Is Xinjiang an Internal Colony?

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ABSTRACT

Scholars and journalists use the phrase 'internal colonialism' to sum up the relationship between the PRC central government and Xinjiang, and the region does have ethnic conflict and a low degree of autonomy. Its relationship with the PRC centre and the political economy of Han/minority interaction indicate, however, that none of the elements of the internal colonialist concept are sufficiently present to warrant characterising Xinjiang as an internal colony of China.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars who study PRC minority areas sometimes use the term 'internal colonialism' to sum up the relationship between these areas and China's central government (cf. Gladney, 1997, 1998, 1998/9). The phrase has also worked its way into journalistic accounts of Xinjiang (Winchester 1997; Johnson, 1995). To some, PRC minority areas are self-evident internal colonies. David Goodman (1983: 111–12) asserts 'the PRC has a number of areas which by any standard are readily identifiable as internal colonies', such as Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. He notes, however, factors that cut against this view: the raised prestige of minority cultures since 1949 and an absence of 'single commodity exploitation by the capital'.

Several factors suggest that China proper (*neidi*) and Xinjiang are like metropole and colony. First, regional economic strategy is based on primary products, with oil and cotton (*yi hei, yi bai* – one black, one white) preeminent and minerals and grain important (Xinjiang People's Radio 1998; *Renmin Ribao* [*RMRB*] 1997). Some of these products end up in the *neidi*. Most minerals extracted in Xinjiang are used there, although 'a significant part' is sent out (Chang 1997: 403). Of 8.2 million tons of Xinjiang grain produced in 1997, 500,000 went elsewhere, mostly to neighbouring provinces. Two-thirds of Xinjiang's cotton output is sold to other provinces (*Xinhua* 19 January, 7 March 1998). Xinjiang produced 15.4 million tons (MT) of oil in 1997 and the region's oil 'consump-

Inner Asia **2** (2000): 239–271

tion' was 14 MT, but national policy requires that 50 percent of Xinjiang oil be shipped out (Dorian, et al. 1998).

The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) produces 80-plus percent of PRC onshore oil. CNPC and Sinopec (which controls petrochemical production) are the main components of the State Administration of the Petroleum and Chemicals Industry (*Xinhua* 20 January 1999; 27 July 1998). Almost all 1997 oil production derived from four areas. The Songliao oil fields that straddle Jilin and Liaoning contributed 38 percent (some 61 MT), followed by Heilongjiang (56 MT), Shandong (28 MT) and, with some 10 percent, Xinjiang (15.4 MT). The eastern oil fields are expected to 'maintain a relatively good output' for the next 20 years. Oil and petrochemicals are 30 percent of regional industrial output (*Zhongguo tongji nianjian* [ZGTJNJ], 1998: 469; *Xinhua* 5, 28 October 1997, 11 December 1998; *Asia Pulse* 10 March 1997). With 28 percent of PRC estimated reserves, Xinjiang is the hope for oil self-sufficiency as eastern reserves decline. Thus far, however, no 'elephant' deposits have been found. A harsh climate and remote, deep locations make most Xinjiang oil expensive to extract (*Xinhua* 28 May 1997, 12(a), 29 January; 7, 27 May 1998, 25 April 1999; *Asia Pulse* 13 June 1997; *Platt's Oilgram News* 1997). While CNPC is profitable, its Xinjiang operations may not be. The perception in Xinjiang, however, is that absent 'Chinese' control, the region would be rich (Tefft 1996; *Far Eastern Economic Review* 1993).

Second, there is an apparent ethnic division of labour in Xinjiang, to the extent that Han predominate in most large cities, while most minority people are rural. In 1997, Han were 76 percent of Ürümqi's population, as well as 95 percent of Shihezi and 76 percent of Karamay, the two other officially-designated regional cities (*Xinjiang tongji nianjian* [XJTJNJ], 1998: 57–61). In 1982, 54 percent of Han and 84 percent of minorities in Xinjiang worked in the primary sector, compared to a national average of 74 percent (Zhou 1990: 238). Both percentages have dropped since then, but the relation of the Han to minority proportions of peasants may not have done so.

Third, there is an ethnic income imbalance. Han migration and income disparities are said to be the chief sources of resentment among Uyghurs, the largest Xinjiang ethnic group (Hutzler 1999). The urban/rural income gap is an indirect indicator of ethnic disparities. Xinjiang per capita rural and urban incomes in 1997 were 1504 and 4859 yuan, a ratio of over 3.2: 1. The official 1995 national average urban/rural disparity was 2.4: 1, but was 3.3: 1 when in-kind incomes are taken into account (Chai & Chai 1994: 689; Khan & Riskin 1998: 250; World Bank 1997: 17).

The difference between 1997 urban and rural consumption levels in Xinjiang (3328 versus 1891 yuan; a ratio of 1.8: 1) was not as large as the gap in income, perhaps because of government subsidies to peasants and savings by urbanites. Consumption was higher still, however, in the overwhelmingly Han cities: 5596 yuan in Ürümqi, 3367 in Shihezi and 8033 in Karamay. In 30 poor

– and largely minority – Xinjiang counties, peasant incomes in 1998 averaged 1000 yuan (*Xinhua* 15 March 1999). In 1993, when Xinjiang urban and rural incomes were 2,680 yuan and 778 yuan respectively and national per capita peasant income was 921 yuan, Uyghur peasants averaged only 732 yuan per capita (Reuters 1993; *Xinhua* 11 August 1994).

These are official figures and even China's premier disbelieves statistics provided by provinces. Indeed, the State Statistical Bureau now bypasses the provinces to get its data on industry (Kynge 1998; Johnson 1999). '[P]ersistent inaccuracies and, at worse, falsification' of statistics (*China Economic Review* 1998) often involves poor areas underestimating incomes to attract subsidies, while richer areas exaggerate local incomes to boost tax revenues or the status of leaders (*SCMP* 18 April1999).

Fourth, there is an ethnic division of political power. The Communist Party (CCP) is superordinate to PRC state organs and in 1993 minorities were 62 percent of Xinjiang's population, but only 40 percent of CCP members (Chang 1997: 412). The Xinjiang regional Party committee has minority members, including deputy party secretaries (*XJRB* 2 June 1998), but the very top Party posts at regional, prefectural and county levels are generally filled by Han. (cf. *RMRB* 1990; interviews with cadres in Turpan, Kashgar and Ili, 1996, 1998). Regional CCP secretary, Wang Lequan, like his predecessors Song Hanliang, Wang Enmao and Wang Feng, is Han. Minorities hold prestigious, but less powerful state offices – regional chairman, four of the eight vice-chairmen, president of the regional Higher People's Court, Chief Procurator and 20 of the 32 top regional minister positions (*XJRB* 19, 23 January 1998).

Fifth, there has been extensive 'colonisation' of Xinjiang. A big migrant influx occurred from the 1950s to 1970s. Almost 92 percent were Han and eight percent were Hui, a Chinese-speaking Muslim minority. Then, as now, most migrants have been unorganised settlers. The largest contingent then was from poor, neighbouring Gansu province and the prime motives now are related to employment, especially commerce (Wang 1998: 38–9, 51). Han were 6.7 percent of Xinjiang's 1949 population, but 41.6 percent in 1978. Net migration was negative from 1981–7. Since then there has been rough stasis, if 'temporary migrants' are disregarded. Han were 38.4 percent of a population of 17.45 million in 1997, 0.2 percent less than the their proportion in 1987. Uyghurs are 47 percent and other minorities 15 percent. In the 1980s close to 90 percent of Xinjiang Han lived in north Xinjiang (Jiang bei), where they were over 60 percent of inhabitants. In the mid-1990s, 72.5 percent of Uyghurs lived in south Xinjiang (Nan Jiang) and were close to 90 percent of the area's 7.3 million people. Pannell and Ma conclude that 'the periods of great migration, especially of Han Chinese, to Xinjiang, are over'. Qiu projects zero growth among Xinjiang Han by 2020 and negative growth thereafter with the proportion of Han in Xinjiang dropping to 24 percent by 2030 (XJTJNJ, 1998: 57; ZGTJNJ: 111; Zhuang 1995: 34; Wang 1998: 40; Qiu 1994: 417–18; Hannum & Yu 1998: 325; Pannell & Ma 1997:

213, 220; Ji 1990: 66).

