

# China's Campaign to Open the West: Xinjiang and the Center

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BS in International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, 2001

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

University of Pittsburgh

2006

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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## **China's Campaign to Open the West: Xinjiang and the Center**

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This paper examines China's ambitious Campaign to Open the West and its impact upon Han and ethnic minority populations in Xinjiang. It focuses on analyzing the components of the campaign that are being implemented to develop Xinjiang through the intensification of agriculture, exploitation of energy resources, and reforms to Xinjiang's education system, revealing that the campaign, rather than alleviating poverty, is leading to greater asymmetry between Han and ethnic minority populations within Xinjiang. Rather than a plan for bridging the gap of economic disparity between the eastern and western regions of China, as construed by Beijing, the plan fits into a greater strategy for integration and assimilation of Xinjiang's restive ethnic population by Beijing.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As Deng Xiaoping declared in the early 1980's that some regions and people within China should be allowed to become rich before others, he was ushering in an era of economic reforms that were a departure from China's traditional socialist economic policies.<sup>1</sup> Under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, government policies designed to concentrate investment resources in regions with high growth potential along China's coasts were implemented. With favorable geographic settings, natural endowment, basic infrastructure, and access to foreign capital, China's eastern and southern coastal regions have experienced unprecedented economic growth. With a sustained annual growth rate of nearly 10%, China has experienced an economic miracle similar to that of the East Asian NICs and seems poised for ushering in the "Chinese century" (Tian 2004).

However, China's leadership has become increasingly concerned that the realization of a "Chinese century" may be challenged by regional inequalities resulting from China's regional economic policies.<sup>2</sup> This concern was illustrated by Jiang Zemin when he declared that, "the development of the west is crucial to China's stability, the Communist Party's hold on power, and the revitalization of the Chinese people," (Pomfret 2000). While coastal Special Economic

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<sup>1</sup> See Chang (1988) for a discussion of the changes in economic policy introduced under Deng Xiaoping's leadership.

<sup>2</sup> See Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang (1999) for detailed analysis of the increasing rate of inequality between China's regions.

Zones (SEZs) and eastern urban centers have flourished economically, China's western and interior regions, comprising more than twenty-three percent of the population and more than half of China's total land area, still lag behind with high rates of poverty and lower levels of development. Many of China's 100 million ethnic minorities live in this region and, especially in Xinjiang, economic disparities fuel ethnic tensions. Wary of ethnic nationalist separatist movements in Xinjiang and potential social manifestations of uneven development, the Chinese central government has initiated an ambitious development campaign: the "Great Western Development Drive" 西部大开发 to counter the threat of political disintegration and to bolster the west's integration with the rest of China.

Though this development drive, initiated in 1999, has attracted a lot of attention from scholars who have been debating Beijing's intentions behind the implementation of the development campaign, there is still a need for more analysis of the campaign's initial economic and social impact upon Xinjiang's Han and ethnic populations. This paper hopes to address this gap by presenting an analysis of the components of the campaign that are being implemented to develop Xinjiang through the intensification of agriculture, exploitation of energy resources, and reforms to Xinjiang's education system to determine whether the campaign has been as successful as Chinese media outlets claim.

"In June 1999 in the ancient city of Xian, Comrade Jiang Zemin made the appeal to the whole party and the people of the whole country on the great development of the western region. Three years have gone by, and the roads have become passable, the lights have become lit, the mountains have become green, the rivers have become clear and the traveling traders have become abundant. One after another, wonderful stories about the homeland of the western region have been circulated and sung."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Xinhua News Agency, November 12, 2002.



Basing this research on the hypothesis that this development campaign and its policies may be another incarnation of Beijing's minority policy as a means to promote greater integration and assimilation of Xinjiang's population of ethnic minorities, I have analyzed the policies being implemented under the campaign to determine whether the economic benefits of the campaign are accruing to Uighur, Han Chinese, or the state. Using Chinese census data from 1990 and 2000, I have identified prior trends for economic growth and development to be compared with development trends after the 1999 implementation of the "Go West Campaign." In addition, this paper examines the trends towards an increase or decrease in Xinjiang's cultural division of labor between Uighur and Han Chinese to determine whether the campaign is achieving its goals of alleviating poverty in Xinjiang and bridging the growing economic disparity between not only Xinjiang's Han and ethnic minorities, but also eastern and western China.

## 2.0 THE PLAN IN CONTEXT

As a part of China's west, Xinjiang, which constitutes one sixth of the territory of the PRC, is endowed with abundant resources, shares borders with Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, and is home to more than a dozen ethnic minority groups who together constitute a majority of the population. This territory is not only strategically and economically important to China, but has become a testing ground for this new regional economic policy. Though on the surface this policy appears poised to rectify regional economic imbalances, with benefits accruing to both Xinjiang as a region and China as a whole, there are aspects of this policy which suggest that the benefits from this policy may accrue to Han and non-Han populations unequally, further aggravating existing imbalances within Xinjiang itself. This imbalance is particularly salient since much of the recent separatist activity has been linked to Han chauvinism and economic inequality between Han and other ethnic minorities (Mackerras 2001:293-294).

Many Western scholars who study inter-ethnic co-existence in China's minority regions have increasingly begun to note the ethnic imbalances of wealth and cultural divisions of labor,<sup>4</sup> and infer that the relationship between minority and majority Han regions resembles that of a

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<sup>4</sup> In their examination of 1982 and 1990 PRC census data, Hannum and Xie (1998) found that compared with Han Chinese, Uighurs were overrepresented in agriculture and underrepresented in industry and service sectors which correspond with higher gross salaries.

colony with its metropole.<sup>5</sup> Though Xinjiang is classified as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and official pronouncements laud the autonomy regime as a system of self government for minorities “established for the exercise of autonomy and for people of ethnic minorities to become masters of their own areas,”<sup>6</sup> many Western scholars claim that autonomy is limited.<sup>7</sup> They cite Beijing’s broad discretionary power over Xinjiang’s affairs, and the manner in which autonomy is implemented, as well as Beijing’s unilateral power over resource exploitation, policing, and other matters which are unbound by power-sharing arrangements through China’s autonomous region regime (Bovingdon 2004). Binh Phan has even likened China’s autonomous areas to “political eunuchs serving at the pleasure of the Communist court in Beijing.” (1996:85).

Though the PRC has departed from the Soviet model in most aspects, China’s system of autonomous regions has been compared to Moscow’s relations with its union republics prior to the collapse of the USSR. According to Gleason, Moscow “both defined the sphere of authority and exercised it” in a manner similar to Beijing’s own approach to its autonomous regions (Gleason 1990: 65). Though there have been recent debates on the subject, in-depth studies on core-periphery relations remain limited and the responses and effects of the “Go West Development Campaign” are just now beginning to trickle out of the region.

Though the campaign to develop western China does have a publicly stated aim to rectify regional imbalances and improve the economic well being of western China’s populace, there are aspects of the policy that raise questions as to who will benefit. Coupled with the introduction of this new regional economic policy, recent revisions of the Law on Regional National

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<sup>5</sup> See Gladney (2003), Goodman (2002).

<sup>6</sup> *Xinjiang Showcases Regional Autonomy of Ethnic Groups*, at [http://english.people.com.cn/200510/01/eng20051001\\_212052.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200510/01/eng20051001_212052.html) (last visited March 30, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> See Sautman (1999), Yu (2004), Moneyhon (2002).

Autonomy which limit the autonomous nature of minority regions, such as the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, suggest that this development program may be intended by the central government to promote greater integration of minority and non-minority populations, which conflicts with the central government's commitments to the maintenance of regional ethnic autonomy.<sup>8</sup> If so, it would also be a continuation of China's programs of the 1990's to promote the migration of Han Chinese to border regions and autonomous regions in a policy of mixing sand, *chan shazi* 铲沙子.

