

## CHAPTER 5

# Qing Policies and Close Marriage: Transforming Kinship in Kashgar

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The original sin of anthropology was to divide the world into civilized and savage. The social systems of all those other people supposedly rested upon a foundation of blood relationships.

—Adam Kuper<sup>1</sup>

Modernization by creating new forms of wealth and rationalized state management did not undercut family and kin attempts to control the flow of resources, but helped foster new strategies of alliance and a new ideology of affinity stressing horizontal rather than vertical ties.

—David W. Sabean<sup>2</sup>

Kinship relations figure at the center of the social networks that provide job opportunities, social security and access to scarce resources, including government resources, for Uyghurs in contemporary Kashgar. What does that mean? What is the content of this concept? How is kinship understood and practiced? Acknowledging decades of debate on these issues and the three big theoretical complexes, descent theory, alliance theory and relatedness theory, kinship is certainly not biology, nor is it the cultural form biology takes, though that is the way it is often seen in modern, industrialized states.<sup>3</sup> In societies dominated by anonymous legal, bureaucratic and

<sup>1</sup> A. Kuper, “Changing the Subject: About Cousin Marriage, Among Other Things.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14.4 (2008): 717.

<sup>2</sup> D. Sabean, “From Clan to Kindred: Kinship and the Circulation of Property in Premodern and Modern Europe,” in *Heredity Produced: At the Crossroads of Biology, Politics, and Culture, 1500–1870*, eds. S. Müller-Wille and H. Rheinberger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007): 53–4.

<sup>3</sup> D. Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968).

markets structures, kinship is relegated to so called “private” areas of social life, while in societies that are not dominated by such structures, kinship often delivers the ordering principle for political and economic life. Here, kinship must be understood as non-bureaucratic social organization based on interpersonal relations. Kinship types and its different versions vary immensely geographically and historically.<sup>4</sup> In Kashgar, while genealogical imaginations of kinship and descent have some prominence in discourse, practice is dominated by a conceptualization of kinship rather defined by exchange, mutual obligation and affinity. Marriage is one important way of forging close ties of kinship and it is the ideal of a marriage to define and produce central relatives for a household. Much is invested into and expected from affine relations. This is closely connected to the much practiced close marriage and the relative frequency and wide tolerance of divorce in Kashgar. Households with whom close ties are upheld are more likely to succeed in being made close relatives through the marriage process and in case this fails, divorce is structurally speaking a logical consequence—to be followed by a new attempt. Despite the rampant transformations Kashgar has experienced over the past 150 years, the basic structure of these relations, concepts and practices have remained surprisingly consistent since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter presents a hypothesis of why that is. It asserts that the deeper structural relations between close marriage, frequent divorce and a kinship practice not centered around descent, are the historical product of a long and meandering transformation of kinship conceptualizations and practices in the region: the shift from a more patrilineal, descent based kinship system towards one rather based on filiation,<sup>5</sup> balanced reciprocity and close marriage. Key elements in this change were the early Qing administrative policies (1759–1864) that aimed at limiting the strength of local kinship groups and helped create a new kind of elite, the *begs* (Uy. *bäg*)<sup>6</sup> as well as the strengthening of an entrepreneurial money economy in Xinjiang. The new policies and the changing economic landscape of Qing Xinjiang resulted in a transformation of the existing patterns of kinship organization in Kashgar that stressed certain elements, like marriage alliance, and deemphasized others, like patrilineal descent. In the following, I develop a preliminary history of the development of kinship in Kashgar and its phases of transformation as an outline for further planned study.

<sup>4</sup> G. Pfeffer, *Verwandtschaft als Verfassung: Unbürokratische Muster öffentlicher Ordnung* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> While descent denotes the transitive connection between earlier and later generations through several links of parenthood, either through women, men or both, filiation means only the intransitive link between parents and their children.

<sup>6</sup> L. Newby, “The Begs of Xinjiang: Between Two Worlds.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London* 61 (1998): 278–97.

## 1. Outline of the Chapter

I will start out the chapter by briefly sketching the contemporary Uyghur kinship practice in Kashgar as I experienced and analyzed it in 2009–13. This practice is dominated by the importance of mutual obligations over genealogy, a cognatic rather than agnatic descent imagination, the structural importance of marriage, a high frequency of close marriage including kin marriage and all forms of cousin marriage as well as high divorce rates. In the chapter's first part I connect these elements in a structural analysis.

Second, I draw a comparison to kinship practice at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, drawing mainly on the work of Ildikó Bellér-Hann to show that the basic structure of the kinship practice demonstrates a high degree of continuity despite rampant political and economic transformations over the past century.

Third, I describe the historical development of kinship practice and conceptualization in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as described by historians such as David Sabean, Simon Teuscher, Gérard DeLille and Jon Mathieu. These historians identify a transformation from a vertically oriented kinship system based on descent to a horizontally oriented system based on marriage alliances and a surge in cousin marriages across all regions and classes in Europe. Both developments are strongly influenced by economic and political changes: the establishment of a new entrepreneurial culture, increased monetization, commodification and the gradually increasing penetration of society by bureaucratic state institutions.

I refer to the European transformations to, fourth, develop the hypothesis that a comparable shift took place in Altishahr/Kashgaria (contemporary southern Xinjiang) around roughly the same time as a result of the Qing conquest and its stronger integration of the area into its administrative bureaucracy and the strongly monetized Chinese economy. Of special importance were the integration of local elites into the administrative system and Qing measures to break local political loyalties centered around groups defined genealogically. The formative time, I argue, was the relatively stable period of Qing rule between 1759 and 1864.

Fifth, I briefly account for the changes I consider to be particularly relevant to kinship transformation after 1864 and conclude by drawing up some of the changes taking place contemporarily to pose the question whether we might currently be approaching a more profound change of Uyghur kinship practice and its basic structures in southern Xinjiang.

## 2. Kinship in Contemporary Kashgar

I stayed in Kashgar for a total of 13 months between 2010 and 2013 to collect

material for my PhD thesis. I conducted participant observation and “practice interviews” amongst mainly lower middle class non-cadre and some cadre Uyghur families in the urban and semi-urban areas in and around Kashgar. In my PhD thesis, I approached the complexities of the Uyghur marriage process in Kashgar, including, but not reducible to, wedding celebrations. The process involves over twenty distinct steps, each of which has several significances or functions, often pertaining to the production and reproduction of various social relations, many of which are expressed in the idiom of kinship.

Amongst Uyghurs in Kashgar no descent groups (lineages, clans, tribes) play any role in social organization. For old established families a weak notion of *jämät* (descent category) exists discursively, but has no ritual or economic significance. Most of the local interest in pedigrees and genealogies is relatively recent and strongly inspired by ethno-nationalist narratives about discovering a nation’s (*millät*) own past along genealogical lines. Instead, strong sibling groups including both brothers and sisters and their spouses arranged around the parental house (*chong öy*) are central social and economic units and the most important relations beyond this group are forged through marriage and exchange, often within the neighborhood (*mähällä*) rather than with more distant genealogical relatives. In general, despite a synecdochical focus on birth-relations in the terms denoting the category of relatives (*uruq-tughqan, qan-qerindash*), in practice kinship is defined rather through mutual obligation and reciprocity. Similarly, some local ideology stresses descent on the father’s side while practice is very cognatic and no differentiation is made between mother’s and father’s side in the kinship terminology. Three phenomena characteristic of Uyghur kinship have been particularly noted by foreign anthropologists and are of central significance to understanding kinship practice in contemporary Kashgar: frequent close marriage (including cousin marriage), the central importance of affinal relatives and frequent divorce. If we approach the matter structurally, the relations between these phenomena become apparent: Marriage is preferably conducted within close relations (genealogically or non-genealogically calculated) because affines are ideally to become the most important relatives beyond the sibling group. Unrelated or socially distant people have little chance of becoming familiar and trusted enough to sufficiently fulfill this role which entails a high degree of financial and labor support. The bride is not transferred between the two families, but retains many rights and duties in her natal household. She is an important element in bridging the two households, ideally eventually uniting them into one family. This takes time and effort. It is not done just with the wedding, but through ritualized exchange relations and customary obligations that continue way beyond the wedding ceremony. These include not just the households, but also their families, neighbors and wider social networks. At the birth of the first child a part of the marriage is symbolically reenacted and arguably the marriage process has not been finalized before this point.

