Uyghur diaspora and Internet

Dilnur Reyhan

Avril 2012

While some do not hesitate to call the dispersed Uyghur community a diaspora, other researchers are still skeptical as to the relevance of this denomination. Since the 90s, Uyghurs have not only managed to create interconnected international organizations in countries where they are installed, but have also re-connected with their country of origin thanks especially to the Internet. The Uyghur diaspora is still under construction, and the Web is an integral part of this process.

e-Diasporas Atlas

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Plateforme e-Diasporas

http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=section&section=10

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Abstract

While some do not hesitate to call the dispersed Uyghur community a diaspora, other researchers are still skeptical as to the relevance of this denomination. Since the 90s, Uyghurs have not only managed to create interconnected international organizations in countries where they are installed, but have also re-connected with their country of origin thanks especially to the Internet. The Uyghur diaspora is still under construction, and the Web is an integral part of this process. Their Web diaspora contains more Web sites than blogs, while the case is reversed in the Uyghur region. The content of Web sites in the Uyghur region and in the diaspora is very diverse, but a clear difference emerges: those in the diaspora are highly political, while sites in the region are more self-censuring than ever before. Religious sites have their place in the diaspora while they are poorly tolerated in China. Countries where there is a strong Uyghur population do not necessarily offer the most developed digital spaces, but more depends on migrants' socio-professional category. As a young population sensitive to ICT, Uyghurs are putting together a classical diaspora as well as a digital diaspora.

Keywords

diaspora, web, Internet, migrations, Uyghurs, China

Résumé : Diaspora ouïghoure et Internet

Depuis ces quelques dernières années, si certains, que ce soit les médias ou les chercheurs, n'hésitent pas à dénommer la communauté ouïghoure dispersée comme diaspora, d'autres chercheurs de la diaspora restent sceptiques sur la pertinence de cette nomination en raison de la montée récente des réseaux ouïghours. Depuis les années 90, les Ouïghours à l'étranger ont non seulement réussi à se regrouper en institution internationale en créant dans chaque pays d'installation des organisations interconnectées, mais ont également retrouvé la connexion avec leur pays d'origine. Le rôle des nouvelles technologies dans ce développement est primordial, notamment l'arrivée de l'Internet qui a très largement contribué à la mondialisation des réseaux ouïghours. Le projet E-Diaspora Atlas répertorie, parmi les autres diasporas, celle des Ouïghours à travers le web. La diaspora ouïghoure est une diaspora jeune en cours de construction, et le monde web fait partie intégrante de ce processus. Web diasporique ouïghour contient plus de sites que de blog, alors que dans la région c'est l'inverse. Les blogs de la région appartiennent tous à la plate-forme Blog Bus, la seule plate-forme autorisée en Chine. Tout blog appartenant à une autre plate-forme y est inaccessible. Le contenu des sites ouïghours de la région et de la diaspora est très divers, mais une nette différence se dessine : ceux de la diaspora sont fortement politiques, tandis que les sites de la région s'autocensure plus qu'auparavant. Les sites religieux trouvent leur place dans la diaspora, alors qu'ils sont très peu tolérés en Chine. Les pays où il y a une forte population ouïghour ne fournissent pas forcément les espaces numériques les plus développés, mais cela dépend plus de la catégorie socio-professionnelle de ces migrants. Une population jeune et sensible aux TIC, les Ouïghours sont en train de constituer une diaspora, classique dans sa définition et numérique dans l'ère des nouvelles technologies.

Mots-clefs

diaspora, web, Internet, migrations, Ouïghours, Chine

For the first time, the term diaspora has been assigned to the Uyghurs by the French sociologist Frédérique-Jeanne Besson in 1998 in an article on the Uyghur militancy in the diaspora [1]. Since then, some political scientists and anthropologists have reused the word in their articles to speak of Uyghur political movements outside their country of origin. In 2006, the Forced Migration Online[1], a website specialized in information on migration, made a report on Uyghur dissidents using the word diaspora in its title. It is also the first time that media has designated this group of expatriates by the term diaspora.

Since last few years, though some, either the media or researchers, do not hesitate to name the dispersed Uyghur community as diaspora, other diasporic researchers remain skeptical about the relevance of this nomination due to the recent rise of Uyghur networks. Indeed, although they mobilized since the 60s in Turkey through traditional media and up to the 80s, Uyghurs outside their home region have not been able to develop international networks. But since the 90s, they have not only managed to gather themselves in international institutions by creating in each country inter-connected organizations, but also reestablished the connection with their country of origin. The role of new technologies in this development is critical, particularly with the advent of the Internet has greatly contributed to the globalization of Uyghur networks.

The E-Diasporas Atlas lists, among other diasporas, the Uyghurs across the web. The Uyghur diaspora is a young diaspora under construction, and the online world is an integral part of this process. We will try, firstly, to give the necessary elements for the existing qualification of this diaspora. And secondly, we will present through this project, the role of the web in the emergence of the Uyghur diaspora.