In fact, it has been increasingly posited by observers that the situation unfolding in Xinjiang with the introduction of the "Go West Campaign" is creating a situation of core-periphery relations akin to those that Michael Hechter used to formulate his arguments for the application of his model of internal colonialism to the British Isles (Goodman 2002, Gladney 2003, Moneyhon 2004).<sup>9</sup> There is even evidence that a cultural division of labor, like that described by Hechter as being the precursor for internal colonization, existed in Xinjiang on the eve of the implementation of these new economic policies.<sup>10</sup> Opposing models of core-periphery relations, such as the Diffusion theory of development which describe a "trickle-down effect," have been offered by Chinese policy makers and analysts to argue that the Han and minority populations within Xinjiang will eventually benefit as the results of the program slowly trickle down to all segments of the population.

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<sup>8</sup> Under these revisions to the LRNA, the central government now has broader discretion over the allocation and exploitation of resources and agricultural products and certain powers of local autonomous regions have been curtailed (Moneyhon 2004).

<sup>9</sup> According to Hechter, efficient markets and industrialization will not necessarily level ethnic and racial differences if individuals of one group, such as the Uighur in Xinjiang, are subject to a cultural division of labor which he defines as a system of stratification maintained by the differential allocation of social roles and assets (2000: 38-39).

<sup>10</sup> Not only did Hannum and Xie find evidence of a cultural division of labor between Uighur and Han Chinese in Xinjiang, but they also conclude that this division is likely to continue unless educational gaps and other factors are not rectified (1998).

### 3.0 DEFINING THE WEST

Before China's economic policy for the west can be analyzed, it is necessary to identify the west and its place within China. China's west has long been an imprecise social and political construct, as social and cultural characteristics of the region have continuously changed since incorporation into the Chinese sphere (Newby 1996). Even in the context of the current development program, the demarcation of the west has been unclear from its inception. According to Deng Xiaoping's strategy of "two overall situations," eastern and southern coastal areas were supposed to subordinate their interests to interior areas; however, he never stipulated which regions and jurisdictions were to be included (Goodman 2002: 133-35).

During The Ninth Five-year Plan (1995-2000), the Western region was identified as inclusive of: Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Tibet, Yunnan, Sichuan, Chongqing, and Guizhou (Holbig 2004:351). Along with these western provinces and the municipality of Chongqing, the central provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Inner Mongolia, Hubei, Shanxi, Hunan, Anhui, Jiangxi, and Henan were initially targeted for inclusion in the revised economic policies for development. However in 2000, the central provinces of China, with the exception of Inner Mongolia, were removed from the framework for the "Go West Campaign" and were relegated to being bridges for development between eastern and western China. Surprisingly, the Guangxi Autonomous Region, which had previously benefited from the coastal development strategy of the 1980s and 1990s as part of the eastern coastal region, was added at the same time (Holbig

2004:354). In September of 2001, upon recommendation of the State Council, the Xiangxi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Hunan province, the Enshi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Hubei province, and the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin province were granted inclusion to benefit from the regional economy being implemented for the West.<sup>11</sup>

With these new inclusions, reference to China's west in the new policy to "Open Up the West" is somewhat metaphorical with the west being defined as a region within China with some of the highest rates of poverty, largest concentrations of minorities, and least developed economic infrastructure. Table 1 provides selected indicators on population, income, and primary school enrollment, while Table 2 provides data on industrial output by ownership sector for each provincial level unit. As shown by the data in these tables, the provincial level units in the west are in general, socially and economically disadvantaged, but not exclusively. Xinjiang, which has experienced continuously high rates of growth, has a GDP per capita of 6,470 yuan per capita that compares favorably with that of Hainan (6,383 yuan) which is grouped with the coastal regions, and Jilin (6,341 yuan), an early industrial center in the northeast. In terms of foreign investment and the growth of share-holding enterprises, which are usually regarded as indicators of economic development and reform, the west is characterized by the predominance of the state sector in the region's industrial output which is a hindrance to economic reform and growth. At the same time, the levels for foreign investment and share-holding enterprises in Chongqing and Inner Mongolia compare well with Liaoning and Heilongjiang in the northeast which is now singled out by Beijing as a lagging region.

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<sup>11</sup> "Suggestions on the Implementation of Policies and Measures Pertaining to the Development of the Western Region," pp. 150-151.

**Table 1: Selected Indicators for Population, Income, and Education**

Provinces	Population (million)	GDP per capita (yuan)	Secondary school enrollment (% of population between ages 15-19)
<b>Cities</b>			
Beijing	12.57	19,846	45.7
Tianjin	9.59	15,976	44.1
Shanghai	14.74	30,805	45.8
<b>Coastal</b>			
Jiangsu	72.13	10,665	52.5
Zhejiang	44.75	12,037	43.7
Guangdong	72.70	11,728	47.2
Hainan	7.62	6,383	49.8
Fujian	33.16	10,796	46.4
Shandong	88.83	8,673	46.8
<b>Northeast</b>			
Liaoning	41.71	10,085	48.5
Jilin	26.58	6,341	53.9
Heilongjiang	37.92	7,660	40.5
<b>North</b>			
Hebei	66.14	6,932	55.3
Shanxi	32.04	4,727	41.6
Henan	93.86	4,894	49.6
<b>Central</b>			
Anhui	62.37	4,707	41.8
Jiangxi	42.31	4,661	40.2
Hubei	59.38	6,514	47.8
Hunan	65.32	5,105	48.7
<b>West</b>			
Inner Mongolia	23.62	5,350	41.8
Guangxi	47.13	4,148	45.6
Chongqing	30.75	4,826	40.4
Sichuan	85.50	4,452	42.1
Guizhou	37.10	2,475	49.5
Yunnan	41.92	4,452	42.9
Tibet	2.56	4,262	35.8
Shaanxi	36.18	4,101	53.0
Gansu	25.43	3,668	46.3
Qinghai	5.10	4,662	37.0
Ningxia	5.43	4,473	43.3
Xinjiang	17.74	6,470	53.8

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, *Zhongguo tongji nianjian 2000* (China Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe 2000. Table 4-3 population, Table 3-9 GDP, Table 4-7 population aged 16-18, and table 20-24 for school enrollment.

**Table 2: Industrial Output by Percentage Ownership**

Province	State sector enterprises	Collective sector enterprises	Share-holding and Private enterprises	Foreign-funded enterprises
<i>Cities</i>				
Beijing	58.5	6.7	3.6	31.2
Tianjin	33.0	19.9	3.1	44.1
Shanghai	44.7	7.6	2.7	44.9
<i>Coastal</i>				
Jiangsu	35.9	28.7	7.3	28.1
Zhejiang	30.1	32.3	12.8	23.9
Guangdong	27.6	11.6	5.7	55.1
Hainan	60.0	2.0	19.9	18.0
Fujian	31.9	6.4	4.9	56.8
Shandong	43.0	33.2	9.1	14.8
<i>Northeast</i>				
Liaoning	66.5	10.2	5.0	18.3
Jilin	72.3	6.1	7.1	14.6
Heilongjiang	83.2	5.5	5.4	6.0
<i>North</i>				
Hebei	56.2	25.1	7.3	11.4
Shanxi	70.8	18.6	6.2	4.5
Henan	55.8	27.5	9.1	7.6
<i>Central</i>				
Anhui	65.6	13.1	11.4	9.9
Jiangxi	79.4	8.7	2.4	9.4
Hubei	56.8	20.4	13.2	9.6
Hunan	69.6	17.1	6.7	6.7
<i>West</i>				
Inner Mongolia	72.2	3.6	18.3	5.9
Guangxi	66.4	14.5	8.8	10.4
Chongqing	65.2	6.9	15.9	11.9
Sichuan	68.3	10.7	13.8	7.2
Guizhou	84.9	8.5	3.9	2.7
Yunnan	78.3	9.2	7.3	5.3
Tibet	65.0	22.9	11.8	0.3
Shaanxi	74.7	6.9	6.5	11.9
Gansu	79.9	13.9	2.7	3.5
Qinghai	84.0	3.0	10.8	2.2
Ningxia	81.1	5.0	5.8	8.1
Xinjiang	88.1	4.9	4.5	2.7

Source: National Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Zhongguo tongji nianjian 2000* (China Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 2000: Table 13-5.