The stability of the Han proportion of the population from the late 1980s to late 1990s, a time of mobility in China and continued migration to Xinjiang, partly results from a high minority birth rate. There is also emigration from Xinjiang (cf. Jun & Mao 1996: 155), 'flying from the northwest to the southeast', including an 'internal brain drain'. Complaints by Xinjiang National People's Congress members about migration due to recruitment there by coastal work units began early in the reform era and continue to be voiced (*Xinhua* 17 December 1981, 14 March 1994; 12 August 1996; InterPress 1994; *South China Morning Post* [*SCMP*] 30 March 1995). Xinjiang and other western areas have disproportionately larger shares of state-owned industry, primary production, and 'civil service' employment than coastal provinces. Internal brain drain is precisely away from these areas of activity (cf. *Xinhua* 7 April, 8 July 1998; *Straits Times* 1994).

Many Han are part of the Xinjiang Production & Construction Corps (the bingtuan), which is often cast as the chief agency for colonisation. Some 2.3 million of the 6.4 million Xinjiang Han were bingtuan members in 1996, 13.6 percent of the population, (down from 17 percent in 1983). About 88 percent of bingtuan members were Han and constituted 28 percent of all Xinjiang Han, down from 42 percent in 1983 (XJTJNJ 1998: 57; *Xinjiang shengchan* ... 1997: 37; *Xinhua* 12(b) January 1998; Ji 1990: 269). Ninety percent of the 930,000 economically-active bingtuan members are in agriculture. They account for one-fifth of Xinjiang's economic output, including forty percent of its cotton and twenty percent of its grain. The bingtuan controls seven million hectares of land and is a publicly-traded corporation whose output in 1998 reached US$16.35 billion, up 10.3 percent from 1997. With 100,000 ex-soldiers in 14 divisions, the bingtuan is also tasked to fight Uyghur separatists. Like several PRC cities, it has provincial status for aspects of economic decision-making and its own armed police, courts and procuracy. Its political commissar serves on the regional party committee (Hutzler 1998; *Xinhua* 9 December 1997, 27 January 1999; Ming Pao 1998; *SCMP*, 17 April 1997; 6 September, 16 December 1998; Ürümqi TV 1997, *China Business* ... 1999). In the 1980s, bingtuan Han had many fewer contacts with Uyghurs than did non-bingtuan Han (Ji 1990: 270).

Based on factors such as these, a picture is drawn of Han Chinese domination and exploitation of Xinjiang. PRC leaders, however, hold that far from being internal colonies, the minority areas are subsidised by the centre. Xinjiang received from the centre almost 60 billion of the 66 billion yuan it spent on capital construction in 1990–1995 (*Xinhua* 26 March 1997). Minority areas have 'ethnic regional autonomy', a system that allows for material benefits that would not accrue if these areas were ordinary PRC jurisdictions (cf. *Xinhua* 12 March 1997). The PRC government does not claim that a high degree of autonomy is (or should be) provided to minority areas, as it is to Hong Kong under the slogan 'one country, two systems'. It does argue, however, that autonomy is 'real' in

that minority area administrations have decision-making power in 'soft' local spheres of governance (Dawamat 1998).

This paper considers whether Xinjiang is a PRC internal colony. It examines the work of social scientists on internal colonialism and argues that the term 'internal colonialism' is inapt as a summary of Xinjiang/*neidi* relations. The essay concludes that a more complex view of Xinjiang's relationship with the centre is warranted and should be informed by research that critically examines claims about the relationship made by both the PRC government and its opponents

INTERNAL COLONIALISM: CONCEPTS AND MODEL

Concepts of internal colonialism date back to Lenin's description of capitalist development in Russia, Gramsci's writings on the mezzogiorno area of Italy and 1930s studies of the relationship between North and South in the United States (Williams 1983: 5; Khlief 1978). European colonialists in the 1940s and 1950s invoked internal colonialism to deflect criticism emanating from the US, by arguing that Native Americans and other US minorities were colonised (Stone 1979: 256).

Studies of US ethnic minorities (Carmichael & Hamilton 1967; Bailey & Flores 1973) and Latin American states (Gonzalez-Casanova 1969; Havens & Flinn 1970) in the 1960s and early 1970s made such concepts prominent. In Latin America, internal colonialism was seen as urban exploitation of rural communities ('colonias' in Spanish) (cf. Stavenhagen 1965). In these early works, internal colonialism was defined as a structure of social relations among culturally heterogenous groups within a state, based on domination and exploitation. These remained the dimensions most scholars have had in mind when speaking of internal colonialism, even after a different model was elaborated in the mid-1970s (cf. Walton 1975: 32–4;Williams 1983: 7). Most scholars who have analysed internal colonialism, moreover, have tied it to capitalism and 'external, neo-colonial structures', particularly foreign governments and transnational corporations (Rogerson 1979: 109–10; Walton 1975: 39).

An internal colonialism model emerged with Michael Hechter's 1975 study on the relationship of England and the Celtic Fringe (Scotland, Wales and Ireland). Hechter viewed internal colonialism as between two distinct cultural groups, one of whom is initially advantaged by the uneven spread of industrialisation. As the state's core expands its control to its eventual boundaries, the advantaged group perpetuates an unequal distribution of power and resources by fixing cultural boundaries and deepening cultural differentiation. Cultural absorption depends not so much on transactions between core and periphery, as on patterns of contact between core and peripheral group members within the periphery. A culture of low prestige within the periphery becomes the chief indicator of internal colonialism (Hechter 1975: 4–5, 30–40, 349).

Hechter argued on the level of regions that the loss of Celtic area sovereignty fostered dependent development disadvantageous to their economic wellbeing and cultural integrity. His argument was not that England still dominates and exploits the Fringe; it was primarily a theory of ethnic solidarity. Diffusionist modernisation theories held that, after initial core/periphery contact, regional economic inequalities would ameliorate. Peripheral cultural distinctiveness would fade as a national culture took hold. Ethnic solidarity would decline as those bearing distinctive cultural markers disassociated from one another after being incorporated into a differentiating occupational structure. As modernisation proceeded, a more random distribution of group members within the structure would reduce the salience of ethnic identity and solidarity and favour class over non-structurally determined consciousness. Hechter demurred and sought to explain why ethnic solidarity persisted under conditions of modernity and became manifest in increasing support for ethnic regionalism.

Internal colonialist concepts predicted that regional inequalities would continue and perhaps even grow, that the cultural distinctiveness of the peripheral areas would be reasserted and that politics would be based on cultural distinctions. Hechter's model too was aimed at the level of regions, but went beyond it to show that, at the level of individuals, internal colonialism contributed to the eventual prominence of Celtic Fringe nationalism. He argued that British development had rested on a cultural division of labour (CDL), a stratification system that makes cultural distinctions politically salient by systematically linking them to individual life chances to participate in capital accumulation and independent economic development. A CDL counters the tendency of the occupational structure and system of stratification to differentiate and dissociate individuals. Hechter first saw the CDL as hierarchical, spatial and a deliberate strategy of domination by a 'superordinate group [that] seeks to stabilize and monopolize its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalization and perpetuation of the existing stratification system' (ibid., p. 39).

