs, but how current Han Chinese culture is presented to them, implying culture as a soft power would need to be rethink, particularly regarding making Han Chinese culture more independent of the values of the Han ethnic group. Lastly, the extent of Chinese soft power beyond the school in this study is questionable as respondents’ encounters with discrimination has arguably led the respondents to rate the government ethnic minority policies as the one requiring most change.

The extent of education as a soft power can be seen by the dichotomy between the Uighur diaspora respondents and the Uighur student respondents. The comparison between the survey and interview reaffirm the divide separating Uighur student respondents and Uighur diaspora respondents. Uighur diaspora respondents did not share the dual identity of Uighurs and Chinese citizen (or at the very least nowhere near as comfortable). Recalled for instance, Mr. C the graduate student, who states that he felt “forced” to admit it is his government, yet does not feel much sense of attachment to it. Mr. C states the central government see you as “someone else”. He did not share any sense of patriotism towards China nor Chinese achievements in sport events such as the Olympics. Mr. C stated he “did not feel proud at China winning gold medals at the Olympics”. Furthermore, Mr. C felt the PRC flag was not “his” flag and he simply didn’t identify with it.

The dichotomy in sense of belonging no doubt reflects the different backgrounds and personal experiences between the Uighur diaspora respondents from the Uighur students. The diaspora respondents obviously did not have the benefit of attending the Guangzhou and Dongguan schools. More significantly, it
highlights again the importance of the education environment as a soft power factor in shaping the sense of belonging. The key point to note here is that this potential is conditional upon the Chinese government being able to create a more coordinated soft power strategy. Because education also illustrates the potential limit of this current form of soft power, education is effective as a soft power so long as it has control to influence the students. Once these students have graduated and entered the workforce and be exposed to the greater Chinese society, will their dual sense of belonging be sustainable?

The above question is particularly pertinent as to the sustainability of this education as soft power in the long-term. Particularly given the contradictory government response of control (as typified by the security official, Ms. Z, who appeared to alienate Uighur respondents) and also simultaneously attempting to sway their identity and sense of belonging through measures such as education. How should the government balance these two approaches of prioritize control vs. soft power? The current approach clearly is problematic given that Uighur students’ view that government ethnic minority policies was the one item which they felt require the most change. Thus soft power is curtailed by uncoordinated and contradictory government responses. On the one hand the government encourages greater sense of belonging through reaching out to Uighurs, while on the other hand, it eliminates any such appeal by its securitized governance.

Furthermore, education as a soft power, while effective in swaying Uighur student’s identity and sense of belonging, has failed to address the Uighur-Han divide in mutual perception. As can be seen in the interview findings, a substantial gulf exist between Uighur and Han respondents over a range of soft power issues, ranging from governance issues such as affirmative action to prejudiced perception of each other’s ethnic group. Likewise, there is the issue regarding the
low appeal of Han Chinese Culture which education has not been able to address. Evidently, education as a soft power in its current form is insufficient to address this ethnic gap and low cultural appeal.

Therefore, the study will now turn to analyzing the findings to explore whether an approach is possible for the government to offer a form of soft power that can overcome the lack of appeal regarding Han Chinese culture, government contradictions as well as the Uighur-Han divide.

6.2 Multi-ethnic Culture and Civic Nationalism: the Meaning of Being a PRC Citizen

Thus far, the study has shown that Uighur respondents have three different reaction towards Han Chinese culture. First, they do not have any innate hostility or dislike towards Han Chinese culture and yet they do not find it appealing as a soft power factor. Second, some Uighur respondents argue that that they do not find Han Chinese culture appealing because they find no areas of commonality with it. Third, whatever appeal Han Chinese culture has as a soft power is overshadowed by other issues such as discrimination and securitization by the state.

One solution, as mention earlier, would be to separate Chinese culture from its ethnic roots of reflecting predominantly Han values and customs so as to foster a Chinese culture more independent from any specific ethnicity. The question now is as to what this will involve. As we shall see, this is not only relevant to making Chinese soft power more appealing (and hence more effective) but also pertains to what it means to be a PRC citizen, and the values this entails. In short, the study argues that soft power appeal to Uighurs will be best enhanced in the form of a multi-ethnic culture that embraces liberal civic values and a cultural mosaic.
approach. To understand what this multi-ethnic culture means, the study will now turn to examine the constituent parts of what this culture should (and should not) be.

First, we have to examine what constitutes Chinese culture. At present, it reflects predominantly Han values and customs and philosophies (i.e. Confucianism). Chinese culture is rooted in that particular ethnic group’s ethos with little room for other ethnic group participation or contribution. Indeed, the interview findings have shown that Uighur respondents felt a distinct lack of respect for their own culture by Hans. Therefore, there is a need for greater cross-cultural communication between ethnic groups. In particular, Chinese culture must find room to incorporate culture from Non-Han ethnic groups as part of what constitute a multi-ethnic “national” Chinese culture. But to be effective, it cannot be mere random incorporation of other ethnic group culture. Rather, it must be the aspects of those ethnic group culture which those ethnic groups most closely identified with that requires incorporation. The study has shown that Uighur respondents identified closely with Turkey over perceived blood ties and cultural affinity. Thus apart from perceived ethnic kinship, this affinity also refers to how Uighurs can more easily relate to Turks through cultural similarity. Accordingly, if you can bring aspects of Uighur culture which they most closely identified with into a “national” Chinese culture, it is possible they will also start to identify more closely with the Chinese culture. As such, it is foreseeable in the future when we discuss Chinese culture, the narrative or discourse will not be solely involved with Han Chinese culture but also Uighur Chinese culture in a “national” multi-ethnic Chinese culture.

How does one know which element of the Uighur culture they are most closely identified with? This goes back to the cross-cultural communication
between ethnic groups. In an authoritarian state such as China, the organization with the best ability to foster such communication is the apparatus of the state. The government must devise means to better listen to concerns of Uighurs and accommodate their culture better than what we have now. Ms. Yang, the teacher from the interview, has demonstrated this outreach is possible with her visit to the Uighur student homes. However, this current approach is an imperfect method at best. From the interview, it is clear that Ms. Yang harbors her own bigotries regarding the Uighurs. Likewise, the interview findings have shown Han and government respondents failing to acknowledge their own role in contributing to the Uighur-Han divide due to their own discrimination. Therefore, to have genuine cross-cultural communication, there has to be more open-minded contact between Uighur and Hans without prejudgements. The government must reassess its approach towards Uighurs in all policy areas starting by re-examining its own attitude, belief and prejudices for all institutions tasked with Uighur affairs. A systematic approach to re-assess each and every policy and programme related to Uighur affairs should be implemented to eradicate prejudices.

Granted, this will not be easy or quick to accomplish, as those responsible for such re-assessments will likely be Hans and may very well harbour prejudices of their own. Nor is the Chinese state known to be willing to make substantial and public adjustment to its ethnic policies. Likewise, different Uighur groups will have different priorities and interests, so there may not be a single cultural aspect that Uighurs find important, but several. However, given the reality of the authoritarian nature of the Chinese state, it will in all likelihood be intolerant of any third party review in sensitive areas such as its ethnic policies. A self-re-examination by the state itself to remove prejudices seems to be the only plausible method, however imperfect this may be. The only remaining question is
whether the political capital exist within the Chinese state for such a measure to be under-taken.

At the same time, if a multi-ethnic culture is to be successful, another aspect of Uighur-Han discrimination must be addressed, the identity and status of Uighur themselves. In particular, ethnic distinction should be removed, because Uighur differentiation by the state is detrimental to Uighurs wanting to identify themselves as Chinese citizens. What does this lack of ethnic distinction refer to? The interview findings have shown many Han respondents are not even sure whether to consider Uighurs as “Chinese”. Likewise, ethnic distinctions serves as a basis for discrimination, as demonstrated by the Uighur student example of being turned away from Beijing hotels during the 2008 Olympics for being a Uighur. Clearly, Uighurs are identified and labelled, even if it is not officially endorsed, then unofficially as a form of second-class citizens, because they are not able to enjoy the same rights and benefits of Han Chinese due to discrimination. Questions by some Han respondents on whether they are even Chinese citizens is clear example. After all, if even the Chinese state do not consider Uighur to be Chinese citizens enjoying the full rights of Han Chinese citizens, then why would Uighurs consider themselves to be Chinese citizens?

For example, the “ethnicity” criteria in the PRC Resident Identity Card should be removed. The holder’s relevant information should only be sufficient to demonstrate his or her legal status as a PRC citizen. Labelling the ethnicity only serves to highlight his or her ethnic status and leave the holder vulnerable to discrimination and differential treatment.

