

**CHINA'S SEPARATIST PROVINCES. XINJIANG AND TIBET
PART OF CHINA?
A VIEW ON THE SEPARATISM AND UNITY AS "CHINESENESS",
"CORE INTERESTS" AND AS "SINOCENTRIC" IN THE CHINESE
PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract

*This article shows the points of view of the interconnected aspects of China's internal and international actions as: **separatism and unity as elements of "chineseness", also "sinocentric", and "core interests"**. An important fact, about the separatists and the "way out" they are searching for, is that China does not allow a way out, but seems to have a "way in".*

*The most important separatists are the **Tibetan Buddhists and Xinjiang Muslims** but **Taiwanese Buddhists and Taoists** have found it. Other searchers are also **Inner Mongolia, Diaoyu Islands, South China islands, Hong Kong and Macao**.*

*As methodology we identify the main **methods** used in this work as the **Inductive and Deductive Methods of Research** and the **Qualitative Method of Research**.*

*China identifies the **three evil forces extremism, separatism and terrorism**. In this context separatist provinces are seen as threats and illustrations of internal terrorism. We identify most issues from **Xinjiang separatism**, while **Tibetan and Taiwanese causes unity** as the "**Chineseness**" assertion and "**core interests**" positions argue in the mainland China.*

*These remaining major facts for those who seek or issue the **Chineseness** and those who **assure the core interests** to merge unity, and assure a "way in".*

Keywords: Chinese, unity, separatist, Xinjiang, terrorism, China, Chineseness

INTRODUCTION

This **article** shows the interconnected aspects of China's internal and international actions as: *separatism* and *unity* as elements of *Chineseness*¹, and *core interests*². Also viewing the meaning of the "*Sinocentric*"³ concept in the world view of China.

¹ *Chineseness* (in this paper) argues about the many varieties shares metaphorical borders with various manifestations of *Islamness*, as a way to repel the influence of *Turkick* or other nations religions and concepts from the Chinese Central Asia regions.

² *Core interests*: the interests that are *fundamental* for the development of the *security* and *unity* of the Chinese continental state.

³ *Sinocentric*: a Chinese concept of world perception, where China is in the center.

As **methodology** we identify the main methods used in this work as the ***Inductive and Deductive Methods of Research***, that has been consistently applied and supported both the assumption *separatism* and *unity*, and the ***Qualitative Method of Research***, by which we analyse the concepts of “*core interests*”, “*Chineseness*” or *Sinicisation*⁴. The **methodology** is also represented by the *Transversal Method* (discovering relations at a time) and *Longitudinal Method* (studying evolution in time), *Method Of Data Collecting* and *Data Processing*, *Casuistic Method* (specific for the region of China).

Presenting this as **methodology**, we provide through our approach, the main *assertions* and *presumptions* about the concepts of *separatism* and *unity* at what mainland China *chooses* to refer at.

We will **analyse** the separatists and the “*way out*” they are searching for, against the mainland People’s Republic of China. And, we will see what is the *way out* that China does not allow, while also seeing the *way in* that China is developing. The separatists are the *Tibetan Buddhists* and *Xinjiang Muslims* they are the ones *who search* (because they *search* for a way out of China), *Taiwanese Buddhists* and *Taoists* have *found it* (because at some point they are or where not a part of China), as well like other provinces with separatist tendencies as *Inner Mongolia*, *Diaoyu Islands*, *South China islands*, *Hong Kong*, *Macao*. But it seems that ***Chineseness*** does not and will not allow such an autonomy or independence in these Chinese regions, not on a non-Chinese basis. So, the argument of *unity* is the main aspect of the mainland China, this being also a premise of the “*core interests*” - as we will see further. The aspect of ***Sinicisation*** remains the main basis of unity for some regions.

But as the *state-centrism* supposition, that applies to the Chinese people’s conception about unity, as a *nation-state*, China also does not, and cannot recognize, the *independence* of separatist provinces like **Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang** or any other provinces that try to call themselves *autonomous* or try to identify their own people as different or alike the “*strangers*”, the mainland remains an important fact *for* and *of* unity.

China, a vast, powerful and dominant state, in the Asian parts has the capabilities to create, influence and lose, as the last century has shown as called the “*century of humiliation*”. In this argument, for the shame of losing many territories to European countries or Japan, so, it is in the Chinese people’s mind that **communism** has **reunified** the country. In this context *separatism* and *separatist* provinces are seen as *threats* and facts of *internal terrorism*.

With the argument of *reunification*, China sees the **Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Taiwan** provinces as part of Chinese territory and part of the **terrorism** activities and **threats**. China identifies the **three evil forces extremism, splittism** (*separatism*), and **terrorism**, these are code-words for *Xinjiang’s troubles*.

⁴ ***Sinicisation***: used by the Chinese people to *unite / assimilate* all the Chinese people.