The CDL may be described in terms of the degree of occupational specialisation of a cultural group and that group's mean occupational prestige level. The relationship between dominant and subordinate aggregates is the key to determining whether a CDL produces ethnic solidarity. Where a distinctive cultural group's members concentrate in a few occupations, especially at the lower levels of the stratification system, their ethnic solidarity should remain high. Where there is large gap in the occupational prestige of positions held by members of two cultural groups (within a state, within a peripheral region of a state or even within the core of a state) there is high solidarity within both groups. Where members of both groups are abundant in low prestige occupations, however, the lack of a CDL diminishes ethnic solidarity.

XINJIANG AND THE INTERNAL COLONIALISM MODEL

Hechter's model is a parsimonious explanation of the emergence of ethnoregional movements and a key element in the discourse of internal colonialism. It is thus one basis for testing whether Xinjiang is internally colonised. Culturally heterogeneous societies usually have a cultural division of labour (CDL) in the sense that members of some ethnic groups disproportionately cluster in low or high status occupations. Whether a CDL is the product of ethnic dominance is another matter. For Hechter, the CDL explained why Celtic ethnic solidarity and mobilisation grew in the face of modernisation.

Uyghurs do protest, but protests, many with anti-regime undertones, are the stuff of everyday life in the PRC. The CCP admits to more than 5,000 protests in China in 1998 and says these severely taxed the security forces (Pomfret 1999). Other PRC officials have stated that there were more than 10,000 cases of 'unruly incidents' by peasants alone in 1998, including demonstrations and attacks on government offices. Exiled PRC labour activist Han Dongfang recorded 216,750 protests, involving 3.6 million workers; in China in 1998; 1,086 were violent and 78 police and government officials were killed. Protests, such as the confrontation over excessive local taxes on January 8, 1999 between more than 10,000 peasants and armed police in Daolin, Hunan, can be large-scale and group organised. Others are seemingly spontaneous: hundreds of Changde, Hunan workers blocked a major highway to protest against layoffs; peasants from Julidi village, Sichuan demonstrated in the provincial capital, Chengdu, against a government seizure of their land; retired Chongqing workers rallied against a cut in pensions. Bombings in Han provinces moreover are now common: of the 2,500 bombings in China in 1998, some had an anti-government background unrelated to ethnic conflict (Eckholm 1999; Agence France Presse [AFP], 18, 23, 25, 27 January 1999; *SCMP*, 11 February, 26 March 1999). Some protests are marked by political slogans. Peasant demonstrators from Tongzi County, Guizhou marched through the provincial capital Guiyang on 26 October 1998 with a banner inscribed 'We want democracy, we want the rule of law (*yao minzhu, yao fazhi*) (Yu 1998).

Political or semi-politicised mobilisation in China thus often takes the form of class-based politics. Given that almost half of workers laid off in Xinjiang have not been re-employed, events of this kind likely occur in Xinjiang as well, but are overshadowed in reportage by the region's ethnic-based protest. The claim is often made, in connection with such reports, that tensions are rising or ethnic conflict growing in Xinjiang. The armed clash in Baren in 1990 and 'riot' in Yining in 1997 are usually cited as evidence. More serious incidents occurred earlier, however, with the worst in 1980–1981, when hundreds of Han were reportedly killed in rioting and many more fled the region in a panic. There were also large demonstrations in 1985 over the replacement of a Uyghur governor

and in 1989 over the publication of an 'anti-Islamic' book (*Zhongguo xinwen xhe* 1999; van Kemenade 1997: 337–8; Dreyer 1994: 47; Becquelin 2000).

There is also no firm evidence that the emergence of independent Central Asian states has led to a rise in violence or greater support for separatism. Separatist activity in Xinjiang has long had a terrorist component. For that reason alone, Central Asian states are unwilling to support it (cf. AFP 16 February 1999). Central Asia's political and economic relations with China also impel circumspection and generally separatist efforts to internationalise the Xinjiang question have failed (*SCMP* 26 July 2000).

It is dubious to suppose that cross-border infiltration by guerrillas, bombings and assassinations of officials indicate rising support for separatism. The anthropologist Dru Gladney has observed that most Uyghurs are wary of separatism because of the impoverishment and chaos in post-Soviet Central Asia, and are interested in securing greater autonomy and a more equal share of the economic pie (Hutzler 1997; Gladney 1998: 14, 1999: 134). *New York Times* journalist Nicholas Kristof (1993) has remarked of Xinjiang that 'So little is known about the public mood that it is not even clear that most people favor independence'. *Washington Post* journalist John Pomfret (2000) has commented that 'while most Tibetans are adamant that they would like the Chinese out, among Uighurs there seems to be a broader spectrum of opinion about Chinese rule'. The often-asserted connection between Uyghur protest and armed conflict on the one hand and the existence of a CDL in Xinjiang is also problematic. Other variables, such as the more generalised perception of Han chauvinism may be more important (cf. Sautman & Yan 2000). In any case, Uyghur mobilisation would more likely be related to the CDL if the CDL were indeed founded upon ethnic domination.

Whether discrimination is a factor in the distribution of high and low status occupations among Han and minorities is a key antecedent question about the CDL. Although they do not address the issue directly, the findings of Hannum & Yu (1998) and Ji Ping (1990) are suggestive in that regard. In 1990, 76.7 percent of Xinjiang agricultural workers were minorities, up from 69.4 percent in 1982, an increase likely due to Han emigration from Xinjiang. Some 84 percent of Uyghurs were agricultural workers (Hannum & Yu 1998: 328; Ji 1990: 105). Minorities were concomitantly underrepresented in most other worker categories, including professional and technical (40.8%), managers and administrators (28.8%), clerical (36.8%), sales (38.4%), service (41.2%) and manufacturing and transport (23.7%). Because of a faster overall rise in the educational level of Xinjiang Han, ethnic differentiation in many of these occupational categories increased between the 1982 and 1990 censuses.

When education is accounted for, however, there was no uniform increase in ethnic differences in occupational attainment. At the post-primary level, education brought equal or better returns to minorities than to Han. When education and geography are controlled for, ethnic differences as to higher-status occupations disappear. Hannum and Yu (1998: 330) conclude that 'education is a key

source of ethnic differences in the attainment of higher-status occupations, but other factors heavily influence ethnic differences in blue-collar and agricultural occupational attainment'. They note that while the education level of minorities is improving, the occupational gap is unlikely to change soon because ethnic differences in educational attainment among school-age children persist. Hannum and Yu do not address the issue of ethnic domination and their findings do not allow for firm conclusions about discrimination and the Xinjiang CDL. The findings do suggest, however, that discrimination is, if anything, positive for minorities as to higher-status occupations. There are indeed numerous 'preferential policies' (*youhui zhengce*) in place in Xinjiang which, at least as to higher-status occupations, benefit minorities (Sautman 1998).

Invidious discrimination may be a factor influencing employment for Xinjiang minorities in blue-collar and lower-status occupations (Smith 1999: ch. 10). A Uyghur former journalist has claimed that ex-Xinjiang governor Tomur Dawamat stated on 10 April 1990,

> Han prejudice is experiencing a steady rise. Quite a few Hans do not respect the local minorities' customs and way of life. Many big and medium-scale enterprises, referring to all possible expert pretext [sic], refuse to employ minorities. (Ferhat 1996)

Policies that may not be based on discriminatory intent, but that produce a disparate impact on minorities may also be important in shaping the ethnic configuration of lower-status occupations. The residency (*hukou*) system that still presents obstacles to permanent peasant migration to urban areas disproportionately impacts minorities. Employer preferences for Chinese speakers, while not directly tied to discriminatory animus, also contribute to the disproportion of minorities in low-status occupations.

