

Han Migration and Social Changes in Xinjiang*

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The dominant ethnic group in Xinjiang over the last several hundred years has been the Islamic Uygurs. However, a recent massive influx of Han people has brought significant change to Xinjiang, both socially and demographically. A dual structure of ethnic composition has emerged. The majority of Han people in the earlier-developed areas have a more affluent life, while most of the minority nationalities in southern Xinjiang, especially the Uygurs in the area of greater Kashi, live in comparatively backward conditions. Disparities in population growth and economic development have presented a challenge to the social stability and unity of ethnic groups in Xinjiang. This study explores both how and to what degree the influx of migration has caused both demographic and social changes in Xinjiang.

Keywords: Xinjiang; Uygur; Han; demography; migration

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Xinjiang is one of the five autonomous minority nationality regions in China, whose population has historically been composed largely of minority groups. Among the fifty-six ethnic groups in China, forty-nine are represented in Xinjiang, with the Uygurs being the key minority nationality.¹

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*This paper mainly deals with the migration of Han people in Xinjiang. International and intra-regional movements of people are not included.

¹According to both official CCP ethnic policy and academic studies, there are fifty-six na-

A massive influx of Han people into the Xinjiang region that began in 1949, however, resulted in the Han population outnumbering minority nationalities in some areas. This has led to a dual structure of ethnic composition. The majority of Han people in the more developed areas are much better off economically, while most of the minority nationalities live in comparatively backward conditions. This disparity has already engendered serious concern and discontent among the minority nationalities. Thus, the social unrest in Xinjiang should not be seen as a string of isolated events but is rather best viewed as being closely associated with this social disparity.²

This study explores the social background behind the Han migration to Xinjiang, and the impact of the influx of migration on demographic change and social development. The disparity in the region's social and economic development and the impact of the migration on ethnic relations are also discussed.

Migration to Xinjiang

Xinjiang's population skyrocketed in the 1949-91 period. During these forty-two years, total population increased by a staggering 250 percent (from 4.3 million to 15.2 million) with a net annual growth rate of 3.1 percent.³ During the period 1949-85, the population in China as a whole increased by 93 percent. The proportion of the Xinjiang people as a total of the Chinese population rose from 0.8 percent in 1949 to 1.4 percent in 1996. Among the five autonomous minority nationality regions, Xinjiang's

nationalities (*minzu* or ethnic groups) in China. The Han nationality is the majority group, while the other fifty-five non-Han nationalities belong to the category of "minority nationalities." Apart from the Uyghur, the twelve major ethnic groups in Xinjiang are the Han, Kazak, Mongol, Kirghiz, Tajik, Uzbek, Tatar, Hui, Man, Xibo, Daur, and Russian.

²For more information on ethnic unrest in Xinjiang, see David Wang, "East Turkestan Independence Movement in Xinjiang," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* (Morehead, Kentucky, USA, forthcoming).

³Qiu Yuanyao, ed., *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang juan* (China's population toward the twenty-first century: Xinjiang) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1994), 21.

population growth rate was the second highest after Ningxia.⁴ This population growth in Xinjiang mainly relied on the intake of mass migration until the late 1970s.

From a historical point of view, migration was, and still is, the major factor which contributed to the changes in social and economic development in Xinjiang. The Han people in China proper were, and still are, a considerable and constant source of migration to Xinjiang. The *tuntian* system, the use of stationed troops to reclaim wasteland, was started as early as the Later Han dynasty and is still practiced today. Historically, under the policy of "*yimin shibian*" (to move people to strengthen the frontiers) people were encouraged to move to Xinjiang to reclaim desert land. Over the last two thousand years there has been a constant stream of migrants reclaiming and populating vast areas of wasteland, a trend which has created and extended many oases in Xinjiang.

The largest migratory inflows to Xinjiang have occurred since 1949. In the forty-two-year span between 1949 and 1991, the total population of Xinjiang grew by 10.9 million (from 4.3 to 15.2 million), mostly due to mass migration.⁵ From 1949 to 1982, 3 million people moved into Xinjiang. The period from 1949 to the present saw different migration intake rates. These dissimilarities can be attributed to political and economic developments both in Xinjiang and in China as a whole.⁶

During the period from 1949 to 1952, the annual net intake rate of immigrants was 12.6 per thousand persons. The demobilized troops of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and unorganized migrants from the neighboring provinces were two major sources of migration during this time. By the end of 1952, approximately 270,000 PLA soldiers and officers had been transferred to the labor force to work on land reclamation and to establish the manufacturing and mining industries. Three quarters of these former

⁴Zhou Chongjing, ed., *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence* (China's population: Xinjiang) (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe, 1990), 65; Liu Hong, *Zhongguo tongji nianjian 1997* (China statistical yearbook 1997) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1997), 69.

⁵Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 223.

⁶Dong Yongmao, "Migration and Economic Development in Xinjiang," *Xinjiang caijing* (Xinjiang's Finance and Economy), 1988, no. 4:19.

PLA people were young and mid-aged men. They not only became the driving force in the region's economic development, but they also attracted further migration through marriage during the ensuing years.⁷

From 1953 to 1958, 57 percent of the net population growth in Xinjiang was from migration. The annual intake rate was 18.2 per thousand persons. This was the period when modern industry was newly established and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) was founded. This was the era when the population of the urban areas as well as the XPCC increased dramatically. The XPCC membership expanded from 150,300 to 384,800, an annual growth rate of 20.7 per thousand persons.⁸

During the period from 1959 to 1963, large-scale population movements occurred again. The three years from 1959 to 1961 were a time of famine, and as Xinjiang was much less affected by the famine, many famine victims from neighboring provinces and regions drifted to Xinjiang. Many then returned to their homeland between 1962 and 1963.

In 1964-66, Xinjiang experienced a period of exceptional economic growth with an annual rate of 16.4 percent. Consequently, this was also a time of high migration with an annual intake rate of 25.7 per thousand persons. The net intake of migrants during the two years was 592,100.⁹

The following ten years from 1967 to 1976 were disastrous years for the economy in Xinjiang and China as a whole. In this tragic period, migration was brought down to a rate of 6.03 per thousand persons yearly, as the organized migration schemes were abolished.¹⁰

After the Cultural Revolution, the new political environment gave the people more freedom to move to China proper. One main reason for this was the economic reforms that commenced in the early 1980s. Many scientists and technicians left Xinjiang for the east. Moreover, political purgees sent to Xinjiang before or during the Cultural Revolution returned to their places of origin after rehabilitation. The educated young people

⁷Ibid., 20.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 21.



who were sent to the countryside were also allowed to go home. As a result, the total number of the migration intake during the period 1981-89 was negative. The intake rate did not turn positive until 1990, with the establishment of Xinjiang's "open door" policy toward the west as well as the opening of the Turpan-Korlar section of the Nanjiang Railway and the Eurasian Continental Bridge.¹¹ But despite these changes, massive organized migration from China proper is most unlikely to happen again.