Continuing with the argument of unity, as China evolves from the *Qing Dynasty* to the *People's Republic*, it is to mention two very pressing problems for the internal issues: the Tibet and the Taiwan nationalists.

Taiwan as a state who *made it out*, became “*the domino most vulnerable*” and also the surviving example of a *separation* with another nation's help, the United States⁵. Even so, the fact that India did not support Tibet or Russia the Xinjiang is explainable because the context was not necessary for such a reaction. This made those two to remain in the point of view in the influence of the Chinese.

About the system and the way that made possible for Taiwan to become independent is to say that the advantage came, regardless the ideological and *nationalist* bases, as China had her own ideology conflicts. Communism became the ideology in the *mainland* China, as *People's Republic of China*, and Nationalism in the *overseas* China, as *Republic of China*.

While a autonomous region, **Tibet** was a *protectorate* of the *Qing Dynasty* and remained independent for political reasons. The Dalai Lama *became a man of international renown* and an *interlocutor in discussions about Tibet's future governance*. Tibet, remains an internal problem of China, as a threat to the unity.

As we argue in this paper about *separatism* viewed as a threat in China, we also argue about “*Chineseness*”. As an issue that is used by the Chinese people to *unite* all the Chinese, in the idea of *Chineseness*, and even further, about “*New Chineseness*” as a way to *overcome* the West with the “*Chinese tradition, Chinese reality, and Chinese mentality*”. And, as an official position of the Chinese administration, we also consider the term of “*core interests*”.

Saying so, we identify the *issue* of the *Xinjiang Muslims* like what *causes Islamness* and religion *separation*, while *Tibetan Buddhists* and *Taiwanese Buddhism and Taoism* as what causes *unity*, as the Chineseness assertion argues, same does the Inner Mongolia, the Diaoyu Islands, South China islands, Hong Kong, Macao to Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism in both *Chineseness* and *core national interests*, and related to the *Sinification* bases.

These remain major facts for those who seek or *issue* the *Chineseness* and those who *assure* the *core interests* to merge *unity*. Or, furthermore, the mainland remains a important fact for and of unity as the assertion of Chineseness and the presumption of core interests evolve and assure a “*way in*”.

And, as we will end, we will resume this paper at the main conclusion that, the paper analyses three main greater issues: **Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan**, also mentioning all the other possible or active issues that are appreciated as possible facts of difficulties, **Inner Mongolia, Diaoyu Islands, South China islands, Hong Kong, Macao**. Concluding that, all these problems for the aspect of *unity* and *separatism* are seen as premises for the evolution and implementation of processes like *Chineseness, sinocentrism* or national *core interests*.

⁵ **Hong Kong** and **Macao** are other *territories* that were supported by other nations and became separated from the Chinese for a long time; being named also the territories of *strangers*, the states who rule were the United Kingdom and Portugal beginning when these states were empires; now these territories were returned to China.

1. CHINA AND SEPARATISM – A VIEW ON THE CHINESE UNITY AND SEPARATISM

A state as vast, as powerful and as dominant, as China, in the Asian parts has the capabilities to create and influence and also has shown the option to loss, as the last century was called the “*century of humiliation*”, as argument for the shame of losing many territories to European or Japanese countries. It is in the people’s mind that *communism* has *reunified* the country. In this context *separatism* and the *separatist provinces* are seen as *threats* and facts of *internal terrorism*⁶.

The idea of a *unified* China comes as an idea and argument such like the “*one county, two systems*”. Even it does not seem like applicable, it has been showed that the future Chinese could consider “*one country, five systems*” or an “*one country, four systems*”. As ways for integrating the separatist state’s systems like Taiwan, Tibet, Xianjiang it seems that *Chineseness* does not and can not allow such an autonomy or independence in these regions.

Arguing the **nationality** of China, as explained by Sun Yat-sen⁷:

“*redefined* China in terms of one race and five nationalities the Han, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans and Hui: in other words, China was recognized as a multinational state, though still composed of one race, all sharing the same Chinese origins [...] the ethnic minorities [...] should be forced to adopt Han customs and practices as speedily as possible” (M. Jacques, 2012, p. 264).

Later, *Mao Zedong*⁸ unified China and renewed it at its former frontiers of the emperors. **Renewing** the system and “*smash*”-ing the old China, Mao talked about the *things which we could not do before*, his ideal was to *crash* the opposition, in both domestic and foreign affairs. He also mentioned so about *restauration* and began the modernization as the *Great Leap Forward*⁹. That accentuated the gap between East and West.

Now, this region as well as Taiwan and Tibet remain autonomous regions. Taiwan is the only one with another system and not governed by communism. As the relation between the state-centrism and separatism provinces maintains, the new century and the terrorism that appeared was viewed were a opportunity to condemn these internal difficulties.

⁶ *Internal terrorism* as the only kind of terrorism China *chooses* to recognize.