This mixed economic picture for the west as a region to be targeted by this latest economic policy, provokes some questions as to the real motivations behind the implementation of the policy. This is especially salient when Xinjiang is factored into the discussion. Though Xinjiang ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among Chinese provincial units for GDP per capita, and is the only province among the interior and western provinces with a GDP per capita above the national average, it has been identified as an integral component of the “Campaign to Open the West” (Hu and Wen 2001). This is perhaps because of the possible implications of asymmetric development are nowhere more apparent than within the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

#### 4.0 XINJIANG AS PART OF THE PLAN

Xinjiang, positioned at the crossroads of Central Asia and once the apex of many of the region's trade routes, borders Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Not only are these borders strategically important for the PRC, but the territory within the boundaries of Xinjiang occupies one sixth of China's landmass and at 660,000 square miles is as large as Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined (Chen 1977:15). In addition, Xinjiang is thought to hold vast reserves of natural resources and energy deposits.<sup>12</sup> Xinjiang is also home to China's nuclear test sites at Lop Nor. However, Xinjiang's strategic geopolitical position and abundant resources are not the only factors which have insured the central government's high level of supervision of Xinjiang's economic development.

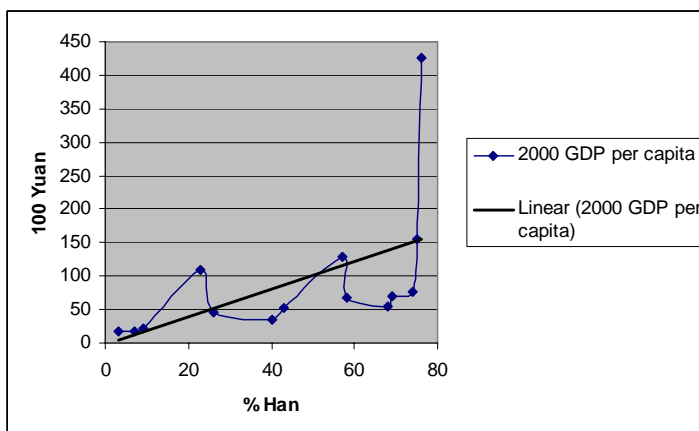
Xinjiang is also one of the few regions in China in which the Han population is still a minority. Even though the proportion of the Han population reached 40.5 per cent in 2000, the population of Xinjiang's southern half is still composed of 90 per cent Uighur<sup>13</sup>, a Sunni Muslim minority, which has a long history of uprising against the central government in Beijing and comprises just under one half of Xinjiang's population (Becquelin 2004:361).

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<sup>12</sup> Though James Dorian believes that they exaggerate the potential for oil and gas production, some Xinhua news reports ("Report on Xinjiang, Oil, Gas Exploration," Xinhua June 13, 1997) suggest that the Tarim Basin may have oil reserves equivalent to three times the total reserves for the United States.

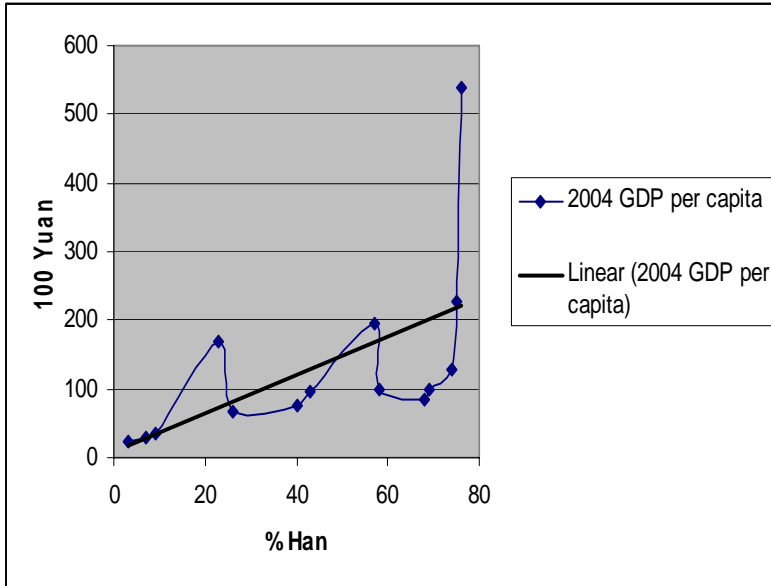
<sup>13</sup> See Figure 1

Though Xinjiang is one of China's most diverse regions with thirteen officially recognized minority groups, it is also one of China's most segregated areas. Han Chinese live predominately in the Junger Basin north of the Tianshan Mountains and are concentrated in the three largest urban centers, Urumqi, Karamay, and Shihezi as well as the autonomous prefectures of Changji, Bortala, Tacheng, Hami, and Bayangol, while the Uighur population is relegated to the less industrial Tarim Basin south of the Tianshan Mountains. This division between the north and south is so pronounced that residents often view the north and south as entirely different regions. This geographic segregation in Xinjiang also corresponds with economic disparities within Xinjiang itself. Though much of this disparity between the north and south can be attributed to the greater rates of urbanization and industrialization in the north, per capita GDP figures as well as figures for average wages suggest that this economic disparity also correlates with ethnicity. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate, higher per capita GDP correlates with higher concentrations of Han residents. As Figure 3 illustrates, the growth trend of per capita GDP also increases with the concentration of Han residents.



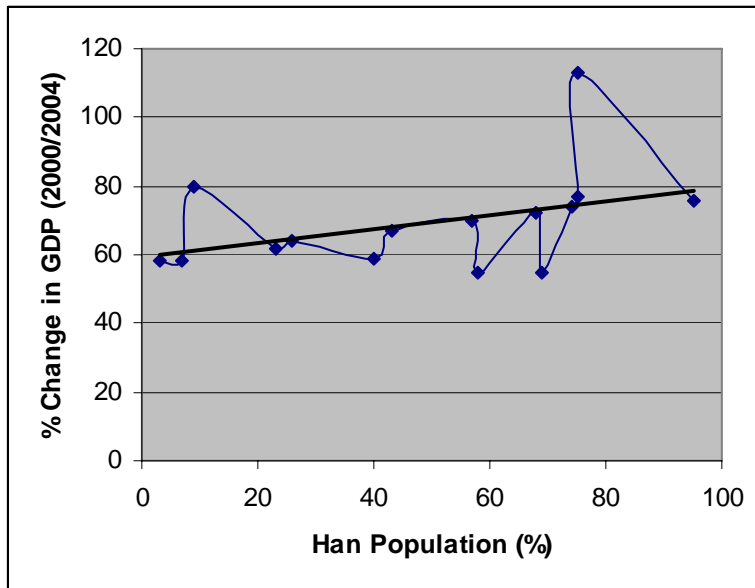
**Figure 1: Xinjiang Per Capita GDP and Ethnic Composition by County Level (2000)**

Data Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001* (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 2-23 and 4-7.



**Figure 2: Xinjiang Per Capita GDP and Ethnic Composition by County Level (2004)**

Data Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001* (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 2-23 and 4-7.



**Figure 3: Changes in GDP 2000-2004**

Data Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001* and *2005* (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 2-23, 3-10, and 4-7.

The GDP in the Han Chinese strongholds of Urumqi, Karamay, and Shihezi alone exceeds that of all of southern Xinjiang. Though I have found no statistics on living standards broken down by ethnicity or *minzu*<sup>14</sup>, several analysts of Xinjiang have remarked on the correlation of high concentrations of Han Chinese with high incomes, and the reverse with high concentrations of Uighur residents (Bachman 2004: 164-168; Toops 2004b:177). Data from the Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook on average wages by industry and region also correlate with this trend with Han population centers in the north such as Urumqi and Karamay ranking ahead of most of the minority regions in the south (See Table 3). Though the Turpan region, a predominantly Uighur region, compares well with the second highest average wage, it is one of the few regions in which minority business predominate in the local economy.

