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Migration, Modernisation and Ethnic Estrangement: Uyghur migration to Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC

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ABSTRACT

In the People's Republic of China, minority nationality peoples have the same formal rights as Han Chinese. However, in Xinjiang, the modernisation project is taking precedence over ethnic harmony as recruitment practices are increasingly disadvantaging the Uyghurs, despite earlier affirmative action policies. Ethnographic and survey research among Urumqi's floating population indicates that Uyghurs are excluded from certain sectors, earn lower incomes and reside in poorer accommodation than Han Chinese, from whom they remain spatially and socially segregated. As the state increasingly relies on the invisible hand of the market, so the commodification of labour relations and property is amplifying social rifts between nationalities. Uneven regional development prompts Han people to migrate into Xinjiang and Uyghurs to migrate to the cities within Xinjiang, bringing these two ethnic groups into competition within a labour market. This has resulted in an ethnic division of labour that exacerbates inter- and intra-ethnic tensions.

Keywords: China, ethnic relations, division of labour, Uyghur, Xinjiang

INTRODUCTION

In China's cities, ethnic groups are coming face-to-face in unprecedented numbers, as human movement becomes more rapid and difficult for authorities to control. China has a long history of strained ethnic relations (Millward & Tursun 2004; Mackerras 1994; Harrell 1994). Conflict and tension rather than the Confucian-inspired socialist vision of social harmony mark inter-ethnic interaction (Mittenthal 2002; Fischer 2004), despite the People's Republic's long-standing policy to integrate minorities (Mackerras 2003; 1994).

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During the 1990s, separatist activities intensified in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (hereafter Xinjiang), leading to severe crackdowns (Amnesty International 1999; 2004; Mackerras 2001; 2003; Moneyhon 2003; 2004). In Gulja in February 1997, an initially peaceful protest by several hundred people, mostly Uyghurs, turned violent as some protesters threw stones at police, looted shops and attacked Han. On the day of Deng Xiaoping's state funeral (25 February 1997) three bus bombings in Urumqi signalled Uyghur contempt for the Chinese state (Amnesty International 1999; Mackerras 2001; Gladney 2004a; Moneyhon 2004; Rudelson & Jankowiak 2004; Millward 2007: 331–4). These events triggered a crackdown on separatist activities. In April 2001, after a period of relative calm, 'separatists, terrorists and religious extremists' were again made a target of a new nationwide 'strike hard' campaign that has never formally been brought to a close (Amnesty International 2004). Today, unrest continues, as media and government reports confirm (Blanchard 2007; 2008; China Daily 2007; Tianshannet 2008).

Integration of ethnic minority migrants into urban milieux is obviously a matter of great importance for China's development (Iredale *et al.* 2001), as it is elsewhere (Solinger 1999b; Galvan 2001; Anas 2004). In Xinjiang, where ethnicity is a marker of division and fragmentation and linked to frequent allegations

FIGURE 1. Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, PRC.
(From Pannel & Ma 1997: 207.)

of human rights abuses (Amnesty International 1999; 2004; Gladney 2004a), such integration is particularly fraught. This paper investigates the integration of migrants of Uyghur nationality into urban areas in Xinjiang (Figure 1).

We argue that, as the state withdraws from direct rule and relies increasingly on the market (Goodman 2008), so the commodification of labour relations and property is becoming a source of social rifts along ethnic lines. In the context of uneven regional development, the spontaneous movement (not state resettlement) of Han migrants to Xinjiang and the rural–urban migration of Uyghurs within Xinjiang have brought these two groups into competition within a labour market. Whatever the previous sources and the degree of ethnic conflict within Xinjiang, an ethnic division of labour has now emerged that exacerbates inter- and intra-ethnic tensions. The argument proceeds in eight sections. We begin in section II by explaining the sense in which we use the term 'ethnicity' before (in sections III and IV) identifying the background conditions of development, migration and ethnicity within Xinjiang. Section V briefly explains the means by which the information within the paper was obtained and section VI the characteristics of our informants. Section VII takes up the bulk of the paper, presenting empirical data from our survey on migrant integration and segregation within Urumqi and the processes that separate the ethnic groups. Segregation is measured through indicators of geographic distribution, employment, material living conditions, income levels, social capital and the processes of recruitment and discrimination. The conclusions in section VIII link changes in labour market relations in Xinjiang to the amplification and hardening of the ethnic distance between Uyghur and Han migrants.

ETHNICITY AND MIGRATION

Ethnicity describes the cultural, psychological and social characteristics of a population, as distinct from physical characteristics (Bolaffi *et al.* 2003: 94). Innumerable approaches to ethnicity have been developed (Marger 1991; Thompson 1989), chief among which sit primordialist (Shils 1957; van den Berghe 1981; Geertz 1973: 260), modernisation (Hettne 1996: 15) and neo-Marxist or class theories. Primordialist theory holds that human beings, by their nature, have a basic, primordial need for group affiliation that is best satisfied by the maintenance of an ethnic identity (Thompson 1989: 11). Modernisation theory regards ethnicity as a premodern epiphenomenon – an anachronistic obstacle to development (Hettne 1996: 15) – that dissipates as contact between core and periphery produces social differentiation, specialisation and technocracies. Both theories have grave shortcomings not shared by neo-Marxist theory, including inabilities to account for shifts in boundaries between ethnic groups and to explain linkages between social forces and ethnicity (Bonacich 1980: 11). Accordingly, we follow a neo-Marxist understanding of ethnicity.

Neo-Marxist theories of ethnicity – including class segmentation (Reich *et al.*

1973; Makabe 1981), split-labour market (Bonacich 1972), internal colonialism (Gonzales-Casanova 1965; Hechter 1975), and world systems theory (Wallerstein 1974; 1979) – allow that ethnicity is a potent force under certain historical-structural conditions, but the theories accuse different social actors (such as the bourgeoisie or the proletariat) of using ethnic division to their advantage. All emphasise that ethnicity is a relation, rather than an immutable force. Moreover, they claim that migration and ethnicity are interrelated and are best understood from a class perspective (defined here as a relation to the means of production).

This understanding distinguishes ethnic experience and ethnic consciousness. Ethnic experience is associated not only with class, but also with other fields of identity, including gender, place and religion (Thompson 2003: 418). As Sargeson (1999) has noted, Chinese workers often experience class through the lens of gender, place and religion (and, in places like Xinjiang, ethnicity); but it is class that sustains those experienced identities (Gimenez 2001) and that underpins the ethnic boundaries that can result in interethnic conflict. Uyghur identity largely solidified under the People's Republic of China (Gladney 1996a) – a product of official recognition by the state in 1955,[2] of an increasingly obvious contrast to Han Chinese that helped coalesce the previously disparate oasis peoples, and of enhanced differences between national groups in economic well being (see Rudelson 1997; Fogden 2003). By contrast, ethnic consciousness is politically activated in response to conflict that arises out of class position: the mechanisms include friction between groups competing for work and divide-and-conquer tactics exercised by the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Under particular circumstances, both capital and labour may exploit ethnic division as an instrument to better their economic well-being (Moberg 1997: xxvii). In Xinjiang, Uyghurs particularly resent relative economic, political and religious deprivation (Moneyhon 2004) – a resentment that informs the core problematic of this paper (cf Gladney 2004b: 219).

Since various class-related mechanisms engender ethnic consciousness (in this political sense), neo-Marxist theories of ethnicity need to be placed within a non-reductionist mode of production theoretical framework in which human agency is paramount (Gould 1978: 80–81). The objective conditions for action are just that: conditions, not causes. Thus, different levels of development and different modes of production generate different social relations and each context requires new interpretations within a framework that recognises the importance of other fields of identity for social actors. One such context is rural-urban migration, which reveals the important role of social capital in migration, class and ethnicity and the oversimplifications of assuming a dual labour market, in which an ethnically distinct industrial reserve army of labour (Marx 1981) occupies the informal economy (Kannapan 1985; Solinger 1997).