⁷ **Sun Yat-sen** was the founder of Republic of China – in 1911, after the fall of the Qing Dynasty – is considered the “*Father of Nations*” in the actual Republic of China, and the “*forerunner of democratic revolution*” in the People’s Republic of China; is also the first leader of the *Kuomintang* Party of China, died in 1925.

⁸ **Mao Zedong** was the first leader of *Communist Party of China* and of the *People’s Republic of China*. In function since 1945 to 1976 – the last being also the year he died.

⁹ The *Great Leap Forward* was a action of Mao Zedong, between 1958 – 1962, aimed to *rapidly transform* the country from an *agrarian economy* into a communist society through *rapid industrialization and collectivization*. The campaign caused the Great Chinese Famine.

With this argument of unity, China sees the Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan provinces as part of Chinese territory and part of the terrorism activities and threats that exists against the People's Republic.

1.1. XINJIANG – SEARCHING FOR A “WAY OUT”

A important fact, about the separatists and the “*way out*” they are searching for, is that China does not allow a “*way out*”. *Tibetan Buddhists* and *Xinjiang Muslims*, are those *who search*, but it seems that China does not and cannot allow such an autonomy or independence in these West regions, same goes for the other provinces with separatist tendencies as *Inner Mongolia*, *Diaoyu Islands*, *South China islands*, *Hong Kong*, *Macao*.

For these regions, the history as Chinese regions, began (mostly) with the *Qing Dynasty*. The Xinjiang argument came, when the *Machus* began an expansion that doubled the territory form the 1644 to the late the late eighteenth century. Befor this expansion:

“threats to Chinese security have originated from the interior. Until the Chinese and Russian Empires met in Central Asia in the nineteenth century and China created the province of Xinjiang” (Michael E. Brown, *et. all.*, 2000, p. 189).

In the historical context, the fact that agrees the *uyghurs*¹⁰ separatism is reviewed starting from the moment when:

“China and Imperial Russia split the Uighur homeland of Turkestan between them, though China did not exercise complete control over this vast region, especially during the upheavals of dynastic collapse, civil war, and foreign invasion, which plagued China in the first half of the twentieth century. A brief period of independence (1945–49) for what was known as East Turkestan ended when the new Chinese Communist leaders sent troops into the area and established the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The People's Liberation Army faced as fierce a resistance as had their Qing dynasty predecessors, and during the 1950s thousands of Uighurs were executed for advocating ‘separatism’“ (Bates Gill, 2007, p. 127).

As need of restraining *separatism*, in the entire China, the Communists choose to encourage *the migration of Han people in Xinjiang* even so the Han population increased from an estimated 6 – 7 percent in the 1940s to about 40 – 45 percent in 2000 and present.

At first, *Xinjiang was a valueless wasteland and a drain on the empire's finances*¹¹, but in time, *Muslim separatists, backed by Russia, gained control of a*

¹⁰ The term *Uyghur* (people or muslims) refers to the ethnic group that formed in the Central Asia as different form the Chinese people or religion, resembling with the border neighbors of China (mostly: Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Afghanistan and Uzbek people).

substantial portion of Xinjiang. Doing so, China has achieved unique success for a continental power: secure borders on its entire land periphery.

The remarkable fact about China's unity, as for Xinjiang and for all the expansions, is that *the territorial expansion has been led by peasants seeking arable land* and this conforming to the teachings of the Confucianism *state power*, and also *China never carried out territorial expansion across water*. So the fact is that the Chinese knew that they cannot *subdue* the nomadic tribes that were in the Central Asian, gave a result and thought that the

“threats to Chinese security have originated from the interior. Until the Chinese and Russian Empires met in Central Asia in the nineteenth century” (Michael E. Brown, *et. all.*, 2000, p. 189).

That problem is viewed so even today. Even though the administration has changed, the president Xi Jinping maintains a high level security in the region and continues to support the Han despite the Muslims.

As the problem of the Muslims and Han remained, in time, China found herself with an *East Turkestan Republic*¹² in 1944, but the Mao Communism assimilated the separatists in 1949.

1.2.TIBET – ANOTHER ASPECT OF CHINESE UNITY

Continuing with the argument of unity, as China evolves from the Qing to the People's Republic, it is worth mentioning two very pressing problems for the internal issues: the Tibetan and the Taiwanese nationalists.

Tibet, also known as *“roof of the world”*, is a region that currently is part of the People's Republic of China. The true identity of the Tibetans is what remains an issue as part of *Chineseness*, as part of the *Buddhism* religion and an independent state, an empire at the frontiers of India and China. Being influenced by India and mostly China, and until 1911¹³ part of the provinces of Chinese Empire, after the Qing Dynasty was banished from China, Tibet gained the *de facto* independence, under the rule of the Dalai Lama.

As an autonomous region, Tibet was a *protectorate* of the *Dynasty*¹⁴ and remained independent for political reasons. When the Communists came to power they invaded Tibet without recognition of the autonomy and the Tibetan

¹¹ In the years of the 1870's there was a debate between those who wanted a *large army* to send to the north - west and those who wanted *modern ships*. First, the ships faction won, but, in the end the emperor *successfully campaigned in Xinjiang*.