Average wages by industry and region Weimar's research also suggests that each one percent increase in Han population adds an increment of 44 yuan to per capita income (2004: 177). In southern Xinjiang where average wages are half the provincial average, only Bayangol's per capita GDP has eclipsed the provincial average. Bayangol also happens to have the largest concentration of Han Chinese in the south. At the same time, Khotan, which has a population that is 97 percent Uighur, lags behind the rest of Xinjiang in all most every measure, including industry, construction, transportation, wholesale trade, telecommunications, and retail and catering trades (Table 2-27, 新疆统计年鉴2005). Ethnic minorities in Xinjiang also compose a disproportionately small portion of the workforce in industries with the highest concentrations of Han workers in industries that pay higher average wages (Table 4).

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<sup>14</sup> Statistics for income and employment broken down by ethnicity are closely guarded even in regions of China where relations between Han Chinese and non Han populations are less politicized. Through her interviews with officials in Guangxi, Katherine Kaup found that officials were forbidden to publish figures comparing Han and Zhuang incomes (Kaup 2000: 151).

**Table 3: Average Wages per Worker by Industry and Region 2000 (Yuan)**

Region	Total	Rank	Agriculture	Mining	Manufacturing	Energy	Construction
<i>North</i>							
Urumqi City	10,853	3	4,575	9,692	9,408	21,403	9,009
Karamay City	16,160	1	7,186	19,355	13,438	17,690	17,200
Shihezi City	8,094	6	6,384	--	7,557	12,249	5,928
Turpan	12,779	2	5,961	22,886	6,964	12,995	6,507
Hami	8,093	5	4,973	10,642	7,579	18,345	6,412
Changji Hui	7,633	10	6,687	6,986	7,223	14,875	8,231
Tacheng	6,529	13	5,143	7,824	7,370	10,806	7,037
Altay	7,135	12	4,437	10,774	6,089	8,951	6,507
Bortala	6,329	14	4,701	6,226	6,625	9,869	7,039
<i>South</i>							
Ili	6,307	15	4,248	6,504	7,013	11,237	7,321
Bayangol	7,625	11	5,043	10,545	7,436	11,089	6,654
Aksu	8,050	7	7,762	6,742	7,088	11,618	6,763
Kizilsu	8,817	4	7,543	4,966	5,993	10,772	6,511
Kashgar	7,747	9	5,211	6,298	5,723	10,592	6,682
Khotan	7,915	8	4,967	6,305	4,768	8,082	6,057

*Source: Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Table 3-44.*

**Table 4: Minority Representation by Industry, 2000**

Industry	Average Wage (Yuan)	% Han 2000	% Minority 2000
Finance / Insurance	13714	72	28
Mining	13524	80	20
Energy	13223	76	24
Transportation	12790	77	23
Scientific Research	11505	78	22
Construction	10220	88	12
Health Care	10114	54	46
Government	9494	57	43
Education	9398	44	56
Manufacturing	8209	79	21
Agriculture	5573	75	25

*Source: Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 3-20 and 3-22.*

Even in the agricultural sector of Xinjiang's economy, peasant incomes vary greatly with per capita incomes in predominantly Han Chinese regions of the north being reported at 2,666 yuan and per capita income in the Uighur dominated south being reported at 1,320 yuan in 2001, or less than half as much, which is an increase of 9.8% over the wage differential between peasants in the north and south in 2000.<sup>15</sup>

This economic disparity along ethnic lines has fueled ethnic tension within Xinjiang and has prompted some to allude to the possibilities of a Kosovo-like crisis in China.<sup>16</sup> In the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent central Asian republics neighboring Xinjiang, Uighur separatist rumblings have begun to be taken more seriously by the central government. Not only did the disintegration of the Soviet Union result in an upswing in Uighur identity and pride, but also in a spate of bombings and separatist riots.<sup>17</sup> This ethnic unrest continued through the 1990s and resulted in the implementation of the "Strike Hard" anticrime campaign designed in Xinjiang to crack down on Uighur separatists and eradicate crime which captured more than 2,700 terrorists and criminals in a mere span of a few months (Rudelson 1997:21-23). In response to these increasing security concerns, China has joined Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia in forming the "Shanghai Six" to prevent separatists and extremists from promoting regional insecurity.

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<sup>15</sup> Figures obtained through *Woqu nongye shengchan fazhan zhuangkuang*, <http://www.xj.gov.cn/xjzf/fazhan.php> (accessed on December 21, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> See "The Hinterland: Plan to Avoid Asian Kosovo," *China Economic Review*, March 13, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Though estimates for ethnic unrest vary widely, Becquelin quotes Abulahat Abdurixit, Chairman of the XUAR government, admitting in 1999 that "if you count explosions, assassinations, and other terrorist activities, the total comes to a few thousand incidents." (Becquelin 2004, pp.361).



## 5.0 XINJIANG AS THE NEW FRONTIER

As a buffer zone against invasions of China from inner Asia and later as a frontier between China and the Soviet Union, Xinjiang is just one of the latest frontiers to be accreted to the enlarging core of China proper. Even the term *Xinjiang* 新疆 refers to Xinjiang's status as "new territory." As in the case of Michael Hechter's British Isles, Xinjiang has long been administered as a peripheral region by Beijing. What is occurring in Xinjiang today with the implementation of the Western Development campaign is not an entirely new development with the Chinese empire successively expanding and contracting its role in administering Xinjiang. Historically, Xinjiang has been governed indirectly through imperial governors and members of native elites who were able to pit the settlers of the Tarim Basin in the south against the nomadic groups on the northern steppes of Xinjiang in a strategy of "divide and rule" (Lattimore 1951). Though native elites among the native population have largely been replaced with the party apparatus, there is one group which is integral to Beijing's administration of Xinjiang, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) or *bingtuan* 兵团, which has been able to reinforce the previous north/south divisions through Han resettlement campaigns and Corps activities.

In fact, it is through the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps that the "Open up the West Campaign" has become a conduit for Beijing's control of Xinjiang. With comparisons

being drawn by Becquelin between Beijing's current policies and those of the Qing dynasty in which, according to Milwood, "the court opted for intensified Chinese colonization, lifting restrictions on Han settlement in the Tarim Basin, allowing merchants and homesteaders to settle permanently...establishing state farms worked by Han soldiers and their families" (Milwood 1998: 235).

Originally established by demobilized Kuomintang and PLA soldiers in 1957, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps has grown into an agency composed of 2.5 million members, 88 % of which are Han, who are directly administered by the State Council (Becquelin 2004:360). Much like the earlier Han settlers of the Qing Dynasty, the XPCC was originally mandated to reclaim land, garrison the frontier region with central Asia, and to populate strategic border regions and transportation corridors within Xinjiang. Through the 1990's, the XPCC has continued this cycle of establishing cities and garrisons to promote settlement and to exercise dominion over the frontier regions (Gaubatz 1995:76). After the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of the newly independent Central Asian Republics and the ongoing Uighur separatist movements, the XPCC has also adopted the role of protecting Xinjiang from internal threats such as ethno-nationalist unrest (Becquelin 2004:366).<sup>18</sup>

Even without its new mandate to defend against internal threats and its role in the "Go West Campaign", the XPCC has an integral influence on the administration of Xinjiang. The Corps has over 16 million *mu* of farmland, nearly a third of Xinjiang's arable land, comprises nearly 12.9 percent of Xinjiang's population or nearly a third of Han registered within the province (Becquelin 2004:367). The Corps' economic activities within Xinjiang are also immense with the Corps leading 174 agricultural and animal husbandry regiment farms, and

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<sup>18</sup> This role has included the XPCC's involvement in the "Strike Hard" Campaign and the continued buildup of demobilized soldiers who can serve as a reserve security force.

more than 427 commercial and industrial enterprises.<sup>19</sup> In essence, the Corps functions like a state owned enterprise (SOE) with many of the commiserate problems such as low productivity, an aging workforce, an inability to compete effectively with private enterprises, and a reliance upon central government funds for much of its budget (Becquelin 2004:84-86).