The Driving Forces Behind Migration

It is estimated that from 1949 to 1984, 9.6 million people immigrated to, and 6.5 million people emigrated from, Xinjiang. The net intake was 3 million.¹² These settlers belonged to two categories: those organized by the government (*guojia jihua yimin*) and those classified as unorganized (*ziliu yimin*) or itinerant migrants.

Organized migrants were comprised of four types: those assigned to a job in Xinjiang (*guojia fenpei*); those sent to "support frontier construction" (*zhiyuan bianjiang jianshe* or *zhibian* for short); those moving to join their families (*suiqian*); and demobilized PLA troops (*fuzhuan junren*).

By the end of 1952, about 270,000 PLA men with their families retired in groups to form the XPCC. This included the former Kuomintang garrisons in Xinjiang, which surrendered to the PLA in 1949. The ratio of males to females in the XPCC at that time was 310 to 100.¹³ The proportion of demobilized PLA soldiers and officers to the total of all migrants is 7.5 percent. Although the proportion is small, they nevertheless play a significant role in the political, economic, and cultural life in Xinjiang.¹⁴

In the 1950s, the State Council developed a migratory scheme to move 2 million people to Xinjiang. Under this plan, more than 800,000

¹¹Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 251.

¹²Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 130.

¹³*Ibid.*, 139-40.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 141.

people were resettled from the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, and Hubei during the period from 1957 to 1960.¹⁵ Most of these "support frontier construction" personnel were peasants and small-town dwellers. The educated young people in the "support frontier construction" category came from the big cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, and Tianjin. From 1962 to 1966, approximately 150,000 educated young people moved from Shanghai to Xinjiang and became part of the XPCC population. It was estimated that the total number of the "support frontier construction" settlers was 900,000.¹⁶

Under a special migration scheme, a number of "prisoners to be reformed through labor" (*laogai fanren* or *laogai renyuan*) were sent to labor camps attached to the XPCC. Many who finished their sentences were assigned a job locally (*xinsheng renyuan*). By 1975, their total number was 121,938.¹⁷

The opening of the Lan-Xin (Lanzhou-Xinjiang) Railway in the late 1950s greatly facilitated the movement of people. A large number of unorganized migrants also arrived in Xinjiang during the period 1957-66, of whom 55.5 percent were unorganized settlers. This figure reached 66 percent during the period 1967-76. By 1984 the total number of unorganized settlers had reached 5.38 million. This was 56.3 percent of the total migration to Xinjiang. Most of the unorganized migrants were peasants who came from the provinces of Gansu, Henan, Sichuan, and Anhui.¹⁸

Sources and ethnic composition of migration: The cadres, scientists, technicians, graduates, and retired PLA men came from all parts of China. Gansu, Ningxia, Jiangsu, Henan, Anhui, and Shaanxi, the provinces along the Longhai Railway, as well as Shandong, Hebei, Sichuan, and Hunan were by far the greatest sources of "support frontier construction" settlers and unorganized migrants.

Gansu, which borders on Xinjiang and is one of the poorest provinces of China, was the greatest source of migrants for the period 1957-84. Other

¹⁵Ibid., 140-41.

¹⁶Ibid., 141.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 140, 142.



major sources of migrants for this period were Henan, Jiangsu, Shandong, Sichuan, and Anhui—the most populated provinces in China.¹⁹ Most of the settlers from these provinces belonged to the category of unorganized migrants. When economic reforms began in the countryside during the early 1980s, the improved economic situation slowed down the movement of people from Gansu, Henan, Anhui, and other poor provinces.

The mass movement of people brought about significant changes in the ethnic composition of the population in Xinjiang. The majority of the new settlers were Han people. It is estimated that by the mid-1980s, 2.8 million Han people had moved to Xinjiang (equivalent to 91.8 percent of the total number of new settlers). The Hui people were a distant second, comprising 8.1 percent of the total intake. Only a very small number of the settlers from other minority nationalities were settled in Xinjiang.²⁰

The XPCC population: In 1954, the XPCC was officially announced. Soon thereafter, the population of the XPCC increased rapidly. From 1953 to 1956 the membership of the XPCC nearly doubled from 150,300 to 298,300. During this period, natural growth was only 16,100 persons,²¹ and the main source of this increase came from the demobilized PLA soldiers and officers from the Xinjiang Military Region and the other provinces outside Xinjiang. The period from 1957 to 1966 saw significant progress in the economic development within the XPCC. There were ten agricultural divisions and two construction divisions under the umbrella of the XPCC. Migration from many parts of China, both organized and unorganized, made a great contribution to the XPCC population growth in this later period (1957-66). Approximately 88 percent of the present members of the XPCC are Han migrants and their descendants. In 1996, of the total population in Xinjiang, 2.3 million were comprised of XPCC members.²²

Population distribution in ethnic groups: As a result of the massive

¹⁹Ibid., 138.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 144.

²²Tang Pingxiang, *Xinjiang shengchan jianshe bingtuan tongji nianjian 1997* (Statistical yearbook of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps 1997) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1997), 37.

Han migration, ethnic composition in Xinjiang has been dramatically changed. In the early 1950s, there were thirteen ethnic groups in Xinjiang. According to China's fourth population census of 1990, the number of ethnic groups increased to forty-nine.²³

During the period from 1949 to 1990, the population of the minority nationalities increased from 4 million to 9.5 million, a more than twofold increase. The proportion of minority nationalities to the total population dropped from 93.3 percent in 1949 to 62.5 percent in 1990 (61.9 percent in 1996). In 1949 the Han people numbered 0.3 million, which was 6.7 percent of the total population in the province. In 1996, however, 38 percent of Xinjiang's population was Han people.²⁴

By 1996, most of the Uyghurs were inhabiting the south of Xinjiang (Nanjiang). Aksu, Kashi, and Hetian, three districts in the south of Xinjiang,²⁵ are home to 72.5 percent of the total Uyghur population.²⁶ There are many counties, particularly in the southwestern part of Xinjiang, where more than 95 percent of the population is Uyghur. Of the Han people, 55.4 percent live in Urumqi, Shihezi, Karamay, Changji, Bortala, Hami, and Turpan, areas along the Lan-Xin Railway line in northern Xinjiang.²⁷

Two Patterns of Population Distribution

Industrial expansion, economic development as well as the massive

²³Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 11.

²⁴Ibid., 11-14, 280; Liu Guoning, *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 1997* (Xinjiang statistical yearbook 1997) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1997), 47-53; Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 285.