True, the ethnicity label may serve a useful function in terms of identifying ethnic groups as recipients for affirmative action. But there are potentially less intrusive ways to identify Uighurs for such purposes. Uighurs could for example
register their ethnicities on a government list that is not open to public and used only for the purposes of identifying ethnic groups eligible for affirmative action. Likewise, one could argue that even with the ethnicity label removed, the photo and name on the identity card will give away the ethnicity of the holder. Even so, removal of the ethnicity label could at the very least signal the government’s intent to demonstrate all ethnic groups are equal citizens in the PRC.

A question can be raised whether removal of ethnic distinctions contradict the goal of incorporating Uighur culture a part of a greater Chinese national culture. If you do not identify PRC citizens with ethnic labels, how do you respect their ethnic group’s culture? This can be addressed by the fact that the study is only arguing for ethnic distinction to be removed in areas that may potentially lead them to face discrimination. The study is not arguing that their freedom to identify as Uighur themselves be infringed, nor should their culture be somehow removed or ignored in public. Rather, the point is that their ethnic identity should not be used in such a manner as to “single them out” for potential maltreatment. This refers to the discrimination that Uighurs would most likely face on a daily basis by virtue of the fact that they are Uighurs. All facets of routine social interaction where their identity will come into play with Hans, whether being denied a hotel stay during the Olympics or denied a job because of his ethnicity. Simply put, it is the discrimination they faced on a daily basis in social, economic or personal spheres as a result of their visible minority identity.

Removing the PRC citizen identity based on ethnicity will also aid in the development of a more civic-based conception of being a PRC citizen since multi-ethnic Chinese culture will also impinge on the issue of national identity. Specifically, this refers to what it means fundamentally to be a citizen of the PRC. If a Chinese culture is no longer defined in ethnocentric terms exclusively around
the Han ethnicity, then what does being a citizen of the PRC mean? This is fundamental to Chinese soft power’s appeal. A Uighur, or any other ethnic group within China wanting to identify with the culture and values of the PRC citizen is the ultimate aim of Chinese soft power. To do so we must know what being a PRC citizen entails and the best solution, from a soft power perspective, is to incorporate civic nationalism.

A multi-ethnic culture is often found in Western democracies, in particular, Anglo-Saxon countries which holds individualistic and civic nationalism, typified by having a social compact of free and equal individuals enjoying the fundamental tenets of liberal democracy. This is considered the essential characteristic of a Western society (Greenfeld, 1992). As such, a citizen of a civic nationalistic state is not defined by his (or her) ethnicity or where he was born, but whether he subscribe to the egalitarian value and beliefs of that society. Indeed, Tamir (1993) has shown that liberal values such as equality and individual rights can coexist and be considered a form of nationalism, or “liberal nationalism” as Tamir terms it (Tamir, 1993).

Our focus here is different in that we are not concerned so much as to whether liberalism and nationalism can coexist, but whether its “civic” component can be a soft power to appeal to Uighurs. China clearly is not a Western democracy, but the virtues of applying certain aspects of civic nationalism is instructive here, because by incorporating certain elements of civic-based value system, it can make PRC citizen more appealing from a soft power perspective.

For instance, if being PRC citizen emphasized liberal values such as equality and individual rights then naturally being an ethnic minority would be less of a hindrance. An ethnic minority would not be at a disadvantage by virtue of him being an ethnic minority or not belonging to the majority ethnic group.
Furthermore, states that subscribe to civic nationalism, at least in theory, stressed the voluntary nature of membership. A member voluntarily chooses to join a civic-based nation-state, not because he happens to be born into one. Hence it must demonstrate its soft power to appeal to potential members. The very sustainability of a civic-based nation-state depends on its success in appealing to potential members, through soft power, of the virtues of joining it. In other words, there would be every incentive for a nation-state with civic values to focus, improve and ensure that its soft power can appeal. Therefore, in our case, if the Chinese state were to stress and emphasize the civic aspects of its citizenship, it is plausible that there may be greater success in convincing Uighurs because its soft power appeal will likely be greater and the state will have a stronger incentive to ensure its success.

There are of course complications with the above scenario. The distinction between ethnic-based and civic-based nationalism is not always as clear-cut (Brubaker, 1999) as above. Likewise, there are questions as to whether civic nationalism is as voluntary as it claims (Bakke, 2000). Nevertheless, a PRC identity based on soft power incorporating civic-nationalism elements is potentially more effective than existing Han Chinese culture soft power. Civic based nationalism can offer Uighurs the equality and respect for their individual rights to a potentially greater extent than the existing soft power measures by addressing Uighur’s concerns over discrimination and inequality.

In addition, civic nationalism holds the possibility of recognition and righting previous wrongs done to persecuted groups, thereby bridging or narrowing differences between discriminated groups and the majority. It could thereby potentially enhanced their sense of belonging to the state if the government is shown to be receptive and caring of their concerns. The Native Americans in the
United States are a prime example of this. Like the Uighurs, the Native Americans were subjected to conflict and tensions between themselves and the newly arrived settlers (in that case, from the Old World). Arguably, they endured far greater amount of abuse from the colonizers than the Uighurs were subjected to throughout their history, being faced with loss of their land, European-originated diseases (from which they have no immunity), extermination campaigns and far more overt pressure to eradicate their distinct cultures and assimilate with the majority American culture (Johansen, 2005a). Even today, many Native American reserves have some of the highest rates of poverty in the U.S (with associated issues of endemic levels of alcoholism and drug abuse) (Johansen, 2005a, p.386). Yet a key difference with the Uighur situation is that Native Americans are provided with an avenue to openly air their grievances and the government, at least to a limited degree, has recognized and accepted some responsibility for their current plight. Thus even if many Native Americans today remain unsatisfied with their economic or social situation, they do not advocate for independence or secession from the United States, because they could, on some level, subscribe to the values of the United States and believe they can seek redress from it. The same cannot be said (or at least very much in question) for the Uighurs.

To illustrate some particular cases, there are countless examples of European settler’s cruelty and enslavement of Native Americans (which appears far more severe than what the Uighurs were subjected to today). As an example, when the Spanish encountered the Pueblo people (in what is today New Mexico) in the late 1500s, many of them were enslaved with limbs chopped off for those resisting the Spanish occupation. This eventually led to the successful Pueblo Revolt in 1680 (Johansen, 2005b). This is only one example among many in regards to cruel treatment endured by Native Americans.
Another was the loss of land and assimilation. The “Indian Wars” in the mid-1800s systematically removed Native Americans from their territory as the American settlers migrated westward along with the laying down of the railroads. The war against the Apaches was particularly savage, leading to their final rebellion by the Apaches led by Geronimo. Following his surrender, Geronimo was imprisoned in Florida. Even upon his release, he was never allowed to return to his original homeland (Johansen, 2005b). The treaties which were supposed to guarantee Native American’s right to their land were annulled by an allotment legislation, which broke-up their communal land and allowed white settlers to seize it (Johansen, 2005b). Furthermore, there was the pressure to eradicate Native American culture and beliefs through assimilation. Boarding schools was set up to indoctrinate Native Americans into the culture of the white settlers and forbade practice of their traditions (Johansen, 2005a).

All these measures are arguably even more severe than what the Uighurs encountered from the Chinese state. So why did Native Americans today not advocate for secession? 

It is perhaps because they can seek redress from the government, that however imperfect their current government is, they can have a chance to seek compensation and justice. In other words, the civic nationalist government can recognize their past actions as mistakes. Historical narrative is not tied to political legitimacy, at least not to the same extent as the Chinese state. Moreover, it is likely recognition of such mistakes by increasingly large segment of the American populations that enhances the legitimacy and sense of belonging to the current state. After all, civic nationalism is based on civic values and there is less reliance

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14 With one exception, the Iroquois Confederacy at Onondga which issued their own passports and abstain from voting in elections.
on an “imagined past” as would be the case with the Chinese state. Hence, there is less resistance from the state to acknowledge past wrongs that does not reflect well on their history, because history defines their identity less than the values which they share.

Furthermore, a Western-based concept of civic values is actually more pertinent to China, since previous communist authoritarian regimes (which China has partially model itself on) has shown to be poor examples to follow when it comes to retaining different ethnicities within a single larger territorial unit. One only needs to look at the break-up of the Soviet Union to understand the problematic nature of authoritarian communist rule over a multi-ethnic state.

True, there are of course key differences between China and the Former Soviet Union in terms of their particular ethnic history and policy toward their autonomous regions. But regardless of these differences, the one essential characteristic which China and Soviet Union shared is the failure to construct a durable notion of what it means to be a citizen under a communist state. There was no soft power that would appeal and unite the citizens of the autonomous regions once communism as an ideology collapsed.