Ji Ping's extensive 1987 survey used an index of net difference for the occupational distribution of Han and Uyghurs. This is the difference between the probability that a randomly selected Han has higher socioeconomic standing than a randomly selected Uyghur and probability that a randomly selected Uyghur has a higher socioeconomic standing than a randomly selected Han. A positive value of ND means an advantage to the Han with a maximum value of 100, indicating that every Han holds a higher socioeconomic standing than every Uyghur. Ji determined that whereas the unadjusted overall index was 31 percent, it decreased to 24 percent (rural) and 11 percent (urban) when the unbalanced rural-urban residence distribution (Han = 7.0: 3.0; Uyghur = 8.6: 1.4) was taken into account. He also found Chinese language ability was a key factor in determining Uyghur occupational status (Ji 1990: 108, 110, 124).

The data of Hannum and Yu and Ji Ping do not clearly show a hierarchical CDL founded upon ethnic domination in Xinjiang. Minorities occupy a substantial, albeit not proportionate, number of high-status positions, while Han are found in numbers in low-status occupations. A segmental CDL may exist in Xinjiang, with many cadre positions reserved for minorities, but this

only raises the question of whether a region with a segmental CDL can be an internal colony. Scholars who analysed Scotland, Quebec, Catalonia and other regions that arguably have a segmental CDL refuse to characterise these areas as internal colonies. In classic external colonialism, segmental CDLs generally did not exist or were created only as an indigenised occupational structure became imperative in the run up to decolonisation.

It may be that more detailed and more recent data related to the applicability of the internal colonialism model to Xinjiang will be developed. Its generation would be consequential for our understanding of Xinjiang society. For now, however, the more diffuse concepts of internal colonialism must be considered in relation to Xinjang.

XINJIANG AS A MIDDLE-LEVEL PROVINCE

The relationship of Xinjiang to the centre can be viewed in the context of the place held by the 30 other PRC provinces that existed as of mid-1997 (Table 1). These statistics show that Xinjiang is in most respects a middle-level province, but that it lags behind in a few areas. Average life expectancy in China as a whole was 70.4 years in 1989. David Wang (1998: 46) explains the relatively low life expectancy in Xinjiang as a function of several factors: 'the backwardness of the economy, the dogmatic influence of conventional culture and habit, poor hygiene conditions, and the low education level in southern Xinjiang'. Wang notes that low life expectancy is also associated with the region's high fertility rate. Life expectancy in Xinjiang in the early 1950s was between 'less than 30' and 33 years, however, according to official figures (*Xinhua* 20 September 1995; 2 February 1998).

Per capita mean income comparisons are often used to sum up the economic standings of provinces. There are a number of difficulties associated with focusing exclusively on this measurement, however:

First, reliable regional costs of living indices (COLs) are required to make meaningful comparisons of absolute incomes in the different regions of a country. Second, focusing exclusively on the average and neglecting other income classes may result in a misleading conclusion concerning regional income distributions and economic well-being. Third, as with relative incomes and inequality, there is the problem of household size and the appropriate equivalence scale to be used in making welfare comparisons. Finally, there is the well-known problem of sampling errors, which calls for the use of statistical inference procedures in studying distributions of absolute income (Bishop, et al. 1995: 5–6).

Taking into account these limitations, Xinjiang is hardly in the position of Guizhou, the province analysed for internal colonialism by Goodman (1983) and Oakes (1995; 1998). Per capita income in Guizhou was lowest among provinces in China in 1952, 1978 and 1990. Xinjiang's per capita income ranked fifth in 1952, fourteenth in 1978 and twelfth in 1990 (Wei & Ma 1996: 187). Xinjiang

Item (in 1997, except as indicated)	XJ value	XJ rank
Change PC Nat'l Income 1978–1991	487.3%	7
PC GDP	Y5904	12
Average wage	Y6644	11
Average wage of state unit workers	Y6709	12
PC urban resident disposable income	Y4845	15
PC cultivatable rural land	3.98 mu	4
PC urban resident consumer spending	Y3887	16
PC rural net income	Y1504	25
PC rural consumer.expenditure	Y1395	18
PC value output of primary products	Y1574	3
% working in primary industry	56.8%	17
PC value output of secondary products	Y2322	14
% working in secondary industry	17.1%	21
PC value output tertiary products	Y2007	11
% working in tertiary industry	26.2%	11
% of emp.with senior.secondary edu.	14.8%	8
% of emp.with tertiary education	7.8%	4
PC revenue (1991)	Y170.2	19
PC expenditure (1991)	Y337.8	4
Expenditure as % of budget. Rev.(1991)	219.6%	4
Expen. as % of extrabudget. rev. (1991)	105.1%	5
Rand on index of undertaxation	0.75	3
Birth rate per annum	66 %	5
Life expectancy (in 1989)	65.7 years	26
Pop. natural increase rate per annum	. 3.11 %	6

TABLE 1.

Source: (XJTJNJ, 1998: 661–75; ZGTJNJ: 129, 159, 171, 346, 399; Qiu 1994: 185; Wei 1996: 336–9).

in 1997 was fifteenth in urban income and twenty-fifth in rural income. In the rural sector, there has been a major slippage, as Xinjiang's per capita net income of rural households ranked third in 1978, fifteenth in 1985 and twelfth in 1990 (ZGTJNJ 1998: 346; *Nikkei Weekly* 1995). Only the overwhelmingly rural members of the bingtuan were much better off than the average Chinese

rural resident. Their per capita income in 1998 was 5,600 yuan (*China Business* ... 1999).

Peasants were seventy percent of Xinjiang's 1990 population, as they were in China as a whole. The 1996 regional urban district population was 34 percent, but the non-agricultural share was for only 19.3 percent. Xinjiang is thus a place where peasants are ubiquitous. Its industry has only two-thirds the per capita gross value of industrial output (GVIO) of China as a whole and is largely state-owned: its 'nonpublic sector' produced 10 percent of 1997 GVIO, as against 32 percent of GVIO nationally. Such comparisons are deceptive, however, because the means against which Xinjiang is measured are highly skewed by a few provinces that have very high rates of industrial output and non-public production. Similarly, single-year comparisons of Xinjiang's economy are misleading. It was buoyant from 1990 to 1997, with GDP up an average of 10.7 percent per year. Grain output increased 22 percent, cotton production 145 percent and oil and petrochemical output by 6.6 times. Recession hit in the late 1990s, however, triggered by a fall in international demand for oil and cotton. The situation became so severe that Jiang Zemin had to call for fewer lay-offs of staff, especially among Uyghurs and Hui (*Xinhua* 22 July, 8 March 1998; Carter 1997; ZGTJNJ, 1998: 434; Pannell & Ma 1997: 216; *XJRB* 20 December 1997; 19 September, 29 June, 16 May 1998; Li Tzu-ching 1998; *Tengfei fazhang de Xinjiang gongye* 1997; *AsiaInfo* 1998; Hong Kong Trade Development Council 1998: 177).

The gap between national (2090 yuan) and Xinjiang regional per capita peasant income (1504 yuan) is not overwhelming and Xinjiang peasant per capita income has more than doubled since 1992, increasing 210 yuan from 1996 to 1997 alone (*Xinhua* 24 December 1997, 12 March 1998). Xinjiang's below average rural income also is not an indicator of a strict Han/minority ethnic divide in terms of rural prosperity. Largely Han Gansu (1185) Shaanxi (1273), Liaoning (1643), Sichuan (1681), Henan (1734), Shanxi (1738) and Anhui (1809) had 1997 per capita peasant incomes below or not much above that of Xinjiang (XJTJNJ: 669). The rural sector is, however, central to Xinjiang's economy and the reasons for its low rank need to be understood.