However, this situation may be reversed with the XPCC's inclusion as a primary player in the Xinjiang component of the "Go West Campaign." The Corps' land reclamation activities, ability to attract migrants from interior China as well as demobilized soldiers, and consolidation of territorial control through its string of Corps administered municipalities, such as Shihezi, meld well with the primary objectives of the Go West Campaign. This has been reflected through the XPCC's involvement with the Tarim River Rehabilitation Project, a major component of the Campaign in Xinjiang, as well as the Corps' increasing involvement in construction, infrastructure development, and the extraction of energy sources which are all explicitly mentioned in the Chinese White Paper on the economic development of Xinjiang, as being industries targeted for development with the Campaign.<sup>20</sup> Much of the Campaign in Xinjiang also revolves around XPCC strongholds in the north such as Shihezi.<sup>21</sup> Chinese scholars even concede that the "future of the Corps is the most fundamental question regarding the stability and development of Xinjiang" (Ma 2002:7).

These official views of the XPCC and its role in the development of Xinjiang are in discord with opposing views from the minority populations in the region. Though it is true that the XPCC's activities have contributed to the industrialization and urbanization of Xinjiang, the

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<sup>19</sup> Xinjiang ribao, July 23, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/20030526/index.htm>

<sup>21</sup> Shihezi has been the headquarters of the XPCC and along with the municipalities of Ala'er, Tumusuke, and Wujiaqu was developed by the Corps. Shihezi and the area surrounding it including the Shihezi Reclamation Area and the Shihezi National-Level Economic and Technological Development Zone have been designated as key projects. *China News Service*, March 16, 2003 (FBIS-CHI-2003-0316).

benefits of the XPCC's past activities have largely accrued disproportionately to the members of the XPCC itself, which is 88% Han (Becquelin 2004:360), creating a cultural division of labor as discussed by Hannum and Xie. The XPCC's activities have also contributed to a growing influx of Han migrants under a policy of "mixing sand" or *chan shazi* to settle Han migrants in regions that have large concentrations of minority populations.<sup>22</sup> This coupled with the preponderance of Han cadres (52 %) and few minority leaders at the county level and above (13.7 %) has diluted the influence of minority groups such as the Uighurs in Xinjiang and gives other groups, including the Han, disproportionate authority in the governance of Xinjiang (Zang 1998: 115-117). This has resulted in an ironic situation in which the XPCC, a Han organization, has more autonomy in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region than the XUAR's Uighur residents through the administration of its own internal affairs, its own public security apparatus, jurisdiction over its own legal, administrative and business structures, as well as independently administered educational, health, and judicial systems.

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<sup>22</sup> Though official provincial statistics do not show a major increase in the Han population, and officials deny that this policy is contributing to a major rise in the Han population in Xinjiang, the Shihezi labor bureau reported that 70,000 migrants from other provinces settled in Shihezi in 1997 alone ("Mingong hu yongru liuzhou," *Shihezi bao*, January 1, 1998, p.2). Xinhua news reports also corroborate this growth with reports of 100,000 migrants in Korla in 1995 (Xinhua, May 19, 1997).

## 6.0 TWO PILLARS STRATEGY UNDER THE CAMPAIGN

During the 1990's, in an effort to boost the provincial economy of Xinjiang, and in part to attract more migrants through job creation, economic planners initiated an economic strategy to “rely on two pillars, one white, one black” in reference to cotton cultivation and oil exploitation (Becquelin 2000: 80). This two pillar strategy was envisioned by central planners as a route to boosting provincial revenues and sideline industries through the development of oil and petrochemical industries as well as agricultural revenues through cotton production capable of raising the collective prosperity of Xinjiang's minority population who are largely engaged in the rural economy.<sup>23</sup> Though the Go West Campaign has been heralded in Chinese media sources as a departure from past regional economic policies, the “two pillar” strategy has become a major component of the Campaign due to its relative success within Xinjiang . As part of the Go West Campaign, the Xinjiang Regional Development Planning Commission identified thirty key projects for inclusion in the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2001-2005), of which three of the thirty

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<sup>23</sup> Though Han workers predominate in the agricultural sector when measured by workforce participation (defined as permanent workers for regiment farms and work units) minority populations are concentrated in the rural economy and are engaged primarily in oasis agriculture, animal husbandry and stockbreeding, and small trade and handicraft industries (Cao 1999: 11). Of these rural regions in southern Xinjiang, only the Bayangol Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture has a majority Han population.

projects were geared towards promoting Xinjiang's status as an agricultural base and four were intended to strengthen Xinjiang's petrochemical and gas industry.<sup>24</sup>

Under the cotton strategy, Xinjiang has become a leading center for cotton production within China, rivaling cotton production bases along the Yellow River and Yangtze River.<sup>25</sup> Between 1990 and 1997, acreage under cotton production doubled and cotton production increased from 294,700 tons to 1,477,000 tons between 1989 and 2002 (新疆统计年鉴2003:72).

This rise in cotton production and apparent success in the program led to the earmarking of 11.5 billion yuan in the tenth Five-Year Plan for development of cotton production bases. Though this past success has buoyed this investment, and cotton agriculture has been described as "the strategic motor for the province's economic growth,"<sup>26</sup> there are factors such as China's entry into the WTO, price instability in cotton prices, reliance upon heavy subsidies, increased competition from cheaper imports, and the preponderance of small farms that may threaten to derail this component of the plan (Wang 2002).

Though cotton production has continued to increase during the first few years of the Campaign, with Xinjiang's annual production nearing two million tons (equivalent to the average U.S. annual cotton export) this growth in production has not been uniform. Much of the increase in cotton yield has been contributed by predominantly Han areas with increases over three years of 108%, 73%, and 44% in the Han strongholds of Hami, Bayangol, and Karamay

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<sup>24</sup> The remaining projects include nine for road and railway construction, five in water resource projects, four in the power industry, and four categorized as industrial development (*Economic and Technical News*, Xinhua News Agency, January 19, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Though the Yellow River and Yangtze River regions accounted for most of China's cotton production prior to 2000, cotton production in Gansu and Xinjiang has been rising rapidly with the total yields between 1996 and 2000 reaching 7.52 million tons, 7.49 million tons, and 6.52 million tons for the Yellow River, Yangtze River, and the northwest respectively (Hsu and Gale 2001:19).

<sup>26</sup> Numerous reports in the *Xinjiang Daily* in 2001 and 2002 refer to Xinjiang's cotton production base in this manner.

respectively.<sup>27</sup> Though Uighur areas in general experienced strong growth in cotton production as well, those regions with the highest concentrations of Uighur cotton farmers and formerly key production bases experienced modest increases or even declines in production with Khotan experiencing a 4.2% decline and the Kashgar region, the second highest producer of cotton in 2001 behind the XPCC at 17.1% of the provincial total, experiencing a modest 2% increase in total production, suggesting that these regions are concentrating on alternative crops such as melons and grapes that have proven profitable in the past.<sup>28</sup> Even the Aksu region, which had the third largest production base for cotton, experienced a relatively modest increase of 22%, well below the average production increase over the three-year period for administrative regions in Xinjiang.

Though the strategy for “putting cotton first” has provided financial incentives for increased cotton production in hopes of boosting agricultural revenue, Uighur farmers do not seem to be profiting from these expenditures. Though provincial authorities in Xinjiang claim that cotton production is the best way for farmers to increase their incomes and promise that increases in cotton cultivation in Xinjiang will bring prosperity to all of Xinjiang’s nationalities, there is little evidence that cotton is even economically viable as either a development strategy for Xinjiang or as an income source for Uighur farmers.<sup>29</sup> An official report of the Chinese Academy of Social Science in 1996 even suggested that “the profitability of growing cotton is far from evident...the market risks incurred by peasants are higher and higher, and peasants naturally don’t want to grown cotton” (Wang 1997: 67).

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<sup>27</sup> Data for increases in cotton yield can be found in tables 5 and 6.

<sup>28</sup> According to Rudelson, the agricultural reforms which allowed for experimentation with alternative crops prior to the cotton strategy proved enormously profitable for Uighur farmers unable to compete with larger mechanized regiment farms (Rudelson 1997: 45-90).

<sup>29</sup> In his fieldwork in southern Xinjiang, Becquelin found that prior gains in cotton production were due to a quota system for cotton which was imposed upon households in order to insure continued growth in production, though profits often remained elusive (Becquelin 2000: 81).