The Soviet Union never developed a durable sense of Soviet “nationhood”, hence there was no strong concept of a national Soviet identity. While in cultural terms a “Soviet people” was created, it was given weak representation and subject to fragmentation (Sakwa, 2013). A Soviet “nation”, encompassing all the different groups within the USSR was not emphasized. There was no option to identify as a “Soviet nationality” in their census. The USSR passport only listed the holder’s nationality but precluded a Soviet category (Ibid, 2013). Such failure to institutionized supra-national Soviet identity reinforced sub-national identification (Sakwa, 2013).
The weak sense of belonging to a Soviet Union was compounded by a strong sense of region-based national identity. The Soviet Union was structured around ethnofederalism (Zurcher, 2007), with its territory divided into ethnoterritorial units (Ibid, 2013). Unlike China, the Soviet Union had a hierarchy of union republics, autonomous republics and autonomous oblasts (Ibid, 2007). The union republics (SSRs) enjoyed the most rights, with the next two autonomous units falling within it and having lesser rights. The SSRs were rewarded to those ethnic groups which the Soviets deem to be the most “progressive” and had the right under the constitution to secede from the USSR (Ibid, 2007). Granted, this secession right was strictly notional for much of the USSR’s existence, but this right would later be considered as one cause in the break-up of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. Ironically, it was this very territorial unit that gave nation-statehood to ethnic groups where they previously did not have such conception. In analyzing the Caucus region, Zurcher (2007) argued that prior to the formation of the SSRs, identity was rooted in kinship, clan, religiously defined groups or along class lines, but was not a nationality. But by giving these groups a territory with institutions for cultural and social development, the Soviet planners inadvertently created nations with unique identity (Zurcher, 2007).

Finally, a difference with China was that the “core” of the USSR, Russia, that chose to secede from the Soviet Union. Russians felt they were shouldering disproportionate burden of the Soviet enterprises without receiving a fair share in return (Brudny, 1999). Russia issued its own declaration of state sovereignty on 12th June 1990. This act reinforces the notion that Russians, supposedly the core and driving force of the USSR, did not identify with the Soviet Union nor its values.

For China, autonomous regions do not enjoy the right to secede (Bovingdon, 158)
2004), but it nevertheless confront a similar problem as the former Soviet Union, there are no values that bind ethnic minorities to the larger state. Beijing may not be confronting any imminent threat of territorial break-up, but the same lack of bond between citizens and the state exists. Therefore, looking towards the Soviet Union clearly is not an answer. Concepts of civic values found in civic nationalism seems to be the only plausible alternative.

A distinction too must also be made here to distinguish the civic based nationalism advocated here with the more assimilationist/melting pot approach debated on the mainland. When this study advocates for a civic nationalism approach, it is arguing for a “cultural mosaic” approach, and not a “melting pot approach”. To clarify this distinction, we must examine recent discourse on the mainland regarding ethnic minorities. Mainland ethnology has shifted to a debate between an argument for a melting pot assimilationist approach (Leibold, 2012) vs the traditional recognition of status of ethnic minorities as its own group (Leibold, 2012). In particular, the former director and dean of sociology at Peking University, Ma Rong, has argued for an assimilationist approach to eliminate the ethnic distinctions as part of a drive towards Hanification. Ma rejects ethnic favouritism (i.e. affirmative action) to favour individual support regardless of ethnicity. He states current ethnic distinctions has led to segregation between Hans and Uighurs and foster a culture of dependency and lack of competitiveness (Ma, 2012). Ma argued that given that economic and social disparities between Hans and other ethnic groups are best addressed by “minzu-blind” policies to target localities and individuals instead (Leibold, 2013). Likewise, Hu Angang, director of the Institute of Contemporary China Studies at Tsinghua, has argued that for a “melting pot” approach whereby ethnic autonomous units are abolished and a shift from ethnic to regional-based preferential policies. This also includes “the
removal of ethnic status from identification cards and other official documents; the eliminations of barriers to ethnic migration, intermarriage and market flows; and the strengthening of Putonghua and bilingual education” (Leibold, 2013). Hu argues for elimination of group-differential rights and integrate different ethnic traditions into a collective civic culture and identity. (Hu, 2011).15

At first glance, this study’s multi-ethnic approach therefore does resemble the assimilationist/melting pot advocated by Ma Rong and Hu Angang. After all, removal of ethnic distinctions, as argued in this study, does appear similar to what Ma and Hu argues. However, there are several key differences, the primary one being that this study’s multi-ethnic approach is rooted in a “cultural mosaic” basis rather than the “melting pot” basis. A “melting pot” approach is defined as the voluntary and harmonious “melting” of different groups into a larger collective whole, often used as a description of the immigrant experience in the United States. In particular, the playwright Israel Zangwill coined this term as the title of his 1905 play, about two immigrants to the US who transcend their mutual religious and ethnic animosities of their homeland to embrace a new American identity (Zangwill, 1905).

15 To be sure, Ma and Hu’s proposals have not been unanimously embraced on the mainland. The Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Science) rebuked Ma and Hu’s suggestions (Leibold, 2013), stating that “forced assimilation” would undermine cooperation, solidarity and trust in a multiethnic country like China (Leibold, 2013). In particular, Hao Shiyuan, one of the deputy secretary general at CASS and a respected ethnologist, argued that while he admired the American melting pot formula, he questioned its suitability for a non-immigrant country such as China. Hao favours the current status quo over the suggestions made by Ma and Hu (Leibold, 2013).

Nevertheless, despite the criticism, there may be indications from the Chinese authorities that they may be more willing to consider Ma and Hu’s proposals. The Central Work Forum on Xinjiang has recently proposed a policy of ethnic intermingling (Leibold, 2014). Zhu Weiqun, the former director of United Front department for Uighur affairs, also endorsed Ma Rong’s proposals of ethnic fusion (Leibold, 2014). Likewise, the South China Morning Post (May 27th 2014) reported that the politburo is now promoting bilingual education for Uighurs to improve their integration with Hans as a means to enforce ethnic unity. Granted, we do not know as yet whether this mark a real shift in Uighur policy or a mere propaganda drive. But at the very least it implies the assimilationist argument by Ma and Hu may be more receptive to the Chinese authorities than before.

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However, this study’s multi-ethnic approach is not advocating for a melting pot approach as championed by Ma Rong and Hu Angang. This is chiefly because a melting pot approach is unsuitable to be applied to China.

First, a melting pot approach pre-suppose a voluntary process whereby immigrants have a choice to leave their country and past identity and join a new one with their newly adopted country. However, Uighurs do not have such choices at present. They are not immigrants but a group that has resided in Xinjiang for many generations. It is therefore somewhat incongruous for Ma and Hu to apply a situation where immigrants had free choice to move to a new country and adopt a new identity to the Uighur situation. In addition, the interviews have shown many Uighurs, even those within the mainland school system, retain a strong sense of their own unique ethnic identity. Thus, it seems unlikely the Uighurs will abandon their own sense of ethnic identity.

Second, the melting pot situation raises the question as to melting into what precisely? Ma and Hu were correct to diagnose the current ethnic identity situation as lacking in social cohesion, but they did not offer a very tenable solution as to what this PRC identity will be. What sort of pan-PRC identity should this assimilation process be? Ma argues that “at the national level the members of all ethnic groups should respect the common social norms; at the ethnicity level, each should respect, even appreciate, the cultures of other groups” (Ma, 2007: 215). But the question remains, what is this “common social norms”? How is it to be found? In a state with Han majority, this “common social norms” could well be subverted to mean “common Han norms”. Ma is silent on how his suggestion differ from “Great Hanism”.

Likewise, Hu Angang’s elimination of group-differentiated rights and obligations ignores the problem of particular issues unique to particular ethnic
groups. Just as different ethnic groups within China have different culture, language and traditions, likewise they have different issue and concerns about each other. By ignoring the unique circumstances of each ethnic group, Hu’s suggestion have the danger of not being able to address the unique concerns of each ethnic group and thereby worsening the contradictions and severity of those issues with the State.

Finally, Ma and Hu ignores the key factor, soft power. Uighurs, or any other ethnic group within China, has to find the melting pot approach appealing. The assimilationist/melting pot approach by Ma and Hu does not address this. They seek to dilute the ethnic consciousness of Uighurs by de-emphasizing their unique status and identity within the Chinese social, economic and political framework. However, this will not have the desired effect. The survey and interview has clearly shown that Uighurs have retain a strong sense of their ethnic identity, be it culture, language or history. They will likely strongly resist being assimilated if they feel their cultural and language rights are not respected. Furthermore, even if they do not feel their identity is threatened, they have to find the melting pot approach appealing. This is what distinguishes the US melting pot approach, the soft power appeal of an American identity, and the values of being an American (i.e. individualism, liberty, tolerance etc.). Even if the reality of American life do not often match its ideal, that soft power appeal is sufficiently strong such that many immigrants willingly adopt it as their new identity. The same cannot be said for China.