¹² The share of the **Turkestan**, at the meeting point / borders, between Russia and China gave each one a part and so the **West** was a political know entity but the **East** was not. The need to separate as an independent political state of the East Turkestan seemed as at a good time, because of the Chinese ideology conflict between communism and nationalism.

¹³ Until the **Xinhai** or Chinese Revolution that ended the Imperial Dynasty of Qing.

¹⁴ Tibet became influenced by China from the early 618, in the time of Tang Dynasty, but in the late 1640 became protectorate of the **Qing** Dynasty.

government. Then a *treaty*¹⁵ of *guaranteeing the rights of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan autonomy* was signed. As proven difficult to implement, after eight years *period of coexistence, there was an uprising*, so the *resistance* culminated in 1959 when Dalai Lama went in exile in India¹⁶.

Trying to offer a view point on the issue at what **Mao's Communism** acted *hard*, Henry Kissinger says:

“When the Communist Party seized power in 1949, substantial regions had broken away from the historic Chinese Empire, notably Tibet, parts of Xinjiang, parts of Mongolia, and the border areas of Burma. The Soviet Union maintained a sphere of influence in the northeast, including an occupation force and a fleet in the strategically located Lushun harbor. Mao, like several founders of dynasties before him, claimed the frontiers of China that the empire had established at its maximum historic extent. To territories Mao considered part of that historic China—Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, border regions in the Himalayas or the north—he applied the maxim of domestic politics: he was implacable; he sought to impose China's governance and generally succeeded. As soon as the civil war ended, Mao set out to reoccupy the secessionist regions, such as Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and eventually Tibet. In that context, Taiwan was not so much a test of Communist ideology as a demand to respect Chinese history.

*With respect to the rest of the world, Mao introduced a special style that substituted ideological militancy and psychological perception for physical strength. It was composed of a **Sinocentric** view of the world, a touch of world revolution, and a diplomacy using the Chinese tradition”* (Henry Kissinger, 2011, p. 120).

In this context, the Dalai Lama *became a man of international renown* and an *interlocutor in discussions about Tibet's future governance*. Tibet remained an internal problem of China as a threat to its unity.

1.3.TAIWAN – THE INSIDE – OUT VIEW

Taiwan¹⁷ is a major problem and *the domino most vulnerable to a foreign “push”, but its toppling could lead to the loss of control* in the border areas such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia.

About the system and the way that made possible for Taiwan¹⁸ to become an independent state form China¹⁹, Charles Horner says:

¹⁵ Namely a “**Seventeen Point Agreement**”.

¹⁶ As important events the days: **May 23rd 1951** and **March 28th 1959** are celebrated as “**peaceful liberation**” and “**Serf Emancipation Day**” in the name of the *sovereignty of the Tibet* and of the declaration of illegality of the Tibetan government.

¹⁷ Also known as *Formosa*; namely **Republic of China** and ruled the entire China – since Xinhai Revolution, 1911 – until when the communists won the mainland, 1949; Taiwan has been annexed by the Qing Dynasty in 1683 and until the loss against the Japanese Fleet, in 1895.

¹⁸ A important fact viewing the **Taiwan** issue is to remember that China was never interested in the *outside word* and what lies *beyond the sea*.

“The victory of the Communist Party of China was unanticipated. The party had begun with a single cell in Shanghai in 1921. It had been paralyzed by endless intra-party disputes about doctrine and tactics. In 1927 it was driven deep underground by Chiang Kai-shek’s (1887–1975) new national government. Its rural-based remnants were chased all over the country—the so-called Long March, in the party’s official parlance— and it was only the full-scale invasion of China proper by the Japanese in 1937 that gave the party a new lease on life. When full-scale civil war resumed between the Nationalists and the Communists after the surrender of Japan in 1945, the Nationalists appeared to be by far the stronger combatant. Hence, their rapid collapse was unanticipated by the world at large.

In 1949 the administrative remnants of the Nationalist state, its army, and Chiang himself fled to Taiwan. At the level of day-to-day politics in the United States, the explanations for this reversal of fortune quite naturally focused on the end game... and how it may have affected—or even actually effected—the Communists’ victory” (Charles Horner, 2009, p. 85).

As we see, giving the world conflicts on ideology and nationalist bases, China had her own ideology conflict. Describing the China – Japan relations, Richard C. Bush notes that:

“In China, Chiang Kai-shek’s²⁰ Nationalists and Mao Zedong’s Communists fought a bloody civil war. The Communist Party won control of the mainland and established the People’s Republic of China in October 1949. Chiang’s Republic of China government retreated to Taiwan, which Japan had acquired in 1895 as the result of an “unequal treaty,” according to the Chinese view of history, and gave up in 1945. China allied with the Soviet Union, and the treaty between the two named Japan specifically as a potential attacker. In June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, prompting U.S. intervention both on the peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait” (Richard C. Bush, Washington, 2010, p. 13)

At this point and in this context, the nationalists were narrowed to Taiwan and Taiwan was also narrowed to the overseas help, meaning Japan and the United States. The help had arrived for Taiwan and after the *great retreat*, and the new conflicts and alliances in what the Communist got involved in China, Taiwan remained a problem of international politics and in the major attention of the mainland.