**Table 5: Indicators for Agricultural Sector by Region (2001)**

Region	Total Area Sown (1000 hectares)	Area sown in cotton (1000 hectares)	Total cotton output (tons)	Percentage of total output for Xinjiang
Urumqi City	27.09	0	0	0
Karamay City	3.95	3.03	4046	.26
Turpan	50.39	13.79	16895	1.1
Hami	36.34	5.81	6903	0.5
Changji Hui	299.79	55.31	90888	6.05
Tacheng	276.07	53.94	88566	5.9
Altay	105	0	0	0
Bortala	71.85	27.55	45159	3
Ili	318.06	2.48	2596	0.2
Bayangol	147.67	56.57	83601	5.6
Aksu	366.06	145.47	230767	15.4
Kizilsu	45.77	4.64	4906	0.3
Kashgar	525.38	195.67	257054	17.1
Khotan	205.37	37.35	40020	2.7
XPCC	909.8	410.72	693934	46.3
Total	3387.87	1012.33	1565035	100

*Source: Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 8-15, and 8-17.*



**Table 6: Indicators for Agricultural Sector by Region (2004)**

Region	Total Area Sown (1000 hectares)	Area sown in cotton (1000 hectares)	Total cotton Output (tons)	Increase in cotton yield since 2001	Cotton yield (kg / hectare)
Urumqi City	29.03	0.10	105		1050
Karamay City	8.40	5.90	5841	44 %	990
Tupan	51.20	14.15	18519	9.6 %	1309
Hami	41.85	9.03	14356	108 %	1590
Changji Hui	315.09	73.55	118099	30 %	1606
Tacheng	289.38	68.91	113182	28 %	1642
Altay	107.51	0	0	-	0
Bortala	71.12	30.15	58764	30 %	1949
Ili	307.89	6.35	6773	160 %	1065
Bayangol	181.31	85.31	144543	73 %	1694
Aksu	391.20	160.67	281692	22 %	1753
Kizilsu	42.33	6.14	8244	68 %	1343
Kashgar	555.56	171.88	263334	2.4 %	1532
Khotan	225.09	23.33	38339	- 4.2 %	1643
XPCC	953.93	472.07	877760	27 %	1859
Total	3570.89	1127.54	1949551	47 %	-

Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2005* (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 11-14, 11-17, and 11-18.

According to Ildiko, Uighur farmers claim that “the various inputs for cotton plus its labor intensity mean that there is no real profit in growing cotton” (Ildiko 1997: 95). This is not surprising given that Xinjiang’s cotton sector is still a small farm economy with the average size cotton farm in Xinjiang under one hectare (Ren 2002: 15). This fragmentation among Xinjiang’s largely Uighur peasant farmers has led to higher costs of production, lower efficiency, and reduced productivity when compared with larger mechanized operations such as the regiment farms run by the XPCC. Beyond factors of scale, this problem is compounded by the heavy reliance of Xinjiang cotton producers upon pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation systems with Xinjiang cotton farmers accounting for an estimated 25% to 30% of China’s annual use of pesticides (Yu et al. 2000). This heavy dependence upon pesticides and fertilizers, which account for nearly 30% of production costs, the highest in the world, has led some observers to compare Xinjiang’s cotton crop to Jamaica’s “hunger crop” of sugar with the return on investment ratio falling from 4:1 to 1:1 between 1990 and 1999 (Ren 2002: 20).

Though profitability through cotton cultivation seems to be elusive for Xinjiang’s small-scale Uighur farmers, the XPCC, which produces nearly half of Xinjiang’s cotton crop, is having more success with greater access to market information, irrigation and water resources, farm credit, and resources for greater mechanization. In addition, XPCC farms are able to operate on a much larger scale, eclipsing the smaller land holdings of southern Xinjiang. The XPCC has also had great success experimenting with genetically engineered specialty cotton strains such as the color cotton strains developed by the Tiancai Brand of the China Colored-Cotton Group, a flagship enterprise of the XPCC, which are capable of achieving revenues that are 50% higher than conventional cotton.<sup>30</sup> The production of colored cotton has been so successful that the

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<sup>30</sup> Information on the Rainbow Group can be accessed through <http://www.westech.com.cn>.

Chinese Ministry of Agriculture has awarded Regiment Farm 148 in Shihezi with the title of “Home of Colored Cotton.” In fact, XPCC farms’ production of specialty mid and long staple cotton is rivaling that of Egypt, and production of commercialized color cotton is expected to eclipse that of the United States (Ren 2002: 9). Given this success and growing competition on the world market, Chinese economists have begun suggesting that cotton production should be relegated to increases in high quality specialty cotton versus conventional cotton (Sheng 2001: 2-5). However, seeds and equipment for producing these improved cotton strains are costly and the majority of small scale Uighur farms lack access to the capital required for such expansion.

Along with incentives to increase cotton production in Xinjiang, there have been moves to strengthen Xinjiang’s textile industry by transferring textile production from eastern China where industrial centers such as Shanghai have traditionally accounted for the majority of China’s textile production. Though this move by central planners promises to make China’s textile industry more competitive with its manufacturing base closer to the production center for cotton and access to a cheaper rural workforce, initial indications are that these textile mills are attracting poor Han migrants from neighboring western provinces rather than employing local Uighur or Han workers (Becquelin 2000: 81). This trend in employing migrant Han workers from neighboring provinces is not a new development as the regiment farms of XPCC have long relied upon seasonal migrant Han workers, with fresh waves of migrants worsening relations between Uighur and Han.<sup>31</sup> In his fieldwork, Becquelin found that the new arrival of Han migrants has also angered long-standing Han residents of Xinjiang (老新疆人) who have developed a sense of regional identity and see new migrants as outsiders who are competing for

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<sup>31</sup> This hiring of outside farm labor has also entailed ignoring the normal procedures regarding work permits and registration of residents (Wang and Chen 1996: 440).

limited resources such as fertilizers, seeds, and water (Becquelin 2000:84-85). Given these factors, some observers, including Becquelin, view the cotton component of the Go West Campaign in Xinjiang as nothing more than a guise for increased Han in-migration and resettlement on reclaimed lands in an attempt by Beijing to further consolidate its territorial grip upon Xinjiang. Whether or not this is the case, aspects of the oil component of the plan do resonate with Becquelin's concerns.

Perhaps the most significant component of the Campaign to Open the West in Xinjiang is the petroleum and natural gas component. With domestic oil consumption finally eclipsing production in 1993, Xinjiang's potential oil wealth has been increasingly attracting Beijing's attention. This has intensified local frustrations among Uighur who believe that, were it not for Beijing's extraction of valuable resources, the region could easily be economically self-sufficient, even wealthy (Dreyer 1994:255). Though Xinjiang does have promising oil reserves and new discoveries have been made in Lunnan, Tazhong, Yinan, Hetianhe and Tahe in the Tarim Basin, early estimates promising reserves three times that of the United States have proven to be overly optimistic.<sup>32</sup> However, Beijing appears to be undaunted by these reports and has pledged more than 500 billion yuan to support energy exploration projects and related infrastructure projects (Tian 2004: 620-621).

In order to develop Xinjiang's petroleum industry, the Chinese government is investing in much needed improvements to transportation and delivery systems for energy products. The largest component of this investment has been the construction of oil and gas pipelines linking Xinjiang with the Eastern and coastal provinces. The first cross-country pipeline linking

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<sup>32</sup> Encouraged by Beijing's promotion of Xinjiang as an untapped energy source, western oil companies were invited to test-drill for oil, but found that many of the promising discoveries did not warrant further investment (Cutler 2000).

Xinjiang's Tarim Basin with Shanghai is nearing completion, and at a length of over 4000 km, and constructed at a cost of more than 140 billion yuan, is one of the largest infrastructure projects in China's history (Chaudhuri 2005: 19). Though these projects promise positive benefits for Xinjiang, especially in light of rising energy prices, they have had a minimal impact upon improving the regional distribution of income. According to Dwight Perkins, the development of the Tarim Basin's oil and gas resources and the construction of pipelines to extract these resources has little to do with people within Xinjiang since most of the equipment and personnel are being shipped in from outside of Xinjiang (Perkins 2004: 20).