Therefore, this study’s multi-ethnic approach and advocating removal of ethnic distinctions (where Uighurs’ identity may subject them to discrimination) should not be seen as an assimilationist/melting pot approach. What it is instead is a “cultural mosaic approach”. In essence, “cultural mosaic” is a society that
tolerates and respects a mixture of different ethnic groups, cultures and languages. The term was coined by Canadian author John Murray Gibbon in 1938 to contrast what he characterized as an ideal Canadian society to America’s melting pot. In contrast to the melting pot, different ethnic groups are not assimilated but co-exist within that society. Canada is a prime example of this “Cultural Mosaic” approach as this concept is institutionalized as law through the Multiculturalism Act and section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. In particular, these two legislation ensures Canadians of all origins have equal access to employment opportunities, recognizing their multicultural heritage may be respected and minorities’ rights to be respected. What bind ethnic minorities together in a cultural mosaic society are not their ethnic identities and culture but a set of values (civic-based liberal values in this case), which they subscribed to as members of this nation-state. But unlike a melting pot society, an ethnic minority does not have to give up his own ethnic identity to join this cultural mosaic nation-state. It is not an “either or” proposition between an ethnic identity and a larger state identity but an overarching all-encompassing identity on top of one’s existing ethnic identity.

In sum, a cultural mosaic society allow all ethnic groups identities to be retained. They do not need to forsake their own identities to assimilate into a new one. What bind these groups together are not traditional blood ties, ethnic culture or history but tolerance and respect. The values that do bind them are the civic based nationalism as mentioned earlier, of an egalitarian value system that is not defined by your race, ethnicity or religion. It is in this context that this study argued for removal of ethnic distinctions. Not because Uighurs are to be assimilated into a melting pot, but because their citizenship as a membership of the PRC is defined not by their ethnicity but by their shared values with other
PRC citizen, regardless of their background. This is the reason why civic based values in a multi-ethnic culture are crucial, because it can transcend the narrow blood tie relationship that typifies many ethnic identities. It is only in an environment where different cultures are respected and tolerated can identity bereshape to embrace civic values. Civic values in a cultural mosaic society does not come at the expense of your own ethnic identity, as a melting pot approach requires, but is an supra layer above your own ethnicity.

What we can conclude in this section is that for Chinese soft power to be effective, it needs to be reformulated as a broader multi-ethnic culture incorporating the cultural elements which Uighurs identified most closely with. In turn, for this multi-ethnic culture to function, there must be a more open inter-ethnic communication and a wholesale review of existing Uighur policies by the government. In addition, such a multi-ethnic culture requires elimination of ethnic distinctions that can be used for discriminatory purposes. This multi-ethnic culture also raises questions as to the identity of being a PRC citizen and what it entails. We argued that this involves the state incorporating civic-based values which will strengthen the appeal of the PRC citizenship as a soft power. Finally, this civic-based values can only be effective in a society of “cultural mosaic” rather than “melting pot” assimilationist society.

6.3 Shared Goal Approach

Thus far, the comparison between the survey and interview findings for Uighur students shows that education as a soft power tool is indeed effective in swaying the student respondents into identifying with the Chinese state and being comfortable being both a Chinese citizen and an ethnic Uighur. In addition, weaknesses in Han Chinese culture can be addressed with a multi-ethnic cultural
approach and applying civic values found in liberal nationalism as a soft power to appeal to Uighurs. However, are these findings alone sufficient to address the problems facing Chinese soft power? The findings indicate that Uighur diaspora and Uighur student respondents differ in their identity and sense of belonging, a wide gulf exists between Uighur-Han mutual perception, a contradictory approach by the government that emphasized both control and soft power and a shared nostalgia for an imagined Maoist past. Education, in its present form as a soft power, effective as it is in targeting this particular group of Uighur students, does not seem able to address the plethora of issues and contradictions raised by the interview respondents. Likewise, multi-ethnic culture and civic nationalism as soft power alone may not be sufficient to address the plethora of issues raised in the interview findings. The following section will therefore focus on analyzing the findings to explore whether an additional soft power solution can be found to overcome these obstacles and contradictions.

The study will argue that education, while effective to a limited extent, is not sufficient on its own to successfully shape Uighur’s national identity. It must be accompanied by a shared goal. This soft power measure that may enhance the sense of belonging for Uighurs is to form a common goal shared by both Uighur, Hans (and possibly other ethnic minorities in China). What is required is a *shared goal* between Uighur and Hans such that the pursuit of this shared goal can cut across ethnic divisions. This goal would be the soft power that transcends ethnic divisions and allows at least for a possibility to become an effective means to appeal to Uighur’s identity in conjunction with education. Because the current inter-ethnic relation between Uighur and Hans is to some extent, characterized by competition for resources and Han prejudice, without a shared soft power goal to sway Uighurs, current soft power potential will continued to be hampered and
prevented from being able to create a sense of belonging. Based on the findings from the survey and interviews, this study will try to ascertain several conditions this shared goal must possess in order for it to be successful.

First, what should this shared goal be? The study has shown Uighur and Hans respondents expressing the view that there is a perceived lack of commonality between Uighurs and Hans as well as competition for resources and employment when Hans migrated to Xinjiang. Therefore, one logical shared goal would be access to resources such as employment. By setting such a relatively concrete objective (rather than a vague and difficult to comprehend goal), participants can easily understand what they can receive if they do obtain this goal. The minute details in how this will be achieved is beyond the scope of this study, but it will nevertheless be useful to explore what this shared goal is in a general sense. Employment is a useful starting point for consideration of a shared goal because it may overcome the current sense of competing resources. The interview findings have shown that Uighur diaspora respondents portray Hans as a threat to their employment. What is required is a national project, the obtaining of resource such that it can only be accomplished by cooperation between Hans and Uighurs. Access to certain funds, subsidies or loans for state and private firms in Xinjiang can be made conditional upon the firm hiring a quota of qualified Uighurs and placing some of the qualified Uighurs in a position of management with Hans such that they are at an equal footing, and not merely as employees of Han employers.

Thus to access shared goal of funding, both Uighur and Han would be required to cooperate with each other as equal employees within a firm. This measure should distinguish the shared goal from existing affirmative action which has been ineffective in bridging the economic and social divide between Uighur
and Hans. Since present affirmative actions do not grant a real voice or
decision-making powers to Uighurs, they become simply passive subjects to be
driven by a top-down process driven by the central government. But if Uighurs
are placed in a position to decide a firm’s allocation of resources together with
Hans, they will have a strong incentive to cooperate with Hans as a matter of
mutual benefit. And by doing so, both sides can gain a better understanding of
each other’s concerns, potentially narrowing their differences and prejudices.

True, in the initial stages, there may be insufficient number of qualified
Uighurs to be placed in more senior managerial positions. Hence, this shared goal
approach should preferably start with major state firms whose projects have a
strong bearing on Xinjiang economy, and gradually, as a pool of qualified Uighurs
build up, expand this initiative to rest of the companies operating in Xinjiang,
private and public. Of course, this shared goal alone won’t necessarily strengthen
all aspect of Uighur-Han relations or Uighur’s allegiance to the Chinese state, but
it is a start toward those goals.

More important than what this shared goal should be is the analysis on why
this shared goal can enhance cooperation between Uighur and Hans (and thereby
improve Uighur’s sense of belonging to the Chinese state). In essence, a shared
goal can address the current divide between Uighur and Hans as revealed in the
findings. To comprehend this point, recall that the interviews showed the Uighur
diaspora respondents feeling they have “nothing in common” with Hans culturally.
Likewise, Uighur diaspora respondents have stated they see Hans as an alien
threat to their employment and general wellbeing. Hostilities between groups over
competing resources are not a new phenomenon. In the field of social psychology,
the well-established Realistic Conflict Theory espoused that intergroup hostilities
arises from competition for resources. In his famous theory, Muzaffer Sherif (1961)
argued that such conflict can only be resolved with the creation of superordinate goal that provide a unified objective that is shared by the otherwise two competing groups. Sherif’s superordinate goal theory is constructive here if it could assist in reducing inter-ethnic tension. So if it is to be possible for a soft power shared goal to work, it is logical to state that both Uighur and Hans would be rewarded with shared resources, rather than competing for it along ethnic lines.

In our current case, the situation is complicated by the fact that Hans are perceived as outsiders by certain Uighurs and the real or perceived unequal status of Uighurs within Xinjiang. However, neither is necessarily insurmountable. The key is to convince a sufficient number of both Uighurs and Hans to share resources as a common goal. This raises another question, how might it be possible to persuade Uighur and Hans together to pursue this common goal? This is the soft power aspect of the shared goal.