²⁵The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was established in 1955. In 1996, the XUAR is comprised of three *shi* (cities) (Urumqi, Karamay, and Shihezi), five minority nationality *zizhi zhou* or *zhou* (prefectures) (Yili Kazak, Changji Hui, Bayingoleng Mongol, Bortala Mongol, and Kizilsu Kirghiz), and eight *zhuangu* or *qu* (districts) (Yili, Tacheng, Altay, Hami, Turpan, Aksu, Kashi, and Hetian). Under *zhou* and *qu* there are fourteen county-level cities, six minority nationality *zizhi xian* (autonomous counties), and sixty-three *xian* (counties). Note: there are three *qu* of Yili, Tacheng, and Altay under the Yili Kazak *zizhi zhou*. For the population distributions in these *shi*, *zhou*, and *qu*, see Liu, *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 1997*, 50-53, tables 3-5.

²⁶Liu, *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 1997*, 49, 52-53.

²⁷For detailed ethnic population distribution by administration, see *ibid.*, 49-53.

migration intake have contributed to forming a new kind of population pattern in Xinjiang. Until the early 1950s, there had not been any regional or ethnic disparity in the social and economic development in Xinjiang. At present, an open pattern of the population has emerged in northern Xinjiang, contrasting with southern Xinjiang where the closed pattern of the population still remains.

The two most populated areas of Xinjiang are the central part of the northern foot of the Tianshan Mountains and the western region of southern Xinjiang. The central part of the northern foot of Tianshan, where Urumqi, Shihezi, and Changji are located, is accessible by railway and possesses modern communications facilities. The western area of southern Xinjiang, the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu region, lacks modern communications, however. The population in both areas is very dense, yet they differ significantly in population patterns and economic development.

The Urumqi-Changji-Shihezi-Karamay area is economically the most advanced in Xinjiang, whereas the Kizilsu-Kashi-Hetian area is the most economically backward in Xinjiang. Under these different socio-economic conditions, these two areas have developed different patterns of population growth.

In southern Xinjiang, the inadequate communications network creates a group of closed oases. In these oases conventional agriculture and handicraft industries dominate the economic structure. Population growth mainly depends on natural factors. Most inhabitants of these oases are of minority nationalities and have been living there from generation to generation. Hence most marriages occur within the same oasis. Old traditions prevent rapid social change from happening in these areas. Economic growth is slow and living standards are low. The typical closed-pattern oases are located in the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu area of southwestern Xinjiang.

The Urumqi-Changji-Shihezi-Karamay area belongs, on the other hand, to what can be called the "open pattern" of population growth. In these open areas the socioeconomic conditions are more advanced and the secondary and tertiary industries are more developed. People flow in and out of these areas, bringing in new ideas and information. The government's family planning policy is more acceptable and the rate of the natural population growth is declining. The people in these areas clearly enjoy

much higher living standards. Migration is one of the main contributors to the population growth in these areas.

Overall, the areas in the north and east of Xinjiang, especially Karamay, Urumqi, Shihezi, and Changji, are catalogued as following the open pattern of population growth, while the oases in the south of Xinjiang belong to the closed pattern. Among the five districts and prefectures in the south of Xinjiang, those that endure very slow socioeconomic change include the Kashi district, the Hetian district, and the Kizilsu prefecture (located at the far southwest of Xinjiang along the foot of the Pamir Plateau and the Kulun and Altun mountains).

The differences in social and economic development in the two parts of Xinjiang account for the differences in population patterns. In an open area, a high proportion of the population is from the outside, bringing about changes in the ethnic composition, and therefore the population growth relies more on migration than on natural growth. The proportion of the population employed in the primary sector is declining. Urbanization is developing fast, while both the fertility and mortality rates are lower than those under the closed pattern.

The areas of Yili-Bortala-Tacheng in northwestern Xinjiang, Hami-Turpan in eastern Xinjiang, and Bayinggoleng-Aksu in the northeast of southern Xinjiang are now experiencing tremendous demographic changes and economic development, and are in transition from the closed pattern to the open pattern of population growth. As will be discussed later in this study, this is due to the opening of the Turpan-Korlar section of the Nanjiang Railway and the Eurasian Continental Bridge²⁸ as well as the booming petroleum industry in these areas.

Differences Between the Two Patterns

With the surfacing of the open population pattern, disparity in social

²⁸Referring to the railway linking Lianyungang, the port-city in Jiangsu, and Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

development was created in Xinjiang. The people in the two parts of Xinjiang endure differences in mortality, fertility, and population growth rates, as well as in life expectancy and other aspects of human improvements.

Population growth rate: The population of Xinjiang as a whole grew rapidly until the late 1980s. However, population growth in the thirteen districts (prefectures) and cities (excluding Shihezi and Karamay) during the period 1949-85 varied widely, from 66.9 percent in Kashi to 788.8 percent in Urumqi.²⁹

During this thirty-six-year period, the total population of Xinjiang increased from 4.3 million to 13.6 million, an average annual growth rate of 214.1 percent. The lowest of these annual average increases occurred in Kashi (66.9 percent), Hetian (85.3 percent), and Aksu (140.9 percent), while many districts (prefectures) and cities in the north of Xinjiang attained annual average rates of over 400 percent.³⁰

The period since 1949 has seen a significant change in the population distribution between the north and south of Xinjiang. Historically, there were more people in the south of Xinjiang than in the north. In 1949 the south had a population of 3 million (70.1 percent of the total population of Xinjiang), the northern area enjoyed a population of 1 million (24.8 percent), while the east of Xinjiang (Hami and Turpan) was home to only 0.22 million people (5.1 percent). Since 1976, the population in northern Xinjiang has outnumbered that in the south.³¹ Figures from 1990 show 52.4 percent in the north and 47.6 percent in the south of Xinjiang.³²

Mortality and fertility: In 1963 the birth rate in the north of Xinjiang was 45.3 per thousand persons, 42.6 per thousand in the east, while the rate in the south was only 27.5.³³ The reason the north and east of Xinjiang had such high birth rates was that a mass migration to Xinjiang took place in the 1950s and 1960s. The majority of these migrants were young and settled in the north and east of Xinjiang. Massive organized migration

²⁹Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 72.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 2-3.

³²Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 11.

³³Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 84.

ceased in the early 1970s. Accordingly, the birth rates in the north and east of Xinjiang declined significantly from 1975, while the south of Xinjiang experienced only a minor reduction in birth rates.