Despite preferential policies for ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, the Go West Campaign's infrastructure projects continue to siphon migrant workers from outside of Xinjiang rather than indigenous Uighur, and officials are limited in their ability to apply quotas to both private enterprises and the oil industry.<sup>33</sup> For example, among the 4,000 technical workers on the Taklamakan Desert oil exploration project, only 243 were from minority groups (Moneyhon 2002: 507). This along with the admission of the Regional Party Secretary, Wang Lequan, that "the workforces in Xinjiang's oilfields all come from other oilfields in China,"<sup>34</sup> suggests that although these projects may be contributing to the acceleration of growth in gross domestic product since the inception of the campaign, there is little to suggest these projects are increasing the standard of living among the majority of Xinjiang's citizens (Lai 2003: 135). Rather, like the Go West Campaign's cotton policy, the oil policy is likely to encourage increased migration of Han to Xinjiang, reversing the flow of migrants to the southeast and instead resulting in "the peacock flying west," in the words of a member of the State Council (Li 2000).

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<sup>33</sup> For an explanation of these preferential policies see Sautman (1998).

<sup>34</sup> *Economic & Technical News*, Xinhua News Agency, January 19, 2000.

## 7.0 PAVING THE WAY FOR GROWTH

Before Xinjiang can even accrue benefits from the Go West Campaign and become a conduit for trade with Central Asia, Xinjiang's isolation from both coastal China and its neighbors to the north must be rectified with improvements to Xinjiang's deficient transportation infrastructure. Though California grapes take less than a week to make it to fruit stands in coastal China, Turpan's primary export of grapes can take up to fifteen days to reach coastal China (Pomfret 2000). As part of the Tenth Five Year Plan, the central government has earmarked 100 billion yuan for railway construction projects in western China, with plans to extend the Kashgar-Urumqi rail line into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, add a rail line connecting Yining with Kazakhstan, and improve existing east-west lines. In addition, Beijing is investing 700-800 billion yuan to build highway networks across the western region with major components in Xinjiang.

Though these transportation infrastructure improvements promise to strengthen Xinjiang's long term economic outlook through improved market access for Xinjiang's agricultural products and petroleum resources, the short term gains have thus far been mixed. Though these large expenditures in infrastructure are providing economic opportunities for thousands of workers in Xinjiang and wages in the construction sector have risen substantially,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Average wages per worker in the construction industry rose 72 % between 2000 and 2005 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2001 and 2005). Table 3-44.

there is evidence that, not unlike the case with seasonal agricultural workers and petrochemical workers, that the majority of workers involved in these projects are coming from outside of Xinjiang with estimates of 250,000 Han migrants a year being drawn to Xinjiang to work on construction and infrastructure projects (Pomfret 2000).

Though preferential employment policies have allowed Uighur workers to gain a small foothold in Xinjiang's bloated state owned enterprises,<sup>36</sup> recent reforms coinciding with the Go West Campaign have been eroding many of these gains.<sup>37</sup> Amnesty International has filed reports documenting the replacement of minority managers in the privatization of textile and carpet factories in the Heitian area with Han Chinese, and Becquelin reports the widespread belief in Xinjiang among Uighur that downsizing SOE's will choose to 下维 ,or fire Uighurs first (Becquelin 2000: 85). These observations coincide with Ma Rong's study on Xinjiang's labor force which suggests that Uighur and other Turkic ethnic groups in Xinjiang have less access to non-agricultural sectors (2002:15-20). Though data on minority participation by industry is not available for 2004 or 2005,<sup>38</sup> data from 2001 indicates that Uighur were under-represented in every industry except for education, with the highest disparity in the most lucrative fields.<sup>39</sup> Nicolas Becquelin even claims that "Many urban ethnic-minority business

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<sup>36</sup> According to Sautman (1998), Xinjiang's state sector's preferential hiring programs for minorities have provided urban Uighur welcome non-agricultural career outlets. Accounting for more than two thirds of provincial GDP and 88% of Xinjiang's industrial output, Xinjiang's largely inefficient state owned enterprises have been slow to reform.

<sup>37</sup> As a consequence of China's economic reforms, managers are being allowed much more freedom in determining the composition and remuneration of their employees. Some have expressed the fear that this increased freedom may also result in greater rates of discrimination as prior protections against labor discrimination erode (Maurer-Fazio et al. 2004:7).

<sup>38</sup> Income differentials and ethnic composition of the workforce in autonomous regions is tightly protected. Though the unit of observation for this type of data is on a prefectural level prior to 2002, this data is no longer included in the Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook.

<sup>39</sup> See Table 8.

people complained .... that they have encountered prejudice when seeking access to bank loans and administrative authorizations” (Becquelin 2000:85).

In their examination of the effects of market reform upon the occupational attainment of minorities in Xinjiang, Hannum and Xie found that the existing gap in occupational attainment between Han and ethnic minorities had widened in large part due to differences in educational attainment as well as the strengthening correlation between educational attainment and non-agricultural occupations. This situation is further compounded by the gap in high school enrollment rates for students in predominately Han regions of Xinjiang and those in regions with high minority concentrations as illustrated by Figure 4. Though enrollment rates have risen during the campaign, the gap has also widened. Illiteracy rates have also increased in all regions of southern Xinjiang, with only the Han areas of Urumqi, Shihezi, and Changji reporting declines since 2001 (Figure 5). Though the Go West Campaign has promised to improve educational standards across Xinjiang and promote technological research and development in the region to promote the growth of new industry and foreign direct investment in the region, the results so far have been disappointing. Not only has the region been unable to attract FDI, funding for research technological development and research is still very low in southern Xinjiang with funding actually declining in Turpan, Khotan, and Bayangol while remaining at zero in Kashgar (Table 8).

Though some of these education disparities can be attributed to rural/urban differences between areas that have high concentrations of Han and minority residents, they may also be attributed to economic asymmetries between the different regions. With the decentralization of fiscal power, schools have become highly dependent on the local economy for a large portion of their budgets with villages now sponsoring primary schools, townships supporting junior



secondary schools, and local counties supporting senior secondary schools (Cheng 1995: 70). This has resulted in educational disparities with richer areas capable of funding basic education, while poorer areas are facing increasing difficulties in funding educational improvements and are falling behind, creating an impossible situation for local governments.

Beyond developing China's human resources, described by Zheng (1999:121) as the weakest in the Asia-Pacific region at the end of the 1990s, education has other roles that coincide with the other objectives of the "Go West Campaign." Education can be used as a means for implementing affirmative action policies and is seen by Beijing as having an integral role in maintaining stability and promoting greater integration of China's diverse ethnic population (Iredale et. al. 2001: 70). If China's campaign to develop regions like Xinjiang is to succeed, China's human capital development must coincide with the campaign's economic development objectives.

Even the Xinjiang CCP Committee recognizes that the retreat of the state-command economy and the introduction of market forces have contributed to the deterioration of the position of ethnic groups. In an investigative report released in 2001, the Committee disclosed that "the power of intervention of the government has steadily decreased, and the difficulties of finding a job for minority laborers has become larger, especially in contract farm work and non-public industrial work. Implementing equal opportunities has become less achievable."<sup>40</sup> Whether the economic policies of the Go West Campaign will be able to reverse this trend remains to be seen.