Elements of understanding the emergence of the Uyghur diaspora

Diaspora: A problematic designation for Uyghur communities in the abroad

The question arises on the real value, that is to say, the desired role of the designation. What good is it to be considered as diaspora? And who decides this name to a group of temporary or permanent exile? Why some can be considered part of a diaspora? And why this title causes disagreements between researchers? This nomination, according to the French sociologist Stephen Dufoix, depends on the decisions of four clusters of actors, namely: the authorities of country of origin, those of the host country, the official representatives of the community and the scientists studying on the issue [2]. The term diaspora carries, in a way, a sense of victimization for some researchers, to the extent that it promotes political demands as it is the case for Tibetans and the same for the Palestinians according to D. Schnapper and C. Bordes-Benayoun and W. Safran, but this name can be negative, can devalue the painful reality of Palestinian refugees according to researcher-Kodmani Darwish who considers that the refugee designation values their situation better than diaspora [3]. For the Palestinian sociologist Kamal Muhamed Dorai, the Palestinians are a refugee diaspora.

Without the claim from the Uyghurs living outside of their native region, the name diaspora has already been assigned especially by the media in recent years. We have so far not seen in statements or speeches of Uyghur political representatives in abroad to mention an Uyghur diaspora. The term corresponds with the Uyghur translation of the word "sürgün" which also means exile as shown in the name of "East Turkistan in Exile", chaired by Enwer Yusuf Turani. Some researchers question us the legitimacy of this name that we use recently. We will try to understand how and why the diaspora can be invoked.

The forced exodus of Uyghurs began in 1950 with the arrival of the Chinese Liberation Army in the Uyghur region. The date of the fall of the Republic of East Turkestan remained in the memory of Uyghurs in abroad as the beginning of their exile. Remained silent because of a total lack of support from the host countries, they did not start until later, from the 90s to build their networks in three continents - Asia, Europe, North America. They lost their link with the home country until the policy of market opening in China in 1980 which allowed them to regain some contact with the region. But in this community scattered throughout the world, not all Uyghurs are

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1. http://www.forcedmigration.org/podcasts-videos-photos/video/uyghur

refugees since a significant portion is composed of scientists, including those in the United States and Japan, and students who are not involved in political advocacy of refugees. However, if the refugees claim and fight for the independence of their country in collaboration with various governmental and non-governmental organizations, others play their part in an important economic and scientific cooperation between the home region and the host countries, particularly in joint projects between the two countries. For example, in Turkey, the Uyghur community participates in the development of economical cooperation between the home region and Turkey (though the bloody events of July 2009 have again worsened relations between China and Turkey because of Turkish government's intervention. (but very soon, Turkish government had regained Chinese contracts).[2]

According to scientific criteria, the Uyghur community in abroad can be called diaspora under construction due to the recent history of its dispersion. Is this designation will be useful for Uyghurs? Politically speaking, there are three advantages to this diasporic claim.

Uyghur politicians in abroad seeking to self-designate as ethnic unity and consolidate all Uyghur currents in abroad under a unique collective identity.

All of the Uyghurs, as we mentioned above, can't be considered as refugee in the host country. Being designated as part of a diaspora seems more pertinent than being called "refugee".

Leaders at the head of institutions and political networks may, on behalf of the designation of diaspora, expressing a political claim that many

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2. Turkish PM called 2009 Chinese crackdown on Uyghur riots "genocide".

Uyghurs can't do openly because of their close relationship with their country of origin.

Uyghur contemporary migration can be divided into three major periods since 1949. The first wave began in the early 50's as a result of annexation to New China, the second is before the Cultural Revolution during the cooling Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations and then last one has been held since late 80s-early 90s after open borders. Until the mid-90s, the migratory destination was mainly Turkic republics of Central Asia attached to the USSR, India and Pakistan.

From the 90s, following the opening of borders by the Chinese government for the sake of commercial development with outside, Uyghurs have found a new way to communicate with the outside world. Students, businessmen have started to leave to Europe, North America, Japan and Australia. This change of destination is due to reasons of studies for students. And secondly, the close cooperation between the newly independent Turkic countries of Central Asia and China, gives no chance to Uyghurs who want to militate against Chinese government. Uyghur separatist organizations in these countries are banned; activists are arrested and even handed over to Chinese authorities.

The Uyghur diaspora really started to form world widely from 80s-90s through new technologies, although Uyghur exiles in Turkey are particularly active since the 1960-1985s. Two major organizations are located in Munich, Germany between 1990-1995s, the country that hosted the largest number of Uyghur migrants in Europe. In 1998, the Uyghur American Association was created in Washington. From 2000, the Scandinavian countries begin to receive Uyghur asylum seekers from inside and outside of the Uyghur region. In 2004, the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) was

Regions in the world	Number of Uyghurs	Regions in the world	Number of Uyghurs
Central Asia	1, 500,000	Turkey	15000
Australia	7000	Canada	5000
Middle East	3000	Netherlands	2000
Scandinaves	2000	United States	2000
Germany	1500	Japan	1500
France	500	United Kingdom	100
Switzerland	30		

founded and has assembled all political-cultural Uyghur organizations.