The difference in mortality rates between northern and southern Xinjiang is also immense. The area of Urumqi and its environs generates the lowest mortality rate in Xinjiang, while the mortality rate in the area of Kashi was double that of the Urumqi area during the period 1974-76. At this same time, the top three highest rates were in Kashi (12.1 per thousand persons), Hetian (12.4), and Kizilsu (12.8). Urumqi, Shihezi, and Changji registered the three lowest mortality rates, 5.9, 5.1, and 5.0, respectively.³⁴ Among the five major minority nationalities (Uygur, Kazak, Hui, Kirghiz, and Mongol), the two highest mortality rates belonged to the Uygur (12.7) and Kirghiz (14.96) during the period from 1974 to 1976.³⁵

According to the 1989 statistics, Xinjiang has the second highest total fertility rate (TFR) in China. The actual figure is 3.22 per thousand, which is 0.91 per thousand higher than the national rate of 2.31 per thousand.³⁶ The TFR gap between the Han and ethnic minority women is quite large. For ethnic minority women, the TFR was 4.51 per thousand in 1989. For Han women, the figure was only 1.53 per thousand, which moreover was even lower than the national rate of 2.31 per thousand.³⁷

Due to the practice of marrying and producing babies at a young age, ethnic minority women continue to produce babies for a much longer time span than that of their Han counterparts. Figure 1 shows the actual general fertility rates (GFR) by age groups of both ethnic minority and Han women in 1989. As shown in table 1, the disparity in the TFR between the Urumqi-Karamay-Shihezi and Hetian-Kizilsu-Kashi areas, where the majority of the residents are the Uygurs, is also significant. The birth rate and the TFR of the Uygurs are the highest in comparison to the other minority nationalities in Xinjiang.³⁸

³⁴Ibid., 111.

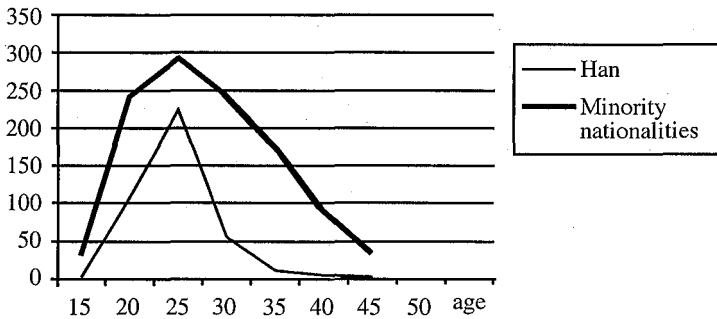
³⁵Ibid., 112.

³⁶Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 157.

³⁷Ibid., 155, 157.

³⁸Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 91-92.

Figure 1
The GFRs by Age Groups of Minority and Han Women, 1989



Source: Qiu Yuanyao, ed., *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: xinjiang juan* (China's population toward the twenty-first century: Xinjiang) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1994), 155.

Although many factors influence demographic changes, we find that economic development, government policies, and levels of education are very closely associated with changes in the TFR in Xinjiang. The top three TFRs belong to the cities of Kizilsu-Kashi-Hetian, whose gross domestic product (GDP) per capital figures are listed as the lowest three in Xinjiang. The TFR for ethnic minority women is declining, albeit at a slow pace. The period 1981-89 experienced a decline in the TFR from 5.55 to 4.51.³⁹ This is mostly due to the introduction of the family planning scheme for minority nationalities in Xinjiang by the government in the 1980s. Along with the disparity in the TFR, the differences in education levels between Han and ethnic minority peoples as well as between northern and southern Xinjiang are also obvious, as will be discussed below.

Life expectancy: The period from 1949 to 1991 saw a rapid increase in life expectancy in Xinjiang from 30 years to 65.7 years. In comparison with the national level of 69.81, this figure is very low, ranking the fourth lowest after Yunnan, Qinghai, and Tibet.⁴⁰ No statistics show the disparity of life

³⁹Ibid., 89, 91, 99; Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 155.

⁴⁰Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 185.

Table 1
Total Fertility Rates by Districts in Xinjiang
(Per 1,000 Persons)

Area	1981	1989
Xinjiang	3.94*	3.22
Urumqi	1.71	1.36
Karamay	2.36	0.91
Shihezi	1.47	1.09
Kizilsu	6.14	5.17
Kashi	5.43	4.96
Hetian	5.47	5.29

*1982 figure. See Zhou Chongjing, ed., *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence* (China's population: Xinjiang) (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe, 1990), 89.

Sources: Qiu Yuanyao, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang juan* (China's population toward the twenty-first century: Xinjiang) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1994), 152, 155.

expectancy between the Urumqi-Shihezi-Karamay and Kashi-Kizilsu-Hetian areas, while the life expectancy of the Uygurs in Xinjiang as a whole was 63.4 in 1989. This figure is one of the seven lowest among the fifty-five minority nationalities in China. In contrast, the life expectancy for Han people in China as a whole was 70.4 in 1989.⁴¹ The backwardness of the economy, the dogmatic influence of conventional culture and habit, poor hygienic conditions, and the low education level in southern Xinjiang are associated with the region's high fertility and mortality rates.

The demographic statistic analysis above presents the major demographic changes in Xinjiang. We may conclude that the model of "high fertility, high mortality, and low life expectancy" in the Kashi-Kizilsu-Hetian area has not yet made the demographic transition to the "low fertility, low mortality, and long life expectancy" model, as have many other parts of China. The Urumqi-Karamay-Shihezi area, however, as the most economically developed area in Xinjiang with the majority of residents being Han

⁴¹Sun Jingzhi, *Bashi niandai Zhongguo renkou biandong fenxi* (Analysis of demographic changes in China in the 1980s) (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe, 1996), 231.

people, has undergone this transition.⁴² The extension of the Nanjiang Railway from Korlar to Kashi and the introduction of a new economic development strategy of "black and white" (petroleum and cotton) in the 1990s are enforcing the demographic transition in southern Xinjiang, as to be discussed later in this study.

Education: As the primary education is reasonably well attended in Xinjiang as a whole, the difference in the proportion in the primary education certificate holders between the north and south of Xinjiang is invisible. However, significant differences can be seen in the proportions of the secondary and tertiary certificate holders. According to the 1982 census, there were five university graduates per thousand people in Xinjiang. The rate was twenty-one in Urumqi, ten in Karamay, and six in Shihezi, while there were only two university graduates per thousand people in Kashi and Hetian.⁴³ The Uygur people have the lowest proportion of graduate, university, and senior high school diploma holders among all the thirteen major nationalities in Xinjiang.⁴⁴ According to the 1990 census, in term of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy among the districts, prefectures, and cities in Xinjiang, the top five were Hetian (29 percent), Kashi (27.9 percent), Kizilsu (25.3 percent), Aksu (24.9 percent), and Bayinggoleng (22.4 percent).⁴⁵

Urban growth: The urban population distribution is closely associated with both the level of economic development and the geographic environment. The most industrialized areas along the base of the Tianshan Mountains have a higher proportion of urban population (50 percent), while the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu area has the lowest in the region (14 percent).⁴⁶

Industrial structure: In the more industrialized open pattern areas, the proportion of the population engaged in the secondary sector is higher than that of the closed pattern oases. Urumqi, Shihezi, and Karamay are the

⁴²The region's TFR is a low 1.12. See Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 155.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 333.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 312-13, 335.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 316.