¹⁹ The *People’s Republic of China* does not recognize the *Republic of China* as a separate state, at official level.

²⁰ **Chiang Kai-shek** was a Chinese military and political leader who led the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) for five decades and was head of state of the Chinese Nationalist government between 1928 and 1949; was a close ally of Sun Yat-sen and became the KMT as leader when Sun died, in 1925.

The fact that the Taiwanese unity was held on external, or *overseas*, help is what the other separatist provinces did not have. Neither the Tibetans nor the Uyghurs neither had external help²¹, like the *overseas* that pressures at one time the Chinese thinking. Even so the fact that there were neighbours with the country that changed the view of the entire 20th century, United State of America, the country that become the very first of the *strangers*, or western, world²².

As for comparing the Xinjiang and the Taiwan issues we share the following perspective:

“The reality is that Taiwanese have their own identity, a rich and multicultural heritage based on Aboriginal origins... and half a century under Japanese rule.

Based on this heritage, we need to distinguish ourselves as a freedom-loving nation that is accepted by the international community, instead of cozying up to an undemocratic China.

The people of East Turkestan regrettably do not have that choice anymore; the people of Taiwan do and must exercise the right to self-determination denied their Uighur cousins” (Susan Wang, 2010, pp. 1-2).

Meanwhile, these days, the separatist province of Xinjiang remains a major issue for the state of China. We have a view of the insecurity for one latest conflict, that broke out in 2014, in which *attackers with knives descended on a train station in the southern Chinese city of Kunming and the assailants to be “Xinjiang separatists”*. So, the major problem remains. The Han and the *Uyghurs* are still in conflict and so Xinjiang is still a major issue for the People’s Republic of China.

1.4. INNER MONGOLIA, HONG KONG, MACAO AND THE ISLANDS OF SOUTH CHINA AND THE DIAOYU - ASSURING A “WAY IN”

Going further from the Taiwan issue, China has many other internal or external aspects to deal with, assuring its *“core interests”*²³. The *core national interests* were defined by the Chinese representatives:

²¹ Even that the **Russians** always got in the way of the Chinese in the Central Asia – Xinjiang, as shown –, they couldn’t back up the *uyghurs* at the same level as the Americans did in the *Taiwan* case, even there are different circumstances and moments, the facts and actions remain.

²² Here it is to notice that neither the Indians, neither the Russians could compare their power with the power that the Americans got after **1945**. Even the fact that the Soviet Russia was one of the bipolar actors didn’t and couldn’t compare to **the Americans** power. The argument is that the Americans ideology and system was far greater at that moment, as shown when it survived from the bipolarity. **The Indians** being on the Americans side, as a ex-British colony, **the Russians**, instead, after advancing the communism ideology to China, they failed in controlling the type of communism that was born, but even so they considered the Chinese Communists allies.

²³ We are assuming that, the term *“core interests”* is to be defined as part of the term of *“core”* and so *the interests that are most basic, vital, fundamental* for the development of the *security and unity* of the Chinese continental state.

“as state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national reunification, China's political system established by the Constitution, overall social stability, and the basic safeguards for ensuring sustainable economic and social development” (An Gang, 2013).

Despite the will of some regions to *split* and separate in *autonomous republics*, the Chinese polity wants to maintain the sovereignty and *unity* of the *continental state*. As we will see in the next section, alike the *core interest*, the Chinese progress is also powerful as the term of *Chineseness* will be to describe.

Other internal difficulties as the mainland China and the Chinese unity comes from the problems like *Inner Mongolia*, *Diaoyu Islands*, *South China islands* and more or less from two major cities, *Hong Kong* and *Macao*. But as the desiderate of unity remains, in the recent years:

“The Chinese province of Inner Mongolia has been comparatively quiet, but Chinese authorities have canceled concerts of Mongolian-pride rock groups and shut down Mongolian language chat rooms in order to nip in the bud any Mongolian nationalist activism” (Susan Shirk, 2007, p. 58).