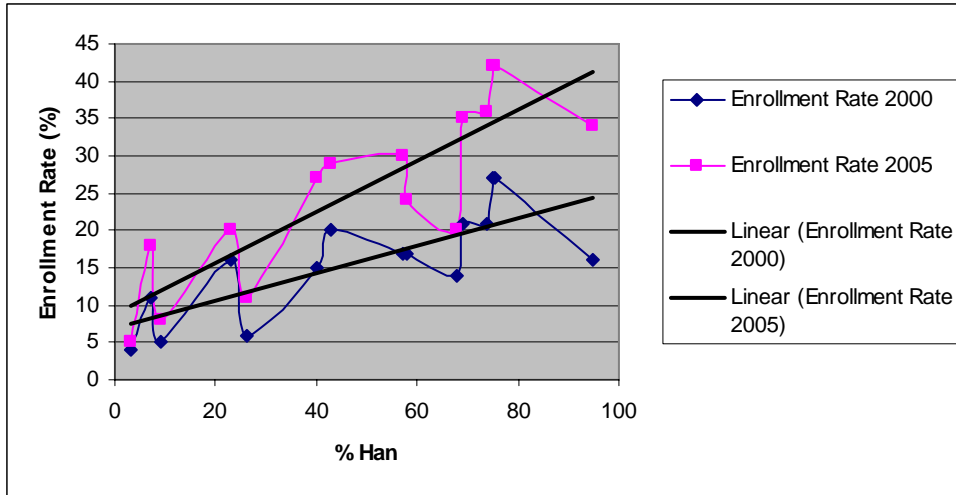
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<sup>40</sup> For the full report, see "Guanyu zhengque renshi he chuli xingshi xia Xinjiang minzu wenti de diaocha baogao," *Makesizuyi yu xianshi* 13(2):34-38.

**Table 7: Growth in Average Wages**

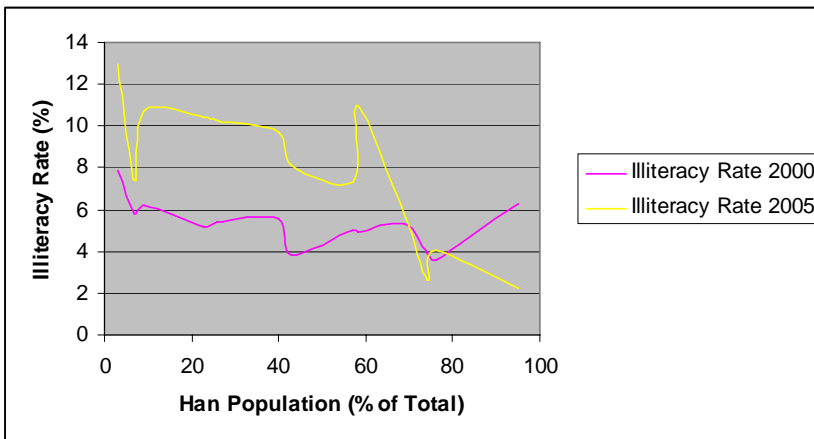
Region	Total	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Energy	Construction
Urumqi City	75.6	113	82	50	54
Karamay City	23	47	11	---	-14
Shihezi City	63	104	43	30	82
Turpan	40	46	38	93	98
Hami	76	85	27	37	89
Changji Hui	56	37	31	61	42
Tacheng	62	60	35	60	49
Altay	66	70	42	-3	44
Bortala	86	102	33	56	80
Ili	80	78	54	49	54
Bayangol	83	82	46	76	95
Aksu	73	76	86	57	71
Kizilsu	82	74	28	9	91
Kashgar	75	110	39	17	71
Khotan	88	60	44	83	71

*Source: Xinjiang tongji nianjian 2001 and 2005 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Table 3-44.*



**Figure 4: Enrollment Rates for Regular Senior High Schools by Region**

Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian* 2001 and 2006 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Tables 18-22 and 4-3.



**Figure 5: Illiteracy Rates**

Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian* 2001 and 2005 (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook), Beijing Zhongguo tongji chubanshe.

**Table 8: Indicators for Technological Development**

Region	Number of Research Agencies (2000)	2004	Number of people engaged in technological development and research	2004	Funding (10,000 Yuan) 2000	2004
Urumqi	17	25	1952	2217	16016.5	24285.6
Karamay	2	17	2450	4522	28080.5	69250.7
Shihezi	5	6	195	570	2001.6	8713.5
Turpan	5	1	1610	524	6576.2	5227.1
Hami	0	3	209	176	108	306
Changji	3	9	319	522	3736.7	21219.4
Ili	0	9	38	404	2568.2	5532.4
Tacheng	1	4	47	145	60.9	2809
Altay	2	2	17	36	109.3	1452.6
Bortala	0	0	0	0	290.2	1270.8
Bayangol	5	5	779	635	7067.8	0
Aksu	1	3	103	416	1138.8	47287.1
Kashgar	0	0	0	0	0	0
Khotan	1	0	305	0	320	0

Source: *Xinjiang tongji nianjian* 2001 and 2005 (*Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook*), Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe. Table 15-24 and 18-3.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the manner in which Xinjiang has been impacted by the initial stages of the much heralded Go West Campaign. In this paper, I have discussed the imperatives driving the Chinese leadership's adoption of this economic policy following two decades of economic reforms. Though these reforms ushered in by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 have led to an average annual growth rate of 7.5 %, much of this growth accrued disproportionately to Han residents of Xinjiang. Though the Go West Campaign as the latest regional economic policy to be applied to Xinjiang promised to alleviate these inequalities, initial indicators suggest that the development of Xinjiang's agricultural bases, exploitation of petroleum and natural gas resources, transportation infrastructure improvements, and educational reforms are contributing to increased asymmetrical development within Xinjiang, rather than alleviating pre-existing inequalities.

Though the cotton strategy has achieved growth in Xinjiang's cotton production, former Uighur cotton production bases in southern Xinjiang are experiencing slow or stagnant growth, not surprising given the comparative advantage of the larger XPCC farms. Though specialty cotton strains are being promoted successfully, this avenue appears closed to independent farming operations and thus the majority of Uighur farmers will not benefit directly. Even the initial stages of the oil and petroleum components of the two pillar strategy are bringing few rewards for Xinjiang's indigenous population with oil and petroleum workers being transferred

to Xinjiang from other parts of China. Though both pillars are contributing to Xinjiang's rising GDP, migrant Han workers are the primary benefactors.

In this regard, the Go West Campaign is similar to past development policies implemented in Xinjiang. The most significant demographic change since the founding of the PRC in 1949 has been the increase of Xinjiang's Han population. Though only 6.7 percent of the province's population was Han in 1949, this percentage has reached 40 percent primarily through migration of Han from neighboring provinces. As in the past, this latest campaign is promoting Han immigration in a similar process to earlier policies dating back to the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (1735-95). Though the campaign promised to promote integration through economic development and a reduction in economic asymmetry between Xinjiang and the rest of China, it is promoting integration through the immigration.

Even the promised improvements in transportation infrastructure development and education policies have failed to promote equality, with investment in research and development, and education, falling in the predominantly Uighur areas of southern Xinjiang. Rates of illiteracy have dramatically increased and past gains obtained through educational preference politics are being eroded, making it less likely that the occupational attainment gap between Uighur and Han will close. Sentiment among the Uighur seems to match these indicators. Herbert Yee's survey in Urumqi, where many components of the Go West Campaign have been concentrated, regarding perceptions in increases in the standard of living under reform policies found that 15.1% of Uighur thought that their standard of living had grown faster than that of the Han, while 46% thought that the increase was about the same with 38% claiming that their standard of living had risen at a slower rate in comparison to that of the Han (Yee 2003: 443).

Though China's Campaign to Develop the West may be promoting the overall economic growth of regions like Xinjiang as well as promoting greater integration through migration of Han workers, its initial stages are not fulfilling the Beijing's stated objectives of reducing asymmetric development. In order to obtain social cohesion and foster "an expectation of a new order of social experience that will encompass both harmony and the official promotion of diversity (Chao 1996:211)," China's economic development must coincide with policies that allow for the development of all of China's human capital.

## APPENDIX

### GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS

西新疆维吾尔自治区	Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region
部大开发竞选活动	Great Western Development Campaign
新疆统计年鉴	Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps
兵团	Unit, or corps – Often used when referring to the XPCC
老新疆人	Han who migrated prior to Xinjiang prior to the reform period
铲沙子	“Mixing Sand” refers to policy to promote integration through the resettlement of Han.
下维	Colloqial phrase referring to the dismissal of Uighur workers before Han workers in reforms of state owned enterprises



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