Xinjiang is disadvantaged by all factors that create PRC interprovincial disparities in peasant incomes (cf. Chai & Chai 1994). A number of Xinjiang-specific factors should also be considered. First, Xinjiang peasants have low 'labourer remuneration' (*laodongzhe baochou*). Wages were only 8.7 percent of PRC rural income in 1988, but 22.4 percent in 1995. Differences in wage earnings accounted for forty percent of all rural inequality in China in 1995. Nationally, 1997 per capita peasant household labourer remuneration earnings were 515 yuan; but 72 yuan in Xinjiang, the second lowest in the country. Xinjiang has a proportionate number of township and village enterprises (TVEs) from which peasants supplement their incomes: with 1.4 percent of PRC population it has 1.5 percent of all TVEs. Xinjiang TVEs are less rewarding, however, as there

are few industrial and transport TVEs. Some 26 percent of PRC TVEs involve industry or transport; but only 8.6 percent of Xinjiang TVEs do, probably because markets are remote and infrastructure still lacking. Several Han provinces, such as Jilin, Heilongjiang and Gansu, also have low levels of labourer remunerations (Khan & Riskin 1998: 239–40; ZGTJNJ 1998: 347, 419).

Second, many Xinjiang rural communities are remote and naturally disadvantaged. Xinjiang has 3.9 million hectares of arable land (China has at least 144 million), but only 700,000 hectares are irrigated. Half of Xinjiang is desert and, although it ranks fourth in water per capita, the cost to access its underground water is very high (Crook 1996: 129; *Xinhua* 9, 19 May 1995; 27 January, 8, 30 June 1998; *Kyodo* 1996).

Third, Xinjiang's commodity focuses affect peasant incomes. The region is first and sixth among provinces in per capita grain and cotton production. The Xinjiang area sown to grain fell from 2.3 million hectares in 1978 to 1.4 million in 1994. The centre mandates that provinces be self-sufficient in grain, however, and the area sown to grain increased again from 1994, reaching 1.7 million hectares in 1997, some 53 percent of Xinjiang's sown area (*Xinjiang tongji nianjian* 1998: 296). PRC grain prices are kept low to recoup state investment in agriculture, lower the urban wage bill, and accumulate funds for industrialisation (Sheng 1993; Cheng & Tsang 1994: 1083). The urban grain retail price was fixed at the 1966 level for 25 years and in 1987 was still only 45 percent of the average grain procurement price and 20 percent of the free market price (Garnaut & Ma 1992: 43). Grain production is highly responsive to state purchases prices and (negatively) to producer goods prices, with market price having little effect (Yang 1993). In the 1990s, state grain prices rose marginally, peaking in mid-1995 and then falling by 38 percent by mid-1998, when a 10 percent rise was induced by new 'Regulations on the purchase of grain' that require paying market or 'protective' prices, whichever is higher. Grain prices were thus low during the period in which Xinjiang was stepping up grain production, including1997, the year of our peasant income comparison (*Xinhua* 12 June; 7 October 1998; AFP 4 June 1998). Peasants throughout China, especially in the northern areas to which grain production has increasingly been shifted (Yang 1998) share the difficulty of profiting from grain, due to the visicitudes of the state procurement system and international grain market.

The decision to vastly increase cotton production, taken in early 1995, was made in light of Xinjiang's comparative advantages of space and climate and the national plan to move the textile industry to central and western cotton-growing areas (cf. *Xinhua* 22 August 1998, 11 September 1996). Xinjiang land sown to cotton increased six times from 1978 (150,000 hectares) to 1997 (883,650 hectares). Cotton now accounts for 27.7 percent of Xinjiang sown area, but 50 percent of the value of agricultural production (*Xinjiang tongji nianjian*, 1998: 268; ZGTJNJ: 400; *RMRB* 1998).

The promotion of cotton-raising in Xinjiang hardly seems an effort to im-

pose a monoculture however. Xinjiang produces one-fourth of PRC cotton, but several other provinces are major cotton-growers. All are overwhelmingly Han, including Henan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Anhui, Shandong, and Hebei (ZGTJNJ 1998: 401). These provinces have fewer hectares per capita devoted to cotton, but that is because they are more densely populated and need to grow more food. In the mid-1990s, the state paid a price for domestic cotton almost 20 percent above that for same grade imported cotton (*Xinhua* 17 April 1998). Foreign specialists were then predicting that growth in PRC cotton production would not meet rising domestic demand for raw cotton and export grade materials for textiles. Cotton imports were expected to double by 2005. A fall in textile profits was not anticipated (USDA 1996; *Xinhua* 8 February 1998). Indeed, even now textile production in Xinjiang continues to grow (by 10 percent in 1998), despite large losses and two-thirds of Xinjiang peasants see cotton as their preferred crop (*Xinhua* 26 June 1998; *Asia Pulse* 15 February 1999). Increased Xinjiang cotton production was also seen as a way to absorb 'surplus' rural labour: it takes 12.3 working day units (WD) to produce wheat on one mu (one-fifteenth of a hectare) of land, but 38.4 WD units to produce cotton (Carter 1997).

Xinjiang peasants rely disproportionately on government purchases, but the state buys more than half the grain sold off the farm in China and Xinjiang gets to fix the floating margin for its cotton and grain purchases; elsewhere the State Development Planning Commission fixes basic and floating prices. Grain and cotton prices rose through the mid-1990s (1978 = 100; 1996: grain = 748, cotton = 646, all farm commodities = 550), but then fell. As a partial offset, Xinjiang cotton products exporters are allowed a zero tariff (*Xinhua* 11 January 1999; 6 October, 3 January 1998; *Zhongguo tongxun she* 28 August 1998; Carter 1997; ZGTJNJ: 314–15).

A fourth factor accounting for the low Xinjiang per capita peasant income is that families are larger in Xinjiang. Poor PRC counties are unable to increase agricultural output and income per capita due to high population growth rates (Howes & Hussain 1994). Some 13.5 percent larger than the national average, Xinjiang family size ranks fifth among provinces (ZGTJNJ: 109). Xinjiang's children dependency ratio (the ratio of people aged 0–14 to those aged 15–64), second only to Tibet's, is 23.3 percent above the national average (ibid: 113). Much of the Xinjiang Han/minority per capita peasant income disparity is related to the higher minority children dependency ratio. In 1990, Xinjiang rural Han and rural Ugyur total fertilities were 1.805 and 4.771 (Anderson & Silver 1995: 215). Households of seven or more are twice as common in Xinjiang than in the whole PRC and are overwhelmingly found among minorities. Although total fertility for Xinjiang minority women declined somewhat in the 1980s, the regional birthrate is climbing again (ZGTJNJ 1998: 120; *XJRB* 13 July1998).

IS XINJIANG AN INTERNAL COLONY?

WILLIAMS' INTERNAL COLONIALISM CONCEPT AND XINJIANG

Many scholars have set out criteria for internal colonialism, but those of Stephen Williams (1977: 273–4) are among the most elaborate. Goodman (1983), in the only application of internal colonialism theory to a part of China, invokes these criteria.

1. a commercial, trading and credit monopoly by the centre;
2. commerce is predominantly carried out by recruits from the core
3. an economic dependency on external markets due to complementary development with the core, usually resting on a single commodity
4. the movement of peripheral labour brought about by forces outside the periphery and due in the main to variations in the price of a single commodity
5. economic dependence reinforced through juridical, political and military measures
6. general lack of services within the colony
7. national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other aspects of the culture.

Williams' first criterion concerns central trade and credit monopolies. These no longer exist in China. Some 2.7 percent of Xinjiang people work in trade, most in small business. This is less than in the PRC as a whole (3.6%), but there is one trading enterprise for every 76 Xinjiang people, as against one for every 87 in the PRC as a whole (ZGTJNJ: 582–3). Decentralisation has 'empowered local governments and other state actors at the lower reaches of the party-state hierarchy' (Gore 1999: 29). Provinces now have power 'over a wide range of economic activities, including a substantial portion of total investment' (Jia & Tisdell 1996: 55). The autonomous regions have thousands of contracts with businesses all over the country (*Xinhua* 15 March 1996). Xinjiang foreign trade exceeded $US1.5 billion in 1998 and $US1.75 billion in 1999, 16 percent higher than in 1997. The 1996 figure was only 0.4 of the PRC total, however, and annual per capita foreign trade was far below the national average, US$125 versus $236. This is because a few coastal provinces account for the bulk of trade, with Guangdong alone supplying 40 percent (Mackerras 1998: 293; AFP 11 April 1997; *AsiaInfo* 1999; ZGTJNJ 1998: 635; *CER* 2000). Given that Xinjiang is the most interior province, it is not unusually underdeveloped as a foreign trade centre and actively formulates its border trade policy (Pannell & Ma 1997: 223).