The exact number of Uyghurs installed worldwide is not clear for lack of official statistics. According to estimates of Uyghur leaders or representatives in different countries, we give here an informal estimate of the Uyghur diaspora. The data below should be taken with caution because the Uyghurs in the diaspora often tend to use exaggerated figures.

How ICTs have participated in the construction process of the Uyghur diaspora?

Development of new technology has evolved considerably since the late 80s. This technological evolution has greatly influenced other areas of social and professional life. One of the areas affected by these changes happens to be the phenomenon of migration, particularly following the multiplication of migration patterns in physical space and the increase of different ways to gather in a digital area that promotes Uyghurs' joining in virtual communities.

The invention of the Web, including the social web (blogs, online social networks,etc..), has produced a revolutionary change in the lives of migrants. Web technology has greatly reduced the distance which has been existed between the home countries and host countries of former migrants. With the help of new technologies, especially that of the web, the migrants, their families, their friends are now living in the same particular relational spaces based on distance. Not only the painful situation of "double absence" of migrants has changed in some ways more sociologically than geographically, but also this new world of ICT especially has enabled the emergence and efficient construction of new diasporas such as the Palestinian, Tibetan and Uyghur diasporas.

For the refugee community of Uyghur diaspora, this new tool is used to have their cause heard in the country of installation but also to strengthen the link and ethnic pride among the Uyghur migrants. For the scientific community and students of diaspora, the Internet acts more unifying identity and maintaining relations with the home

country.[3] The web has played a large role in the formation and construction of their diaspora claiming more their proper identity and positions vis-à-vis China.

The E-Diasporas Atlas project, initiated by the Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and led by the researcher Dana Diminescu, includes among others the study of the Uyghur diaspora. This study began in October 2009, was accountable for all sites dedicated to the Uyghurs regardless of theme, language or geographical area. In total, over 800 sites in Uyghur region and in the diaspora were selected, collected and classified into different categories. The objective of this study is to show the role played by new technologies of communication and information in the development and construction of the Uyghur diaspora community-based in different countries of the world [4]. As part of this project, as in other diasporas, we have systematized and categorized the various websites in different languages of the Uyghur diaspora in order to understand the strategy of political and social diasporic actors.

Formation of Uyghur E-Diaspora:

We started the work in exploring the Uyghur web via the Navicrawler tool, provided by the office TIC & Migration in this project. By entering at first address of a few websites in the diaspora that we have already knew, we started to search for other Uyghur websites. The computer tool gathered thousands of websites that related to the Uyghurs in any way or websites that have no connection with our target. We had to remove the later. We have identified 843 Uyghur websites, of all categories, which are linked by hard links.[4] From the beginning of this Navicrawler census, we had to remove the margined or *high layer[5] websites*, that is to say the general websites like google, national or international platforms (yahoo, baidu, youtube ... etc .) or the social networks like Facebook and Twitter. These *high layer websites* are often related to websites of migrants and non-migrants, due to the integration of the late to the previous for the sake of SEO. We therefore avoided from the start, the *high layer websites* that are general and have no direct link with those belonging to dias-

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3. Interviews with two communities

4. The link of a frequent updated and high rately visited website in SEO

5. Some special terms for the E-Diasporas Atlas are written in this paper in italic

pora, nor to the home country, in order to classify those which interest us in this work.

In the Uyghur diasporic web, there is no *border site* that speaks directly this ethnic group. They are systematically created in abroad by the government of the home country, which is why these websites are neither migrants nor strictly non-migrants. In the case of Uyghur web, *border sites* are often located in inner China[6], often in Beijing, that is to say, in the provinces outside the Uyghur region, often specifically for websites. As Nimrod Baranovichi seen, the Uyghurs in inner China can be considered as internal exiles [5] because of their non voluntary leaving and their sufferings outside their homeland. Government websites in the Uyghur language in Beijing can therefore be classified as specific *border sites*. [7]

In the next step, the migrant and non-migrant websites who are necessary for us to build our Uyghur e-diaspora corpus, the 843 sites identified, based on their accessibility and their hosting country. Migrant websites designate the sites created by Uyghurs in abroad (146 sites); non-migrant websites are those that are managed by the Uyghurs in the region (680 sites); border websites (5 sites) are government or official websites based in Inner China (often in Beijing) and finally semi-migrant websites (12 sites) mean websites in Inner China, but kept by the Uyghurs who were exiled. (Figure 2.1)