Migration networks are connected to the creation of ethnic unions in the city that are mobilised in response to class issues. These migration networks are a form of social capital (Massey *et al.* 1987: 170), understood as '... the sum of the

resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 119). Migrants draw upon social capital for shelter – hence ethnic clusters (Pratt 1911; Yancey *et al.* 1976) – and employment – hence labour sectors associated with particular ethnic groups. However, in a market economy, the use of social capital by social actors may result in industry-related ethnic segregation – an ethnic division of labour. Inter-ethnic conflict may then arise from competition among ethnic groups for wage-labour employment (split labour market theory) or exploitation of labour by the bourgeoisie through the manipulation of ethnic divisions (class segmentation theory). Or it may arise from processes that exclude certain groups from some sectors of the labour market. These groups must then rely upon the informal economy and, sometimes, connections with the formal economy (social capital) in order to survive. If these groups are excluded from the formal economy (through lack of social capital) inter-ethnic tension is likely. If, in addition to this exclusion, social capital erodes so that reproduction of the informal economy becomes unsustainable, the stage is set for greater conflict – both intra- and inter-ethnic (Wacquant 1998; Auyero 2000; Brennan-Galvin 2002).

DEVELOPMENT, MIGRATION AND ETHNICITY IN XINJIANG

Historically, the Chinese have controlled the northwest through the construction of garrisons and urban settlements (Gaubatz 1996; Rudelson 1997; Ma 2003). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) used these methods of control in tandem with agricultural settlements in the form of the still active Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, established in 1954 (Rudelson 1997: 37; Toops 2004: 245–6). The Corps is one of Xinjiang's three main administrative organs, operating as an autonomous society with its own public security and judicial organs (Seymour 2000: 172). The CCP instituted a programme of resettlement of Han into Xinjiang after liberation (McMillen 1979: 61–7). Many in-migrant Han entered the Corps (Rudelson 1997: 34; Toops 2004: 246).

The last large-scale organised resettlement into Xinjiang occurred in 1964, after which underemployed people from China proper drifted westward (Toops 2004: 257). In Xinjiang itself spontaneous intra-provincial migration followed the disbandment of the commune structure in 1976 (Tsui 2003: 124; Iredale *et al.* 2001: 181). For the rural population this entailed seasonal short-term migration to markets. In 1986 governments at various levels began a process of easing restrictions and allowing increased movement into urban areas. Deng Xiaoping's 1992 southern excursion, during which he called for more radical economic growth, ushered in appreciably heightened migration levels, including to Xinjiang (Iredale *et al.* 2001).

In parallel with the relaxation of controls over migration, since 1978 the

People's Republic of China's (PRC) economic path has veered, not unequivocally, along a regulated capitalist development trajectory, of decreasing state control over systems of production and distribution and increasing commodification of labour, land and capital (Solinger 1999a; Maurer-Fazio & Hughes 2002; Oakley 2002; Webber *et al.* 2002: 61–92). This process has shaped and been shaped by soaring rural–urban and regional inequalities: the gap between average rural and urban per capita incomes has widened greatly since 1978 (Webber *et al.* 2002: 86–7).

Waves of internal migration into China's cities have been triggered by this gap between rural and urban incomes and the reform of migration controls (Lippit 1996; Solinger 1999a; Fan 2002). Increased numbers of Han migrants are floating to Xinjiang to sell their labour, lured by economic opportunities (Rudelson 1997), for Xinjiang, unlike much of China's west, is a moderately well-off region, ranking 14th out of China's 31 autonomous regions and provinces on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2005: 154). This Han in-migration is cited by many as lying at the crux of inter-ethnic tensions in Xinjiang (Rudelson 1997; Fuller & Starr 2004).

In 2000, Uyghurs comprised 45 per cent of Xinjiang's population, but only 12.8 per cent of Urumqi's population. Han people, China's national majority, comprised 40.6 per cent of Xinjiang's population and 75.3 per cent of Urumqi's. Between 1953 and 2000 Han Chinese increased their share of Xinjiang's population from 6.1 per cent to 40.6 per cent, largely through immigration (XPC 2002; Toops 2004: 246). However, since reform, their population growth has resulted not from large-scale resettlement but from spontaneous immigration and natural growth (Fuller & Starr 2004).[3]

Today, Xinjiang's Han Chinese predominantly live in wealthier urban areas, whilst Uyghurs and other, particularly Turkic, national minorities tend to constitute the majority in rural areas, or the poorer cities of southern Xinjiang.[4] Over 80 per cent of Uyghurs reside in rural areas compared with 46.4 per cent of Han (NBS & EAC 2003). Between 1991 and 2000 Uyghurs' share of the population of most cities declined significantly (XSY 1992; NBS & EAC 2003). In Xinjiang's oasis settlements, home to the majority of Uyghurs, land is scarce and the small plots insufficient to satisfy subsistence needs and provide work to all the available labour force in the household (Beller-Hann 1997: 90–91). As elsewhere in China, following the advent of the household responsibility system (Iredale *et al.* 2001: 3–4), agriculture is unable to absorb surplus labour. Furthermore, lack of markets, poor infrastructure and high dispersion of the population all limit rural industrial and transport activities.

Thus Xinijang's rural inhabitants, primarily Uyghur, are increasingly driven to Xinjiang's cities. They come particularly to the booming industrial centre of Urumqi, the growth of which has been fuelled by petrochemical production, as well as other heavy and light industries (Toops 2004: 260). Urumqi is Xinjiang's commercial and political hub, reflecting the increasing polarity between centre and periphery in Xinjiang (Pannel & Ma 1997; Toops 2000: 167; World Bank

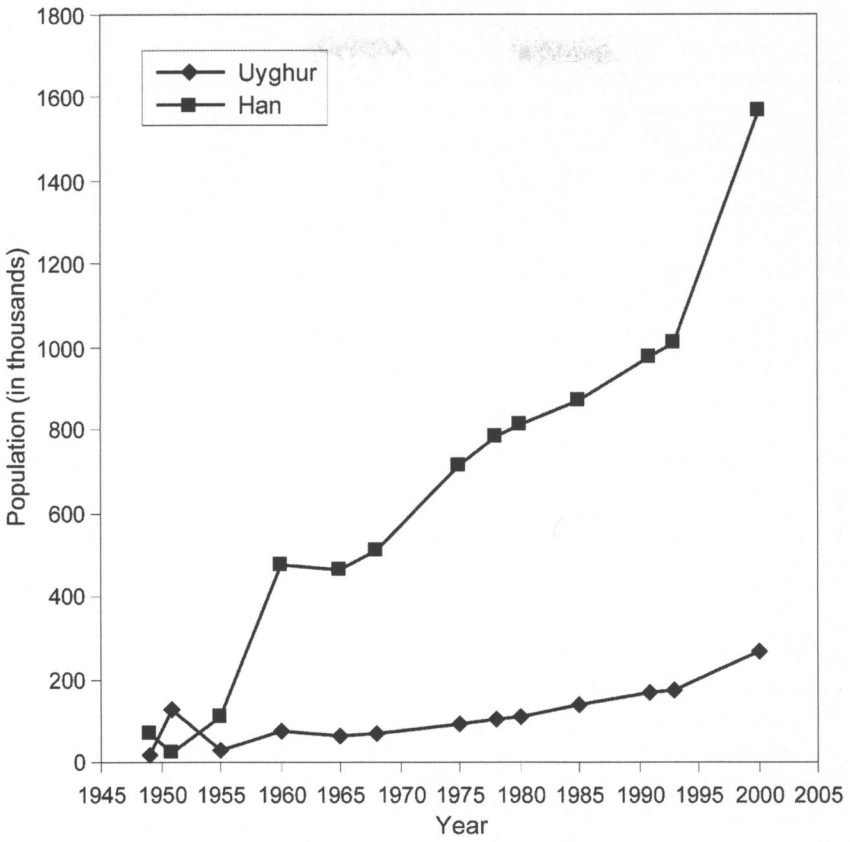

FIGURE 2. Urumqi's population by nationality, 1949–2000. (Sources: XSY 1992; Urumqi City Gazetteer 1994; Pannel & Ma 1997; NBS & EAC 2003.)