⁴⁶Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 191; Wang Ning, "Urbanization in Xinjiang: The Trend and the Future," *Xinjiang caijing*, 1992, no. 2:14.

most industrialized areas of Xinjiang; the share of their work force employed in the secondary sector in 1996 amounted to 37.7, 43, and 73 percent, respectively. In the closed pattern areas in the southwest of Xinjiang, this percentage is very low. In 1996, only 6.3 percent of the people living in Kashi were engaged in the secondary sector. In Hetian and Kizilsu, the figures were only 8 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively.⁴⁷

Migration and Formatting of the Open Population Pattern

Migration has been playing a significant role in creating the open population pattern in Xinjiang.

Formatting of the open pattern of population growth: The decisive factor for migration in Xinjiang since 1949 (excluding international and intra-regional migration) was mainly economic. Demobilized PLA soldiers and officers settled in Xinjiang for military land reclamation. Educated youths and university graduates were sent to Xinjiang to "support frontier construction." Unorganized, itinerant people went to Xinjiang for "voluntary support of frontier construction." Xinjiang's economy flourished and these economic migrants changed the single-product economy into a dual-structure oasis economy which will be discussed below. This changed Xinjiang's population growth from the closed to open pattern.

This influx of large numbers of migrants in the mid-1950s occurred mainly in the Urumqi-Changji-Shihezi-Karamay area. Shihezi and Karamay were built as new cities on the edge of the desert to accommodate this population growth. A large number of migrants settled in Urumqi, Changji, Hami, and Turpan, all considered "old towns" of Xinjiang. As a consequence, a new open population distribution pattern emerged in northern Xinjiang, while the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu area remained closed. Slow social progress did eventually occur in the south of Xinjiang, however. In the Yili-Bortala-Tacheng and Bayinggoleng-Aksu areas, the transition from a

⁴⁷Liu, *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 1997*, 77.

closed to open pattern took place much later when the Turpan-Korlar section of the Nanjiang Railway and the New Eurasian Continental Bridge were opened in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The biggest border trade port in Xinjiang is located at Alataw Pass in Korgos county, Yili district. The Alataw Pass, where the New Eurasian Continental Bridge crosses the border into Kazakhstan, is near Tacheng and Borla city, the administrative center of the Bortala Mongol prefecture. Due to the new policy of *maoyi xingbian* ("flourish the frontier regions by trade"), Xinjiang's border trade with Russia, Mongolia, and Central, South, and West Asia is booming. Trade has increased 42 percent annually over the last two years, and Xinjiang became the second biggest border trade area in China after Heilongjiang.⁴⁸ As a result, the border trade areas in Xinjiang (especially Yili district and Bortala prefecture) have become the new destinations for migrants from other parts of China. The areas of Korgos and Borla are good examples. In 1990, 6,898 and 5,357 people moved to Korgos county, in Borla city, respectively. Of these immigrants, 3,352 and 3,027 came from outside Xinjiang.⁴⁹ Yining city, the administrative center of the Yili Kazak prefecture, is located at the middle part of the New Eurasian Continental Bridge and may become the biggest trading center in Central Asia.

Located in the northeast of the Tarim Basin, Korlar is the administrative center of the Bayinggole Mongol prefecture. In 1949, Korlar was a small, non-industrialized town with 28,617 citizens of eight different ethnic nationalities (only 1.23 percent of the population was Han). Due to the influx of new migrants, mostly Han farmers and XPCC members, the total population in Korlar rose to 170,180 in 1978. The period from 1980 to 1990s has seen tremendous developments in demography and society in Korlar. After the opening of the Turpan-Korlar section of the Nanjiang Railway in 1984 and the establishment of the Tarim Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration and Exploitation Headquarters in Korlar in 1989, construction workers, oil technicians as well as Chinese and foreign business-

⁴⁸*Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), July 9, 1998.

⁴⁹Qiu, *Xua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 252. This does not include the floating population.

men began to rush into Tarim. The population of Korlar reached a quarter of a million in 1990, representing thirty different ethnic nationalities. In 1949 only 20 percent of the population in Korlar lived in town but by 1990 this number had reached 64 percent. Of the total population, 62 percent is now Han.⁵⁰ Korlar is becoming a prosperous oil city.

Emergence of the cities of Shihezi and Karamay: Shihezi is a typical city in regard to migratory patterns. In 1949 there were only a dozen families residing in this small village located in the Gobi Desert. In 1950, 10,000 troops of the 22nd Corps of the PLA began to open up the wasteland there. By 1985 the total population had risen to 0.55 million, 97.4 percent of whom came from outside Xinjiang.⁵¹

Karamay is another typical city, attracting migrants due to the developing crude oil industry. In the early 1950s, there was nothing in Karamay but bare wasteland of the Junggaur Gobi Desert. In 1955 crude oil was discovered and this brought oil exploration crews, engineers, technicians, and workers from many parts of China. Karamay then became the most important base for petroleum production in China before the Daqing oil field was established.⁵²

The XPCC and artificial oases: In response to Mao's directive of "turning the PLA into a working force," the PLA forces in Xinjiang were involved in large-scale demobilization. The bulk of these PLA forces, which included the former 359th Brigade under Wang Zhen, gained production and land reclamation experience at Nanniwan in north Shaanxi during the Yan'an era of the CCP. These demobilized PLA troops were reorganized into agriculture, construction, and civil engineering divisions taking up positions on the fringes of wastelands near the main oases in the north, south, and east of Xinjiang.

As mentioned earlier, about 90 percent of XPCC members were Han people from China proper. These Han settlers have created new oases by

⁵⁰Jiang Qingfang, *Ku'erle shizhi* (A history of Korlar City) (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1995), 94-97.

⁵¹Huang Denglai, ed., *Shihezi zhi* (A history of Shihezi) (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1994), 682-83.

⁵²Wang Shuming, ed., *Zhongguo shixian jingji fazhan gaikuang* (Development of city-county economy in China) (Beijing: Jingji kexue chubanshe, 1989), vol. 3:757.

reclaiming wasteland, building water reservoirs, and undertaking development of basic industries, housing construction, and capital works. With a membership of 2.2 million, the XPCC owns 172 agricultural and livestock farms with 95 million *mu* of land and 352 large and medium-sized enterprises in the fields of industry, transportation, commerce, and civil infrastructure. In addition, they also own seven universities and thirty-seven technical colleges.⁵³

As mentioned above, the schemes of massive migration organized by the government were terminated in the late 1970s. Since then, most of the migrants in Xinjiang have been unorganized, and the driving force behind the migration is marketing. Some of these people settled down in Xinjiang, some belong to the category of the floating population. Among them, according to *Xinjiang jingji ribao* (Xinjiang Economic Daily) of June 18, 1998, there are about 80,000 people from Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, who are famed for their business skills in China as a whole.