Websites of the diaspora are at the heart of our work, while the Uyghur websites in the region join the e-Diasporas Atlas corpus for being used in the qualitative study of this project. Among the non-migrant websites, the vast majority is personal or just poorly attended or fed blogs. We therefore chose to keep only websites with high popularity[8] like forums with rich content or blogs of high-visit. The structure of Uyghur e-diaspora is somewhat different from other corpus because of its composition by three geographical corps: non-migrant websites; migrant websites, and finally the few semi-migrant websites and particular *border sites* located in Inner China. The integration of

non-migrant websites in our corpus is related to our will to analyze the relationship between these three regions and their mutual influences. The relation with Uyghur region websites is extremely important for the analysis of the construction of the Uyghur diaspora.
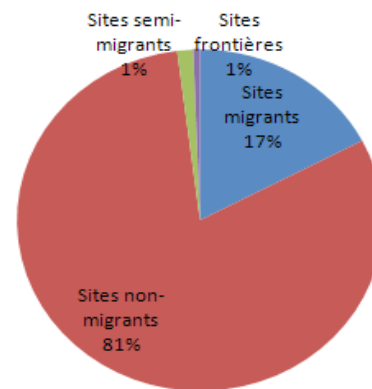

Figure 2.1-geographic division of Uyghur websites

If our first level of selection based on relevance of relationship of the selected website with other websites and its frequency of update and we were able to identify 843 websites, we conducted a second level of selection by deleting the majority of personal blogs in the non-migrant websites category. Thus, we chose the final 314 websites belonging to the three selected corps, that is to say, websites, forums and blogs which are most often connected to each other and better updated in content. We conducted this study between October 2009 and late 2010, a special time for the Uyghur region after the bloody conflicts of July 2009 in Urumchi, the Uyghur capital city. The majority of websites were blocked or banned in the region, many political websites were also disrupted or pirated in the diaspora.

Among the selected websites, 76 websites are classified as dead because of inaccessibility. Seven of these websites are diasporic and the rest belongs to the category non-migrant, they often played the role of *bridge site* between the websites in the diaspora and those of Chinese Turkestan. Our corpus will finally be made up of 146 websites in diaspora, 17 websites located in China, half of which are *border sites*, the rest (151 sites) ones being classified as non-migrants.

These 314 websites are classified into ten categories according to their contents, social and geographic area (Diaspora / China / Uyghur region),

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6. The term « Inner China » (in Chinese « nei di ») is used by the population of autonomous regions (especially in Chinese Turkestan, in Tibet and in Inner Mongolia), to designate other provinces of China.

7. Some government websites are multilingual, those written in Uyghur are for the Uyghur public.

8. The popularity of a website depends on the numerous website that links it.

languages, updatefrequency, property, country of location, website type (website / forum / blog),organizational type (individual / association / government), platform blog(blogbus / blogspot / wordpress) ...

Analyse of catégories

These ten categories of e-Uyghur diaspora mentioned above show the general use of the Internet made by the Uyghurs inside and outside of their region. However, because all of these categories are interrelated, the analysis of the structure and movement of the diaspora is difficult.

We chose the two most important categories for our article, namely the theme and language category. The category of country has been added to enhance the linguistic part. We have appointed two or three categories because others do exist

around these main categories and play a secondary role in the corpus.

Some websites are better referenced than others. Indeed, the more a site is referenced, the more he gains fame and popularity and made *authority*. Some websites are placed separately on the graphic cards and are not referenced by any other websites: no incoming and outgoing link. These websites are isolated from one cluster on the map. The websites of the Uyghur region are set above the map and those in the diaspora are at the bottom of the graph.

Thematic categories of Uyghur web

The topics addressed by the various Uyghur websites were divided into 14 thematic categories that we can see from the chart below:

Figure 2.2: thematic division of Uyghur websites
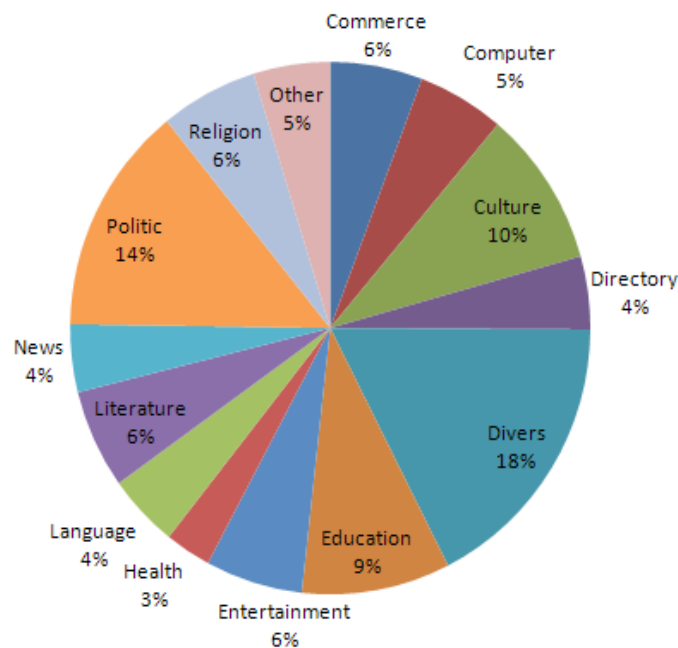
The "diverse" category (the most represented with 55 sites), refers to websites that address all the other themes present in the figure. They often play the role of universal platforms. The majority of these websites (36 sites) is located in the Uyghur region, however they may have political content if they come from Chinese sources and therefore official Chinese media. 13 of these websites are managed by the diaspora and political issues are treated very freely. Some "diverse" websites can be found in Inner China where the theme is as much political censorship in Uyghur region.