2000). In 2002, the city, with 9 per cent of Xinjiang's total population, accounted for nearly a quarter of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (NBS 2003: 63, 98, 390).

But they come to cities in which forms of ownership have shifted since the economic reforms introduced into Xinjiang in 1992 (Dreyer 2000). Between 1995 and 2002 Xinjiang's urban state sector shed 884,000 jobs and its share of urban employment dropped from 80.6 to 59 per cent (NBS 2003: 126–7; Wiemer 2004: 178). By contrast, the private sector is growing rapidly, accounting for a fifth of Xinjiang's total GDP in 2003 (Vicziany & Zhang 2004: 2–6). Ethnographic research and admissions by the CCP itself confirm minority underperformance in the private sector (Becquelin 2000; 2004; Gilley 2001; Wiemer 2004).

In the 1990s urban poverty, resulting principally from unemployment, became a major issue for China (Hussain 2003). As the state sector and urban collective enterprises have shed workers under the pressures of economic reform, reductions in state sector employment in Xinjiang have outweighed private sector growth and Urumqi has experienced a rapid rise in laid-off employees and heightened poverty rates (Hussain 2003). Poverty rates amongst residents with permanent household registration in Urumqi are high, whilst those amongst in-migrants are the highest in the country (Hussain 2003: 21).[5]

Unemployment has also become important for ethnic relations. Recession in the late 1990s was so severe that Jiang Zemin had to call for fewer lay-offs of staff, especially among Uyghurs and Hui (Sautman 2000: 250). A 2001 report of the Xinjiang CCP Committee (cited in Becquelin 2004: 375) disclosed that:

> The strategy of 'choosing from both sides' [Han and national minorities] in hiring has been more and more challenged following the establishment and perfecting of the market economic system ... The power of intervention of the government has continuously decreased, and the difficulties of finding a job for the minority labourers have become bigger and bigger, especially in contracted farm work and non-public industrial work; and implementing equal opportunities measures have become less and less practicable ...

An ethnically defined relation between migration patterns, urbanisation, division of labour and marketisation is crystallising. The struggle of minority and Han migrants to survive within a marketising urban economy exemplifies this relation, particularly within Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi. To grasp the significance of this ethnically-defined relation, it is important to note that the ethnonyms we use herein – Uyghur and Han – have become naturalised within China. However, no immutable 'ethnic' referent inheres in these descriptors (Gladney 2004b) and social relations remain paramount in vesting the ethnonym with substance. As mentioned above, the etymology of modern-day usage of 'Uyghur' derives from state-sanctioned classification of China's minority nationalities.

UYGHUR ETHNICITY

In about 1935 the ethnonym Uyghur was adopted by the then Xinjiang provincial government to delineate the settled turkophone Muslim oasis-dwellers of north-western China. The term had not been used since the fifteenth century to describe the largely Buddhist population of the Turpan Basin (Rudelson 1997: 6; Hoppe 1998: 56; Smith 2002; Gladney 2004b: 217–18). Subsequently, the CCP officially adopted the category Uyghur in its classification of the PRC's population into 56 minority nationalities (see Schein 2000: 82–3). The group met Stalin's four criteria (common language, common territory, common economic life and a common psychological makeup manifested in common specific features of national culture) (Gladney 1996b: 66). Thereafter, Uyghurs' nationality was

marked on their identity cards, literally a state-imposed definition of identity (Fogden 2003: 43). However, as Schein reminds us, what is important is not who produces otherness, 'but rather which representations, once produced, enjoy wide circulation' (Schein 2000: 105; cf. Gladney 2004b: 225–8). In Xinjiang, the identity Uyghur has enjoyed wide circulation, shaped in particular in opposition to Hui and Han (Gladney 1996a; Rudelson 1997: 6, 38; Hoppe 1998: 57–69). Its content is forged as Uyghurs define themselves relationally 'under certain highly contextualised moments of social relation' (Gladney 1996a: 445) to other social actors in the circumstances of an economy in transition.

We argue that Xinjiang's mode of production now contextualises interethnic relations in Urumqi (cf. Thompson 1989) in the manner described in section II. We draw support for this approach from Rudelson's (1997: 117) claim that Uyghur identity is formed according to social class and occupation rather than family type, descent, or pan-oasis solidarity. Rudelson (1997: 38) observes that as the number of Han Chinese in Xinjiang has grown, Uyghurs have increasingly viewed them 'as their opponents' and are 'no longer focused on the rivalries with Uyghurs in other oases'. Smith (2002: 156) writes to similar effect: 'traditional oasis rivalries may now have been largely (but perhaps temporarily) eclipsed by a new religio-cultural and socio-economic threat: Xinjiang's Han Chinese immigrant population'. Even the minister leading the State Ethnic Affairs Commission has noted that increased minority migration to urban areas has 'disrupted social harmony' (Mittenthal 2002).

Consequently, in Urumqi, Uyghurs 'emphasise religio-cultural differences and use them to demarcate ethnic boundaries between Uyghurs and Han Chinese in what is actually an articulation of demands for ethnic equality in education and work, and the control of Xinjiang's natural resources' (Smith 2002: 172). Notably, 'those same differences apparently did not prevent Uyghurs from interacting with the Han in the past ... Nor do those differences stop Uyghurs from interacting with Han Chinese in the present context *when it suits them to do so*' (Smith 2002: 155, emphasis original). Other China watchers have also observed a rise in ethnic consciousness among Uyghurs (see Cesaro 2000; Bovingdon 2002; Tsui 2003; Gladney 1996a; 2004a).

Our survey of internal migrants to Urumqi lends insight into Uyghur, particularly peasant, responses to Xinjiang's marketising political economy. It suggests that Uyghur ethnic consciousness is piqued not only in response to state control and regulation, but also in response to Uyghurs' positioning within Xinjiang's market-engendered socio-economic structure.

METHODS

With more than two million residents, Urumqi is by far Xinjiang's most-populous city (XSY 2001: 95–7). It is a centre of economic activity and growth and, therefore, a magnet that attracts many rural–urban migrants. In this setting,

we sought evidence of the socio-economic standing of Urumqi's Han and Uyghur migrants through questionnaire and ethnographic methods that gave insight into work, income levels, living conditions and attitudes. Preliminary fieldwork occupied four weeks of February 2004. The fieldwork proper, consisting of surveying and ethnographic techniques, was conducted over six weeks during July and August 2004. This specific collection of data occurred within the context of more than two collective years living and working in China over the past decade.

Participants were recruited from sites that were known to have large numbers of floating population. Interviews with migrants were not conducted through official government channels. Typically interviews began by approaching one person and engaging them in friendly small talk. Then, we would clearly explain our intentions and the nature of the research. Participants were chosen systematically (generally asking every fifth person seen at the site), and a balance in terms of age, gender and nationality was aimed for. If a person was reluctant or showed signs of worrying, we politely left them. Petty entrepreneurs (sales and service workers; and scrap collectors) generally could talk while working. Conversely, participants from manufacturing and mining were difficult to access due to the closed nature of their workplaces. Talking to construction workers often required consent from supervisors, many of whom were averse to the presence of a foreigner. Thus, petty entrepreneurs may be over-represented in the sample. However, Iredale *et al.* (2001) found that this category contains the largest concentrations of Xinjiang's floating population. In total, 150 questionnaires were completed, 76 with Uyghurs and 74 with Han. We also conducted interviews with 10 Hui informants, but these are not analysed here. In addition to the questionnaire, many semi-structured interviews took place with respondents willing to talk, but unwilling to participate in a formal interview. We thus rely on both ethnographic and statistical approaches to illuminate the lives of migrants in Urumqi.