Genealogical kinship ties carry little eminent significance in themselves, which is why, in order to remain relevant and central, they have to be reconfirmed through gift-giving and other exchange. Extensive economic cooperation and labor help are ways to do this, but the most efficient and symbolically significant way is a marriage between the households. The close relation between them is reconfirmed and strengthened through the added affinity. Marriage confirms kinship and marriage constructs kinship. This entails elaborate exchanges of gifts, hospitality and courtesies and many expectations. It is a fragile process of communication very susceptible to breakdown. If the two families do not succeed in making each other central relatives by demonstrating their willingness and ability to offer the right kind of support and cultivating the right kind of sentiments, divorce is a likely option. Thus, divorce is often initiated by the family rather than the married individuals themselves. This structural logic is not in itself the cause of the high frequency of divorce, but it plays a big role in making divorce socially acceptable. Divorce is seen as a logical consequence of certain regrettable circumstances, an individually dramatic but sensible way to overcome certain family crises. Divorcees are not stigmatized and remarriage is easy and expected for both genders, since new alliances can and should be forged and since to local understanding an adult person, male or female, is not complete without a spouse. Kinship practice can thus be said to be centered around exchange and marriage rather than descent. Marriage is instrumental in creating close kinship including the social and economic obligations related to this category.

My PhD research was mainly based on ethnographic fieldwork, with all the difficulties this entails in this part of China. What I identified, described and analyzed was a particular moment in time of Uyghur kinship practice in Kashgar. Only in fragmented glimpses did I manage to approach the question of its historical genesis and transformation. The particular practices I describe in my thesis define but a fleeting moment in a historical sequence of transformations. Indeed, with the introduction of new policies and measures following the declared state of emergency in May 2014, the massive modernization policies pushing for economic development in Xinjiang since 2000 (*Xibu dakaiifa* 西部大开发), the 2010 declaration of Kashgar as a Special Economic Zone, and the now developing One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR, *Yidai yilu* 一带一路), this moment has probably largely passed already. Still, studying this moment provides valuable insight into larger processes of changes, constants and transformations. The diverse contemporary elements of Uyghur kinship practice and the logic of marriage have significant relations to each other and derive their meaning at least in part from these relations, but they also have significant relations to institutions and developments of the past, both as a system and as individual parts. Any given “whole” of this system is—besides being shifting, open and unbalanced—as chronological as it is synchronic, as historic as it is

structural.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, as a logical consequence of my observations in contemporary Kashgar, the question arises: how and when did these structures come about? And what were the roles of state institutions, economic change and foreign influences in their development? To approach these questions, I compare the knowledge I have of contemporary Uyghur kinship with published works on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and situate this within a kinship studies theoretical framework drawing on the three major schools of kinship study: descent theory, alliance theory and relatedness theory.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Kashgar in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Today, as in the decades before, Kashgar is undergoing rapid transformations. Yet, on a structural level we detect a surprising consistency in kinship practice over the last at least 100 years. When comparing the descriptions of social structure, kinship and life cycle rituals presented by Ildikó Bellér-Hann in her seminal book based on archival material from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the similarities to contemporary practices is striking. While the symbolism of marriage celebrations in Kashgar and to some degree the elements and their sequence have changed according to political and religious influences, the basic logic of marriage and kinship practice seems to have remained remarkably constant.<sup>9</sup> Frequent close kin marriage, as described by Bellér-Hann,<sup>10</sup> has increasingly given way to other less genealogically weighted forms of close marriage following the prohibition of cousin marriage in the marriage laws of 1950 and 1980,<sup>11</sup> but marriage and affinity were then as now central to the definition and production of close relatives. Marriage allied households into one family forging essential ties of mutual economic obligation. Married women retained duties and rights in their natal home and could not easily be moved too far away from their parents. Marriage's function of joining the households into one family and the inherently balanced reciprocity essential to this was also reflected in the marriage prestations. Both bridewealth and dowry were important and both sides

<sup>7</sup> M. Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): 136–50.

<sup>8</sup> E. Viveiros de Castro, "The Gift and the Given: Three Nano-essays on Kinship and Magic." In *Kinship and Beyond: The Genealogical Model Reconsidered*, eds. J. Leach and S. Bamford (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009): 237–68.

<sup>9</sup> I. Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters in Xinjiang 1880–1949: Towards a Historical Anthropology of the Uyghur* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>11</sup> J. Engel, "Marriage in the People's Republic of China: Analysis of a New Law." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46.4 (1984): 955–61.

contributed significantly to the wedding expenses then as now.<sup>12</sup> Retaining this alliance beyond the death of one of the spouses was the basis for the moderately frequent practices of both levirate and sororate.<sup>13</sup> A century ago, as well as today, a practice of exchange-based kinship dominated practice over a linguistic focus on birth, descent was understood mainly cognatically despite an agnatically inclined explicit ideology and serial monogamy including frequent divorce and the ease of remarrying for both genders were normal, though not normative.<sup>14</sup> Then as now, “marriage was regarded as a project aimed at making community,”<sup>15</sup> family and kinship.<sup>16</sup>

How did this system come to be? How did it develop historically? How has the development been influenced by political and economic transformations in the region? And why did some elements change a lot while others remained relatively constant? My understanding and treatment of kinship is based on two important theoretical prerequisites that may seem self-evident, but that I nonetheless want to spell out explicitly because it is somewhat at odds with normal Western commonsense understanding of kinship—and the way kinship is often treated in scholarly literature on Central Eurasia: First, kinship is not a question of nature or biology, but is a cultural system of categorization, a type of social organization including and ordering economic and political issues.<sup>17</sup> Second, Uyghur kinship is not an isolated, self-contained acephalous system of social structuring, but has been bound up in states, empires, markets, trade and other not-merely-local political and economic structures for centuries. The dichotomy of local vs. state institutions does not apply in any straight-forward way here. These institutions have been formed in dialogue with each other, constituting each other.<sup>18</sup> This is true for the kinship system as well as for other so-called “informal structures” and “local customs.” David Sneath convincingly argues that social structure and kinship on the Kazakh steppes before Russian colonization was in no way “primordial,”<sup>19</sup> but rather the result of historical processes including the formation and dissolution of states. This insight very much applies to

<sup>12</sup> Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*: 252.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>14</sup> L. Benson, “A Much Married Woman: Marriage and Divorce in Xinjiang 1850–1950.” *The Muslim World* 83.3-4 (1993): 227–47; Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*: 259.

<sup>15</sup> Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*: 278.

<sup>16</sup> A. Rakhman, R. Hämdulla, and Sh. Khushtar, eds. *Uyghur örp-adätleri* (Ürümchi: Shinjang yashlar-ösümlär nāshriyati, 2008): 128; Ä. Qorghān, *Uyghurlarda pārhiz* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khālq nāshriyiti, 2007): 104.

