Ethnoregional Disparity, Ethnoterritoriality and Peripheral Nationalism:
Socioracial Dilemmas in Contemporary China

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Abstract

While Chinese economic reform in the recent decades has brought about stunning economic miracles, it also aggravated the problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality that continue to plague China in her politico-socioeconomic development into the new millennium, and with poverty having the properties of being concentrated in the western region and in the ethnic minority areas, ethnoregionalization of poverty inevitably ensues, presenting the country not only with economic challenges but also long-term sociopolitical uncertainties. Focusing on the involuted nexus between the challenges posed by central-peripheral conflicts, ethnoterritorial aspirations, income and wealth inequalities and interregional economic disparity exacerbated by the country's "retreat from equality" over the recent decades, the revival of old regionalisms, the creation of new regionalisms brought about by increased local autonomy, as well as the evolving role of the one-party State in the economy and society, this paper proceeds to ponder the pitfalls and prospects of further decentralization and contemplates the feasibility of the road beyond fiscal federalism. While the alleviation of the multi-faceted problem of poverty in China is inevitably linked to the country's regional and minority policies and hence may call for a stronger emphasis on the elements of decentralization and localization, the paper does caution that the same problem with its ethnoregional dimension may also add to decentralization the threat of centrifugal tendencies especially if decentralization leads to a politics of cutthroat competition instead of a decentralized politics of accommodation and the resultant provincial protectionism intensifies local particularism and precipitates secessionistic ethnogenesis or reethnicization.

Keywords: *ethnic diversity, ethnoterritoriality, national question, peripheral nationalism, ethnoregionalism, intergroup relations*

1. Introduction

In terms of the link between ethnic diversity and public policy, the outwardly homogeneous China shares with a country like multiethnic Spain in their common majority-minority ethnic configuration, as compared to, say, countries like the mainly bi-ethnic Belgium and Malaysia which are characterized by a "precarious balance" in intergroup relationship[1]. While the development of the Spanish political reform is influenced by the dominant group's reaction to subordinate groups' aspirations and that of Belgium or Malaysia is shaped more by intergroup competition and variations in the balance of power, China is unique due to her long-running absolute Han predominance in demography and political configuration, with her minority ethnic groups – while large in absolute numbers – as a whole not even reaching a critical mass as a proportion of the country's total population. Yet multiethnic countries like Spain and China share much in terms of the territoriality of their ethnic divisions, homeland nature of all the major ethnic factions, though not level of economic affluence and political democracy and any common strategy of adopting some form of political decentralization and fiscal federalism during the last few decades in response to the exigencies engendered by their respective patterns of ethnic conflicts.

2. Ethnic Identity and the Nationality Question

The fact that China is technically speaking, if one follows the critical mass approach[2], not a multiethnic country, with the majority Han constituting 92 per cent of the population, often obscures the fact that the ethnic minorities are huge in absolute numbers – about 110 million in total, including the 16 million Zhuang, 10 million Manchu, 9 million Hui, 8 million Uygurs, 5 million Mongols and 5 million Tibetans – although they are practically dwarfed almost to invisibility by the sheer size of the Han population. Although the race-neutral[3] policy of the Chinese State does contain certain elements of affirmative action in favour of the minorities, poverty is still highly concentrated in the ethnic minority areas[4] and ethnic regions in western China are clearly disadvantaged for both historical (being marginalized by centuries of Han-Chinese imperial expansion[5]) and geographical (e.g. terrains which are mountainous, desertified, environmentally fragile) reasons. Despite that, these ethnic minorities' pattern of habitation should no doubt be of strategic concern for the central government, for the country's over 21000 km land frontier borderline region is basically populated with these minorities who are also distributed over 64 per cent of the whole country (Chen, Wang, Chen and Fang, 2007: 61). In general, China's ethnic distribution simultaneously shows patterns of concentration as well as intermingling.

There is wide geographical distribution of each ethnic group, showing a pattern of wide scattering with small concentrations – the Hui, for instance, who are distributed across most provinces/zizhiqu and most cities, towns and counties of the country, relatively more so in Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Shandong, Anhui and Liaoning, but with a sixth of the total population concentrated in the Ningxia Hui Zizhiqu; or the Manchu who are distributed among over a thousand cities, towns and counties across the country, but with relative concentration in the Northeast and with over 50 per cent of the total population inhabiting the Liaoning province, over 2.11 million in Hebei, 1.03 million in Heilongjiang and 0.99 million in Jilin; or the Zhuang with 87 per cent of the total population of over 16.17 million

Table 1 China: Ethnic Composition – The National Picture (percentage)