The category "Politics" comes secondly with 44 websites. Without any surprises, all these websites which are located in the diaspora, implies a significant activism in favor of independence for the Uyghur region. These websites are largely composed by the official websites of the World Uyghur Congress **(WUC) and its various com**mittees, associations (33 sites) present in different countries. We can see from the thematic graph (Figure 2.3) two websites that are *authority*, that is to say two sites receiving the highest number of inbound links. First one, the website of Radio Free Asia in Uyghur, then the website

of World Uyghur Congress, both located in the United States. Both sites are easily identified by the obviousness of their size, which refers to the large number of websites which have mentioned them. It also shows the goodwill and reputation of these two sites that have a status of referral to other political websites.

61% of cultural websites are in the diaspora and are often managed by the Central Asian cultural associations that address as the Uyghur culture, too. Among the websites devoted to Uyghur culture, London Uyghur Ensemble is particularly active. Turkish TRT International channel broadcast in the Turkic world is identified as the *authority site* in this area. Meshrep, a website created in the United States in 1996 is still very active in presenting the Uyghur culture to English-speaking users and has become a reference on the subject.

Figure 2.3: thematic graph

The "Education" category includes 29 websites of which 62% belong to the region and 38% are in the diaspora. For the first one, apart from two government websites, the rest is composed of personal websites. In the diaspora, the websites of groups of students or student organizations outnumber than personal sites.

Of the remaining thematic categories, news, computer, literature and religion are also interesting to analyze. News websites (13 sites) are shared between the diaspora and the region, if we add to this last specific border websites in Inner China. The six websites of news concerning the diaspora are all powered by non-governmental organizations opposed to seven news websites in the region with the *border sites*, all managed by the government. These news websites can be considered as both political and informative, although we have here divided into two different categories.

Websites dedicated to religion occupy 6% of all diasporic websites. Only a personal website is located in Inner China, no religious website in the Uyghur region and therefore almost all websites on religion are created in the diaspora. As we can see in the table below, those websites are found most in Turkey, the United States and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, in Saudi Arabia, the only subject on which the Uyghurs can speak freely and react is religion. Four of the five religious websites in Turkey are established and funded by the Foundation Suleymaniye, a large Uyghur religious foundation based in Istanbul. Three of the four religious sites in the United States are devoted to

the dissemination of evangelism among Uyghur Internet users. The religious websites are all very rich in terms of content, often use multimedia audio and video.

Country	Religious website
Turkey	5
USA	4
Saudi Arabia	3
Canada	1
Netherlands	1
UK	1
Danemark	1
Portugal	1

Websites that deal with computer (17 sites) are also important in the region and in the diaspora. Ten of these websites are located in the Uyghur region, one is located in Inner China and seven are in the diaspora. The *authority site* among them is undoubtedly the website of the Uyghur Computer Association, based in the United States. This website can be described as *bridge site* because of its role as a bridge between different groups either in the region or in the diaspora. Apart from a website located in France, other computer websites of the diaspora are all located in the United States.

Websites devoted to literature are as numerous as the religious websites and all are in Chinese Turkestan except the website of the Uyghur PEN Club, based in England, and the website of the Taklimakan publishing house, located in Turkey. The content of literary websites in the region consists essentially of Uyghur classical, religious or historical books in PDF version. Some personal blogs devoted to literature are the poems of young Uyghurs who speak essentially of preserving Uyghur culture and tradition.

We analyzed above the corpus of Uyghur websites. Now we will focus on the statistical analysis of the various categories presented above and on the differences between the websites of the diaspora and those in the Uyghur region. As we can see from the graph below which shows the proportion of websites under each category, the subject of concern on each side is different. The category Politic does not contain any website on the side of the Uyghur region, while it is the first important category in number in the diaspora. This attests to the Chinese authorities censor the content of Uyghur websites avoid talking about politics. No political protest is allowed which means that no website exists on this issue. (Figure 2.4)