<sup>17</sup> M. Sahlins, *What Kinship Is: And Is Not* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); J. Carsten, *After Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> M. Strathern, “Kinship and Economy: Constitutive Orders of a Provisional Kind.” *American Ethnologist* 12.2 (1985): 191–209.

<sup>19</sup> D. Sneath, “Tribe, Ethnos, Nation: Rethinking Evolutionist Social Theory and Representations of Nomadic Inner Asia.” *Ab Imperio* 4 (2009): 80–1, 90–4.



southern Xinjiang too—as well as for many Western and other social contexts.

#### 4. Kinship Transformation in Europe: From Agnates to Affines and Cousin Marriage

Before outlining my hypothesis of the development of Uyghur kinship over the past two hundred years, I want to illustrate a similar development that has been much more closely studied and which has inspired my own research: the transformation of kinship in Europe around the same time. In the early second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century kinship as the core focus of anthropological research was challenged by the suggestion that it was based upon ethnocentric and orientalist premises.<sup>20</sup> As a result it declined and gave way to other theoretical and analytical emphases. Also, the binary imagination of Western cultures having families in state societies and non-Western cultures being structured by kinship in communities was challenged and critically placed within its historical context.<sup>21</sup> It was recognized that European societies too had once had centrally structuring kinship systems before more bureaucratic systems of social organization permeated more and more of daily life. At this point many anthropologists expected globalization and modernization to soon marginalize contemporary kinship systems everywhere. Therefore, as anthropology moved away from kinship, historians moved in and shifted the focus from synchronic structures to diachronic developments.<sup>22</sup>

David Sabean, Jon Mathieu and others describe a change in kinship practice and conceptualization taking place in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries across Europe.<sup>23</sup> They note a shift in emphasis from vertical to horizontal kinship relations, i.e. from genealogical connections (as we see in pedigrees or genealogies across generations) to affinal ones (through marriage within the same generation). Sabean connects these changes to transformations in the wider political and economic environment, including the rise of a more strongly monetized, increasingly capitalist economy<sup>24</sup> and the gradually increasing integration of villages and communities into a

<sup>20</sup> Schneider, *American Kinship*; D. Schneider, *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); E. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (London: Athlone Press, 1961); R. Needham, *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971).

<sup>21</sup> J. Goody, *The East in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 162–204.

<sup>22</sup> Kuper, “Changing the Subject”: 727.

<sup>23</sup> D. Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); J. Mathieu, “Kin Marriages: Trends and Interpretations from the Swiss Example,” in *Kinship in Europe. Approaches to Long Term Development*, eds. D. Sabean, S. Teuscher, and J. Mathieu (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007): 211–30.

<sup>24</sup> E. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); Kuper, “Changing the Subject.”



bureaucratic state administration.<sup>25</sup> As a part of the state's advance, political and economic loyalties tied to genealogical kinship relations are targeted as "nepotistic" and "personalistic." "Vetternwirtschaft" (cousin economy) appears in this discourse as a derogatory term for such relations. Sabean's sources from Neckarhausen in today's southwestern Germany reveal telling evidence for the shift in kinship practice:<sup>26</sup> Local officials in the village were being accused of nepotism, but the accusations were often dismissed, because "no violation of the letter of the law" could be identified.<sup>27</sup> The involved individuals were not related through blood but through a closely intertwined network of marriage alliances. In other words, the local economic and politically saturated kinship practice had adapted to the restrictions put on it by the state administration and circumvented them by new means.

As the importance of certain categories of relatives decreased and increased respectively, so the local conceptualization of kinship altered significantly. Jon Mathieu demonstrates such a shift in conceptualizing kinship by contrasting two historians' very different conclusions pertaining to the importance of kinship in Europe in this historical phase:<sup>28</sup> While Gérard DeLille asserts that kinship lost in importance after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is Sabean's view that it actually became more important. When approaching the matter more closely we realize that both are right. Yet, the kinds of "kinship" they talk about differ. Sabean impressively shows how the European kinship model of a cognatic family formed by the marriage of a couple and situated in the network of both wife and husband's relatives evolved within the changing economic and political environment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whereas DeLille substantiates the disappearance of a more agnatically biased and community-based understanding of kinship that went before. What was thus far understood as "kinship" slowly disappeared while new forms of closest social relations became increasingly relevant. These new forms constituted a type of "kinship" much closer to the Western understanding today, which is exactly a product of these developments.

In Europe, these developments were accompanied by a strong surge in kin marriage, most particularly cousin marriage during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cousin marriages have become widespread all over Europe throughout all classes.<sup>29</sup> According to British anthropologist Adam Kuper, this has at

<sup>25</sup> D. Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* (New York: Melville House, 2015); J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*: 38–40, 190.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Mathieu, "Kin Marriages."

<sup>29</sup> Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*; Kuper, "Changing the Subject."

least two immediate causal reasons: 1) a new culture of family entrepreneurs securing their economic labor and assets by marrying close to “keep the wealth within the family” and strengthening their business networks and 2) the emotional structure of the new bourgeois European family.<sup>30</sup> Both of these reasons have some validity when looking at Uyghur close marriages in southern Xinjiang a century ago and today. Indeed similar, though by no means identical, developments seem to have preceded these two contexts of preferred, unspecific cousin marriage. Like some Uyghurs from Kashgar today, Kashgarlik Turkis in 1913 and German villagers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

Scots abroad, Berber villagers, Pakistani and East European Jewish migrants, Tswana aristocrats, and Victorian elites marry cousins for different reasons, but there are clearly common threads in the marriage strategies in all these cases. However, the analysis of marriage choices is not enough. Marriage preferences have structural consequences.<sup>31</sup>

I am interested in these structural consequences for kinship practice in southern Xinjiang seen in an historical perspective. The predominance of cousin marriage and the importance of affinity described by Sabean and Matthieu remind of the basic structure of kinship practice and logic of marriage identified by both Bellér-Hann and me in Kashgar. And indeed, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the two areas were experiencing similar economic and political transformations that may very well have produced a similar social structure in these geographically distant Eurasian agricultural contexts. One of the things that inspired me to approach this research was the experience of reading Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* during the last research phase for my PhD thesis in Kashgar in the summer of 2013. I was struck by the parallels and similarities of the logics and reasons behind the kinship practice and marriage strategies I was trying to come to terms with in Kashgar and the narratives of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain I was being presented with by Austen.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kuper, “Changing the Subject”: 728–30.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.