Floating Population

As Xinjiang's economy started to boom,⁵⁴ the demand for labor in the region rose rapidly. In the wake of the central government's decision to step up the development of China's northwest, both foreign and Chinese capital has poured into Xinjiang, drawing laborers from China proper to Xinjiang.

The number of the floating population in Xinjiang increased from 179,100 in 1983 to 350,000 in 1991, an annual growth rate of 8.76 percent.⁵⁵ The last five years saw a more startling increase of the floating

⁵³Zhang Youde and Fang Yingkai, "The Development of the [Production and Construction] Corps: A Perspective from Land Reclamation in Xinjiang in the Past," *Xinjiang jingji yanjiu* (Studies of Xinjiang's Economy), 1990, no. 3:53.

⁵⁴After a slow start, Xinjiang has experienced vigorous economic growth since 1990. In the Eighth Five-Year Plan period, the economic growth rate of Xinjiang surpassed the average level of the entire country: its GDP increased at an average rate of 12.5 percent a year and its financial revenue maintained a growth rate of more than 15 percent every year. *Xinjiang ribao* (Xinjiang Daily), August 28 and September 18, 1997.

⁵⁵Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 266.

population from 400,000 to 1.4 million.⁵⁶ According to Xinjiang's Public Security Department, the total number of people in 1996 with temporary household registration status was 1.37 million.⁵⁷ These migrants are mainly cotton pickers, oil field workers, tradesmen, construction-site labors, vendor owners, tailors, repairmen, craftsmen, and other small business people.

Due to the "black and white" strategy initiated by the Xinjiang authorities in 1995,⁵⁸ cotton production and oil industry in Xinjiang are booming.⁵⁹ Over the last few years, hundreds of thousands of labors from inland rural areas have rushed in Xinjiang to work in the cotton fields. Many of them arrive in the fall and depart in early spring, while others stay on as caretakers of the cotton fields. Some early arrivals are ambitious and have made enough money and gained enough experience over the past few years so that they have begun to grow cotton on their own. It is estimated that the number of cotton-pickers varies from 200,000 to 500,000 every year.⁶⁰ Since the Tarim Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration and Exploitation Headquarters was established in Korlar in 1989, many petroleum companies—both Chinese and foreign—have begun sending their teams to Xinjiang for oil exploration and exploitation. At present, there are no statistics that show the total number of the oil field workers in Xinjiang, the majority of whom are on short-term contracts.⁶¹

Under the policy of "connecting with the east and opening up to the

⁵⁶"Laborers Rush to the Northwest," *Beijing Review* 40, no. 5 (1997): 6.

⁵⁷In December 1997, the XUAR Public Security Department and Labor Bureau edited a book *Xinjiang liudong renkou guanli yu fuwu shouce* (The floating population in Xinjiang: Management and service handbook), which announced that there are about a million people in Xinjiang who have had temporary household registration every year for the last few years. See *Xinjiang ribao*, December 16, 1997. Some of 1.37 million people may fall under the category of intra-regional movement.

⁵⁸*Xinjiang ribao*, October 10, 1997.

⁵⁹See David Wang, "Black and White Strategy: Petroleum and Cotton—Two Pillars of Xinjiang's Economy in the Twenty-first Century" (forthcoming).

⁶⁰Telephone interview with Mao Yongfu, director of the Policy Research Office, the XUAR CCP Committee, February 8, 1998.

⁶¹Interview with Liang Digang, deputy director of the Tarim Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration and Exploitation Headquarters, Korlar, Xinjiang, August 27, 1997. Regarding the oil industry in Xinjiang, see David Wang, "Will Xinjiang Become a Chinese Texas in the Twenty-first Century?—Petroleum Industry in Xinjiang: An Opportunity to Prosperity" (forthcoming).

west" introduced by the Xinjiang government in the late 1980s, thousands of tradesmen from other parts of China have been journeying to Xinjiang's border trade centers to trade with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan. The trade ports at Korgas in Yili and at Alataw Pass in Bortala attract most of these tradesmen. For the construction-site labors, vendor owners, tailors, repairmen, craftsmen, and other small business people, Urumqi and other cities and towns along the railway lines and major highways had been their major destinations. Over the last few years, however, they have been increasingly active in other areas of Xinjiang as well.

The main sources of the floating population are the rural areas in Jiangsu, Henan, Sichuan, Zhejiang, and Shandong. The majority of these people do not stay in Xinjiang longer than a year. Take the example of the city of Tacheng: 0.7 percent of the floating population in Tacheng stays over a year, and 6.1 percent stays less than four months per year. On average, a migrant stays in Xinjiang for 223 days a year,⁶² and a cotton picker stays in Xinjiang about 3-5 months per year. Many of the oil field workers live in Xinjiang for 1-3 years until their contracts expire.

While the Han people are rushing into Xinjiang for business, many Uygurs are going to China inland to make their fortune. In Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and many other cities, there are places called "Xinjiang village" or "Xinjiang street," where Uygurs run their shops. These places are famed for Xinjiang food and handicrafts.

The Dual Structure of Economic Demography

Over the last several decades, with formatting of the two patterns of the population, the dual structure of the economic demography, as a consequence of migration and economic development, has emerged in Xinjiang.

Among the thirty provinces, metropolitan cities, and autonomous regions in China, Xinjiang was and still is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas. Xinjiang started its industrialization in the early 1950s

⁶²Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 261, 271.

from a very primitive and backward level. By 1987 the total value of industrial and agricultural output had reached 14.5 billion *yuan*, 60 percent of which came from industry. The last forty-eight years have seen Xinjiang's economy in transition from a mono-production economic structure (agriculture and animal husbandry) to a dual-structure economy, where modern industries are predominant and agriculture is the base. This evolution was made possible by the influx of migratory labor, the spread of technology, the allocation of funds from the central government, and the heavy inflow of capital from foreign investors.

These influences have generated a dual structure of economic demography. There is the open pattern of population growth in northern Xinjiang on the one hand with the Han settlers and their descendants making up the majority of the population. On the other hand, the closed pattern prevails in southern Xinjiang (the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu area in particular) where the Uygurs are the dominating ethnic group.

Accordingly, eighty-seven cities and counties in Xinjiang may be divided into three regional economic zones in relation to national income per capita and gross national product (GNP): the earlier-developed economic zone, the mid-developed zone, and the later-developed zone.