Public finance is the key element of credit in putatively socialist China, but it has sharply diminished in recent years. The share of budget revenue to

national income fell from 37.2 percent in 1978 to 21.8 percent in 1991. Fiscal decentralisation reduced central budgets as a share of net material product and diminished central control over local expenditures. Although the centre receives and spends about 40 percent of budgetary funds, extrabudgetary funds of provinces and localities have surged (Wei 1996: 334–5). The centre still uses taxation and spending to coordinate decentralised economic activities, but much of fiscal decision-making has shifted to the provinces.

Fiscal decentralisation, however, widens disparities because it requires local self-financing, reduces interregional income transfers, eschews an industrial policy to equalise regional incomes and fosters interprovincial competition for investment (Tsai 1996). With it, per capita income levels have sharply diverged between the coast and interior marcro-regions, offsetting an overall provincial convergence in per capita production. In 1985, interior residents earned 75 percent as much as their coastal cousins; by 1995 it was 50 percent. Poor infrastructure had caused low rates of retention of educated personnel and low foreign direct investment, which yielded low productivity (Chen & Fleisher 1996; Fleisher & Chen 1997; World Bank 1997: 3). PRC leaders thus now see infrastructure development as the key to reversing the coast/interior disparity (cf. Becquelin 1998: 18–19). Intra-provincial inequalities, correlated to the geographical size of provinces, should also be noted (Lee 1995: 116 Yang 1997: 149), as these are much wider than inter-regional or inter-provincial differences: 1993 per capita income in Shenzhen, Guangdong's richest city, was thirteen times that in Longchuan, the province's poorest county (*Nikkei Weekly* 1995).

Fiscal decentralisation is linked to financial decentralisation. During the Mao era, the centre arranged 90 percent of capital investment; rural areas received 10 per cent of state investment in 1953–1985, while 45 per cent went to heavy industry (Jia & Tisdell 1996: 56; Lin 1994). A central credit plan remains and flows from enterprises to local governments, to local branches and headquarters of China's specialised banks, to the People's Bank of China (PBC), to the State Planning Commission and State Council. Decentralisation is ongoing, however. Local banks, including private, specialised ones, have emerged. In 1998, 88 city-based commercial banks, 3,200 urban credit co-operatives and 44,000 rural credit co-operatives had capital of 2.1 trillion yuan, as against the 9.5 trillion yuan held by the 'big four' national banks, the Industrial & Commercial Bank, the Bank of China, China Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank of China. These banks are in turn commercialising (Montes-Negret 1995; AFP 10 February 1999).

The largest part of trade in Xinjiang still may be in government hands and finance remains largely centrally-controlled, but this by no means indicates 'colonialism'. The government entities that carry out the bulk of trade in Xinjiang in yuan-volume terms are – with the notable exception of oil – provincial and local enterprises. That is generally true of gold production, for example. Xinjiang produces about 2.5 percent of the PRC total. All producers have been required to

sell their output to China's central bank at 90 percent of world prices. Purchase prices have been adjusted only once every few months, based on international prices, so that when world prices drop significantly, as they did in the late 1990s, PRC gold producers receive a premium over world prices. Even if the centre did control gold production in Xinjiang, it would likely not be very profitable since generally only larger production sites make money. Xinjiang's mines are roughly only half the size on average of those in Shandong, the province which accounts for nearly half of the profits made in gold production in China. Only about one-third of Shandong mines are profitable and production costs are bound to be much higher in remote Xinjiang (*Asia Pulse* 5 May 1999; E&M Journal 1997, 1998a 1998b).

There is, moreover, no evidence that finance is any more centrally-controlled in Xinjiang than in most of China's Han provinces. The still prominent role of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in trade and finance in Xinjiang would evidence internal colonialism only if had been shown that the centre profits from its activities in Xinjiang. In finance, the centre's Xinjiang activities, even apart from the direct subsidies it supplies to the Xinjiang government, are sure-fire money losers. This is because the main financial activity is almost certainly to supply loans to Xinjiang's disproportionately high number of SOEs. The latter are notoriously unprofitable. SOEs as a whole are recording net losses and they soak up about 80 percent of all bank loans in the PRC (Sender 1999). Providing centrally-owned bank funds to Xinjiang SOEs in the form of 'stability loans', with little expectation that the loans will ever be repaid, is a curious form of 'colonialism'.

Williams' second criterion is the predominance of core recruits in peripheral commerce. PRC sources provide no ethnic breakdown on merchants, but Uyghurs have a rich history of commercial activity and carry out the bulk of everyday commerce in Nan Jiang. North of the Tianshan, most merchants are Han, but many communities have wealthy Uyghur merchants (cf. Rudelson 1997). The centre encourages Muslim merchants to trade with Islamic countries (Ferdinand 1994; Christofferson 1993). Just as it is not the case that 'Uighurs have to settle for being small farmers and craftsmen' (Meyer 1997), Xinjiang Han merchants are not 'recruits from the core'. Most are Xinjiang-born or came independently to pursue petty family commerce. Even if government-controlled commerce still accounts for the largest portion of things bought and sold in Xinjiang and Han still play a large role is this kind of commerce, most are by now Xinjiang Han with a sense of Xinjiang identity (cf. Ren 1999), not recruits from the *neidi*. Indeed, low wages make it difficult for Xinjiang to retain its cadres and professionals (*SCMP* 5 March 1999).

The third Williams criterion is 'economic dependency on external markets ... resting on a single commodity'. There is no Xinjiang monoculture and production, marketing and profit-taking there is mainly done by Xinjiang people. Oil is an exception, although Xinjiang scholars assert that the centre remits to

the region 30 percent of taxes collected from profits on oil processed in Ürümqi (interviews, Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences 1995). In the mid-1990s, Xinjiang crude oil output was 11.5–12.8 MT and Xinjiang refining capacity was 8–8.8 MT, mainly in Ürümqi. The key question is whether the centre exploits Xinjiang through removal of what separatists call 'our Islamic oil'. Viewed in comparative perspective, it is difficult to sustain an argument that internal colonialism exists whenever profits for oil accrue to a national government, rather than to regions within a state. Many states are 'sovereign entrepreneurs' in the oil business (Klapp 1987). In some federal states provinces own subsurface mineral rights and receive oil royalties. Thus Alberta takes the lion's share of oil royalties in Canada (Schaeffer 1980). In other federal states, national and provincial governments share oil royalties. The US Alaska Claims Settlement Act of 1971 awarded nearly $1 billion and 110 million hectares of land to 75,000 indigenes, allowing them to derive substantial oil royalties (Strohmeyer 1993).

In unitary states, oil revenues typically accrue to the national government. Under the UK Petroleum Production Act of 1934, the Crown owns all subsurface oil rights, including in the offshore Exclusive Economic Zone (Price Waterhouse 1990: 3). Depending on how the England/Scotland boundary is drawn, as much as 90 percent of North Sea oil has come from wells off the Scottish coast. Britain, however, classes the North Sea as a region of its own and its oil revenues go to the UK exchequer.