Interpreters were employed. Generally, Han respondents were interviewed with a Han interpreter and Uyghurs with a Uyghur interpreter. However, for logistical reasons, some of the interviews with Han respondents were conducted with a Uyghur (trilingual) translator, which may have distorted some of the answers to politically sensitive questions. In a politicised environment, innocuous (to us) questions can be understood as political (Curran & Cook 1993; Sargeson 1999: ix–xv; Qiang 2000: 1): in Xinjiang, employment is a delicate subject (Mackerras 2001: 299). To overcome these constraints we worked hard to establish trust with the respondents, explaining the scientific nature of the research and assuring them of anonymity. Interviews were conducted in the absence of local cadres (cf. Yee 2003).

In addition to ethnographic observations, the questionnaire was designed to gain an understanding into how migrants get by in the city. Qualitative questions followed many quantitative questions, especially those inquiring into opinions. The questionnaire was partially influenced by McGee's (1975: 148) study of

Malay migrant adaptation to the city. The survey sought details of the demographic characteristics of respondents (age, gender, family size). Questions were asked about migration patterns and time spent in the city. The questionnaire included questions about the types of jobs and sectors that participants worked in pre- and post-migration; money earned in the previous month; remittances; residential location; opinions about job opportunities and other nationalities. The questionnaire also enquired into the types of resources respondents bring into the city (education, social networks, *hukou* status), job-finding methods, and reasons for coming to Urumqi.

SAMPLE PROFILE AND REASONS FOR MIGRATION

Table 1 summarises the pertinent demographic statistics of the sample. Male respondents are over-represented. Many migrants leave their wives to tend the farm while they seek higher earnings opportunities elsewhere and, among Uyghurs, women's work tends to be confined to the domestic sphere (Beller-Hann 1998a, 1998b). Thus, working respondents were generally male.

Han are generally older than Uyghurs,[6] which accords with other research on Xinjiang (ADB 2003: Ch. 11). Age is negatively correlated with education.[7]

Table 1: Profile of sample

		Uyghur	*Han*	*Total*
Number of respondents		76	74	150
Gender	Percentage Male	75.0	80.0	77.5
Age	18 to 25	26.3	16.2	21.3
Percentage in each	26 to 35	39.5	36.5	38.0
category	36 to 45	17.1	23.0	20.1
	46 to 55	9.2	14.9	12.1
	56 to 65	5.3	5.4	5.4
	Over 65	2.6	4.1	3.4
Education	Primary unfinished	26.3	10.8	18.6
Percentage in each category	Primary graduate	28.9	28.4	28.7
	Middle school graduate	36.8	41.9	39.4
	Upper secondary/tertiary	7.9	18.9	13.4
Money earned last month (*yuan*)	Less than 500	45.8	24.6	35.2
Percentage in each category	500 to 1000	42.4	53.8	48.1
	Over 1000	11.9	21.5	16.7
Rural/Urban hometown	City	13.2	18.9	16.1
Percentage in each category	Town	23.7	6.8	15.3
	Village	63.2	74.3	68.8
Total time in Urumqi	12 months or less	21.3	26.0	23.7
Percentage in each category	1 to 5 years	28.0	27.4	27.7
	5 to 10 years	22.7	28.8	25.8
	Over 10 years	28.0	17.8	22.9
Family Size	Average number of children	2.2	1.5	1.85

Even so, Han migrants are better educated (cf. Fischer 2004).[8] Han occupy proportionately more high-income brackets. Uyghurs are more likely to originate from towns and more Han than Uyghurs are from villages. No significant differences exist for total time spent in Urumqi. Minorities tend to have larger families (Anderson & Silver 1995) and this holds true for our sample. Uyghur migrants were also more likely than Han to relocate with their family: 76.9 per cent of Uyghur partners resided with the respondent compared with 60.6 per cent of Han.

Reasons for migration revolved around themes of poverty and a desire for the modern, reflecting the penury of the countryside relative to the city. Sixty-five per cent of Uyghur respondents and 89 per cent of Han respondents cited finding work as the reason for migrating. However, Uyghurs also cited political freedom, social freedom (e.g. divorce, trouble with law), and family moving – reflecting the nationwide pattern that Uyghurs are much less likely to migrate for business reasons than Han and Hui (NBS & EAC 2003). Reasons for choosing Urumqi in particular likewise related to monetary incentives, which is understandable given Urumqi's disproportionate share of Xinjiang's wealth. However, a quarter of Han drew upon hometown networks that are not such a crucial factor for Uyghurs.

Upon arrival, transients to Urumqi enter a labour market where ethnicity is increasingly becoming a marker of division, as older institutionalised employment patterns merge with or are replaced by newer unregulated employment patterns. This impedes integration and breeds Uyghur alienation from what is widely perceived as a Han colonial system (Bovingdon 2002; 2004; Moneyhon 2003).

URBAN AND ETHNIC DIS-INTEGRATION

There are two criteria for integration: one psychological, focussing on the will or agency of the subject, and the other socio-economic, focussing on the subject's structural position within a particular political economy. We understand integration as *the reduction of socio-economic distance between ethnic groups*, without a loss of ethnic identity. Socio-economic distance operates to impede integration both into the city and between ethnic groups.

In this section we demonstrate the distance between Uyghur and Han migrants to Urumqi through survey results across the fields of living standards, employment, accommodation and social attitudes. We then embark upon more detailed analysis to explain observed income differentials with reference to the segmented labour market, which in turn is explained with reference to social capital differences and discriminatory social processes. We end the section with examples of marketplace inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts.

Living standards

Material improvement was an incentive to move to Urumqi among most respondents. However, on average, Uyghurs earned ¥613.14 per month – about ¥200 less than Han respondents, who earned ¥814.23 per month.[9] This finding lends credence to the belief generally held among Urumqi's Uyghurs that they earn less than Han people (Yee 2003: 443–4).

Given such low salaries, housing conditions were also generally low. However, Han respondents tended to enjoy better living conditions. As one Uyghur respondent complained, 'compared with other people's lifestyle, this is not good. I also want a nice apartment.' There are comparatively more Han (35 per cent) living in apartments and more Uyghurs (63.2 per cent) in houses. For Urumqi's floating population, the category 'house' refers to crude, low-quality brick or concrete squat structures with corrugated iron roofs, many of which qualify as slums: inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality, overcrowding, and insecure residential status (UN-Habitat 2003: 10–12).

Han respondents had better basic amenities. Appreciably more Han than Uyghurs had at least two out of five basic amenities (Table 2). The major difference was access to piped water. Uyghurs also exhibited a greater dependence upon cheaper sources of cooking fuel. Whilst 86 per cent of Han used gas cylinders for cooking, only 50 per cent of Uyghurs were able to afford gas cylinders, costing on average ¥47 each.

Lower incomes account for Uyghurs' inferior housing conditions. In the construction sector, most employees pay no rent. Excluding construction workers, then, the number of amenities is significantly correlated with rent, as is use of gas cylinders as a piped gas replacement.[10] Uyghurs paid ¥119.7 rent per month on average, Han ¥144.8. More sophisticated analysis suggests that Uyghurs have poorer accommodation than Han because they pay less rent, which is in turn a product of lower incomes.[11]

On these two measures of integration into city life (income and housing conditions) Han fare significantly better than Uyghurs. Measures of socio-economic

Table 2: Number of amenities (piped water, electricity, piped sanitation, shower, piped gas) by ethnicity

	Per cent of ethnicity having stated number of amenities					
	1 of 5	*2 of 5*	*3 of 5*	*4 of 5*	*5 of 5*	*TOTAL*
Uyghur ethnicity	42.7	34.7	13.3	6.7	2.7	75
Han ethnicity	17.8	52.1	15.1	8.2	6.8	73

Notes: Cramer's V = 0.281; significance = 0.020; Chi-square = 11.672; df = 4; significance = 0.020. Two cells (20.0 per cent) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.45.

distance between Uyghur and Han migrants also reveal substantial separation at work, at home and in social attitudes.