<sup>32</sup> Many economic considerations of households pertaining to marriages as well as individual sentiments of hopes of good matches for oneself and the children described by Austen in 19<sup>th</sup> century England’s high society circles, seem very familiar from a contemporary Uyghur Kashgari perspective. Some parallels are striking, such as the self-evident way in which the siblings of a spouse immediately become “brothers” and “sisters” both in terms of address and reference, the joy and enthusiasm with which marriages between one’s own friends or relatives are mediated and the general economic significance of marriage and in-laws. Other elements are less similar, such as the inability of daughters in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain to inherit even in the absence of a son and the general strong agnatic and patrilineal bias. The comparison shows that this logic of affines being central kin is not directly contradictory to a stronger patrilineal and agnatic practice and ideology in certain parts of social life. This is the case to a varying

## 5. A Similar Development in Xinjiang

### 5. 1. *The Hypothesis*

The hypothesis of this chapter is that a similar shift as the one DeLille, Mathieu and Sabeen describe for Europe, occurs around the same time in kinship practice and conceptualization in south Xinjiang (Altishahr/Kashgaria). This produces the patterns observed by the Swedish missionaries and Gunnar Jarring in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and that I have identified many basics of a century later. Also, like in Europe, this development is connected to the establishment of a state administration that includes local elites and the increasing commodification of the economy, both consequences of the area's conquest and integration into the Qing dynasty. The Qing introduced a number of administrative measures that altered and re-channeled the local political structures and thus kinship. They connected the local elites to the state administrative system thus creating, as Laura Newby has impressively demonstrated, a new local elite of *begs*.<sup>33</sup> These officials depended on the Qing administration for their authority and standing. They were empowered by the state but also answerable to it and to some degree directly and indirectly managed by it. They became part of the administrative system, met with new limitations and a new strategic field for political maneuvering and thus adapted their own household strategies to the new circumstances in order to compliment rather than compete with the new structures. This, according to the hypothesis here laid forth, included adapting strategies of marriage, reciprocal gift giving and labor contributions as well as political organization. All of these fields had a very direct impact on kinship structure as they were all connected to and partly managed through kinship.<sup>34</sup> The Qing rulers and bureaucrats were acutely aware of the danger of competing local political structures inhabiting and dominating the bureaucratic apparatus to take advantage of state resources while promoting their own agendas and institutions, so they took precautions to counter such tendencies. This can be compared to anti-corruption measures today. The avoidance law, in effect also in other parts of the empire, presents the most prominent example of such precautions. This law stipulated that

degree in both contemporary Kashgar, 19<sup>th</sup>-century England and other social contexts in contemporary and historical Central Asia, where I suppose the logic of making affines central kin and thus the structural meaning of affinity is very relevant despite a stronger agnatic bias and little scholarly attention.

<sup>33</sup> Newby, "The Begs of Xinjiang."

<sup>34</sup> J. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (London: Hurst & Co, 2007): 100–1. A key precondition for this argument is to recognize explicitly that kinship in Central Asia is not an isolated sphere distinct from politics and economy, but rather constitutes a mode of structuring society entailing both of these two. See Sneath, "Tribe, Ethnos, Nation."

administrative and political office within the Qing system could not be hereditary,<sup>35</sup> thereby avoiding lineages' direct, long-term, institutionalized appropriation of the state institutions. The local elites were included into the administrative structures not just in the sense of individuals becoming cadres, but also through largely upholding local social institutions within the new framework. As most other bureaucratic systems in Eurasia, the Qing bureaucracy focused its preemptive measures on genealogical connections like tribes, clans and lineages, i.e. political collective categories drawing on real or imagined blood ties, or rather, groupings using the language and practice of genealogy to structure their political and economic organization. We can here return, briefly, to Sabeen's story of the accusations of nepotism above to imagine a Kashgari *beg*, well situated in high office within the Qing administrative system, being accused of promoting his own kin and helping them to political offices, but the investigation concluding that no evidence of such a misconduct could be found, since this *beg* was not genealogically related (related through blood) to those promoted, while everyone on the ground knows the intimate connections between these men, upheld by ritual gift givings and the intermarriage of their children. The avoidance laws also prevented higher *begs* from serving in their home district.<sup>36</sup> Such families quite likely used marriage alliances as a strategy to gain foothold in new communities and were probably sought for by locals. This, too, made marriage alliance more central to household strategies and political considerations.

### 5. 2. *Cousin Marriage: Genealogy or Affinity?*

As causal factors for the surge in cousin marriages in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kuper mentions the emergence of a new entrepreneurial culture and a new need for financing of family businesses without a developed banking system. Similar developments seem to be identifiable among Uyghur traders and artisans in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Altishahr/Kashgaria/Xiyu set in motion by surging trade and provisioning for the stationed Qing garrisons<sup>37</sup> and the gradual expansion of the strongly monetized Chinese economy<sup>38</sup> following the Qing conquest of the area. As described above, cousin marriage was widespread in Xinjiang in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early

<sup>35</sup> Newby, "The Begg of Xinjiang": 289–90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>37</sup> Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*: 103, 212; D. Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016): 41, 61.

<sup>38</sup> M. Cohen, *Kinship, Contract, Community, and State: Anthropological Perspectives on China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005): 223–51.

20<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>39</sup> and still is today, especially in the south.<sup>40</sup> Cousin marriage at first sight seems to speak rather to the significance of genealogical ties, but this is not necessarily the case. Firstly, the weakened genealogical links were those beyond the sibling group of living active participants of social life, i.e. of adult parents, their siblings, their children and the siblings' children who would be cousins to each other. In other words, the significance of descent (a transitive connection connecting several generations beyond personal acquaintance) for social structure and economic and political loyalties was weakened, not that of filiation (the connection between parents and children and thus indirectly between siblings). Secondly, cousin marriage actually in some cases documents the weakening of the principle of descent, since a marriage between the children of siblings or cousins seems to have become necessary to cement their relation. The recognized genealogical relation in itself does not guarantee anything unless it is reaffirmed, practically through mutual help and exchange or even made more officially and symbolically salient through the marriage of their children. The metaphorical roots of Uyghur words for kinship, are quite genealogically laden while their use in quotidian Uyghur speech often lacks that meaning. This suggests that the central idiom of closeness has switched from that of genealogy (which the state sanctions) to that of marriage (which the state does not start to sanction before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, neither in Europe nor in China or Central Asia). As a point in contrast, we can compare this logic to that of the local Hokkien on south Taiwan in the 1970s of whom Myron Cohen writes that affinity "is too important to be wasted on kinsmen."<sup>41</sup> Despite featuring an entrepreneurial and competitive environment of family businesses of tobacco cash cropping and despite the absence of any prohibition against marrying kin, these farmers would restrain from doing so as they did not want to "waste" the socially connecting potential of marriage on people to whom they were already connected through blood. Here, unlike in the case from Kashgar and Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, kinship practice was structured by patrilineages and the agnates were secured as close relatives to be relied on without the marriage. For Uyghurs in Kashgar the opposite is the case: affinity is too important to be wasted on strangers and as genealogy merits little

<sup>39</sup> Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*: 256; T. Hoppe, *Die ethnischen Gruppen Xinjiangs: Kulturunterschiede und interethnische Beziehungen* (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde Hamburg, 1998): 134; G. Jarring, *Gustav Raquette and Qasim Akhun's letters to Kamil Efendi. Ethnological and Folkloristic Materials from Southern Sinkiang* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1975): 12.

<sup>40</sup> J. Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism along China's Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 108; R. Steenberg, "'Keep the Wealth within the Family': Cousin Marriage and Swedish Uncles in Kashgar." In *Kashgar Revisited: Uyghur Studies in Memory of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring*, eds. I. Bellér-Hann, J. Sugawara, and B. Schlüter (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 266.

<sup>41</sup> M. Cohen, *House United, House Divided: The Chinese Family in Taiwan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976): 43.

authority in itself the combination of both or the combination of marriage with some other form of closeness is the most promising for a strong family structure. Such a structure becomes particularly salient within the increasingly competitive money economy where raising funds (capital accumulation) has become a central prerequisite for success. Also, as genealogy has lost its defining power of political loyalties, marriage, before a strategic asset predominantly for the rich and powerful, brokering power relations with neighboring kingdoms, villages or communities, now becomes a necessary tool for every household to situate itself within the prevailing social and political structures. It indeed becomes a way of defining the communities themselves rather than just negotiating their relations as set groupings. Cousin marriage, in other words, is a way to consolidate the family as an economic and political unit, in the light of crumbling genealogically defined lineage structures.