Figure 2.4 comparisons of migrant and non migrant websites

Themes of diasporic websites

Themes of Chinese Turkestan websites
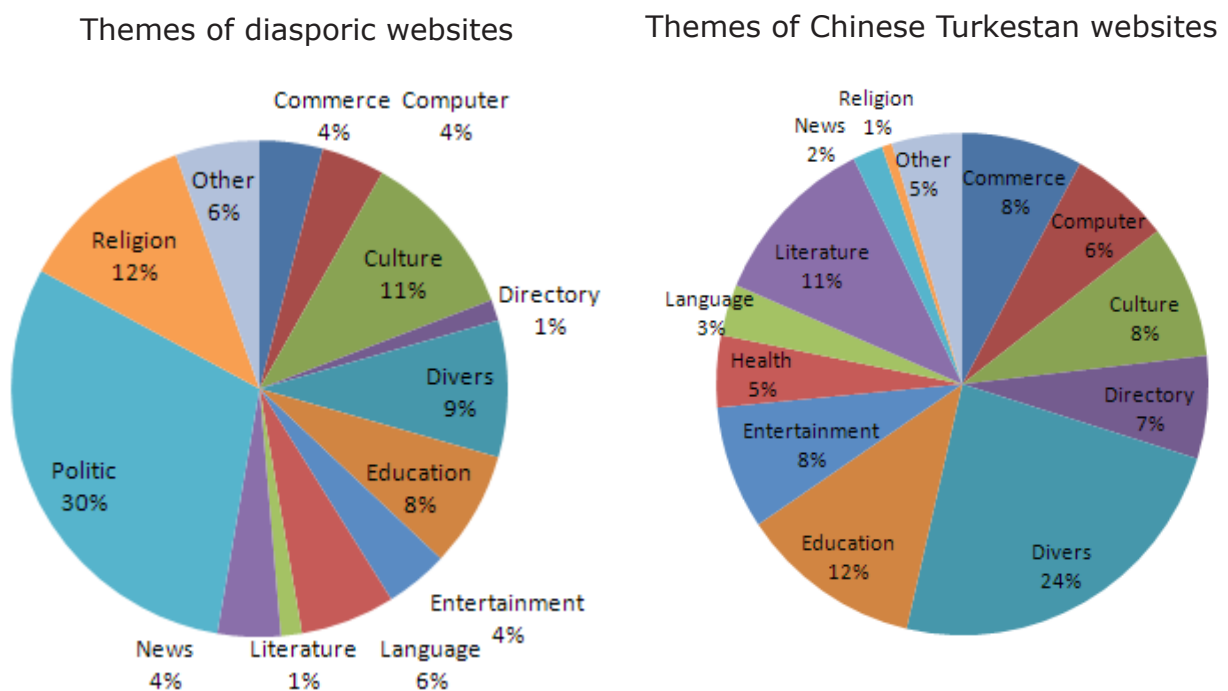
As we just mentioned, the category religion is quite important in the diaspora with 12% of all websites, while in Uyghur region, it is reduced to a single personal blog. However, the literature is virtually absent in the diaspora when it occupies an important place with 12% toward the Uyghur region. Websites that deal with the Uyghur culture are quite large on both sides, although the diasporic websites about culture are more numerous. The category education shows an opposite image of the category culture, in fact, the websites are more numerous in the Uyghur region. Diverse websites are very important in the region, while they are in third place after politics, religion and before education in the diaspora. Directory, entertainment, business and computer websites are less numerous in the diaspora than the websites of the same categories in the region.

Nonpolitical websites in the diaspora are directly related to the websites of the region and vice versa. The most popular website www.Jeckblog.com is both an *authory site*, since many websites refer to it and a *bridge* linking the diaspora *cluster* and the Uyghur region *cluster*. Political websites all support each other although there is no link

pointing to the sites of the region. However, the Uyghur American Association (UAA) website (www.uyghuramerican.org) appears as a *bridge site* between the politics cluster and other clusters which links to the website of UAA. The different categories we have defined among the websites of e-Uyghur diaspora are all closely interconnected to each other, thus forming a single network around a few giant websites *authority* such as www.jeckblog.com and www.ukij.org or the major political websites like www.rfa.org/uyghur and www.uyghurcongress.org.

Language category of Uyghur web:

The language used in the Uyghur websites is an important element to consider in the analysis of the virtual diaspora. The difference between diasporic websites and theses in the region are obvious. Websites that have used two or more languages are categorized as multi-lingual. English and Uyghur are presented in each multilingual website. Until the mid-90s, websites in Uyghur used the Uyghur Latin alphabet. In 1995, the Uyghur Arabic script (commonly known as old Uyghur) is established for the web. Since these

Figure 2.5: linguistic graph

two ways to write the Uyghur language are applied on the web. In our work for e-Diasporas Atlas, we have differentiated websites written only in old Uyghur and those in Uyghur Latin. For websites that have used these two versions, we have put them in the language category "Uyghur".

As we can see from the chart below for category language of Uyghur websites (Figure 2.5), the vast majority of websites in the region is in old Uyghur and Uyghur Latin has very small presence. However, the websites of the diaspora are often multi-lingual. This is one of the specificity of diasporic websites writing the content in several languages, including the language of the host country.