Employment

Before moving to Urumqi, Uyghur and Han migrants generally worked in similar jobs – mainly as peasants. However, only Han had worked in construction or manufacturing and only Uyghurs had worked as artisans. Once in Urumqi, Uyghur and Han migrants entered different labour market sectors. For example, 7 per cent of the Urumqi sample were small business owners (such as restaurant and shop-owners or a demolition site owner) and of those three-quarters were Han – evidence which accords with research revealing Han domination of small businesses (Iredale *et al.* 2001: 186; Wiemer 2004: 180).

Figure 3 shows national stratification by sector. Qualitative data and prior research (Iredale *et al.* 2001: 185; Tsui 2003) indicate that the national distributions in our sample reflect actual numbers. The unemployed are mainly Uyghur and the scrap collectors mainly Han. Uyghurs appeared too proud to collect scrap: as one Uyghur demolition worker put it, 'the Han are willing to do any sort

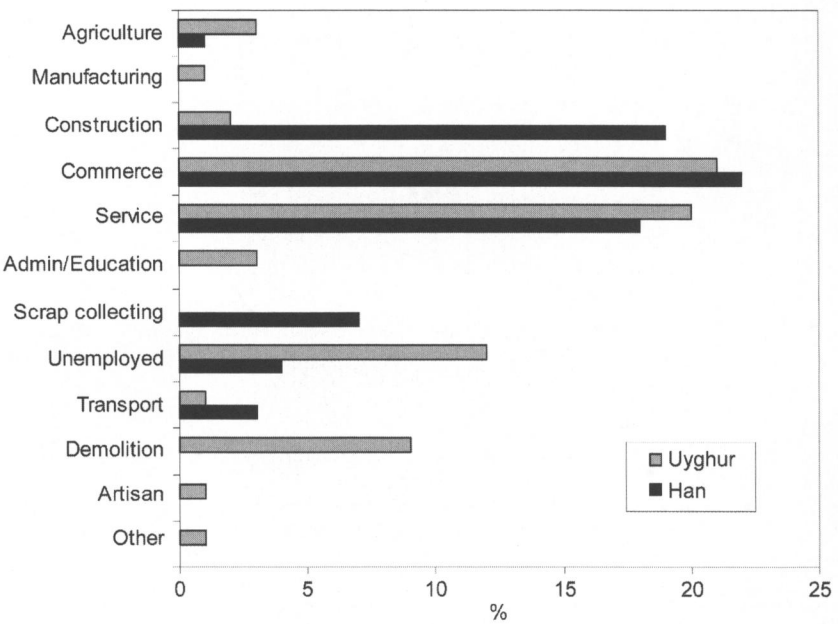

FIGURE 3. Sector by nationality, Urumqi sample 2004. (*Note*: N = 150; Cramer's V = 0.544; significance = 0.000; chi-square = 44.310; df = 11; significance = 0.000. Five Uyghurs and one Han in the unemployed category are homemakers. 15 cells (62.5 per cent) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.49.)

of job, e.g. collecting rubbish. But for Uyghurs such work would be degrading.' Noteworthy is the national division among physical labourers. All workers in demolition are Uyghur and all but one worker in construction Han. The one Uyghur in construction was a road builder who fervently remonstrated that 'here the Uyghur people do different work from the Han people. They do all the tough physical labour, like carrying the heavy things, while the Han do the lighter work.'

It is common knowledge in Urumqi that, as one respondent noted, 'Han mainly do construction; Uyghurs mainly do demolition. I don't know why.' Others have observed the prevalence of Han in construction and infrastructure projects (Becquelin 2000: 75; US Department of State 2003; Fuller & Starr 2004: 11–12; Moneyhon 2004: 11–12; Toops 2004: 258–9). Despite many observations of construction sites, only once did we come across a group of Uyghurs. In a New City district street flanked by six large construction sites we counted 124 workers, of whom 108 were male and 16 female: not one was Uyghur. Similarly, apart from one Han scrap collector trying to extricate some iron out of a few electricity poles lying in a heap of rubbish, we never observed a Han working in demolition, except as buyers of debris or technicians operating machinery.

The qualitative confirms these quantitative data. In answer to the question what sorts of jobs are easier for national minorities to find, 34 (21 per cent) said demolition; 29 (18 per cent) restaurant work; 21 business (13 per cent) (of whom 12 specified small business such as selling fruit or traditional Uyghur goods); and three each for farming, transport and traditional occupations. Only five mentioned construction and nearly all Uyghurs specified that their nationality only received the jobs disdained by the Han. As a Uyghur respondent said: 'the only companies Uyghurs can get employment with are "hammer" companies or being a butcher. Nothing else.' To the question what sorts of jobs are easier for Han Chinese to find, 62 (39 per cent) replied construction; 11 (seven per cent) business (of whom three specified small business and one specified big business); seven restaurant work; six scrap collecting; and four farming. As a Han respondent noted: 'It's difficult for national minorities to do construction work because they don't eat pork. The Uyghurs get angry more easily.'

In the commerce and service sectors, which contain much of Urumqi's floating population (cf. Solinger 1997: 106; 1998; Iredale *et al.* 2001: 185), Han and Uyghurs are equally represented, aside from the fact that more Han than Uyghurs are small business owners. More intriguing, though, is the evidence of national networks inside these sectors. Eighty-nine per cent of Uyghurs have a boss of the same nationality, as do all the Han. Likewise, the co-workers of 87 per cent of Uyghurs are co-nationals (88 per cent for Han). Evidently, Han and Uyghur generally interact with non co-nationals only through transactions as customers or as salespeople, but even these interactions are limited: Uyghurs represent only 12.8 per cent of the population of Urumqi, but 34.4 per cent of Uyghur respondents stated they did not buy from, sell to or service people of non-Uyghur nationality in their daily work; 57.6 per cent of Han stated they did not

meet non-Han people in these same circumstances.[12] Given their relative shares of the population of Urumqi (12.8 per cent Uyghur, 75.3 per cent Han), it is evident that Uyghur in-migrants were more ensconced than Han within national commodity distribution chains. Market actors and agencies *per se* are unable to create linkages between Uyghur and Han migrants, perpetuating intra-national social and work life in Urumqi.

Accommodation: geographic distance

Separation of the floating population according to nationality is also apparent at home. The southern districts of Urumqi contain the largest number of floating population residences. Both Uyghurs and Han are concentrated in these areas, though Han migrants also live throughout the city's northern areas. Furthermore, within these districts, Urumqi's migrants are bounded by co-national neighbours (Table 3), forming micro national enclaves.

Table 3: Ethnicity of neighbour

Ethnicity of respondents	*Per cent having neighbours who are* Uyghur	Han	*Number of respondents*
Uyghur	86.2	8.6	55
Han	4.2	95.8	71

Note: Cramer's V = 0.875; significance < 0.001; Chi-square = 98.74; df = 2; significance < 0.001. Some Uyghurs have other ethnicities as neighbours.

Socio-cultural distance

Social-cultural distance between Uyghurs and Han was likewise high. Han typically regarded Uyghurs as rude: 'The minority people here are very rude'; 'the minorities I've seen at the train station ... conduct their business in underhanded ways.'[13] Many Uyghurs complained of Han chauvinism (*da Han zhuyi*): 'the Han always have the idea that they are the masters of the Uyghur people.' Or, from Han respondents: 'Here the local people think they are the masters, but in Hohhot most minorities ... know what they should and should not do';[14] 'the minorities here are disobedient'.

