

Xinjiang alongside the focus on Uyghurs, such as in David O'Brien's chapter. These cultural and ethnographic approaches are productively juxtaposed with data-driven chapters on demographics, health and development: James Leibold and Danielle Xiaodan Deng focus on residential segregation, Alessandra Cappelletti provides a powerful indictment of the development gap and the role played by Uyghur elites, while Hankiz Ekpar contributes informed insights into the looming HIV epidemic.

I would have welcomed a greater sense of integration between the different chapters, and a more leisurely introduction which made the links between them, but this is a very useful addition to the literature, which does a great deal to deepen our understanding of what life is like inside Xinjiang.

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*Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State*

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This book presents a nuanced history of ethnopolitical discourses and institutions in and about Xinjiang from the beginning of the Republican period through the early Mao era. Jacobs's work improves significantly on previous efforts by drawing critically on a range of new archival sources, including the normally impenetrable Xinjiang Regional Archives. It succeeds in illuminating the strategies that Chinese state actors and certain Uyghur and Kazakh leaders used in their often desperate attempts to maintain control and project legitimacy over the region's people. While we are accustomed to understanding Xinjiang's political figures through caricatures or hagiographies, Jacobs presents a history in which each one acts rationally according to their knowledge, goals and resources. The result is an at times gripping narrative of political wrangling as an imperial territory gradually became a modern autonomous region.

The core of the book is a narrative history that illustrates the mobilization of two basic strategies of government, both of which draw on or react to Qing imperial precedents and respond to discourses surrounding ethnic difference with regard to the sovereignty of the Chinese state. The "ethno-elitist" strategy co-opts local leaders, usually hereditary nobles, who possess their own legitimacy, while the "ethnopolulist" strategy seeks to establish the state as the authentic representative of the common people. In Jacobs's account, the region's first Republican governor mastered the ethno-elitist approach, and so used "indirect" rule to consolidate his own authority. When his successor attempted to do the same by projecting the meagre power of the Xinjiang state, the failure of his reform program demonstrated the limits of an activist, pseudo-imperial government by outsiders under conditions of scarcity.

Instead, a Soviet-backed governor introduced a successful ethnopolulist strategy supported by the resources and infrastructure of the Stalinist state. From the 1930s onward, Jacobs argues, the elite-popular dichotomy defined the politics of ethnicity and legitimacy in Xinjiang as a range of actors deployed one strategy or the other: in the 1940s, the Chinese Nationalists and the Soviets both competed for influence over Kazakh and Uyghur politicians, or over newly empowered local leaders, depending on which strategy they perceived to be expedient. Ultimately, neither power had a firm grip on the region's

elites, who came to understand their position between two states, both with imperial legacies and neo-imperial ambitions, not so much as a choice of loyalties but as a structure of opportunities through which to pursue their own goals.

Thus, Chinese politicians in Xinjiang strategized between the need to maintain control and to please the centre, local Turkic Muslim elites attempted to use the state and its resources to their own ends, and both groups made pawns of ordinary people. This persistent tendency for Xinjiang's rulers to promise what they cannot or do not care to deliver helps to explain the malaise of the region's politics: the post-1949 Chinese government produced a set of ethnopopulist "affirmative action" policies but maintained its reliance on elites. While both strategies were in play, both poorly disguised the state's overriding concern with Chinese sovereignty and resource extraction. Similarly, Xinjiang elites abroad employed ethnopopulist language to court Kazakh and Uyghur refugees. Their competing interests forged deep divisions within diaspora politics. Jacobs's work shows that, while elites and politicians have rhetorically supported autonomy and national self-determination, they have carefully avoided building institutions to actualize these ideals, save for those institutions that in reality support short-term ambitions.

While the narrative chapters are excellent, chapter one and the conclusion fall flat in their presentation of the book's broader significance. Throughout, Jacobs demonstrates that the persistence of imperial practices was the result of specific actions taken by real political actors. However, when it comes to analysis, the book falls frequently into confusing and *ad hoc* typological arguments, notably the conceptualization of a "national empire." The root of the problem appears to be a misappropriation of the challenge to think critically about "empire" as historical process, here transformed into a license to extend the term in whatever way is convenient for the argument. Moreover, the author has explicitly chosen to avoid the term "imperialism," ostensibly because it is politically sensitive, even though this word points to problems of ideology and power that are at the heart of the book and thus would be analytically useful. Because the book concludes that the modern People's Republic of China is an "empire," it is difficult to see what the taboo accomplishes.

Nevertheless, Jacobs's work succeeds admirably in presenting a new political history of the region in the twentieth century. Jacobs is to be lauded for answering a host of lingering questions in the field and for establishing a new basis for further scholarship. The case studies in each chapter illuminate moments in the region's history that have rarely been explored in such depth or with this level of regard for the real motivations of key actors. Moreover, the book resituates modern Xinjiang within modern China and Eurasia in powerful ways, making it of interest to scholars working beyond the region.

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*Building a New China, Colonizing Kokonor: Resettlement to Qinghai in the 1950s*

GREGORY ROHLF

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Qinghai Province was created by the Kuomintang (KMT) in 1928 when it was ruled over by the Muslim warlord General Ma Qi. Its remoteness precluded it from much