“The family,” is a case in point. Whereas it seems that the genealogical structures existing before had more of a stress on lineage (*jāmāt*)<sup>42</sup> and less on family (*a'ilā*) this slowly changed—again much as in Europe. Who is family and who is inside the family came to be defined not mainly genealogically, but increasingly through marriage. Thus “inside the family” became defined through a marriage in which the affines fulfill their duties of being the closest relatives beyond the sibling group and came to constitute “the family.” Most often that was the case when some degree of direct or indirect exchange relations were already established between the two families, a relation usually phrased in the idiom of closeness (*vāqinliq*) or kinship (*tughqandarchiliq*) in modern Uyghur. This increasingly important and relatively flexible “family,” became the central economic unit, within which wealth was managed and kept. It became a place of trans-generational capital accumulation as entrepreneurship both in trade and in the crafts flourished in the early Qing period up until the Taiping rebellion and as Xinjiang’s economy became increasingly monetized and integrated into the Chinese economy and the expanding international industrial commodity market.<sup>43</sup>

## 6. The Historical Development of Uyghur Kinship

### 6. 1. From Vertical to Horizontal

What did the kinship system look like before Qing conquest? I admittedly do not really know. Yet, I have reason to believe that it was more heavily genealogically based, as Sufi families with long pedigrees and the strongly patrilineal Junghar

<sup>42</sup> Y. Tughluq, *Qa'idā Yolsunlirimiz* (Ürümchi: Shinjiang universitāti nashriyati, 2009): 548–9.

<sup>43</sup> Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*: 102–5; Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*: 41.

Mongols had been the dominating political forces in the centuries before. Also, the “Uyghurs” are known as a nomadic people reaching the Tarim Basin from Altai in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and this nomadic population is more than likely to have had a genealogical organization and lineage exogamy (such as the Kirghiz and Kazakh *jeti ata*, or “seven fathers rule”) at the time of their arrival and beyond.<sup>44</sup> The late Kashgarian Uyghur folklorist Yarmuhämmät Tahir Tughluq attests to the Turki vocabulary in the Tarim Basin recorded by Mahmud Kashgari in the 11<sup>th</sup> century being more linear and clearly distinguishing between maternal and paternal relatives.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, we find hints that more patrilineal structures must have existed amongst Uyghurs in Xinjiang not too long ago in the kinship practices and terminology of some parts of Xinjiang today though, where a stronger genealogical bias has been upheld and where, unlike in Kashgar, some maternal and paternal relatives (the respective uncles and aunts) are referred to using different terms. This is particularly the case in northern and eastern Xinjiang (Ghulja and Qumul). Also, the most used generic terms for kinship in Uyghur (*tughqandarchiliq*, *qerindashchiliq*, *qandashchiliq*)<sup>46</sup> point to a genealogical bias that no longer defines practice but is still clearly recognisable in the vocabulary.<sup>47</sup> At the time of Qing conquest in 1759, thus, most likely, the oases had a local social organization relatively strongly influenced by genealogical patterns and ideologies. On the basis of my still insufficient evidence and some qualified speculation, we can, therefore, put forward a hypothesis of the following development of Uyghur kinship.

As a general tendency, the kinship practice experiences a shift from a stronger descent centered organization along genealogy to one more strongly focused on marriage alliance and other exchange. This development was enhanced by the establishment of Qing administration and the stronger integration into the Chinese money economy. An initial slow shift in emphasis from genealogical (lineages, clans and tribes) towards spatial categories (neighborhoods, villages and oases) is likely to have started with the settlement and pursuit of irrigation agriculture of Uyghur tribes in the oases of the Tarim Basin. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the gradual spread of Islam in the region, starting in Artush and Kashgar, had a strong influence on the

<sup>44</sup> Yet, they were not the first arrivals to the region which was populated by sedentary speakers of Indo-European languages. We know next to nothing about their kinship system, nor do we know much about the integration or merger of these and many other populations that have influenced the social organization of the settled Turkic inhabitants of the Tarim Basin before the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>45</sup> Tughluq, *Qa'idä Yolsunlirimiz*: 548–9.

<sup>46</sup> All of these terms denote kinship, stressing the shared birth, womb and blood respectively.

<sup>47</sup> Bellér-Hann, “Women, Work and Procreation Beliefs in Two Muslim Communities,” in *Conceiving Persons: Ethnographies of Procreation and Fertility, and Growth*, eds. P. Heady and P. Loizos (London: Athlone Press, 1999): 124–7; A. Häbibulla, *Uyghur etnograpişi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang khäliq näshriyati, 2000): 244.



social structure as well. Quite possibly it is the introduction of the option of patrilateral parallel cousin (FBD) marriage, preferred in many Arabic contexts, into the pre-existing Turkic exogamous patrilineal structure that contributed to obliterating the terminological difference between maternal and paternal uncles in Kashgar (*tagha*: both FB and MB), as the former unmarriageable FBD's father, the "FB" now became a classificatory "possible father-in-law," a term up until then connoting "MB."

The transformation from genealogical to marriage-based kinship has not been a simple linear development, but rather a meandering and continuous shifting of kinship practice and conceptualization as the political and economic circumstances changed. During both the rule of the Sufi lineages (*khojas*) and the Junghar Mongols the lineage orders of the ruling classes supported the merger of political legitimacy with genealogical descent. During this time genealogy provided an important idiom for expressing belonging and political unity, while marriage expressed and forged political alliances between such units. After the Qing conquest of the area in 1759, it was relatively quickly integrated into the empire's administrative system. As in other non-Han areas outside the 18 provinces that made up the core land of the dynasty, this meant that local institutions were to a large degree upheld, while their responsible office holders were given office, rank in the bureaucratic hierarchy, political legitimacy and to some degree emoluments. This changed the power base within communities by re-regulating the access to political office and legitimacy along criteria laid out by state administration rather than being decided through descent or other local mechanisms. Like so many other bureaucratic systems, including the European states developing around the same time, the Manchus, who were used to political structures and kinship conceptions following mainly patrilineal descent, went out of their way to ensure that succession to office and power was not decided along principles of descent and lineage. The avoidance law mentioned above<sup>48</sup> was but the most visible expression of a more general change in political atmosphere aimed at decoupling kinship structures from political power while retaining the basic functions of local administration and economy (including most primarily irrigation). Newby describes how this bureaucratic system gave rise to a new local elite, the *begs*, as a category defined by state office and sanctioned by state recognition, recruited from the local nobility. The authority of the *begs* came to depend on Qing power to such a degree that when the Qing state weakened and the *begs* started to question and resist its authority, they ended up undermining their own position in society.<sup>49</sup> But while this change did have a deep impact on local society and probably did break with the inheritance of political office along descent lines, it certainly did not succeed in decoupling kinship from political power. Rather, I argue, like in

<sup>48</sup> Newby, "The Begs of Xinjiang": 289.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

Neckarhausen described above,<sup>50</sup> it provoked a change in kinship practice to accommodate the new laws and structures. The practice and notion of kinship started to change from one organized around descent, to one more focused on marriage alliance. Marriage had been an important way of forging political alliance between noble families in the region for a long time,<sup>51</sup> but now it became important in defining who was family in the first place. Influenced by a system of power distribution that limited political succession through descent and thus limited the importance of genealogical kinship, marriage became more instrumental in defining the basic units of society. Kinship practice, as a way of ordering local society both politically and economically, adapted to the changed political environment.