Attitudes to intermarriage confirm this disintegration at the psychological level (Gordon 1964; Ji 1992; Yee 2003). Uyghurs expressed strong disapproval of intermarriage between their own nationality and Han: 59 per cent strongly agreed with the statement: 'intermarriage between my own nationality and others is unacceptable.' Likewise, nearly 84 per cent of Uyghurs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: 'there are too many Han Chinese in Urumqi.' A common reason for this attitude cited by respondents was job competition.

Explaining income differentials

Thus Han and Uyghur migrants to Urumqi are separated by different average levels of well-being, both in their working and domestic lives and in their attitudes to each other. Material well-being and national separation are not unrelated, of course. In particular, national sectoral divisions of labour and national commodity distribution chains strongly influence income differences.

Differences in educational attainment are significant and do influence observed income levels. Uyghurs were less educated than Han (Table 1) and education levels were correlated with nationality.[15] However, both education and nationality were independently correlated with income:[16] hence, a significant portion of national income variance remains unexplained by human capital. This is consistent with Hannum and Xie's (1998: 330) finding that, after accounting for differences in education, minorities in Xinjiang remained disadvantaged in blue-collar sectors. Sectoral divisions, in particular due to the construction industry, help determine income differences.

Income varies by sector (Table 4). Construction, which Han dominate, and transport stand out as financially rewarding sectors for the floating population (cf. Toops 2004: 258–9).[17] Thus, a principal source of the income disparity between the two nationalities is Han presence in, and Uyghur exclusion from, the construction sector. Yet, access to the lucrative construction sector was not primarily linked to education and training. There are no significant differences in

Table 4: Average monthly income (*yuan*) by ethnicity and sector, Urumqi 2004

	Uyghur		*Han*		*Hui*		Total	
	Mean	*Count*	*Mean*	*Count*	*Mean*	*Count*	*Mean*	*Count*
Agriculture	810.00	3	250.00	1			670.00	4
Manufacturing/Energy	750.00	1					750.00	1
Construction	1000.00	1	1021.39	18			1020.26	19
Commerce	647.37	19	892.11	19	837.50	4	776.19	42
Service	647.06	17	655.63	16	400.00	2	636.86	35
Admin/Education	575.00	2					575.00	2
Scrap collecting			457.14	7	250.00	1	431.25	8
Unemployed	325.00	4	725.00	2	400.00	1	450.00	7
Transportation	816.67	3	1100.00	2			930.00	5
Demolition	360.71	7					360.71	7
Artisan	600.00	1					600.00	1
Other	670.00	1					670.00	1
Group Total	613.14	59	814.23	65	600.00	8	711.36	132

Note: Outliers and zero incomes removed. The Hui respondents have been included in this table to provide a fuller picture of income levels among Urumqi's floating population. The income of the two Han unemployed persons came from government pensions. Most unemployed Uyghurs received no or lower pensions; their incomes derived from work in the previous month, help from friends, or informal selling.

education levels between those within construction and those not;[18] nor between nationality and the education levels of physical labourers.[19]

Further, the concentration of Uyghurs in national commodity distribution chains reduces their earning capacity. Those Uyghurs who bought from, sold to or serviced different nationalities earned ¥750.1 per month on average compared with ¥466.7 for those who only bought from, sold to or serviced other Uyghurs.[20]

National segregation thus plays an important role in creating differences in well-being. As state allocations of labour and household registration laws have diminished in significance, so has a labour market arisen in Urumqi. Under these conditions Uyghurs are disadvantaged by a lack of social capital and by the difficulties that employers face in exploiting them. Lacking competitive advantage in the open, formal labour market, many Uyghurs retreat into national commodity distribution chains. Even though education levels are significantly correlated with nationality, other social processes account better for the sectoral divisions observed in postsocialist (Dirlik 1989) Urumqi: social capital or network resources.

Discriminatory social processes: social capital deficits, labour surpluses and discrimination by recruiters

A migrant's network resources are inextricably linked to the labour market he or she enters and explain much of the exploitation he or she will experience (Solinger 1997: 101; 1998; 1999a: 202–39). Whilst all nationalities relied upon co-nationals in job seeking, Han were more deeply embedded within native-place networks than Uyghurs. Whereas 49.3 per cent of Han relied on hometown connections to find their current job, the corresponding figure for Uyghurs was only 22.5 per cent.

Entry to construction remains ensconced within social processes, despite claims to the contrary by some bosses. Of recruitment practices at his construction company one boss said: 'According to law. It is a very fair competitive process. We advertise for people and then applicants sit an examination. Those who pass are given a certificate and come here to work with their certificate.' His employee answered the question on recruitment practices more plainly, 'hometown friends', and laughingly dismissed suggestions of examinations and certificates. Uyghurs cannot compete in a labour market for construction workers blanketed by *guanxi*, to which one woman's complaint attests: 'My husband went countless times to find a job in construction. It is very hard because they only want Chinese. He eventually found a job with a building team, but it was run by Uyghurs.'

Excluded from construction, Uyghur temporary physical labourers have carved out a niche for themselves in demolition. Here Uyghur bosses only employ Uyghurs: 'I don't hire Chinese because they don't know how to demolish. The job is too heavy for the Han.' However, it is a low-skill sector in

which working conditions are poor and the supply of labour outstrips market demand. Most demolition workers receive low pay despite long hours of toil. At one site the boss paid labourers ¥0.3 per kilogram of iron, which he resold to Han buyers at ¥12 per kilogram. According to the boss, a worker can collect ¥20–40 worth of iron in one day. The demolition work itself is divided along gendered lines. Women generally clean the bricks whilst men demolish and in some cases also extract iron. Uyghur women were working at least 13 hours in a day to clean about 1000 bricks, earning them ¥30 from Han procurers.[21]

Furthermore, Uyghur migrants are not as easily exploited as Han migrants. Bosses who employ Han do not need to accommodate the cultural values and dietary requirements of Muslim ethnic minorities. In the railroad and oil industries, minorities are not hired because the costs of training are high (Sautman 2000: 259). Preferential policies are of advantage for minorities seeking cadre positions, but do not aid those seeking jobs as ordinary workers or clerks (Sautman 1998: 96). Because of the abundance of cheap Han labour, the market does not punish those who discriminate against other ethnicities.

Unregulated or poorly regulated job-finding agencies discriminate too. The following comments were made by Uyghur migrants working to lay pipelines for a Han boss. Their pay was ¥30 per day:

> Worker 1: 'At the train station there is a Labour Service Office. They ask for a ¥30 fee per labourer from the employer. If the employer has *guanxi* with the office, he doesn't have to pay the ¥30 fee. The office workers will go to the Han first to find workers. If the Han don't want to do the job, only then will the job go to a Uyghur. I also have *nan*-baking skills but I cannot do that here in Urumqi because I'm afraid I won't get paid my wages.'

> Worker 2: 'The government said they will use Uyghurs. At least 30 per cent of the workers in physical labour in all of Xinjiang must be ethnic minorities. But that hasn't happened. They still use the Han. The Han boss will ask for a copy of a Uyghur's identity card and say that he will give the Uyghur a contract and then disappear. The Han boss will then show that copy of the card to the authorities to show that he has 30 per cent Uyghur workers.'

Twenty-six respondents had sought aid from a job-finding agency. Except for four Han, who had met with success, all had been swindled by confidence tricksters. One Han construction worker, who had been employed in a private job-finding agency in Lanzhou, Gansu, confirmed the nature of their operations:

> 'Six to seven out of every 10 private job-finding agencies are cheats. I worked for one for two months in Lanzhou. First, we asked for the applicant's contact details, and put them on a list. For doing that we asked for a ¥20–50 fee (taking as much as they could give us). Then we would contact them and take them to their new place of employment. We would ask for ¥100–200 before taking them (again taking as much as they could give). The boss would fire them after several days. The boss had an agreement with the job-finding agency.'