#	Group	%	#	Group	%
1	Han 汉	92	29	Tu 土	0.017
2	Zhuang 壮	1	30	Xibe (Xibo) 锡伯	0.015
3	Manchu (Man) 满	0.9	31	Mulam (Mulao) 仫佬	0.014
4	Hui 回	0.8	32	Kirghiz (Kirgiz) 柯尔克孜	0.013
5	Miao 苗	0.7	33	Daur (Tahur) 达斡尔	0.0108
6	Uyghur (Uygur) 维吾尔	0.63	34	Jingpho (Jingpo) 景颇	0.0106
7	Yi 彝	0.58	35	Salar (Sala) 撒拉	0.0077
8	Tujia 土家	0.51	36	Blang (Bulang) 布朗	0.0073
9	Mongol 蒙古	0.43	37	Maonan 毛南	0.006
10	Phöpa (Zang/Tibetan) 藏	0.41	38	Tajik 塔吉克	0.0029
11	Bouyei (Buyi) 布依	0.23	39	Pumi 普米	0.0026
12	Dong 侗	0.22	40	Achang 阿昌	0.0025
13	Yao 瑶	0.19	41	Nu 怒	0.0024
14	Chosŏn (Korean) 朝鲜	0.17	42	Evenki (Ewenki) 鄂温克	0.0023
15	Bai 白	0.14	43	Kinh (Vietnamese) 京	0.0017
16	Hani 哈尼	0.11	44	Jinuo (Jino) 基诺	0.0016
17	Li 黎	0.0985	45	De'ang 德昂	0.0014
18	Kazakh (Kazak) 哈萨克	0.0983	46	Uzbek (Ozbek) 乌孜别克	0.0013
19	Dai 傣	0.091	47	Russki (Russian) 俄罗斯	0.0012
20	She 畲	0.06	48	Yugur (Yugu) 裕固	0.00109
21	Lisu 傈僳	0.05	49	Bonan (Bao'an) 保安	0.00103
22	Gelao (Gelo) 仡佬	0.039	50	Oroqen (Olunchun) 鄂伦春	0.00062
23	Lahu 拉祜	0.036	51	Moinba (Menba) 门巴	0.00066
24	Dongxiang 东乡	0.033	52	Drung (Dulong) 独龙	0.00052
25	Wa (Va) 佤	0.0312	53	Tatar (Tartar) 塔塔尔	0.00045
26	Sui (Shui) 水	0.0307	54	Hezhen (Hezhe) 赫哲	0.00038
27	Nakhi (Naxi) 纳西	0.025	55	Gaoshan 高山	0.00025
28	Qiang 羌	0.018	56	Luoba (Lhoba) 珞巴	0.00021

Source: Computed with census data.

Table 2 China: Ethnic Distribution[#] by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi[+]

	Province/zizhiqu/zhixiashi	*Ethnic distribution*
1	**Qinghai***	Han 汉 54%; Tibetan 藏 23%; Hui 回 16%; Tu 土 4%; Salar (Sala) 撒拉 2%; Mongol 蒙古 2%
2	**Xinjiang*** (Uygur Zizhiqu)	Uyghur (Uygur) 维吾尔 45%; Han 41%; Kazakh (Kazak) 哈萨克 7%; Hui 5%; Khalkh 1%; Mongol 1%
3	**Guangxi*** (Zhuang Zizhiqu)	Han 62%; Zhuang 壮 32%; Yao 瑶 3%; Miao 苗 1%; Dong 侗 1%
4	**Guizhou***	Han 63%; Miao 12%; Bouyei (Buyi) 布依 8%; Dong 5%; Tujia 土家 4%; Yi 彝 2%; Gelao (Gelo) 仡佬 2%; Sui (Shui) 水 1%; Bai 白 1%
5	**Yunnan***	Han 67%; Yi 11%; Bai 4%; Hani 哈尼 3%; Dai 傣 3%; Zhuang 3%; Miao 2%; Hui 2%; Lisu 傈僳 1%; Lahu 拉祜 1%; Wa (Va) 佤 1%; Nakhi (Naxi) 纳西 1%
6	**Ningxia*** (Hui Zizhiqu)	Han 65%; Hui 34%
7	**Inner Mongolia*** (Mongol Zizhiqu)	Han 79%; Mongol 17%; Manchu (Man) 满 2%; Hui 1%
8	Hainan	Han 83%; Li 黎 16%; Miao 1%; Zhuang 1%
9	Liaoning	Han 84%; Manchu 13%; Mongol 2%; Hui 1%; Chosŏn (Korean) 朝鲜 1%
10	Hunan	Han 90%; Tujia 4%; Miao 3%; Dong 1%; Yao 1%
11	Jilin	Han 91%; Korean 4%; Manchu 4%; Mongol 1%
12	**Gansu***	Han 91%; Hui 5%; Tibetan 2%; Dongxiang 东乡 1%
13	**Xizang/Tibet*** (Tibetan Zizhiqu)	Tibetan 93%; Han 6%
14	**Chongqing*** (Zhixiashi)	Han 94%; Tujia 5%; Miao 2%
15	**Sichuan***	Han 95%; Yi 3%; Tibetan 2%
16	Heilongjiang	Han 95%; Manchu 3%; Korean 1%
17	Hubei	Han 96%; Tujia 4%
18	Hebei	Han 96%; Manchu 3%; Hui 1%
19	Beijing (Zhixiashi)	Han 96%; Hui 2%; Manchu 2%
20	Tianjin (Zhixiashi)	Han 97%; Hui 2%; Manchu 1%
21	Fujian	Han 98%; She 畲 1%
22	Guangdong	Han 99%; Zhuang 1%