The shift from vertically to horizontally oriented kinship implies a paradigm shift in the understanding of kinship that curiously parallels the theoretical shift in anthropological analysis from an analytical approach based implicitly on descent theory to one more susceptible to the insights of alliance theory and the new kinship theories of relatedness.<sup>52</sup> The valuable differences introduced by these two latter strands of theory to the understanding of Uyghur kinship in southwestern Xinjiang are: 1) the insight of relatedness theory that non-genealogical kinship based on mutual exchange and dependency can be seen as “real kinship” in a literal and not merely metaphorical sense—as it would be in a Western understanding.<sup>53</sup> 2) The insight of alliance theory that marriage arrangements and marriage rules are not necessarily secondary to the organization of society, merely connecting pre-existing groups (families, lineages, clans) defined through descent, but can be the central structuring force in constituting these groups and their boundaries in the first place.<sup>54</sup>

Kinship practice and concepts did not change from one day to the other, but between 1759 and Ya‘qub Beg’s reign starting in 1865, the region experienced about 100 years of relative political stability in which the changes that the Qing bureaucracy and economy introduced into the local social fields slowly became imprinted into the local habitus, institutions and concepts. I believe these 100 years to have been instrumental for the switch in emphasis from vertical to horizontal kinship, i.e. of the decline of descent as a structuring force of society and the rising importance of marriage in constructing family and kinship, including the logic of close marriage and frequent divorce in Uyghur society in West Tarim. I also believe that this structure has provided a basic constant of kinship practice and conceptualization over the 150 years that have passed since, despite the rampant political and economic

<sup>50</sup> Sabeau, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*.

<sup>51</sup> Y. Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2003): 14, 32, 34, 42, 60.

<sup>52</sup> Viveiros de Castro, “The Gift and the Given”; Carsten, *After Kinship*.

<sup>53</sup> Schneider, *American Kinship*; Schneider, *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*; Needham, *Rethinking Kinship*.

<sup>54</sup> L. Dumont, *An Introduction to Two Theories of Social Anthropology: Descent Groups and Marriage Alliance*, transl. R. Parkin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

changes the region has witnessed. Though by no means causally responsible for this constancy, two framing conditions for it that have remained influential and almost undisrupted since early Qing rule have been 1) the presence of a bureaucratic state administration incorporating local institutional structures and 2) a market based money economy. Today, as a century and a half ago, the state administration only functions efficiently because it has incorporated certain local structures and can depend on the collaboration of locally respected office holders. In turn these individuals, like the *begs*, depend on their empowerment and the provision of resources by the state for their status and power within local communities. Similarly, the market based money economy depends on the ability of families or “houses” to accumulate funds to invest in trade and artisanship that support close ties between households in mutual economic dependencies with a certain degree of choice of “close relatives”, something not provided by genealogical relations but very possible in marriage and gift giving.

This could possibly be formulated into a more general historical hypothesis stating that it is not primarily the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life that makes descent and lineages less important in Central Asia, but rather the integration of local institutions and power relations into the fringes of bureaucratic administrative systems of empires and states as well as into the developing capitalist world system. Also, when looking at the time period from the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we might suggest that this tendency of a shift from vertical to horizontal emphasis in kinship reflects a Eurasian or even global trend of proliferation of the bureaucratic state<sup>55</sup> and entrepreneurial capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

## 6. 2. *Kashgaria versus Qumul and Turfan*

This chapter has primarily been concerned with southern Xinjiang, especially the western part of the Tarim Basin. Xinjiang’s Uyghurs live across a wide area and despite never having been the object of any explicit study, much evidence points to the kinship terminologies and practices varying greatly across the region, especially between the western and eastern (and to some extent northern) parts. One visible difference is the far more widespread use of pedigrees and genealogies (*jāmāt namā*) in the eastern than in the western areas. In Qumul some pedigrees are even published through official publishers. They are designed as classical patrilineal genealogies only displaying male ascendants structured according to lineage and generation. In contrast, in Kashgar (aside from those of Sufi families) I found only unpublished pedigrees in which the daughters and sisters are included and spouses (male and

<sup>55</sup> Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules*.

<sup>56</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*.

female) are remarked, even where several divorces and remarriages had taken place. In a book on how to draft your own pedigree published at Xinjiang University Press by Yarmuhämmät Tahir Tughluq,<sup>57</sup> the mother's side is given as much space as the father's side and women are included in an equal quantity with men (though admittedly coming after the men in relative sequence). In Kashgar, pedigrees in ordinary families seem to be a quite recent phenomenon, triggered by an interest in family history which has in turn been provoked by the very popular genre of historical novels and history awareness and by rising ethno-national sentiments and the genealogical bias ethnicity carries. In Kashgar, this genealogical bias currently does not seem to have any great effect on social organization in practice, but rather on political discourse. Further evidence for a stronger genealogical practice in Qumul than in Kashgar is that in the eastern parts patrilineal parallel cousin marriage seems much less frequent than in the south-west and is in some cases even prohibited according to local custom.<sup>58</sup> This means that a certain degree of exogamy (the norm of marrying outside one's own group) is still tied to groups agnatically defined.

The reasons for these differences can be manyfold, including Qumul's closer cultural contact with Kazakhs and Chinese, both known for stronger agnatic genealogical kinship practices, but I believe the decisive reason to be a rather structural and concretely historical one: Following the line of argument of this chapter, I want to suggest that the reason why Turfan and especially Qumul retained a stronger emphasis on pedigrees and a higher relevance of genealogy is to be found in the region's administrative history. Because the Wang of Qumul and Turfan submitted to and aided the Manchu overlords in their conquest of the Tarim basin, their kingdoms (*wangliq*) were preserved with relatively intact administrative structures throughout the Qing under the Manchu *jasak* system and well into the republican period.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the Qing bureaucracy was not established in the same way here as in the southwest in Altishahr/Kashgaria. The local elites were thus not incorporated into the administration as *begs*, subject to avoidance rules and accordingly local institutions did not adapt and react with the same kind of transformations. This policy has been a central factor in facilitating the variation in importance of genealogical and affinal kinship conceptualization, terminology and related practices from east to west across contemporary Xinjiang. These differences in local kinship structure, seem to mark "phantom borders"<sup>60</sup> left from the Qing administrative differentiations: those where the *beg* systems and avoidance rules were introduced in the southwest have a more strongly affinally based kinship

<sup>57</sup> Y. Tughluq, *A'ilä jämät näsäbnamisi* (Ürümchi: Shinjang universiteti nāshriyati, 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*: 108.

<sup>59</sup> Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*: 100, 169, 190.

<sup>60</sup> S. von Löwis, "Phantom Borders in the Political Geography of East Central Europe: An Introduction." *Erdkunde* 69. 2 (2015): 99–106.

structure, whereas those where they were not, as the kingdoms of Qumul and Turfan, rules through the *jasak* system, have retained a more genealogical and patrilineal bias both in terminology, ideology and practice.

## 7. After 1864

### 7. 1. Social Transformation

It seems likely, that Europe and Xinjiang, on a very general level, went through a comparable development of administration and economy at a similar time in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries resulting in similar (though by no means identical) kinds of transformation in kinship practice. But if so, then their ways parted at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cousin marriage disappeared in Europe and marriage alliance lost its political and (to a lesser degree) economic significance. Both remained important in Xinjiang. I believe that one of the reasons for this was that European society rapidly became increasingly saturated by market capitalism and bureaucracy including the welfare state, whereas in Xinjiang the degree of state involvement in local institutions did not change radically until 1949 and market structures were more limited in their development. Much did change that affected kinship practice, but nothing really challenged the foundational logic of the system before 1949, and even in 2013 it proves basically similar in structure.