Considering *the Core of China's Unification Problem* as the *Taiwan issue*, we have the next argument of the *national core of interests* as a view point as unity:

“While developing into a world power, China has upheld and strengthened national unity and safeguarded its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The return of Hong Kong in 1997 and of Macao in 1999 represented two important achievements in the process of Chinese unification. With respect to unification and territorial integrity, however, China still faces five challenges. These are the problems of the Diaoyu Islands, the South China islands, countering Xinjiang separatism, Tibetan independence, and Taiwanese independence. As some scholars have pointed out, whether one focuses on expanding the army and improving its combat effectiveness, adjusting ethnic relationships, increasing investments in western China, or strengthening ground forces and developing the navy, no single one of these measures by itself can resolve the five problems simultaneously. To safeguard China's territorial integrity, what is required is an integrated set of strategies and, in particular, some innovative ideas regarding how to proceed. The reunification of Taiwan with the mainland is still the key to restoring China's greatness. If this key issue is managed well, it will positively influence the resolution of the other issues” (Ye Zicheng, The University Press of Kentucky, 2011, p. 228).

From the argument we conclude that, the main problem of solving all the internal separatism issues is Taiwan, and so the Diaoyu and the South China Islands, Xinjuang, Tibet, Hong Kong and Macao cannot be safely resolved until

the issue of the Taiwan international separatists will be solved. In this period, the premises of *core interests* and the assumption of *Chineseness* will remain the ways of **assuring** unity with the mainland or assuring a comeback, a “*way in*” to the continental China.

2.DYNAMICS OF SEPARATISM – SEPARATISTS AS THREAT

As the *state-centrism* supposition, that applies at the Chinese people's conception about unity, as *nation-state*, China also does not, and cannot recognize, the autonomy of separatist provinces like Taiwan or any other provinces that try to call themselves autonomous or try to identify their own as different or alike the “*strangers*”, the mainland remains a important fact *for and of* unity.

With this argument of reunification, China sees the Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Taiwan provinces as part of Chinese territory and part of the terrorism activities and threats. The Xinjiang province is the biggest problem concerning internal terrorism.

Now it is a problem that intensified after the separatist movement in 1990, after the Soviet Russia's disintegration. The success of the Taiwan movement, the continued opposition of Tibet's integration and the fact that the “*Uyghurs*” identifies themselves with *Center Asia*, despite of the **Han** people²⁴ that the Communists send to the region, or the good relations that China try to maintain with the region. Also, China identifies the *three evil forces* **splittism** (*separatism*), **terrorism** and **extremism**, which are code-words for Xinjiang's troubles.

And so, Taiwan as a state who *made it out* is “*the domino most vulnerable*” and the surviving example of a separation with another nation help, the United States. Even so the fact that India did not support Tibet or Russia the Xinjiang is one that the context was not necessary for such a reaction. This made those two to remain in the point of view in the influence of the Chinese.

So, what China does, is to declare the internal actions, which are considered illegal by the government, **terrorist actions**²⁵. By doing so, it establish the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization*²⁶ with a **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure**²⁷.

”This antiterrorism organisation was given the mandate of cooperating with both the SCO's membership and other international organisations in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism as well as creating an information nexus and think-tank dedicated to the study of terrorism. Beijing's concern with the

²⁴ **Han** are the ethnic group which reportedly constitutes 97 percent of China's nearly 1.3 billion people; the only region where they are **not majority** is **Xinjiang**.

²⁵ In the context of the 9/11 terroris actions, this is the way China chooses to act on the international scale (meaning only the actions at the inside and at the borders of China are considered terrorism).

²⁶ **SCO**: founded in 2001 by leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the **purpose** was to upgrade the level of cooperation to a more effectively seize opportunities and deal with new challenges and threats.

²⁷ **RATS**: the permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

rise of secessionist and Islamic fundamentalist movements in central Asia is a product of concerns about how these developments will influence the Muslim population in Xinjiang... The prospect of "splittism", the traditional term used by China to describe a forcible breaking away of Chinese territory, has been of paramount concern for Beijing since the founding of the People's Republic" (Marc Lanteigne, New York, 2005, p. 122; p. 125).

The opening to the west of Beijing began in 2000 and that was also a fact of the process of modernization, as a series of government modernisation initiatives designed to promote socio-economic growth in western China, a way in which the undeveloped side's of China would become stronger and advance.

As a far periphery or remote territory, the west side of China remains a volatile part and a major strategic asset as for the proximity to Central Asia trade routes and for the petroleum and mineral reserves. For such an area with no natural borders to be kept under control it was needed a cause, the cause was given by the over 55 ethnic groups who are subordinated to the Han's groups and who are under the government's jurisdiction. Also, fighting internal terrorism, the Communist found a chance to keep the ethnic groups under control, with the cooperation of neighbor state in the SCO.

So, what China really does in Central Asia, as Marc Lanteigne, explains is:

"Internally, the Chinese government has encouraged migration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang and increased economic development in the province as a method of dampening popular support for secessionism. Externally, China has endeavoured to maintain good relations with much of the Islamic world as a means of avoiding state-based support for Muslim separatists in Xinjiang. Once the states of central Asia achieved independence, China was quick to establish relations with the governments in that region, in part, for these same reasons" (Marc Lanteigne, New York, 2005, p. 125).