The majority of Uyghur respondents, but also many Hui, had experienced discrimination from Han bosses. One Hui lady protested: 'If they wear Muslim headwear, the bosses won't employ them. It makes it difficult to find work. The company will ask me to wear clothes I don't want to wear. But after marriage, Muslim women must wear headwear. And the companies won't hire them.' A Uyghur street vendor commented: 'Before they wouldn't use derogatory words with us, but now they call us "chantou" [headscarf].'[22] Another Uyghur: 'There are no jobs for the Uyghurs. If a Han comes from inner land, there's always a job ready for him. Even if the Uyghur can speak Chinese and has the requisite skills, the Han won't give him or her the job.'

These responses accord with reports by numerous Xinjiang watchers that Uyghurs face greater difficulties gaining employment than Han (Gilley 2001; Iredale *et al.* 2001: 186; Becquelin 2004: 372). Past studies of Xinjiang (for examples, see Hannum & Xie 1998; Iredale *et al.* 2001) evince tougher entry barriers into blue-collar and higher-status occupations for Xinjiang's minorities than for Han.

The emergence of such practices and increasing competition are reflected in Uyghur and Han sentiments regarding employment (Table 5). The majority of respondents, but significantly more Uyghur than Han, saw a reduction in employment opportunities. Respondents were also asked the reason for such worsening conditions. Most blamed the escalation in numbers of job-seekers and 85 per cent of Uyghurs specified Han in-migrants. Several would not answer the question directly, saying that they did not wish to discuss political matters.

Marketplace inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts

Under such deteriorating employment conditions, conflict occurs within as well as between nationalities. A demolition boss told of a fight between two groups of Uyghurs that had taken place 15 days before at the demolition site. A brick-collector threw an unwanted brick away. It clipped the head of an iron-collector

Table 5: Comparison of employment conditions now and ten years ago

		Are employment conditions better, same or worse now?				
		Better	*Same*	*Worse*	*Don't know*	*Total*
Uyghur	Count	13	1	58	4	76
	% within ethnicity	17.1%	1.3%	76.3%	5.3%	100.0%
Han	Count	23	3	36	12	74
	% within ethnicity	31.1%	4.1%	48.6%	16.2%	100.0%

Note: Question was: Are employment conditions in Xinjiang better or worse than ten years ago? (or than when you first arrived in Xinjiang?). Cramer's V = 0.248; p = 0.016; Chi-square = 8.226; p = 0.016. The category 'don't know' was removed from statistical analyses. Two cells (33.3 per cent) have expected count less than five. The minimum expected count is 1.85.

who then turned on the accidental assailant. A fight erupted. The 'irons' and the 'brickies', 10 or so in each group, unsheathed their daggers and brawled. Ears and hands were sliced off as the two groups became more and more violent until police arrived to break up the mêlée. Whilst the demolition boss related this story, one Uyghur man began hurling abuse at other demolition workers, accusing them of stealing his iron. The demolition boss had to go over to quiet things down, saying, 'There is a lot of fighting. If I weren't here to stop them, they would fight and hurt each other. People have fought to the death over iron.'

At De Hui International Shopping Centre a heated dispute arose between a Uyghur migrant – probably a freight handler – and a Han drink vendor. The Uyghur man wanted to buy a drink at a lower price than the Han lady was asking. The two almost came to blows, pushing and hitting each other until the lady picked up a metal stool and threatened to strike the man. She was restrained by her daughter and a bystander. The man was restrained by his wife. 'He swore at me,' she protested afterwards to anyone who cared to listen, 'I can't understand what he says.'

CONCLUSION: LINKING URUMQI'S POLITICAL ECONOMY TO ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS

We have adopted a neo-Marxist approach to ethnicity in this paper. Paramount in this approach is labour or human agency, within which social, political and economic conditions are not causative, but rather delimit the field of potential operations. The reproduction of Urumqi's political economy through market actors and a weakened state structure fuels ethnic consciousness. Many Han and Uyghur rural-dwellers are choosing to move to Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi, in response to changes in conditions in the countryside and the city, including reform of the *hukou* policy that in the past tethered peasants to the land, a surplus of agricultural labour as the population grows and land ownership is restructured, and Urumqi's growing wealth relative to the rest of Xinjiang. These conditions are signs of a transition away from state-controlled and towards market-directed forms of production. As in rural areas, so too in urban areas the organisation of production is undergoing significant and rapid change. Urban state sector jobs have rapidly depleted. Conversely, the urban private sector has expanded apace, as have unregulated job-finding agencies. This process has created increased wealth, but also increased poverty. Urumqi's urban poverty rates are high: among internal migrants, the highest in the country.

Uyghur and Han migrants face significant barriers integrating into the city. However, barriers are higher for Uyghurs, who receive significantly lower incomes than Han and generally reside in poorer accommodation. The major reason is that Uyghurs enter less productive labour sectors than Han. In particular, they are excluded from the construction sector, which is the major source of the income differential between Uyghur and Han migrants. Instead, they have

carved out a niche in the demolition sector. Furthermore, Uyghurs are ensconced within less productive commodity distribution chains. As at work, so too at home Uyghurs remain distant from Han people, each national group tending to live in separate neighbourhoods. Distance is also revealed in social attitudes, with many Uyghurs and some Han expressing strongly negative attitudes on the subjects of intermarriage and population levels of Han and minorities in Urumqi, respectively.

We have argued that as Xinjiang's economy undergoes transition from a socialist to a market economy, a labour market has emerged in which social processes, outside the reach of the once panopticon Chinese state, have taken a foothold. Social capital, or a migrant's network resources, and invidious discrimination are the key inhibitors of Uyghur migrant integration into Urumqi's expanding labour market. A major determinant of entry into the lucrative construction sector is inclusion within a (Han) hometown network, which of course disadvantages Uyghur migrants. Further, Uyghur migrants do not have the necessary social capital and/or are disinclined to enter into commercial relations with Han people. Hence, many remain within less remunerative national commodity distribution chains. Unregulated job-finding agencies and Han employers discriminate against and in some cases outright swindle Uyghur job-seekers through unscrupulous practices.

Uyghur agency is unable and sometimes unwilling to overcome the barriers engendered by Xinjiang's economic transition: lack of punishment of discrimination by Han bosses, exploitation exercised by labour recruitment agencies, and self-segregation as a survival mechanism. Such discriminatory conditions pique Uyghur ethnic consciousness, manifesting in heightened antipathy towards Han migrants, whom many view both as job competitors, and as a threat to their identity as a nation (cf. Yee 2003: 442).

Consequently, in post-socialist Urumqi tension between Uyghur and Han people and within the Uyghur community itself is widespread and reflects new articulations of ethnic consciousness with the state and the market. This is not to argue that ethnic relations were less conflictual before the market economy began to emerge; rather it is to argue that, under the increasingly market-dominated social relations of recent Xinjiang, ethnic consciousness and ethnic relations are more and more cast through the lens of the market.