All Uyghur websites using only the Chinese are located in the Uyghur region, only a personal website of the diaspora is written in Chinese. This is a video platform with political content, established in the United States. As we can see through the comparative graph in terms of linguistic division below, the difference in the use of language and is obvious between the two sides of diaspora. (Figure 2.6)

Although the old Uyghur is widely used in the websites of both sides, it does not have a monopoly because other languages are still applied. Less than half of the diasporic websites is only written in old Uyghur. It concerns all thematic categories that we analyzed previously. They are

intended only for Min-kao-min[9] Uyghurs and address both the themes of politics, religion or education. The Uyghur Latin script is rarely used today both in the diaspora and in the region. In the diaspora, some websites offer both versions to be considered of Min-kao-han[10] Uyghurs. English language comes second with 26 websites, many of which are political or cultural, intended only for English-speaking audiences. In contrast, among the websites in the region, only three are in English: a personal blog and two others held by the Anglo-Saxons settled in Urumchi. These three websites are about Uyghur culture. There are as many multilingual websites as theses in English in the diaspora (27 sites). This is particularly true for political or religious websites. The use of various languages is part of the strategy of political websites that target the as more internet users as possible. Thus, the official website of the World Uyghur Congress is already in English, Turkish, Chinese, German and Japanese. In 2011, the French version was introduced and in January 2012, they got Spanish version. The WUC is seeking to develop an Arabic version of their website and. The situation for the news website www.etic.org (East Turkestan Information Center) is same with English, German, Turkish, Arabic, Japanese and Chinese versions. They also seek

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9. Chinese term used to designate minority students in minority schools
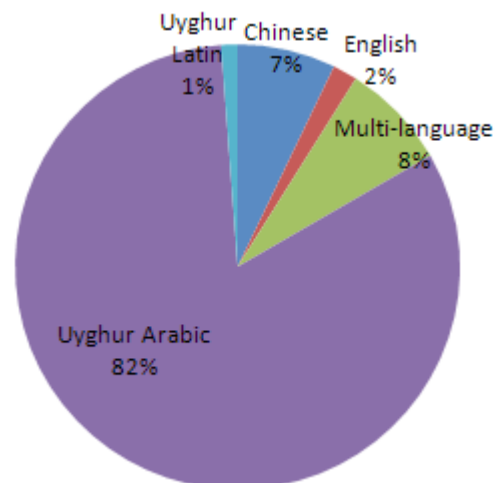
10. Chinese term used to designate minority students in Chinese schools

Figure 2.6 linguistic comparisons of migrant and non migrant websites

Languages used in diasporic websites
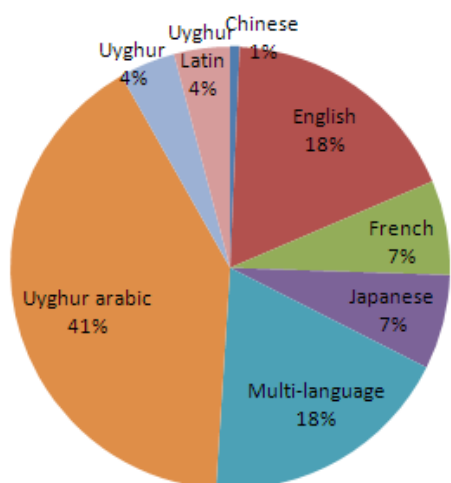
### Languages used in Chinese Turkestan websites

to translate their website into French to reach the French speaking public. Websites of WUC associations are often made in the language of the host countries, as well as the Uyghur version. For example, the website of the Association of Uyghurs in France, a branch of the WUC is not only written in French but also in Uyghur Latin. The website of association of Uyghur students of France (www.oghouz.org) is in French and old Uyghur. In Uyghur region, multi-lingual websites (13 sites) refer essentially not only to websites in Uyghur and English for personal websites but also those in Uyghur, Chinese and English in the case of commercial ones.

Although the Uyghur population is smaller in France, the Uyghur websites (10 sites) are quite numerous. Seven of these websites are political while only three are cultural. French is absent in the websites of the Uyghur region where there is no French installed.

The "country" category of e-Uyghur diaspora joined in some way the language category. (Figure 2.7) The United States occupies the first position since they account for 29% of diasporic websites. Among them, there are as many websites in old Uyghur than in English (or almost all the sites). 15% of these Uyghur-American websites are multi-lingual. Websites located in Turkey came second with 18%: they are overwhelmingly in old Uyghur, 15% are multilingual (with use of Turkish) and 6% in English. 12% of websites are located in France, making it the third country where there are most Uyghur websites. Over 70% of sites are in French, others are multilingual (with use of French). In Japan, there are almost as many websites as in France. Moreover, like in France, websites in Japanese represent over 70% of all Uyghur websites, remaining 30% being multi-lingual (with use of the Japanese). We also count 12 websites in Canada where there is a large migration of Uyghur families. Half of these sites is in English and the other half is in old Uyghur. Political activities are very active in the Netherlands, new destination for Uyghur asylum-seekers and where nearly 2000 Uyghurs. However, we find only five websites, including two multilingual (with use of Dutch) and three others in old Uyghur. Most surprising is still Germany where we find only four websites, including three multi-lingual sites (with use of German), while it has long been considered the home of the Uyghurs in Europe and continues to represent the political center of Uyghur cause in Europe.