Evidence that may point to a shared basis comes from the common nostalgia among several Uighur and Han respondents to a Maoist past where ideological campaigns trumps almost every other aspect of society. There was no ethnic division as such since ideological fervor was the shared goal for both Uighur, Hans and other ethnic minorities within Xinjiang. However, a clear distinction must be made here. Such a Maoist goal was facilitated by the repressive political environment at the time and driven by Mao’s determination to reshape society; it was not a “soft” power that appealed to Uighur and Hans. While it cannot be ruled out entirely, it is quite unlikely there will be a return to Mao’s ideological campaigns in the foreseeable future in China. In any case, Maoist campaigns would not be a “soft” power as such, thus this shared goal will have to be achieved by alternative (non-coercive) means.

Thus unlike during the Maoist era, the government today cannot compel by
hard power measures alone for Uighur and Hans to adopt a shared goal and certainly not on ideological grounds. It must persuade them voluntarily to pursue this goal. Eventually, the success for the participants of this shared goal programme may be the biggest incentive for future participants to join this programme. But in the initial stage, when the programme’s success has yet to be proven, there must be another method to persuade participants to join. Clearly, soft power appears to be a solution. Employing soft power to persuade participants is a logical means to convince participants to join the programme. The problem, as we have seen, Chinese soft power is ineffective for many Uighur respondents. How then could Chinese soft power be deployed in service of this shared goal? First, the Chinese state needs to identify the problem of the divide that separates Uighur and Hans. The crux of the matter is that current Chinese soft power does not appeal to both Uighur and Hans. The interviews have shown a wide mutual perception gap between Uighur and Hans, coloured by discriminatory view by Hans toward Uighurs. Some Han respondents felt the Uighurs were lazy while Uighur respondents felt Han migration into Xinjiang meant Hans were stealing their jobs. These findings no doubt indicates existing inter-ethnic tension, but more importantly, shows current soft power, even if it can appeal to one group (i.e. the Uighurs in the form of education at Guangdong) does not appeal to other ethnic groups. A soft power that exclusively appeals to only Uighurs, Hans or other ethnic group would be ineffective as it would fail to address the issues and concerns of other groups. A soft power that appeals across ethnic division is a prerequisite for this shared goal.

One can challenge whether an inclusive soft power goal that can appeal to different ethnic groups is possible in China given the fact that each ethnic group may harbour different culture, interest and priorities. Is it possible that a soft
power exist that can simultaneously appeal to both Uighur and Hans? If we look at foreign soft power responses from the survey and interview, that indeed can be a possibility. While Uighur respondents derive close affinity with Turkey in part from perceived cultural and ethnic ties, other foreign soft power is not related to blood ties, but cultural appeal, in particular US soft power. Although Uighur and Han respondents differ, both intra-group-wise and inter-group-wise, in how they view the US overall, they do generally share a positive appraisal of certain aspects of US popular culture (Hollywood movies), if not its government policy. This cultural appeal crosses ethnic divide, so soft power does have an intrinsic ability to transcend ethnic divisions.

Therefore, for soft power to appeal to both Uighur and Hans, it must be separated from a perception that it signifies solely the interest of any particular ethnic group. In particular, from the standpoint of the government, a common soft power approach means it should not be seen as representing exclusively Han interest. It can be argued that this is what the Chinese government is attempting to do currently with our case study of the education programmes directed at Uighurs in Guangdong. However, as seen by the interview responses, the Uighur diaspora respondents often have a negative appraisal of current Chinese soft power and perceived unfair treatment by the government. In addition, as seen from the interview findings, some Uighur students have indicated that they do not believe the Chinese government adequately respect their culture, implying that these respondents may identify the Chinese state with Han interest. Likewise, Han security officials such as Ms. Z, the very people responsible in shaping government policy toward Uighurs, harbour negative view on Uighur culture. Now it might be the case Ms. Z’s discriminatory views may not necessarily be representative of her colleagues or due to the fact she is a Han. Nevertheless, the
reality that she belonged to the Han ethnic group meant this may cause Uighurs to identify oppressive measures not just with the government but also with the Han majority. All this illustrates current soft power approach by the Chinese government has been unable to distinguish itself from the majority Han ethnic group for Uighurs.

Furthermore, a shared goal would have the advantage of assisting in tackling the current conflictual and contradictory governmental approach to Uighurs. As we have seen from the interviews, the government employs soft power as an outreach to Uighurs, the education programs in Dongguan and Guangzhou being prime examples. Yet at the same time, the security officials, such as Ms. Z, who emphasis control and order, may have a detrimental effect on Uighur’s sense of belonging by causing their grievances against the state’s controlling measures. The fact that some Uighur students who indicated their dissatisfaction with various government policies or treatment by Hans implied their schooling, and however successful at fostering a sense of belonging to the state, has not entirely insulated them from discrimination and oppressive government measures. But if Uighur and Hans could jointly pursue a common goal, then the government, could arguably place less emphasis on the harsher “hard” power aspect of control. The Uighur themselves would voluntarily want the same objective as Hans and the government. Then there will be less justification on using oppressive government measures against Uighurs. This in turn would potentially reduce the negative impact such security measures will have on the identity formation and sense of belonging of Uighurs.

Granted realistically, given the nature of the Chinese government, it is most unlikely the government will simply abandon the hard power of security control, but with the shared goal between Uighur and Hans in place, there may be less
need for the government to employ such counterproductive security measures to the same degree as it is today.

Moreover, a shared goal may help meet, at least to a limited extent, some of the issues raised by the respondents in regards to what solutions should be offered to address the deficiencies of Chinese soft power. It could raise the possibility of transforming Uighurs from mere subjects to active stakeholder.

To begin with, Ms. B has stated that the Uighurs must be satisfied with the status quo. And one way for Uighurs to at least improve their satisfaction with the current order is to feel they have a stake in their future by being allowed to pursue a goal that would ensure equal access to resources. That is, to transform them from passive subjects to active stakeholders. Thus far, the survey and interview findings reflect Uighur respondents as mere passive recipients of Chinese government policy with no power or ability to change the structural circumstances regarding government policies directed at them. If Uighurs are given a stake in being able to affect the status quo, it would also raise the possibility they will also be more satisfied with it. Thus one potential route for Uighurs to be satisfied with the status quo is to convert Uighurs from passive subjects to active stakeholder by giving them the option of pursuing this goal which they can have greater degree of control over.

This shared goal through active stakeholder differs from present Chinese government soft power approaches in two ways. First, by degree. Uighurs must be allowed greater control over how this shared goal can be achieved. For example, both the survey and interview findings suggest Uighur respondents are dissatisfied with current affirmative action towards Uighurs. Likewise, government ethnic policies were deemed most in need of improvement in the survey. In addition, Uighur respondents have indicated in the interviews that they find current
affirmative actions for the benefit of Uighurs rather ineffective. These findings seem to suggest that Uighurs do not appear to have a voice in how this affirmative action were shaped or tailored for them. Rather, it appeared these were top-down hierarchical arrangements which did not consider the wishes and needs of the Uighurs. Therefore, the active stakeholder aspect of this shared goal must provide greater degree of control for Uighurs in the standards, method and process in how this goal is achieved, because this will likely mean that the standards and process better reflect Uighur’s desire and wishes. Thus by being active stakeholders, it will provide greater sense of ownership of this shared goal to Uighurs. It would be logical to assume that Uighurs could possibly have greater satisfaction if they can shape and mold the process and methods in how this shared goal is achieved.

Second, this active stakeholder approach will also necessitate active cooperation between different ethnic groups, thus it may have the benefit of hypothetically reducing the tension in the perceived adversarial relationship that some Uighur and Han respondents view each other. It can be recalled that the interview findings appear to suggest that the government employ a “divide-and-rule” strategy to create internal division among ethnic groups to maintain overall control. As discussed in the interview findings, this strategy may be counter-productive to Uighur’s sense of belonging and identity to the Chinese state, as inter-ethnic tension likely strengthens individual ethnic identities among groups (rather than identify with the state). However, a shared goal approach entails cooperation between ethnic groups to achieve it. By definition, different ethnic groups must set aside their disagreements and work in partnership for the shared goal to be achieved. This is particularly pertinent, as the literature review section has found that interaction and close contract alone does not automatically lead to improved inter-ethnic relations. However, by providing an incentive to
cooperate and interact by promising a mutual reward for doing so, the government may create a different outcome. In other words, interaction and contact between these ethnic groups in pursuit of achieving this shared goal may possibly foster greater understanding between ethnic groups.