What gave China the legality to declare terrorism activities came when the government linked the activities of the Uyghur separatists of Xinjiang to the former Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. By doing so, the "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" (ETIM), was declared a terrorist organization and the relations between China and the United States started to become greatly synchronized in the policies of combating international terrorist organizations.

As an argument, the People's Republic presents the latest strategy of China's National Defense, where:

"The 'Taiwan independence' separatist force and its activities are still the biggest obstacle and threat to the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. Further progress in cross-Strait relations is still confronted by some complicating factors. Separatist forces working for "East Turkistan independence" and "Tibet independence" have inflicted serious damage on national security and social

stability. Pressure builds up in preserving China's territorial integrity and maritime rights and interests. Non-traditional security concerns, such as existing terrorism threats, energy, resources, finance, information and natural disasters, are on the rise. Suspicion about China, interference and countering moves against China from the outside are on the increase"(*China's National Defense in 2010*, Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, March 2011, Beijing).

3.DYNAMICS OF UNITY – A VIEW ON CHINESENESS

Chineseness as a concept, was believed to having existed since forever, but the Chinese understood to use it, as a way to unify its people, started since the *mid nineteenth century*. Due to the influence that the Chinese kingdoms and state-exercised on the neighbors, in history and now, and the evolving nature of *nation-state*.

There are different attempts to define the concept and many admit it's existence, many do not.

"China's history is trapped by a cultural geography, an ultra stable spatial identity of 'Chineseness'" (Tim Oakes, 2000, p. 668).

"Something called 'China' unquestionably exists, but, more importantly, there is a multitude of expressions to denote the different aspects of China and Chineseness... The process of sinicization is one being Han-ized, and the ethnic minorities within territorial China are likewise set apart as being non-Han" (Allen Chun, 1996, pp. 111 - 112).

"Apparently 'sinicisation' has been rejected as the main theme in the study of Chinese history as it was thought to refer to the process of assimilation of non-Han-Chinese into Chinese culture and thus excludes non-Han-Chinese contributions to Chinese civilization. This argument against a Han-centric interpretation of China's history however has been counteracted with the claim that experts researching into Chinese history have used 'sinicisation' in a broader sense that 'transcend[s] the narrow confines of interethnic relations and embraces the evolution of the whole Chinese civilization'" (Siao See Teng, p. 4)

So, *Chineseness* is seen as an aspect used by the Chinese people to *unite* all the Chinese people. Even so, the fact that the Chinese did not recognize such an action until late 19th century is a shown fact of the superiority and the different type of unity that it existed in the Asian parts where Chinese people are spread, and where the *Chinatown's* are born²⁸.

²⁸ The **Chinatowns** are spread all over the world. Now, Chinatowns are as a territory where the Chinese immigrants exist *trade and live* in the *overseas*.

But, in the context of our paper, regarding the unifying and separatism actions, given the religion problem of the China's West side, is that:

*“Today Beijing's concern with Xinjiang is the product of the **Islamic revival**, the clash of civilizations, the energy crisis, and the war on terrorism. With the outer world, China shares five literal borders with Islam—Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan—and Chineseness in its many varieties shares metaphorical borders with various manifestations of Islamness”* (Bates Gill, p. 177).

*“Simply, China does not want Xinjiang to become **a new Kosovo**, where international forces intervene to assert human rights norms. Similarly, China must worry about the other side of international intervention. The last thing they want, I imagine, is for Xinjiang to be the new cause celebre among the jihadists. Keeping information from seeping out is to China's great advantage”* (Martin Wight, p. 3)

*“The argument about the **Chineseness of Mao's China** also entered into an evaluation of its strategic outlook and foreign policies. Almost immediately, the new regime undertook what was essentially the reconquest of Xinjiang and Tibet, both of which had slipped into a loose relationship with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, otherwise occupied in its life-or-death war with Japan and, after that, in an equally fateful struggle with the Communists. Both Xinjiang Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists forcibly resisted liberation, which they understood as the imposition of Han Chinese dominance, pure and simple”* (Bates Gill, p. 88).

We have mentioned the **Sinocentric**²⁹ world view of China before and now we will describe this concept.

“This was a world order that was both sinocentric and orchestrated by China” (Martin Stuart - Fox, 2003, p. 2, p. 18).

And, in this system of the world:

“Tribute for China was thus not a means of accumulating wealth (even through accompanying trade), but symbolic recognition and reinforcement of China's superior status in its own sinocentric world order” (Martin Stuart - Fox, 2003, p. 33)

As we see, the *Sinocentric* world view is different but very close related to the aspect of *Chineseness* view, but we can classify these two aspects as part of the *cultural influence* of China to others. One coming as the center, the *Sinocentric* view; the other being the outer and the extension of the Chinese center self view

²⁹ The **Sinocentric** concept is also known as “*sinicisation*”, “*sinification*” or “*chinalization*”.

of the world, the *Chineseness*. Simple saying, one comes as Chinese influences to neighbours, other as influence to the world, still the center remaining in China but also able to adapt, even so loyal to the center. But as we showed earlier, the *sinicisation* was considered to *large* as concept and so the *chineseness* seems more *rightfull*.