Figure 2.7 Countries of Uyghur diasporic websites
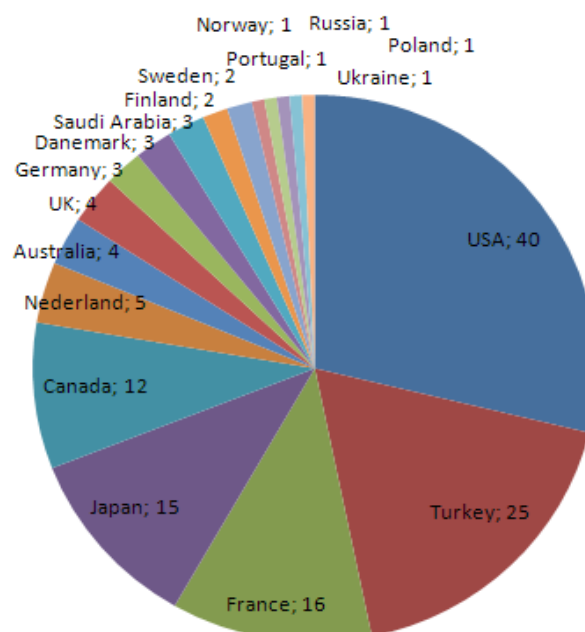
Countries where there is a strong Uyghur population are not necessarily the most developed digital spaces. Long regarded as the European home of the Uyghurs, Germany has only four active websites in the diaspora. Same phenomenon for European countries, recently become targets of Uyghur asylum seekers such as Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. Scandinavian countries have about 2,000 Uyghur refugees and political activities are particularly active over the past three years. And we find only one website in Norway, two in Sweden and five in the Netherlands. In contrast, only France accounts 16 websites despite the very low presence of Uyghur refugee population. We can see that the Uyghur population in France is mainly comprised of young qualified students contrarily other European countries where there are rather a non-academic refugee community.

After comparing the websites of the diaspora and those in the Uyghur region, we found that the first category contains more websites than blog, while the data in the region are reversed (145 diasporic websites against 46 in the region). Blogs in the region belong to the platform Blog Bus, the only platform in China authorized. Any blog that belongs to another platform (wordpress, blog-spot ... etc...) is inaccessible. Only a few blogs that do not wear political speeches are available: namely the site of the Uyghur Academy (www.uyghuracademy.com) Jeckblog (www.jeck-blog.com), the site of the Uyghur Computer Association (www.ukij.com). About 80 websites are dead, a dozen sites belong to the diaspora but the vast majority was located in the region. The study of e-Uyghur diaspora was conducted in 2010 just after the bloody events of July 2009, a period when internet connection was cut in the Uyghur region for 10 months. After reopening, the most popular websites among young Internet users like www.salkin.cn, www.xabnam.cn and www.diyarim.cn were accused of having supplied the demonstration of July 2009. These websites have been banned and bloggers were arrested. The vast majority of websites are blocked and the only way to open a blog is to use the platform Blog Bus. Of the 843 websites we collected at the beginning of this work, approximately 600 websites are actually created blogs on Blog Bus. Banned or blocked websites have found their space on the digital platform much less efficient than their original version. The content of websites in Uyghur region and the diaspora is diverse, but a clear difference emerges: those in the diaspora are strongly political, while websites in the region censor themselves more than before. Religious websites have their place in the diaspora, because they are poorly tolerated in China. Unsurprisingly websites on the Islamic religion are located in Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In Anglo-Saxon, there are also three evangelist websites with high performance and rich content for Uyghur Min-kao-min Internet users, since none of these three sites is using the Uyghur Latin.

Conclusion

The use of the Internet has been greatly simplified in all countries of the world, and all interconnectivities and hence the emergence of new diasporas. According to scientific criteria, the Uyghur community in abroad can be named diaspora under construction due to the recent history of its dispersion. Politically, this appointement can play a positive role.

This study began in October 2009, it was accountable for all websites dedicated to the Uyghurs (843 sites) regardless of theme, language or geographical area. The corpus of e-Uyghur diaspora is somewhat different from other bodies because of its composition into three geographical websites such as non-migrant websites; migrant websites, and finally the least ones as semi-migrant sites and particular *border sites* located in Inner China.

For the refugee community of Uyghur diaspora, this new tool is used to have their cause heard in the host countries but also to strengthen the link and ethnic pride among the Uyghur migrants. For the scientific community and student of the diaspora, the Internet acts more unifying identity and maintaining relations with the home country. The web has played a large role in the formation and construction of their diaspora claiming more identity and positions vis-à-vis China.

The work on the project e-Diasporas Atlas helped us to see more clearly the links in the digital world of Uyghurs and their relationship not only with the Uyghur region, but also with other countries of the diaspora via different websites and networks. A young population, being sensitive to ICT, the Uyghurs are forming together a classical diaspora in its definition and digital diaspora in the era of new technologies.

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