Scottish per capita income is lower than in England as a whole, but far higher than Wales and many parts of northern England. Scotland has a budget deficit, which was some US$11.6 billion in 1998 or 11 percent of Scottish GNP. Britain's Scottish bloc of funding makes up the difference by subsidising Scottish health care and education, whose higher costs are due to Scotland's more scattered population. Although Scots are 8.8 percent of the UK population, Scotland receives more than 10 percent of UK centrally distributed revenues. In 1998, the UK government spent 22 percent more per capita in Scotland than in England. The Scottish Nationalist Party argues that if Scotland were independent, it could use oil revenues to erase its deficit. Had it been independent in the 1980s, Scotland would have covered most of its deficit because the cost to extract North Sea oil from shallow waters was low and oil prices were high. Oil revenues now are much lower. New fields are remote and deep and the price of oil fell in the late 1990s, before its sudden surge in 2000, leading to the collapse of production in remote areas. Despite the oil price surge, an independent Scotland's share of UK oil still may not enough to make up for the loss of public revenues from the rest of Britain (Press Association 1995; Buerkle 1999; *Economist* 16 January 1999, 6 March 1999; Hibbs 1997).

The burden of proof as to the 'exploitation' of Xinjiang rests with those who make the claim, but fanciful assertions abound instead. A Uyghur émigré newspaper averred in 1997 that 'the natural resources of Uighurstan have been and remain a fundamental element in the growth of the Chinese economy [and]

each year China receives six billion yuan in profit from oil-extraction' in Xinjiang (Muhlisi 1997). The all-China profits for CNPC and Sinopec in 1997 were 17.5 billion yuan, while Xinjiang produced only about 10 percent of China's oil. All-China profits for these entities in 1998 were 7.3 billion yuan (*Platt's Oilgram News* 1999; *China Chemical Reporter* 1998). Xinjiang oil could not have produced six billion yuan in profits in either year.

It is more likely that there was no profit at all from Xinjiang oil. Bingtuan political commisar Wang Chuanyou spoke in 1999 of 'enormous difficulties' in the region's petroleum industry. The Tarim Basin oilfield, touted as China's 'ocean of hope', was producing only 7,000 tons per day in mid-1998 or about 2.5 MT per year. Tarim oil was selling at close to the international benchmark of US$90 per ton, a yield of about US$225 million if all the year's output were sold. In fact, many buyers of Tarim oil cancelled in 1998, as cheaper imported oil, smuggled or not, could be had. Tarim oil enterprises, moreover, have to repay bank loans taken out for prospecting and development. Principal and interest run to over US$200 million per year. Even resurgent sales are thus not apt to lead to profits for this most promising of Xinjiang oil fields. A sign that the centre has no profit expectations from Tarim is that it has begun to contract out some production to 'collectives' (i.e. partnerships) that operate with one-third the number of workers that the state-owned companies used (Bangsberg 1998; *SCMP* 9 March 1999; *Xinhua* 10, 20 April 1999). In any case, even with the price of oil in 2000 four times higher than in 1999, the cost of extracting Xinjiang's remote and deep oil reserves is so great that the economic viability of a planned oil pipeline from Xinjiang to Shanghai has come into doubt and foreign companies have declined to invest in the project (*SCMP* 2 October 2000).

The fourth Williams criterion is the movement of peripheral labour due mainly to variations in the price of a single commodity. The opposite is true for Xinjiang. The brain drain of university graduates from Xinjiang involves a few thousand per annum. Communities of Uyghur petty traders exist in several *neidi* cities, but the largest, the Beijing Xinjiang *cun* (village) has only '1,000 or more' or 'a few thousand' (AFP 26 January, 15 March 1999; T. Tan 1997). Labour migration is mainly into Xinjiang. Longterm migration has already been discussed. About 1.2 million temporary migrants annually also enter Xinjiang, the largest contingent coming for the cotton harvest (*Xinhua* 19 May 1997; 26 December 1996; *Zhongguo tongxun she* 1994).

Williams' fifth criterion is the use of juridical, political and military measures to enforce economic dependence. Xinjiang is economically dependent on the subsidies provided by Beijing. Economists have measured the rate of 'state extraction' from Chinese provinces, i.e. the amount of surplus or deficit of each province as compared with its expenditure which was remitted to or subsidised by the central government. Xinjiang's negative rate of extraction is high even among western region provinces (Chai 1996: 53). Analysts of internal colonialism, however, have had in mind a dependence that benefits the

core at the expense of the periphery, not the other way around. This was in fact the raison d'être of classical external colonialism: for example, in its heyday, colonialism was immensely profitable to the British core at the expense of the colonised periphery (Svedberg 1982; Davis & Huttenback 1986). It should not be assumed, as Oakes (1995, 1998) seems to do in the case of Guizhou, that an area suffers from internal colonialism because it is not yet sufficiently developed to do without subsidies from the central government. As Gladney (1998: 48) correctly points out, the internal colonialism model is applicable only where the kind of development makes it appear 'as though these areas were still under economic colonial exploitation'.

The sixth Williams criterion is a general lack of services within the colony. Most services found throughout urban China are present in urban Xinjiang. On almost all indices (access to tap water and gas, per capita living space, busses and trolleys, paved roads, public green areas, etc.), urban Xinjiang is near or above the national urban average (ZGTJNJ: 377). The shortage of services found in most of rural China is duplicated in rural Xinjiang. Because Xinjiang rural income and population density is lower than most of China, however, rural area services are not as abundant. That being said, an argument that Xinjiang generally lacks services is not tenable.

In 1992, there were only 3,130 telephone subscribers in Xinjiang's 8,916 villages. By the mid-1990s, telephones had spread, but unevenly. In Karamay in 1998, there were 285,000 people and 65,000 residential telephone subscribers; in the Xinjiang countryside, where nearly 12 million people live, there were only 198,000 subscribers in 1997, perhaps one telephone for every 12 families. In China as a whole, anywhere from 33 to 61 percent of villages were without telecommunication connections in 1997, depending on whether one considers the official or natural village. Geography accounts for these huge discrepancies: it is much more expensive to reach rural than urban residences with telephone cables. The great distances between villages in Xinjiang means that telephones will be slow in coming to rural areas, even as urban Xinjiang reaches telephone saturation (*Xinhua* 20[a] November 1997, 21 January 1999; *China Daily* 18 September 1998; *SCMP* 3 March 1998).

A Xinjiang to Kazakstan railway began operation in 1992 and a feasability study for another 300 km 'border railway' through Yining was undertaken in 1997. A 495 km line from Turpan in Jiang bei to Korla in Nan Jiang went into service in 1984 and a 975 km extension reached Kashgar, in far southwestern Xinjiang in 1999. Most of Xinjiang's impoverished counties are in Nan Jiang. The new railroad passes through some of them and should provide opportunities for economic development (*Xinhua* 20 June 1992; 5 July, 30 September 1997; 6 May 1999).

Xinjiang has fairly elaborate urban health services; the main problems lie in the countryside. By the late 1990s, all 846 townships had hospitals and hundreds of urban doctors are sent down to rural areas every year. Xinjiang

regional spending on health care is low, however; less than one yuan per capita in the regional budget, with the centre and localities bearing the main burden. Xinjiang infant mortality is 6.8 percent, while it is 3.1 percent nationally (*Xinhua* 7 June 1996; 14 April, 27 May, 10, 20[b] November 1997; 25 July 1998). The high birthrate and low population density in Xinjiang are aggravating factors, beyond the general neglect of rural PRC health care.

Xinjiang's rank in education has already been set out. The position of its minorities lags even further behind the national average. The 1990 census showed the position in Table 2.

	Total China (%)	Xinjiang Non-Han (%)
University degree	0.63	0.54
Technical university degree	0.97	0.62
Sr. secondary (vocational)	1.72	2.25
Sr. secondary (general)	7.30	4.87
Junior secondary	26.44	16.21
Primary	44.63	51.94
Illiterate/Semi-literate	18.31	23.56

TABLE 2.