Inter-ethnic cooperation in turn may ultimately enhance the sense of belonging and identity for Uighurs. Cooperation could transform ethnic identity from a source of tension and friction to facilitating an enduring multi-identity for Uighurs. The study has revealed that Uighur student respondents are comfortable in sharing a multi-identity, an ethnic one of being a Uighur and a national one as a citizen of the PRC. It is not inconceivable that a shared goal approach may provide the same effect for a larger group of Uighurs. Though the scale and scope of a shared goal may be larger and hence more complex than the school environment of the Uighur students, the same positive experience between Uighur and Hans found in the Guangdong school is possible to replicate provided that they have an opportunity to work together. This is beneficial because many of the Han respondents have indicated they have little contact with Uighurs, despite being born and raised in Xinjiang. Even if this lack of contact may not necessarily be the cause of their discriminatory views, the absence of contact meant there may not be an opportunity to change such discriminatory perception of Uighurs.

It is true, greater interaction between Uighur and Hans may not always result in improved ethnic ties for all involved. Unlike the relatively cloistered school environment of our case study, a shared goal approach will likely involved greater number of different Uighur and Hans with their own background and possible prejudices. Given the sheer variety of different socioeconomic class, religion, age, education, language and simply the individual personalities of the Uighur and Hans involved, it is unlikely all of them will change their perception of the other
for the better. But the study is not concerned with an absolute and complete transformation in ethnic ties for all those that could be involved in this shared goal approach. That is unrealistic. What matters is there could be a net improvement for a substantial number of Uighurs and Hans resulting from this shared goal approach and that the overall trend is towards an improved perception characterized by less discrimination and greater understanding and empathy towards the concerns of the other group. That should be the outcome of this shared goal approach. And despite the differences in the socioeconomic background of the participants concerned, the author believes it is quite plausible for a gradual change in mutual perception between the ethnic groups could occur due to the shared goal approach.

Consequently, if a gradual but general trend of improved ethnic ties can occur, it may increase their sense of belonging and identity with the Chinese state. Because if negative perception and tension with Hans decreased, they may no longer view (to the same degree at present) of the Chinese government being merely representative of Han interest. Granted, this may not mean Uighurs will have a positive impression of the government, as many Hans themselves also have a poor impression of the government over a variety of political, economic and governance issues (i.e. the corruption problem raised by the Han respondents in the interview findings). But even if it is likely the Uighurs may not have a positive impression of the government, it may no longer be regarded as an alien government to the same extent as it is today among certain Uighurs.

Moreover, there is the problem of sustainability. A shared goal approach appears rather utilitarian in a consequentialist sense, that is, designed only as a tool to achieve the outcome (greater satisfaction) while other issues are ignored, in particularly, whether this shared goal approach is sustainable. Once this shared
goal is achieved, can the improved inter-ethnic relations persist? First, the process of the shared goal itself may improve mutual perception in the longer-term. Through greater interaction between Uighur and Hans, the discriminatory and prejudicial views between the groups may lessen and it would seem implausible they will automatically revert back to their previous prejudicial perceptions immediately upon completion of the goal. Second, the shared goal should not be a one-time occurrence only to meet one particular resource goal. Rather, it should be a continuous or succession of shared goal approach such that it does not “expire” upon completion. In this case, obtaining resources in employment or social mobility goals (or access to these resources) by shared goal approach should be implemented as a long-term policy by the government. Uighur and Hans who did not participate in one shared goal approach should be given the opportunity to participate in future shared goal events. This will have the advantage of institutionizing inter-ethnic group interaction and hence allow a sustained and structured approach to a shared goal policy.

Finally, one must also address, at least tentatively, how such a shared goal should be achieved in practice. The study has earlier discussed what this shared goal should be with the example being employment. To implement this shared goal requires tackling several issues which has surfaced in this study. First, the study has noted securitization agenda often clash and diminish the soft power agenda of the Chinese state. This implies there must be better coordination between the different arms of government to create a more cohesive and balance policy towards Uighurs. For example, judging by the interview responses, the Uighur respondents express dissatisfaction that they are singled out as Uighurs for extra security measures and suspicions from the government. Thus for the security apparatus, the current category of suspects being the entire Uighur community, is
simply too broad. The state must reassess who are the targets? The state should consider narrower and targeted searches if feasibility allows, as broad searches on Uighurs simply place an entire ethnic group under suspicion.

Second, to balance the often contradictory impulses between the state’s security and those responsible for Uighur outreach arm, there should ideally be some kind of policy coordinator that has overarching powers to coordinate and balance the competing aims between security and soft power outreach. This could overcome any potential inter-departmental or bureaucratic resistance over competing goals and lessen the severity of policy contradiction directed at Uighurs. Ultimately, it could raise the effectiveness of current Chinese soft power initiatives if it can clash less with the security agenda.

Finally, the above two points depend on another factor, a fundamental shift in thinking from the political leadership. This is likely the most difficult to accomplish. Substantial shift in approach to Uighur policies require a corresponding paradigm shift in thinking by the political leaders. Specifically, this requires the willingness of top leaders to attempt a change. In the past, there does not appear to be sufficient political capital for a significant change. The recent bombings in Xinjiang may have compel the central government to effect changes through, what they claim, as increased focus on bilingual education, local jobs and religious protection (Pinghui-SCMP, May 14th and 27th 2014). Whether that really indicates a real change in direction from the central government or is merely a fanciful press release is too early to tell, but these headlines do suggest there might at least be an opening or an opportunity for real changes to occur in Uighur policies.

In conclusion, analysis of the findings indicates that soft power, in the form of a shared goal approach, combined with multi-ethnic culture and civic
nationalism, may be a solution to resolving some of the shortcomings of current Chinese soft power in addressing Uighur’s sense of belonging and identity, as well as possibly aid in reducing inter-ethnic tension. While this study is not suggesting that these measures will definitively transform Uighur identity or Chinese soft power, it could form one basis (among others) to create a more effective way to meet Uighur’s needs and improve Uighur-Han tensions. By looking at this study’s finding’s difficulties of Chinese soft power and Uighur-Han relations, elements of this shared goal can be identified. These include identifying a shared goal, allowing Uighurs to become active stakeholders, giving them a genuine voice on how to pursue that goal and the inherent advantage of soft power to transcend ethnic and cultural division. Additionally, a shared goal could assist in reducing some of the current contradictions in government policy between a “hard” power of securitization and the soft power of persuading Uighurs through affirmation action or education. It may also be more sustainable than current government measures directed at Uighurs by fostering long-term improvement in Uighur-Han relations and institutionizing inter-ethnic interaction in a more sustained manner.
7. Conclusion

This study began by asking whether Chinese soft power can sway Uighur’s identity and sense of belonging to the Chinese state. Examination of existing literature on soft power and identify formation indicates a gap in the literature regarding the role of soft power to influence national identity and specifically ethnic minorities such as Uighurs. To answer this query, this study conducted a survey questionnaire and interview with Uighur, Han and other ethnic minority respondents born and raised in Xinjiang. By analyzing and comparing the findings of the survey and interview, the study found that education, in the form of Uighur students being placed at these Guangdong schools; do foster a stronger sense of belonging and identity with Chinese state. In that sense, the schools in Guangdong is a qualified success of Chinese soft power in the form of education.

The survey and interview findings reveal that Uighur students successfully negotiated the ethnic differences and were comfortable in possessing a multi-identity, an ethnic one as a Uighur, and a national one as a citizen of the PRC. We can see this multi-identity clearly from the survey. In particular, for appeal, sense of belonging was ranked first, followed by Chinese values, ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. For importance, sense of belonging again came first, followed by ethnic minority policies, Chinese values, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. Likewise, if we look at identity, Chinese values were ranked first, followed by sense of belonging, ethnic minority policies, Han Chinese culture and Foreign culture. These findings suggest the
Uighur student respondents retain a strong sense of their identity as ethnic Uighurs yet when asked in the interview, express unreservedly their membership as nationals and citizens of the PRC.

However, the interview findings on Uighur diaspora and Han respondents not only raise questions regarding whether Chinese soft power can be effective to shape Uighur identity, it in fact highlights the inherent limitation of current Chinese soft power and sense of belonging beyond the confines of a tailor-made school environment. Simply put, the interviews suggest Uighur diaspora respondents are not receptive to Chinese soft power as a means to shape their sense of belonging or identity with the Chinese state.

The Uighur diaspora for example has viewed their appraisal of Han Chinese culture through the prism of the discriminatory treatment they received. Conversely, Dongguan High School students emphasized their positive interaction with Han students help shaped a more positive view of Han Chinese culture. Another important issue raised during the interview was the wide gap in mutual perception between Uighur and Hans. The Han respondents, despite being born and raised in Xinjiang, had little to no contact with Uighurs. In fact, current ethnic relations are described by one Han respondent as a form of “psychological segregation”, with inter-ethnic ties worsening after the July 2009 riots. Moreover, many Han respondents harbour discriminatory attitudes towards Uighurs, finding them “lazy” and “easy to incite”. Likewise, Uighur diaspora respondents find Hans in Xinjiang as a threat to their employment and to steal their resources.