More currently the concept of “*New Chineseness*” is discussed as a way to *overcome* the West with the:

“*Chinese tradition, Chinese reality, and Chinese mentality*” as apposed to *vapid ‘universalism’ and ‘humanism’* (Mo Yan, 2001).

As the 2008 Olympics began, at Beijing appeared another view of:

Chineseness as a “*new*” set of *Chineseness*, or the “*thematic core*” of this *global event* (G. Zeng, 2013, p. 47).

This way showing the world what kind of nation is China and opening the country to people world wide.

At this point, it seems necessary to define *Chineseness* especially as **different** from *Americanness, Europeanism or Europeanisation, Japaneseness, Australianness* and define *Chineseness* as Chinese *doings* and *viewings*.

As for the *Chineseness – Taiwanese* perspective is to say that the mainland China expects to *include* the Taiwan separatist province to the state of China as the term that defines the Chinese aspects, the *Chineseness* term. Even so, *Taiwanese* is still a term related to the *sinicification* so it has a major influence in the Chinese world viewing.

Saying so, we identify the *issue* of the *Xinjiang Muslims* like what *causes Islamness* and religion separation, while *Tibetan Buddhists* and *Taiwanese Buddhism and Taoism* cause unity. These remaining major facts are those who *seek* or *issue* the *complete internal Chineseness*. Or, the mainland remains an important fact *for* and *of* unity and for the assertion of *Chineseness*.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has showed three interconnected aspects of China’s internal and international actions: *separatism and unity as elements of “chineseness”, also “sinocentric”, and “core interests”*.

We analysed the separatists and the “*way out*” they are searching for, what China does not allow, a *way out*. *Tibetan Buddhists* and *Xinjiang Muslims*, are those *who search*, *Taiwanese Buddhists and Taoists* have *found it*, but it seems that *Chineseness* does not and can’t allow such an autonomy or independence in these chinese regions, not on the non-chinese basis.

The **Xinjiang** province is the biggest problem concerning **internal terrorism**. The threat appeared when the Chinese met the Russians in the ninth century in the Central Asia and created the province of Xinjiang. At first, *Xinjiang*

was a valueless wasteland and a drain on the empire's finances, but in time Muslim separatists, backed by Russia, gained control of a substantial portion of Xinjiang. Doing so, China has achieved unique success for a continental power: secure borders on its entire land periphery.

Now it is a problem that intensified after the separatist movement in 1990, after the Soviet Russia's disintegration. The success of the Taiwan movement, the continue opposition of Tibet's integration and the fact that the "Uyghurs" identify themselves with Afghanistan, Pakistan, or most of the former Soviet republics in the region than people from eastern China. Despite of the Han people. Also,

As China identifies the **three evil forces extremism, splittism (separatism), and terrorism** now these are code-words for Xinjiang's troubles.

Tibet was a **protectorate** of the **Qing Dynasty** and remained independent as political meanings. Now the Dalai Lama became a man of international renown and an interlocutor in discussions about Tibet's future governance. Tibet remaining a internal problem of China as a threat to the unity.

Separatism view as a threat in China and *chineseness* as a aspect of Chinese people to **unite** all the Chinese, and even further, about "New Chineseness" as a way to overcome the West with the "Chinese tradition, Chinese reality, and Chinese mentality". Explaining also about the *Sinocentric* world view as we argue *Chineseness*, we also seen one related to other.

Saying so, we identify the *issue* of the **Xinjiang Muslims** like what causes **Islamness** and religion **separation**, while **Tibetan Buddhists** and **Taiwanese Buddhism and Taoism** causes **unity** as the *Chineseness* assertion argues, same does the Inner Mongolia, Diaoyu Islands, South China islands, Hong Kong, Macao to Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism in both *Chineseness* and *core national interests*, and related to the *Sinification* bases.

These remaining major facts for those who seek or **issue** the **Chineseness** and those who **assure** the **core interests** to merge unity. Or, more further, the mainland remains a important fact for and of unity as the assertion of *Chineseness* and the presumption of *core interests* evolve and assure a "way in".

And, as we will end, we will resume this paper at the main conclusion that, the paper analyses three main greater issues: **Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan**, also mentioning all the other possible or active issues that are appreciated as possible facts of difficulties, **Inner Mongolia, Diaoyu Islands, South China islands, Hong Kong, Macao**. Concluding that, all these problems for the aspect of *unity* and *separatism* are seen as premises for the evolution and implementation of processes like *Chineseness, Sinocentrism* or national *core interests*.

And **finally concluding**, as the concepts of *Chineseness* and *core interests*, all separatists regions are regions that are being seen as part of the continental China, as extensions of the main *sinification* bases.

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