Among the nineteen cities and counties in the earlier-developed zone, fifteen are located in northern Xinjiang, and two each in the east (Hami and Turpan) and the south (Korlar and Aksu). Twenty-nine of the thirty-one cities and counties of the later-developed zone are in the south of Xinjiang, particularly in Kizilsu, Kashi, and Hetian. Disparities in national income and GNP per capital between the earlier-developed and later-developed zones are enormous. In 1987, national income and GNP per capital in the earlier-developed zone were 1,373 and 1,736 *yuan*, respectively, while the figures in the later-developed zone were 396 and 440 *yuan*, respectively.⁶³

A new economic belt located in the northern area of the Tianshan Mountains is beginning to appear. This includes such cities as Urumqi, Karamay, Shihezi, and Changji. In 1995, the GDP of this belt accounted for

⁶³Wang Yao, "Imbalances in Xinjiang's Economic Development and Solutions," *Xinjiang caijing*, 1988, no. 2:12-13.

Table 2
Disparity Between the Han People and the Minorities in Industrial Structure (1982, %)

	Primary Sector	Secondary Sector	Tertiary Sector
Xinjiang (%)	71.86	14.65	13.49
including:			
Han people	54.01	26.94	19.05
Minority nationalities	84.3	6.06	9.64
National (%)	73.66	16.02	10.32

Source: Zhou, *Zhongguo renkou: Xinjiang fence*, 238.

40 percent of Xinjiang's total while its industrial output value accounted for 60 percent.⁶⁴

A similar situation occurred between the Han people and the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Table 2 shows the disparity between the Han people and the minorities as far as industrial structure is concerned. In 1982, 26.94 percent of the Han people in Xinjiang were employed in the secondary sector, while the rate of participation for non-Han people was only 6.06 percent, 9.96 percent lower than China's national average.

Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet in Comparison

Inner Mongolia and Tibet are the next two largest minority nationality autonomous regions in China. Unlike Xinjiang, the dual structure of demographic economy does not exist in Tibet and Inner Mongolia. Together with Xinjiang, these regions have been experiencing significant demographic change and social development since the early 1950s. The uneven demographic development and regional disparity in Tibet and Inner Mongolia, however, are not as obvious as that in Xinjiang.

⁶⁴"Xinjiang Economic Upsurge," Xinhua English Newswire, March 22, 1996, AN XNHN9608300488, Dow Jones News/Retrieval, April 1, 1998.

A sharp increase in population has been seen in these areas. During the period 1949-90, the total population in Inner Mongolia increased more than three times,⁶⁵ while the total population in Tibet doubled during the period from 1952 to 1994.⁶⁶ During this forty-two-year period, the total number of people in Xinjiang increased from 4.3 million to 15.2 million, as shown earlier in this study.

While massive migration has brought significant changes to the ethnic components in Xinjiang, the influx of migrants to Tibet and Inner Mongolia has not heavily affected the ethnic components there. During the period 1964-94, migratory intake in Tibet was 98,500 persons, 70 percent of which were Tibetans from neighboring provinces.⁶⁷ From 1964 to 1990, the number of Han people in Tibet increased from 37,000 to 81,000.⁶⁸ The year 1980 saw a peak intake of 120,000 Han settlers, registering 6.6 percent of the total population in the region.⁶⁹ Of the total increase in population of 21.6 million in Inner Mongolia, 3.9 million were migrants.⁷⁰ The majority of them were Han people. Unlike Xinjiang, where the number of Uygurs has dropped sharply as percentage of Xinjiang's population, the proportion of Mongolians (the primary ethnic minority in the region) has comparatively been stable.⁷¹ For 1990 demographic statistics for the primary minority nationalities, see table 3.

As far as ethnic population distribution is concerned, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia share similarities. While there are more Uygurs living in southern than in northern Xinjiang, 70.3 percent of the Mongolian popula-

⁶⁵From 6 million to 21.6 million with an annual growth rate of 3.1 percent as shown in Wang Zhen et al., *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu juan* (China's population toward the twenty-first century: Inner Mongolia) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1994), 16, 21.

⁶⁶Ma Rong, *Xizang de renkou yu shehui* (Population and society in Tibet) (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 1996), 48. This does not include the Tibetans living outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

⁶⁷Ibid., 65.

⁶⁸Ibid., 63.

⁶⁹Ibid., 66-67.

⁷⁰See note 65 above.

⁷¹The actual percentages that Mongolians make up of the total population in Inner Mongolia in 1947, 1974, 1982, and 1984 are 14.8, 10.7, 12.9, and 13.5 percent, respectively. See Song Digong, *Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu fence* (China's population: Inner Mongolia) (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe, 1987), 342.

Table 3
Proportion of the Primary Ethnic Minority in the Region's Population, 1990

Region	Percentage of minority nationalities in the region's population	The primary minority nationality and its percentage in the region's population	
Tibet	96.9	Tibetan	95.5
Xinjiang	62.3	Uygur	47.4
Guangxi	38.9	Zhuang	33.7
Ningxia	33.5	Hui	32.8
Inner Mongolia	18.6	Mongolian	15.8
China	8	Han	92.0

Source: Ma Rong, *Xizang de renkou yu shehui* (Population and society in Tibet) (Beijing: Tongxin chubanshe, 1996), 87.

tion lives in eastern Inner Mongolia.⁷² As in the case of Xinjiang, the Han settlers in Inner Mongolia belong to two categories: those organized by the government and those migrating independently. Under the independent category there are many Han peasant-settlers in both Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. Once the Inner Mongolia Production and Construction Corps was formed (as a counterpart of the XPCC in Inner Mongolia), most of the members of the corps were the Han peasant-settlers.

There are no Han volunteer-peasants settled in Tibet. Most of the Han people moved to Tibet due to job assignments including working in government offices or state-own enterprises, or for government construction projects on a contract basis. This is why about half of the residents in Lhasa are Han, many of whom are government officers or technicians. In most of the counties and towns in Tibet, the Han people consist of less than 5 percent of the local population. In rural areas, Han settlers are scarce.⁷³ Harsh geographic conditions, extreme inconvenience of communication, and sharp contrasts in sociopolitical systems, socioeconomic development, and traditional culture prevent the flow of Han migrants to Tibet.

⁷²Wang, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu juan*, 242.

⁷³Ma, *Xizang de renkou yu shehui*, 89-90.

In terms of the ethnic component, Inner Mongolia proportionally has a much larger population of Han Chinese than Xinjiang. In 1982, of the twelve *meng*⁷⁴ (leagues) and cities in Inner Mongolia, only two have more than a 30 percent Mongolian population. For the rest of the leagues and cities, the Mongolian population is under 12 percent, with the exceptions of the Alashan league (23.8 percent) and Xilinguole league (26.1 percent).⁷⁵

The peoples in Inner Mongolia have experienced more standard-of-living improvements than have the peoples of Xinjiang and Tibet. Disparity between Han and Mongolian women in the TFR is not very large.⁷⁶ The illiteracy rate for Mongolians is lower than that of the Han people.⁷⁷ The proportions of university and high school graduates in the Mongolian population are higher than in the Han population.⁷⁸ Roughly speaking, uneven demographic developments in Inner Mongolia are not as visible as they are in Xinjiang. This is mainly because geographic conditions make most parts of Inner Mongolia physically accessible. Although Tibet has significantly accounted for social and demographic improvements since the 1950s, the disparity in levels of standard of living between the Han and Tibetan peoples remains very high in general, but no regional disparity has yet to be seen in Tibet.⁷⁹

⁷⁴*Meng* and *zizhi zhou* are equivalent in administrative delimitation. However, unlike *zizhi zhou*, *meng* do not have the right of autonomy.