Furthermore, the Chinese government appears to hold a contradictory approach to managing ethnic relations with Uighurs. The security apparatus, represented here by Ms. Z, focus on the “hard” power of security control without realizing the potential alienating impact on Uighur’s perception to the Chinese
state. As reflected by their unhappiness of being under surveillance, these measures do have an impact on their perception of the Chinese state by Uighurs. Moreover, it is possible that it could act as an encumbrance to any positive impact Chinese soft power can play. In order for Chinese soft power to operate, it seems the Chinese state should prioritize and synchronize the different initiatives directed at Uighurs. The government would have to decide whether it wants a stronger emphasis on “hard” power or “soft” power initiatives? This in turn, raises the question what sort of Chinese soft power is appropriate.

Uighur diaspora respondents have stated in the interview that they hold little interest or appeal in traditional aspects of soft power, such as Han Chinese culture. And while they are not hostile to popular Han Chinese culture, they appear to be quite indifferent to it. Therefore it appears that while education, effective as it is in swaying Uighur respondents in the much more controlled environment of the school, is questionable in swaying larger group of Uighurs without addressing the myriad social, political and economic issues raised by them.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to tackle these issues individually, the study argues that Chinese soft power can be more effective in shaping Uighur identity (and addressing some of the issues raised by the Uighur and Han respondents) if it is reformulated into the form of a multi-ethnic culture, civic nationalism and a shared goal, one that require cooperation between Uighur and Hans to accomplish. This includes formulating a soft power that appeals to both Uighur and Hans, namely by incorporating Uighur culture into a larger Chinese multi-culture, there is a greater potential for Uighurs to identify with this larger multi-ethnic culture independent of any one specific ethnic group. In addition, it should not be tailor-made only to any specific ethnic group but be able to appeal Uighur, Hans and other ethnic groups within Xinjiang. To achieve this, Chinese
soft power cannot be seen as a mere representation of Han interest but as a soft power that transcend ethnic issues. Separating culture from any one ethnicity would in turn require a rethink of PRC citizenship, one that would require civic nationalism to act as soft power. The role of ethnicity should lessen, replaced with greater emphasis on civic nationalism aspects such as equality and individual rights. These civic values would in turn act as a more effective soft power to appeal to Uighurs, and in particular, address the discrimination faced by the Uighur respondents.

Finally, by cooperating together for a shared goal, there is a possibility that the discriminatory attitude between these groups can reduced through increased interaction and greater mutual understanding. On theoretical grounds, such a shared goal is not unprecedented. Social psychology has demonstrated that with the creation of a superordinate goal, previously hostile groups competing for resources can cooperate together. In our case, there is also a need to convince the potential participants of the benefit of the programme. Chinese soft power would be the means to do so. For this shared goal to be an effective soft power by itself, it must also use soft power to convince participants to join this programme. But in order for Chinese soft power to fulfill this role, it must correct its problems as indicated by the survey and interview findings.

In addition, the shared goal has the advantage of potentially alleviating some of the needs for the government’s “hard” power (even if it is unlikely that it can be eliminated). Furthermore, it could assist Uighur’s sense of identity by transforming them into active stakeholders, by giving them a real voice in how to accomplish that goal and not be mere passive bystanders. If they feel they have an active stake in the process and goals, it is conceivable that they will have a greater sense of ownership in the process and ultimate goal, and hence potentially
increasing their identity to the state. Ultimately, considering these aspects of a shared goal approach, it can be at least one solution to the current problems preventing Chinese soft power from becoming effective.

In sum, the study indicates that education as a soft power was effective in shaping Uighur student’s sense of belonging and identity to the Chinese state. Specifically, Uighur student respondents were found to be comfortable with a dual-identity of both ethnic and national identities. However, it also revealed some concerns such as the students facing discrimination and a need for improvement in ethnic policies. Beyond education and the school environment however, Chinese soft power appears ineffective in trying to shape Uighur’s sense of belonging and identity. Not only have Uighur diaspora respondents found current Chinese soft power unappealing, they also tend to frame it with a variety of political, social and economic issues. It seems likely unless those issues are addressed by the government, Chinese soft power will remain handicapped and held hostage to those issues. Furthermore, the interviews also illustrate three pertinent issues, a conflictual government approach between emphasis on securitization and control, ineffectiveness of Han Chinese culture to act as a useful soft power as well as a gap in Uighur-Han mutual perception coloured by discrimination and hostility over perceived competition over resources such as employment. These issues also point to potential soft power solutions. Han Chinese culture should reformulate to become a multi-ethnic culture. In turn, a multi-ethnic culture points to a PRC citizenship incorporating civic nationalism. Finally, soft power as a shared goal could possibly narrow the Uighur-Han gap as it will possibly reduce the securitization emphasis of the government. It has the advantages of giving a sense of empowerment to Uighurs which may possibly increase their sense of belonging. Thus in order for this shared goal approach to
work, Uighurs must become joint stakeholder in the goal and process with Hans. This shared goal approach is of course not a panacea for solving all the problems and issues Uighur respondents raised in the interview, nor was it meant to be. Existing problems and identity issues of Uighurs will likely remain a pressing issue for both Uighurs and the Chinese state concerned. Yet the study believes that this shared goal approach can be a start to help build a stronger and more sustainable sense of belonging and identity. It may help contribute to at least a less conflictual relationship between Uighurs and Hans as well as between Uighurs and the Chinese state.

Ultimately, Chinese soft power to shape sense of belonging and identity is possible. But more significant are the socio-political constraints and limitations which prevent its effective application in the wider Uighur community. In turn, these constraint and problems point to a potential solution in the form of multi-ethnic culture, civic nationalism and shared goal. The question that remains unanswered is whether the political capital exists in China will allow such possibility to be permitted. After all, in order for these soft power measures of multi-ethnic culture and shared goal to be given a chance to work, the government must be willing to undertake such a measure, and that remains unknown at this point.
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Appendix: Survey Questionnaire Sample

Survey Questionnaire

Greetings! We are from the Hong Kong Baptist University. We hope you can provide assistance in completing the following survey on ethnic minorities and their development. The survey is divided into four parts, “Appeal” (How much interest you have in the item), “Importance” (How important you think this item is), “Sense of belonging” (How closely you identified with the item) and “Issues requiring change” (Which item you feel is in most need of change). Please rank the items in the questions below each part, thank you!

Basic Information

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<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
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(P1) As a mainland high school student, please rate how much the mainland appeals to you by rating how the following items appeal to you according to the strength and weakness of this appeal. Please rank the items on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 having the least appeal and 4 the strongest.

(P1-1) Han Chinese culture

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(P1-1-1) Chinese traditional culture and customs
(P1-1-2) Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)
(P1-1-3) Other Chinese ethnic group’s culture, customs and festivals
(P1-1-4) Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs

(P1-2) Ethnic Minority Policies

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<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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(P1-2-1) State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)
(P1-2-2) Current government ethnic group social policy
(P1-2-3) Values of the Chinese state
## (P1-3) Chinese Values

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<td>Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
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<td>Han Chinese social customs</td>
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## (P1-4) Sense of Belonging

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## (P1-5) Foreign Culture

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</tbody>
</table>

(P2) As a mainland high school student, please rate the following items in accordance to how much **importance** it holds to you. Please rank it on a scale from 1 to 4. With 1 being the least important and 4 being the most important.

## (P2-1) Han Chinese culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Chinese ethnic group's culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## (P2-2) Ethnic Minority Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current government ethnic group social policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values of the Chinese state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (P2-3) Chinese Values

1. Han Chinese family values
2. Han Chinese Filial piety
3. Han Chinese social customs

### (P2-4) Sense of Belonging

1. Han Chinese sense of belonging
2. Sense of belonging as PRC citizen
3. Sense of belonging to respondent's own ethnic group

### (P2-5) Foreign Culture

1. US modern culture
2. Japan modern culture
3. Korean modern culture

---

(P3) As a mainland high school student, please rate the sense of belonging you have to the following items, that is, how much you agree or identified with the items. Please rank it on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the least you identified with the item and 4 the strongest.