Source: Bass 1998, p. 11.

The PRC has variously claimed that the overall education level of Xinjiang minorities has surpassed the average level in China, that only 15 percent of Xinjiang minority peasants are illiterate and that the Xinjiang literacy rate is above 96 percent, two percent higher than the national average. These claims are dubious in light of the 1990 statistics. The more realistic publicised statistic is that about eighty percent of Xinjiang students are Han (*Xinhua* 27 January 1993; 10 July 1994; 12 September 1995, 13 April 1999). The low level of education among minorities is largely because of persistent poverty that requires parents to cut short their children's education, the higher cost of educational services in thinly populated areas and decentralised educational financing, which hits poor areas hard (Lee 1998: 37). There is no indication that education is withheld from minorities, however, and efforts are made to service remote areas, for example, through hundreds of boarding schools (*Xinhua* 17 October 1994).

The final Williams criterion is national discrimination on the basis of language, religion or other aspects of culture. Xinjiang officials have not taken sufficient action to curb non-public employment discrimination and use public employment hiring criteria that malignly impact minorities, for example, in not hiring minorities in the oil and railroad industries because costs of training are high (van Kemenade 1997: 344; InterPress 1996). A common Han chauvinist attitude toward Uyghurs reflects the official social evolutionary ideology, which

deems the Han to be an advanced ethnie in comparison to most minorities. It also contributes to hiring and other forms of bias (cf. Sautman & Yan 2000; *Economist* 1997). The PRC state does not, however, carry out the systemic discrimination characteristic of colonial systems, whereby subaltern peoples were deprived by law of rights enjoyed by metropolitan citizens. Minority people have the same rights as Han, plus preferential policies that exist side-by-side with ethnic nepotism in non-public employment, a situation also common in other countries where internal colonialism is not at issue.

There is a language hierarchy in China with Chinese at the top and minority region languages such as Uyghur and Tibetan, in second place, above other minority tongues (Dwyer 1998: 71). The state underscores the advantages of learning Chinese, but does not prohibit public use of minority languages, as have Turkey and Indonesia. Indeed, national legislation prepared in 1998 requirea all minority areas to present regulations and notices, educational materials, etc. in both Chinese and local languages (Sutton 1997; M. Tan 1997;Wagstaff 1999; *China Daily* 6 November 1998).

In the mid-1990s, some 72 percent of Xinjiang primary schools and 51 percent of middle schools used minority languages as a medium of instruction for all or some courses. Of the 48 newspapers published in Xinjiang, 26 are said to be bilingual and 70 percent of the broadcasting time of the Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station is in minority languages (*Xinhua* 10 July 1994; 31 October 1994; 1 October 1995). While education and broadcasting are Han-centric in content, minority language retention is universal. Virtually every Xinjiang minority person is fluent in one or more minority languages, with urban minorities also competent in Chinese. By Xinjiang law, all government documents must be translated into Uyghur or other minority languages and signs must be bilingual. Charges of 'cultural genocide' made by Uyghur emigres (cf. AFP 3 November 1998) are thus farfetched.

Restrictions on the number of religious centres and 'clergy' have a history of hundreds of years in China and are applied to all faiths (cf. Waldron 1998). In Xinjiang and Tibet, the limitations take on a political colour because separatists invoke religion. The government asserts, however, that there are 28,000 'clergy' in Xinjiang and that with 20,000 mosques and 4,000 'scripture recitation sites', there are more mosques per 10,000 people in Xinjiang than in any Arab country (*Xinhua* 8 March 1998). The only apparent 'discrimination' on the basis of religion in Xinjiang seems to be in eligibility for admission to the CCP, which is in theory reserved for atheists.

CONCLUSION

Because Xinjiang a half-century ago was a largely Uyghur society and had brief de facto independence during the civil wars in China, it is now easy to conceive of it as colonised by Han migrants and a strong Chinese state. Because Xin-

jiang's economy is mainly based on primary products, its Han are more likely than minorities to have high-status occupations and its rural areas are poorer than in China as a whole, its relationship to the centre seems colonial. There is no basis to conclude, however, that demographics, the CDL, poverty, or the sum of these factors, make Xinjiang a colony. Internal colonialism involves 'intranational exploitation of culturally distinct groups' (Mettam & Williams 1998: 365). This exploitation requires ethnic domination (Kay 1989: 76). The centre has provided huge budget subventions for Xinjiang. In 1993, regional government revenue was 2.83 billion yuan and expenditures were 6.63 billion yuan. The PRC requires provinces to balance their budgets. The centre thus had to provide Xinjiang with some four billion yuan, over 57 percent of regional spending. In 1994, Xinjiang revenue was 2.49 billion yuan; expenditures were 7.65 billion yuan (*XJRB* 1994, 1995). The centre provided more than 5 billion yuan, over two-thirds of the budget. Yet even the centre's Xinjiang oil ventures – the most frequently cited indicator of internal colonialism – seem to be loss-makers thus far and are unlikely to have generated taxes and profits exceeding the centre's subsidies.

Far from being explicable in terms of simple exploitation and ethnic domination, Xinjiang's conditions result from complex historical, geographic and political factors. Historical factors may be region-specific, such as Xinjiang's less developed pre-1949 education system (cf. *Xinjiang jiaoyu nianjian* 1991: 2–5). Other historical factors are common to China's minority areas, including all the legacies of domination that arise from China's evolution as a conquest state (cf. Chen 1996). Still others are all-China phenomena, for example the 'socialist primitive accumulation' that has milked the countryside (cf. Knight 1995). Confining geographic conditions, such as remoteness and aridity, continue to hinder Xinjiang's development and public services. The politics of anti-separatism also fosters ethnic allocations of power; it is likely the main reason why the very top CCP leaders at all levels are Han.

In the waning days of the USSR, Cambridge University geographer Graham Smith (1989: 68–74) looked at the claim made by Wallerstein (1973) that Soviet Central Asia was an internal colony of Russia. He noted that while Central Asia lagged behind Russia is most respects, the Soviet regime in Central Asia fostered rapid urbanisation and substantial industrialisation, even if geared to food production, textile industries and minerals. There had been great advances in health care and education and Soviet Central Asia was much better off in terms of social development than neighbouring Muslim states. Moreover, there was 'no evidence to suggest that Moscow purposely discriminates against Central Asians in terms of income, housing or jobs'. In fact, there was 'every indication to suggest that a considerable transfer of wealth has occurred from the relatively rich to the relatively poor republics'. Due in part to state affirmative action programs, a 'growing native middle class [had] emerged in the region' and 'natives are generally well represented in [leading] posts in their union republics'. Smith concluded that 'it would therefore seem that the 'internal colonialism'

concept has limited applicability' to Soviet Central Asia. This argument can be taken a step further. Far from internal colonialism serving as 'the original intent behind and reason for the success of Stalin's nationalities policy in the Soviet Union' (Gladney 1998: 47), the former Soviet Union is better described as 'an affirmative action empire', with Central Asia as the primary locus of preferential policies (Martin 1996: Ch.3).

All that Smith described for Soviet Central Asia applies to that other part of erstwhile socialist Central Asia, Xinjiang. It should also be noted that Xinjiang now is, in terms of living standards, relatively well-off in comparison to ex-Soviet Central Asia and is generally more stable. There remain many problems in Xinjiang to whose solution the Chinese state might contribute, if prodded by an ethnic-based, but non-separatist, rights movement. Investment in physical and cultural infrastructure, especially in education and health care, should be drastically accelerated. Measures to outlaw all aspects of Han chauvinism and spread affirmative action to every facet of the 'private sector' are urgently needed. The claim that Xinjiang and its minority peoples are vassals of an internal colonial system does nothing, however, to illuminate the realities of Xinjiang's situation, nor does it contribute to needed change.

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