On the one hand, Uyghur resentment is directed at what is perceived to be a largely Han state – indeed Han cadres outnumber minority cadres in Xinjiang (ADB 2003: Ch. 13) – triggered by the presence of Han (even poor Han) against a background of imperialism (Millward & Tursun 2004). On the other hand, underlying tensions are reproduced by unregulated labour markets and the ensuing inter- and intra-national competition and living conditions under which Urumqi's urban poor subsist, as symbolised by demolition site violence. A Uyghur muezzin who had fought in the 'Three District Army' in 1944 (see Millward & Tursun 2004: 82) framed his resentment thus: 'The Open Door policy and Develop the West policy mean less work for Uyghurs. They are just

abolishing the Uyghurs now. Even buildings (like my house) are not in the Uyghur style. All the market now is doing is letting more Han come from *neidi* [inner land] and they're taking all the jobs'. Paradoxically, the same segregating segmented labour markets (in conjunction with linguistic and cultural factors) bind Uyghurs together and, arguably, form part and parcel of the recent surge in Uyghur nationalism (Rudelson 1997; Smith 2002). Unfortunately, state withdrawal from the lives of Uyghur migrants does not induce vibrant autonomous Uyghur communities; for these transients lack the economic wherewithal to sustain such 'small societies' (cf. Beller-Hann 1998a, who discusses the way in which an informal labour market in rural Xinjiang buttresses social ties).

Of course, ethnicity is not only source of discrimination, but also source of resistance. In Urumqi, the ethnicised nature of labour relations offers the opportunity to resist unequal labour market opportunities through practising a mimetic tactics of the weak. 'Myths of ethnicity' (Moberg 1997: xxii) have arisen to explain the composition of the workforce through the posited 'genetic' predisposition of Uyghur and Han migrants. Han have become associated with the construction sector, and thereby with the modernising 'face' of development. One Han worker declared, 'The Han work hard. The Uyghurs won't do hard construction work.' Another asserted, 'because we are Han people we do construction work'. Conversely, Uyghurs have become associated with demolition. One Uyghur demolition boss remonstrated, 'the Uyghurs should get more jobs in construction because Uyghurs also need to make a living. You can make much more money in construction.' At another point he said, 'I don't hire Chinese because they don't know how to demolish. The job is too heavy for the Han. So I only employ Uyghurs.'

Inter-national tension is evident in such distancing by Uyghurs (cf. Becquelin 2000; 2004; Smith 2002; Fuller & Starr 2004). However, intra-national 'demolition' or the 'psychic repression [causing] violence turned inwards towards oneself' (Moberg 1997: 132) also manifests. Uyghurs tend not to compete with Han or Hui in the restaurant, service and demolition industries. They subsist in highly competitive sectors where survival is very difficult: hence, frequent comments to the effect that 'Uyghurs do not know how to help each other', and, 'Uyghurs are not good at working together. The Han work more closely together than the Uyghurs.' Apparently, intra-national labour market competition is one factor in Uyghur intra-national struggles, which have a precedent in 'oasis identities' (shaped by historical and geographical divides) (Rudelson 1997: 45). Thus evidence of 'relational alterities' (Gladney 1996a) is emerging in the marketplace as Uyghur migrants to Urumqi define themselves in relation to both Han and co-national competitors. In the ethnographic picture of Urumqi painted here, Uyghur migrants are becoming strangers in their homeland and Han migrants are making themselves at home in a strange land. Typically, Xinjiang watchers have framed the 'Xinjiang problem' in terms of a David and Goliath struggle of a small but increasingly self-conscious people against a powerful state. However, the evidence herein indicates that as the state recedes, labour becomes commodified

and discriminatory social processes take root, the form and substance of 'the Xinjiang problem' are being redefined.

NOTES

[1] Ben Hopper is a legal graduate at a law firm in Melbourne. He is interested in the nexus between development theory and praxis. This interest has spurred him on to work as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development in East Timor and China. In China he has also worked as a teacher of English and German and as a play producer, and has travelled extensively. He thanks one-time Urumqi local Endwar Sharip, without whose assistance this paper would not have been possible.

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[2] In China, most (but not all) of the groups that claim ethnic identity are identified as *minzu*, literally 'ethnic group' or 'tribe of people', but commonly translated as 'nationality'. This identification, which integrates the concept of people (*min*) and the fiction of descent (*zu*) (Dikötter 1992: 97), also ignores linguistic and other physical differences within the so-called Han majority. On this topic, see Gladney (2004b) and Dikötter (1992). Here, we use 'ethnic' and 'ethnicity' to refer to a theoretical concept; 'national' and 'nationality' to refer to ethnic groups as recognised by the Chinese state.

[3] About 15 per cent of Xinjiang's population and 12 per cent of Urumqi's belong to other ethnic minority groups, some of whose labour market positions are quite distinctive. However, we do not have space here to consider either their responses to this stratification or the Chinese state's deployment of nationalism against the various ethnic groups within Xinjiang (see Gladney 2004b on this latter topic). Numbers alone, if nothing else, must make ethnic consciousness within these groups different from that among Han or Uyghur, but also limit these groups' effect on labour market competition between Han and Uyghur.

[4] The Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2003: 272) found a significant correlation between GDP per capita and the proportion of Han residents by county in Xinjiang (see also Wiemer 2004: 177–8).

[5] The Household registration system (*hukou*) assigns to each person a sector (rural or urban) and a specific location for their citizenship. Until recently, few people could formally change their *hukou*, and so most rural–urban migrants were unofficial residents of the city of their residence. However, the system is now changing rapidly, and changes in *hukou* are more easily arranged for some categories of people and in some locations.

[6] The correlation between ethnicity and age is weak, however.

[7] Education grouped as in Table 1; age is interval level: $r = -0.221$; $p = 0.005$.

[8] Education grouped as in Table 1. A chi-square correlation between ethnicity and education is significant (chi-square = 8.943; df = 3; $p = 0.037$).

[9] Those who earned nothing, mostly Uyghur homemakers and unemployed, and outliers (three Uyghurs and four Han who earned between ¥2500 and ¥5000) have been removed

from all statistical analyses except where indicated. A t-test revealed that the difference in income by ethnicity was significant: $t = -2.814$; $p = 0.006$. Testing also revealed a positive correlation between ethnicity and income ($r = 0.247$; $p = 0.006$). Data was transformed to log of income in order to normalise the distribution.

[10] Correlation of number of amenities with rent: $r = 0.465$; $p < 0.001$; one-tailed; correlation of use of gas cylinders with rent: $r = 0.369$; $p = 0.001$; one-tailed. Data are for 96 Uyghur and Han non-construction respondents.

[11] Analysis of co-variance of number of amenities, with log of rent entered as the independent variable and ethnicity as a co-variate: the model only approaches significance ($F = 0.096$; $p = 0.096$; $N = 96$). The model without ethnicity as a co-variate was highly significant ($F = 23.304$; $p = 0.000$; $N = 96$).

[12] These data derive from the yes/no question: 'Do you buy from, sell to or service people of a different ethnicity to you in your daily work?'

[13] Han respondents would often use 'Uyghur' and 'minority' interchangeably.

[14] Hohhot is the capital of the neighbouring Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

[15] Gamma = 0.334; $p = 0.005$. Gamma is the preferred correlation coefficient when two ordinal variables have relatively few categories. However, it gives higher coefficients than other ordinal coefficients (de Vaus 2002: 258, 261).

[16] Having a primary school, lower middle school or at least an upper secondary school education were entered as independent variables with log of income as the dependent variable in analysis of variance. The model was significant ($F = 2.449$; $p = 0.05$). To test for the effect of ethnicity, the dichotomous variable (Uyghur or Han) was entered as a predictor and the model remained significant ($F = 4.859$; $p = 0.029$).

[17] $t = 3.601$; $p < 0.001$.

[18] Gamma = –0.110; $p = 0.537$; chi-square = 0.548; $df = 3$; $p = 0.908$.

[19] Gamma = 0.143; $p = 0.626$; chi-square = 1.955; $df = 3$; $p = 0.582$.

[20] $t = 2.162$; $df = 44$; $p = 0.036$.

[21] Statistics gathered from conversations with six Uyghur brick-collectors.

[22] In the 1930s use of the pejorative '*chantou*' as an ethnonym was so widespread that in eastern Xinjiang even Uyghurs labelled themselves Chantou (Hoppe 1998: 58; see also Gladney 2004b: 217). Today, however, it is a derogatory term.

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