During Ya‘qub Beg’s reign (1865–76) the *beg* system collapsed and genealogical structures may have been more prominent for a while. Yet, by this time, the new system had been in effect for several generations and Ya‘qub Beg’s rule proved short. After the Qing reconquest, Xinjiang was accorded provincial status and new administrative policies were introduced: More Han-Chinese officials were installed and local *begs* were excluded from the highest offices.<sup>61</sup> The bureaucratic state moved a step closer to the daily life of ordinary people, but exactly because the local population was not involved in a changed structure, but rather just excluded from its highest offices, this probably did not effectively alter social organization. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century another concept entered the region via Soviet influence, Jadid intellectuals<sup>62</sup> and eventually Chinese<sup>63</sup> state practices, that proved very influential for imagining kinship: the concept of ethnicity with its inherent cognatic model of descent as the primary path for the generational devolution

<sup>61</sup> Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads*: 140–1.

<sup>62</sup> Brophy, *Uyghur Nation*.

<sup>63</sup> T. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); S. Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

of both cultural and linguistic heritage as well as the political legitimacy of claim to the land. In recent decades, the ethno-nationalist inspired interest in “the own people’s” past have provoked a rising interest in historical novels<sup>64</sup> often tracing family histories and in personal family pedigrees. This interest has also been reflected in local scholarly and semi-scholarly publications.<sup>65</sup>

During the radical decades of the 1950–70s the penetration of state bureaucracy into people’s daily life was taken to an extreme, but as the state pulled back from private life in the 1980s many of the old local structures and marriage strategies reappeared, albeit dressed in new symbolisms of modernity, reformed Islam and strengthened ethno-nationalism.<sup>66</sup> According to Uyghur anthropologist Sawut Pawan and others, the political and administrative measures taken during the radical decades thoroughly damaged Uyghur neighborhood communities, especially in the rural areas. Why then did the family and its strategies prove so relatively resilient? One reason may have been that the time frame was too short to really affect the deeper structures imprinted into the habitus of generations still alive in 1979. Had the degree of state involvement been upheld for a full century, the results would have probably been much more marked. A second reason is that the state became involved on too many levels of life and society. The local structures were not able to respond to the new situation because local institutions were not transformed through their integration into bureaucratic structures like in the late Qing or as Oliver Roy describes for Soviet Central Asia.<sup>67</sup> Rather, local institutions were dismantled and replaced by modern, socialist institutions invented in theory and introduced with severity. Similarly to the replacement of local officials by Han-Chinese ones in late Qing Xinjiang, these new institutions did alter the practice and increased state control, but they did not seriously alter the existing institutions as they did not really engage with these but rather simply muted them or forced them into informality and illegality—or into hibernation. Elise Massicard and Tommaso Trevisani describe how the incorporation of local neighborhood structures (*mähällä*) into the state administration (in the form of *mähällä* committees) in post-Soviet Uzbekistan led to these institutions becoming all but obsolete, as the functions they had fulfilled moved into other, less controlled social institutions.<sup>68</sup> A similar thing is likely to have

<sup>64</sup> Abdurehim Ötkür’s *Iz* (or *Traces*, 1985) and Zordun Sabir’s trilogy *Ana Yurt* (or *Motherland*, 2006) are amongst the most well-known and popular Uyghur historical novels. Cf. Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*: 163–5. They are seen to present historical truths not entailed in the official censored historiographies available in Xinjiang.

<sup>65</sup> Tughluq, *A’ilä jämäät näsäbnamisi*; Qorghon, *Uyghurlarda pärhiz*.

<sup>66</sup> W. Clark, *Convergence or Divergence: Uighur Family Change in Ürumqi* (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1999).

<sup>67</sup> O. Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (London: Tauris, 2000): xii–xv, 85–95.

<sup>68</sup> E. Massicard and T. Trevisani, “The Uzbek Mahalla: Between State and Society,” in

happened during the radical decades in Xinjiang. After 1979, the household and close family resumed their role as the central producing unit. Money, and thus funding structures again became important and the state kept tight regulation on nepotism along genealogical kinship ties. Increasingly marriage too became regulated by the state in the PRC.

## 7. 2. *New Marriage Laws*

The regulation of marriage is a common area of state control, and here too we find parallels to the European transformations. Cousin marriage and other close kin marriage had been widespread in Europe and the USA throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Towards the end of the century, several measures were taken to outlaw it in western countries. And though often biological arguments of incest and birth defects were quoted against cousin marriage, the evidence remains inconclusive to this day and leading historians and anthropologists, like Jack Goody and David Sabean,<sup>69</sup> suggest rather political and economic reasons for the governments' and churches' interventions.<sup>70</sup> As cousin marriages were elements in household strategies to accumulate wealth and strengthen social networks, authorities interested in limiting the political and economic power of such networks or in distributing wealth or accumulating it themselves, such as many state and religious institutions, tried to limit and control this tool. Marriage was approached later than genealogy both in Europe and in Xinjiang. The Qing to some extent forbade inter-ethnic marriages, but did not interfere in cousin marriages, nor did the Republican government. Yet, only one year after the communist takeover, a marriage law was devised in the PRC. This law had a great effect on a number of elements in Uyghur marriage practice in Xinjiang. Along with regulating a minimal age at marriage, prohibiting non-consensual marriage, outlawing polygamy and generally bureaucratizing the marriage process, the communist marriage law of 1950 forbade marriage between paternal parallel cousins (FBD/FBS) up till the third generation. Other cousin marriages that included links through women (*biao* 表, i.e. any cross cousin or maternal parallel cousins; MZD/MZS, MBD/FZS, FZD/MBS) were still permitted until 1980 when all cousin marriages with connections within three generations were prohibited.<sup>71</sup> This is likely to have effected a decrease in these kinds of marriages,

*Central Asia. Aspects of Transition*, ed. T. Everett-Heath (London: Routledge, 2003): 205–18.

<sup>69</sup> Goody, *The East in the West*; Sabean, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*; Sabean, "From Clan to Kindred."

<sup>70</sup> J. Durey, "The Church, Consanguinity and Trollope." *Churchman* 122 (2008): 128–9; S. Müller-Wille and H. Rheinberger, "Heredity: The Formation of an Epistemic Space," in *Heredity Produced*: 9.

<sup>71</sup> These legal changes reflected changes in the Chinese government's view on kinship from



but seemingly did not really interfere with the basic logic of close marriage so much as it shifted the relative frequency of certain categories of closeness first away from agnatic and then more generally from close genealogical ones. My evidence from several generations of couples in Kashgar clearly shows that neither form of cousin marriage disappeared, they only decreased in frequency. This means that the basic logic of close marriage probably remained relatively unaffected by the marriage laws. After 1980 many things changed. In the wake of Deng Xiaoping's reforms land was redistributed amongst households and the opening economic environment created business opportunities, facilitated a reemergence of trading networks and gave rise to a new need for financing of these enterprises, not unlike the economic atmosphere of family enterprises in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe as described by Kuper.<sup>72</sup> Close family networks of mutual dependency, as before the communist takeover, once again became instrumental in securing the household's livelihood and for enabling and funding its business operations. As simultaneously the state pulled somewhat back from regulating community and family life,<sup>73</sup> the centrality of marriage and indeed weddings to household economic strategies increased rather than decreased in the following decades and while the one child policy, implemented in Xinjiang in the late 1980s,<sup>74</sup> certainly affected household strategies and social structure, it too rather added on to the strategic importance of each individual marriage in constructing a household's closest relations. Within the last decade, increased mobility and the rising prominence and accessibility of banking, insurance and health care for non-elite Uyghurs in south Xinjiang as well as the destruction and dissolution of urban neighborhoods and the political pressures experienced by the local Uyghur population are challenging the existing kinship structures including the still relevant basic logic of close marriage described above.