⁷⁵Song, *Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu fence*, 351.

⁷⁶In 1990, the TFR for Han and Mongolian women were 1.92 and 2.31, respectively. Wang, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu juan*, 261.

⁷⁷Inner Mongolian illiteracy rates in 1990 were 22.5 for Han people and 18.84 for the Mongolians. *Ibid.*, 282.

⁷⁸In 1982, the rate of university graduates per 100,000 people was 0.46 for Han nationalities and 0.61 for the Mongolians. The rates for senior high school were 8.3 and 9.6. Song, *Zhongguo renkou: Neimenggu fence*, 363.

⁷⁹In 1990, the death rate for Han people in Tibet was 1.49, compared to 8.68 for Tibetans. Life expectancy in Tibet is the lowest in China. Ma, *Xizang de renkou yu shehui*, 111-13. The TFR in Tibet in 1981 was 3.55, which was higher than the national level of 2.63. Liu Rui, *Zhongguo renkou: Xizang fence* (China's population: Tibet) (Beijing: Zhongguo cai-zheng jingji chubanshe, 1988), 92. In terms of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy, Tibet has the highest rate among the five autonomous regions at 69.34 percent (in 1990). As for the proportion of university and high school graduates, Tibet is also at the bottom of the list. Duo-jie Ouzhu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou: Xizang juan* (China's population toward the twenty-first century: Tibet) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1994), 78.

While ethnic separatism is active in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang, the disparity in social development in Xinjiang provides a strong justification for the Xinjiang separatists to instill anti-Han sentiment among the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

Migration and Ethnic Relations

The massive migration of ethnic Han to Xinjiang is likely to be a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the Han settlers have been bringing in labor, skills, and technology to improve Xinjiang's economy. On the other hand, the large inflow of Han people has sparked fear among the indigenous nationalities (the Uyghurs in particular) of the ruination of their cultural identity.

For centuries the Uyghur culture has dominated Xinjiang's society. For about the last fifty years, however, the influx of Han people has generated significant changes in Xinjiang's ethnocultural and ethnoreligious background. In northern Xinjiang, where the Urumqi-Shihezi-Karamay developed area has been formed, the Han population outnumbers the Uyghurs, and people have a more affluent life. Most of the Uyghurs in the Kashi-Hetian-Kizilsu area of the south, however, live in comparatively backward conditions. This disparity has already engendered serious concern as well as discontent among the Uyghurs. These circumstances have certainly provided a basis for Islam fundamentalists and national separatists to arouse discontent and anti-Han sentiments among the Uyghurs. The Baren riots near Kashi in 1990, the Uyghur unrest in Yining, and a series of bus bombings in Urumqi in 1997 should not be regarded as unrelated political events. To some degree, social unrest and riots, which occur in Xinjiang from time to time, are closely associated with disparity between the northern and southern Xinjiang. This is also why over the last two decades most political assassinations and social riots have occurred in the poorest areas in southern Xinjiang.

The development of Xinjiang, by resting on the influx of migrants and technological and financial assistance from outside Xinjiang, has created a "blood transfusion" type of economy. Politically, the policy of autonomy

for minority nationalities has not been sufficiently carried out. The regulations have yet even to be finalized. Due to lack of training, minority cadres have been unable to play an effective role in the market economy. Under these circumstances, the less developed areas of southern Xinjiang cannot rely mainly on mass migration for its economic development. While rapid economic growth may be narrowing the disparity between the two parts of Xinjiang, the influx of Han migrants may bring more tension to the area.

The disparities between the two parts of Xinjiang have presented a challenge to the social stability and unity of the ethnic groups in Xinjiang. If this socioeconomic gap keeps widening, existing conflicts between the minority nationalities and the Han people will escalate, leading to serious consequences on the northwestern frontier of China.⁸⁰

Migration in the Future

Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Xinjiang have been the key destinations for domestic migration in China since 1949. In Heilongjiang, there is a different geographic situation, and only a small proportion of the population is from the ethnic minorities. In Xinjiang, however, harsh geographic conditions, environmental concerns, as well as the complex relations between the many ethnic groups are vital factors that should be taken into account when dealing with issues of migration.

The natural environment of the oases is very fragile and population growth is thus constrained. Dry, dust storms from the Gobi Desert threaten the economic endeavors of the people in the oases. Desert vegetation is vital to protecting the oases from dust storms. Desert vegetation is being destroyed in many oases due to population growth and improper land reclamation.⁸¹ The essential prerequisite to the intake of new settlers in Xinjiang must be an accurate understanding of the capacity of the oases to sup-

⁸⁰See note 2 above.

⁸¹Wang Ning, "Characteristics of the Oasis Population in Xinjiang," *Xinjiang jingji yanjiu*, 1990, no. 6:48.

port more people. The density of the oasis population in Xinjiang is similar to that in many parts of China proper. Large-scale migration in the future is not imperative. Population growth in the oases should basically rely on natural growth rather than the influx of a large number of new settlers.

The opening of the Eurasian Continental Bridge and the Turpan-Korlar section of the Nanjiang Railway have facilitated the movement of people in this area. Due to the expansion of old oases and the establishment of new ones, the oases at the northern foot of the Tianshan Mountains have already been linked up (except for the oases in the Hami and Urumqi areas where there is still a substantial gap of desert between the two areas). In the south of Xinjiang, however, there still remains considerable distance between many oases, which inhibits migration. With the expansion of the Nanjiang Railway from Korlar toward Kashi as well as the development of oil fields in the areas of Tarim, Xinjiang (most notably southern Xinjiang) will see further progress in urbanization and industrialization. Moreover, ethnic Han Chinese will certainly continue to increase their presence.⁸²

Economic development in Xinjiang would not be more beneficial to the indigenous peoples, unless the "blood transfusion" type of economy is transformed to a "blood-generating" type, making the indigenous peoples in Xinjiang more compatible with the market economy.

⁸²According to Qiu Yuanyao, by 2020, the growth rate of the Han population in Xinjiang will be zero. The negative growth rate of the Han population from 2020 will bring down the proportion of the Han population in Xinjiang to 23.97 percent by 2030. Qiu, *Kua shiji de Zhongguo renkou*, 417-18.