### (P3-1) Han Chinese culture

1. Chinese traditional culture and customs
2. Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)
3. Other Chinese ethnic group's culture, customs and festivals
4. Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs

### (P3-2) Ethnic Minority Policies

1. State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)
2. Current government ethnic group social policy
3. Values of the Chinese state
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P3-3) <strong>Chinese Values</strong></th>
<th>weakest -- [Identity] -- strongest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-3-1) Han Chinese family values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-3-2) Han Chinese Filial piety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-3-3) Han Chinese social customs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P3-4) <strong>Sense of Belonging</strong></th>
<th>weakest -- [Identity] -- strongest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-4-1) Han Chinese sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-4-2) Sense of belonging as PRC citizen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-4-3) Sense of belonging to respondent's own ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P3-5) <strong>Foreign Culture</strong></th>
<th>weakest -- [Identity] -- strongest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-5-1) US modern culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-5-2) Japan modern culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-5-3) Korean modern culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P4) As a Mainland high school student, please rate the following items which require changes in your opinion. On scale of 1 to 4, with 1 having the least need for change and 4 having the most need for change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P4-1) <strong>Han Chinese culture</strong></th>
<th>least need -- [Change] -- most need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-1-1) Chinese traditional culture and customs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-1-2) Chinese modern culture (i.e. movies, TV shows)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-1-3) Other Chinese ethnic group's culture, customs and festivals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-1-4) Respondent own ethnic group’s culture and customs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P4-2) <strong>Ethnic Minority Policies</strong></th>
<th>least need -- [Change] -- most need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-2-1) State’s ethnic group governance policy (i.e. autonomy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-2-2) Current government ethnic group social policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-2-3) Values of the Chinese state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-3) Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>least need --[Change]-- most need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-4-1) Han Chinese sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-4-2) Sense of belonging as PRC citizen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P4-4-3) Sense of belonging to respondent's own ethnic group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
調查問卷

您好！我們來自香港浸會大學，希望您能配合我們完成一項關於促進少數民族和諧發展的匿名調查。問卷中涉及到“吸引力”（你對它有多大興趣）、“重要性”（你認為它對你有多重要）、“認同感”（你是否同意其做法或滿意其表現）、“改善”（你認為目前表現程度和你對它的預期有多大差距）等概念，請注意區分含義。感謝您的配合！謝謝！

基本信息
民族：( ) 性別：( ) 年齡：( )

(P1)作爲內高班學生，內地對你的吸引力因素，可以具體細分為如下若干點。請根據其吸引力強弱程度（你對它有多感興趣），分別打分，如最無吸引力的打1分，最有吸引力打4分。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P1-1)中國文化</th>
<th>無吸引力 -------最有吸引力</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P1-1-1)中華傳統文化、民間習俗</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-1-2)中華現代文化，如電視、電影</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-1-3)中國其他少數民族的文化，如藏族的風俗、節慶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-1-4)你所屬族裔的風俗文化</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P1-2)對少數民族政策</th>
<th>無吸引力 -------最有吸引力</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P1-2-1)國家對少數民族的政策，如民族自治政策</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-2-2)現任政府對少數民族科教文衛事業的支持政策</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-2-3)國家價值觀，如強調國家統一、民族平等</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(P1-3)華人的價值觀</th>
<th>無吸引力 -------最有吸引力</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P1-3-1)華人的大家庭觀念，重親情，過年要全家團聚</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-3-2)尊老愛幼，扶助弱勢群體</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P1-3-3)凡事講求禮節，如問候長輩、婚喪嫁娶講求儀式</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(P1-4) 归属感

(P1-4-1)对“中国人为中国人的归属感”，如作为一个中国人感觉到自豪
(P1-4-2)对“中华人民共和国公民”的归属感，如愿意履行公民的纳税等义务，共享到公民应有的种种权利
(P1-4-3)对所属族裔的归属感，如对自身族裔的语言、风俗习惯而感觉到自豪

(P1-5) 外国文化

(P1-5-1)美国现代文化，如苹果平板电脑、百老汇音乐剧
(P1-5-2)日本现代文化，如日产丰田轿车、卡通片、日本电视剧
(P1-5-3)韩国现代文化，如韩国连续剧、音乐、韩国产电子产品、汽车品牌

(P2) 作为内高班学生，你对内地的吸引力因素，可以具体细分为如下若干点。请根据你认为的重要性程度，分别打分，如最不重要的打1分，最重要的打4分。

(P2-1) 中国文化

(P2-1-1)中国传统文化、民间习俗
(P2-1-2)中国现代文化，如电视、电影
(P2-1-3)中国其他少数民族的文化，如藏族的风俗、节日
(P2-1-4)你所属族裔的风俗文化

(P2-2) 对少数民族政策

(P2-2-1)国家对少数民族的政策，如民族自治政策
(P2-2-2)现任政府对少数民族科教文卫事业的支持政策
(P2-2-3)国家价值观，如强调国家统一、民族平等

(P2-3) 華人的價值觀

(P2-3-1)華人的大家庭觀念，重親情，過年要全家團聚
(P2-3-2)尊老愛幼，扶助弱勢群體
(P2-3-3)凡事講求禮節，如問候長輩、婚喪嫁娶講究儀式

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### (P2-4) 归属感

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>不重要 ------------------- 最重要</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P2-4-1)</td>
<td>對“中國人、中華民族”的歸屬感</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P2-4-2)</td>
<td>對“中華人民共和國公民”的歸屬感</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P2-4-3)</td>
<td>對所屬族裔的歸屬感</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (P2-5) 外國文化

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>不重要 ------------------- 最重要</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P2-5-1)</td>
<td>美國現代文化，如蘋果平板電腦、百老匯音樂劇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P2-5-2)</td>
<td>日本現代文化，如日產的豐田轎車、卡通片、日本電視劇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P2-5-3)</td>
<td>韓國現代文化，如韓國連續劇、流行音樂、韓國產的電子產品、汽車品牌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (P3) 作爲內高班學生，內地對你的吸引力因素，可以具體細分為如下若干點。請根據你對下述各點認同程度（你是否同意其做法或滿意其表現），分別打分，如對其表現和做法不認同的項目打 1 分，認為做的非常正確，極為認同的打 4 分。

#### (P3-1) 中國文化

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P3-1-1)</td>
<td>中華傳統文化、民間習俗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-1-2)</td>
<td>中華現代文化，如電視、電影</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P3-1-4)</td>
<td>你所屬族裔的風俗文化</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### (P3-2) 對少數民族政策

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(P3-2-1)</td>
<td>國家對少數民族的政策，如民族自治政策</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-2-2)</td>
<td>現任政府對少數民族科教文衛事業的支持政策</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P3-2-3)</td>
<td>國家價值觀，如強調國家統一、民族平等</td>
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### (P3-3) 華人的價值觀

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P3-3-1) 華人的大家庭觀念，重親情，過年要全家團聚
(P3-3-2) 尊老愛幼，扶助弱勢群體
(P3-3-3) 凡事講求禮節，如問候長輩、婚喪嫁娶講求儀式

### (P3-4) 归屬感

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(P3-4-1) 對“中國人、中華民族”的歸屬感，如為中華悠久歷史驕傲，作爲一個中國人感覺到自豪
(P3-4-2) 對“中華人民共和國公民”的歸屬感，如願意履行公民的納稅等義務，並享受到公民應有的種種權利
(P3-4-3) 對所屬族裔的歸屬感，如對自身族裔的語言、風俗習慣而感覺到自豪

### (P3-5) 外國文化

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>非常認同</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P3-5-1) 美國現代文化，如蘋果平板電腦、百老匯音樂劇
(P3-5-2) 日本現代文化，如日產的豐田轎車、卡通片、日本電視劇
(P3-5-3) 韓國現代文化，如韓國連續劇、流行音樂、韓國産的電子産品、汽車品牌

(P4) 作爲內高班學生，內地對你的吸引力因素，可以具體細分為如下若干點。請根據你認爲下述各點有待改進的程度（目前表現和你的期望之間差距有多大），分別打分，如已經滿意而最不需要改進的打 1 分，最需要改進的打 4 分。

#### (P4-1) 中國文化

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(P4-1-1) 中華傳統文化、民間習俗
(P4-1-2) 中華現代文化，如電視、電影
(P4-1-3) 中國其他少數民族的文化，如藏族的風俗、節慶
(P4-1-4) 你所屬族裔的風俗文化
### (P4-2) 對少數民族政策

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>亟待改進</th>
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(P4-2-1) 國家對少數民族的政策，如民族自治政策
(P4-2-2) 現任政府對少數民族科教文衛事業的支持政策
(P4-2-3) 國家價值觀，如強調國家統一、民族平等

### (P4-3) 對於改善歸屬感，下列方面政府政策是否需要改進

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>無須改進</th>
<th>亟待改進</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

(P4-3-1) 對“中國人、中華民族”的歸屬感，如為中華悠久歷史驕傲，作爲一個中國人感覺到自豪
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(P4-3-3) 對所屬族裔的歸屬感，如對自身族裔的語言、風俗習慣而感覺到自豪