## Conclusions

The hypothesis of the development of Uyghur Kinship in southern Xinjiang can be summarized as follows: Uyghur Kinship and social structure in southern Xinjiang are primarily based on exchange, mutual obligation and not least marriage, and only secondarily on descent and genealogy, though the latter is still prominent in some areas of practice and in the terminology. We find an intimate connection between

an agnatically and patrilineally biased understanding to a cognatic one stronger influenced by biological narratives, including such concerning incest. Cf. Kuper, "Changing the Subject."

<sup>72</sup> Kuper, "Changing the Subject."

<sup>73</sup> Clark, *Divergence and Convergence*.

<sup>74</sup> Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*: 106; Bellér-Hann, "The Peasant Condition." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 25.1 (1997): 101–2.

close marriage, the importance of affinity and frequent divorce, as close marriage consolidates families as social and economic units, affines are the most important relatives beyond the sibling group, divorce is the logical consequence of the failure to achieve this and close marriage a strategy to enhance it is probability. This basic structure of kinship has been effective in Kashgar throughout at least the last 150 years, despite rampant political and economic changes in this period. It developed between 1759–1865 during the relatively stable period of early Qing rule in Xinjiang in response to the Qing's introduction of an administrative system that dismantled the political advantages for the elites of retaining socio-central genealogical categories of belonging and also in response to the strengthening of market based money economic structures that exacerbated the need for capital accumulation and flexible networks of trust for business. In Qumul such a structure did not develop with the same speed or vehemence, as the Qing did not interfere with the ruling families or impose their bureaucratic administrative system on them to the same degree as they did in Kashgar, but left elite families in power within still genealogically determined structures. The effects of these differences in Qing policy are today still visible in the marriage patterns, tradition of pedigrees, importance of descent groups for the social structure and the kinship terminology, all of which have a stronger genealogical weighting in Qumul than in Kashgar.

One objection against this hypothesis seems obvious, when viewing it from a modern, Western perspective: The avoidance regulations only affected the highest officials in the Qing system.<sup>75</sup> How could this change the kinship practice and imagination of the area's entire Turki population? The first answer to this is that these laws were but the most visible expression of a much more general targeting of and atmosphere against the connection between genealogical kinship and political privileges. This can be sensed in Newby's observance that the *begs* accused each other of nepotism.<sup>76</sup> Such discourses and other expressions of this logic are less easy to pinpoint. The logic in its basic form is that of Weberian bureaucracy: that the system treats everyone "without consideration of the person" (*ohne Ansehen der Person*), i.e. regardless of social relations and personal connections.<sup>77</sup> A kinship-based political system, such as that found in a genealogically structured society, presents the exact opposite of this state sanctioned imperative and will thus be in opposition to and experience the sanctions of the bureaucratic or bureaucratizing state. The second answer regards the basic premises of the objection. It is based on a

<sup>75</sup> Newby, "The Begs of Xinjiang": 285, 288–90; L. Newby, "'Us and Them' in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Xinjiang," in *Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia*, eds. I. Bellér-Hann, C. Cesàro, R. Harris, and J. Smith-Finley (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007): 15–29.

<sup>76</sup> Newby, "The Begs of Xinjiang": 289.

<sup>77</sup> M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a. M.: Uni-print, [1922] 1972): 563.

notion of kinship and society that is valid mainly for modern, state- and market-based societies. Here, kinship is primarily confined to the private space of the family and carries little economic or political significance beyond even the nuclear family. In contrast, in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Xinjiang kinship played a structuring role in society. It was constitutive<sup>78</sup> of both economic and political structures and thus central to daily organization of life.<sup>79</sup> The relevance to people's daily lives of anonymous bureaucratic structures such as law (including Islamic law), state and market was secondary to that of social relations of which kinship was the most important. Kinship, in Georg Pfeffer's words, can, to a certain degree, be considered this society's constitution, or part of it anyway.<sup>80</sup> Kinship did not structure a small element of society, but—to a greater or lesser degree—all, or most, of society. The introduction of a bureaucratic system that incorporated local elites, altered their kinship practice and thus arguably gradually changed the entire structure of society by introducing the logic of Weberian bureaucracy into the heart of the social structure. It thus displaced kinship, relegating it outwards towards the margins of political organization, as complementary to state structures, “informal” or even illegal.<sup>81</sup>

A third and related answer concerns the relation between elites and non-elites. In 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Kashgar, the relation between elites and non-elites was much more direct than in industrial or post-industrial class societies. While in modern class societies the elites largely live in social spheres removed from the common population while maintaining their political and economic power and their advantage over the non-elites through the mediation of anonymous structures like the state, law, police, schools, markets, banks etc., in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>- and even early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Kashgar the interaction and the relations of dominance between elites and non-elites were of a much more immediate type.<sup>82</sup> In a sense the elites here played many of the roles and held many of the functions that in modern industrialized

<sup>78</sup> Strathern, “Kinship and Economy.”

<sup>79</sup> Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*.

<sup>80</sup> Pfeffer, *Verwandtschaft als Verfassung*.

<sup>81</sup> Here, state bureaucracy and formal legal structures stand in a structural relation of competition, substitutability and sometimes complementarity to social networks. Kinship and bureaucracy figure as two competing organizing principles, promoted by different social actors with their own personal agendas in order for the one to encompass (Dumont, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986): 253) or control the other within a given concrete social sphere. To facilitate this, various narratives and their connected practices are invoked: “Corruption,” “nepotism,” “personalistic networks,” “informal structures,” “patron-client relations” are some of the pejoratives that carriers of the state bureaucracy connote with social network or kinship structures. “Illoyal,” “oppressive,” “rigid,” “egotistic,” “individualistic” etc. are reverse judgements of the other side.

<sup>82</sup> Bellér-Hann, *Community Matters*; Bellér-Hann, “Strangers, Guests and Beggars in Xinjiang: The Ambiguities of Hospitality among the Uyghurs.” *Etudes Orientales* 25(2008): 145–64.

societies are fulfilled by anonymous structures like the state and the market. When, as in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Kashgar, the non-elite directly depends on the elite they react and adapt to changes in the elites' social structure, similar to non-elites adapting to changes in state policy. At the same time, like in Europe,<sup>83</sup> though not to that strong a degree, nascent class structures were emerging along with, and partly as a result of, endogamous tendencies and the logic of "keeping the wealth within the family."<sup>84</sup> Thus, through the mediation of local elites, throughout the first short century of Qing rule in Xinjiang the advancing logics of bureaucracy with its anti-nepotism discourses directed mainly at genealogical but not at affinal kinship and the rising drive for capital accumulation and investment, contributed to changing the kinship structure and the role of kinship in Turki society in southern Xinjiang: from lineage structures toward the cognatic family as wealth holding unit and towards affinal relatives as central relatives.

<sup>83</sup> Sabeen, "From Clan to Kindred": 48.

<sup>84</sup> Jarring, *Gustav Raquette*: 12; Rudelson, *Oasis Identities*: 108–9; Steenberg "“Keep the Wealth within the Family’.”