Table 2 (continued)

	Province/zizhiqu/zhixiashi	*Ethnic distribution*
23	Henan	Han 99%; Hui 1%
24	Zhejiang	Han 99%
25	Shandong	Han 99%; Hui 1%
26	Anhui	Han 99%; Hui 1%
27	Shanghai (Zhixiashi)	Han 99%
28	***Shaanxi****	Han 100%
29	Jiangsu	Han 100%
30	Shanxi	Han 100%
31	Jiangxi	Han 100%

\#   China as a whole – Han 92% + 55 other "nationalities" (*minzu* 民族) including Zhuang 1%, Manchu 0.9%, Hui 0.8%, Miao 0.7%, Uygur 0.68%, Tujia 0.65%, Yi 0.63%, Mongol 0.47%, Tibetan 0.44%, etc.

\+   Decimals are rounded to the nearest. Ethnic groups below 1 per cent are not shown.

*   ***Provinces, zizhiqu, and zhixiashi now classified as the "western region"***.

Source: Computed with census data.

concentrated in Guangxi Zhuang Zizhiqu and the rest distributed in the adjacent areas of Yunnan and Guizhou; or the Dong who are concentrated in the adjacent areas of Hunan, Guizhou and Guangxi; or the Miao with half of the total population of 8.9 million inhabiting Guizhou and the rest distributed among the province's surrounding areas in Yunnan, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Chongqing and Sichuan; or the Yi who mainly populate Yunnan and Sichuan, but also Guizhou (*ibid.*).

A distinctive feature of the distribution of China's ethnic minority communities is that they are mainly found in the mountain areas. Other than some minorities like the Manchu and the Hui who traditionally stay on the plains and in the cities, the majority of China's ethnic minorities are staying on the plateaux and in the remote mountain areas, and out of the total of 106.43 million ethnic minority population (8.41 per cent of China's total population), over 50 per cent are staying in the country's mountainous southwestern and northwestern regions (*ibid.*: 62). Besides, there is an apparent ethnic distribution by degree of elevation. Take the southwestern mountain area as an example (*ibid.*: 45): the Han are mainly living on the plains and in the hilly areas of an elevation of 400-700 metres, Tujia and Miao at 400-1000 metres, Dai and Bouyei (Buyi) at 700-1500 metres, Yi, Qiang, Nakhi (Naxi) and Lisu at 1500-2500 metres, and Tibetans at 3000-4500 metres (Figure 1).

Figure 1 China: Vertical Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Southwestern
    Mountain Region
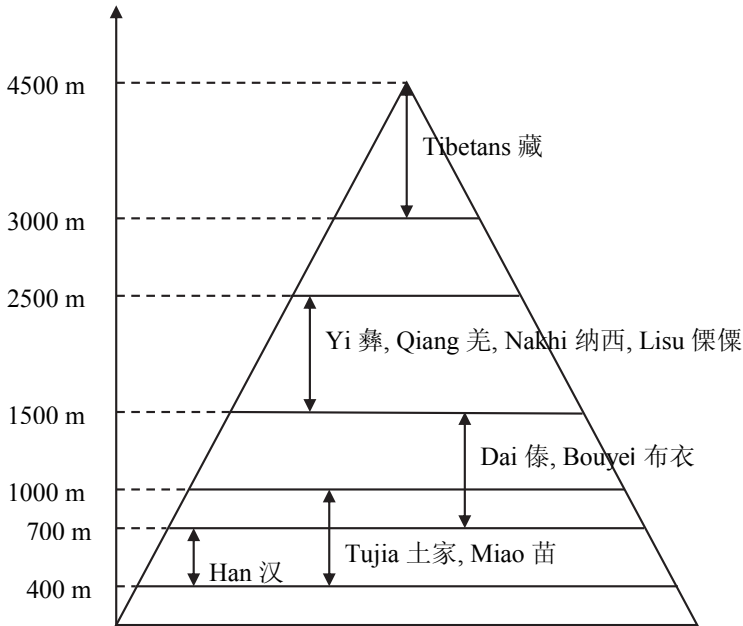
Source: Chen, Wang, Chen and Fang (2007: 45).

As noted by Gladney (1991: 6-7), due to the interchangeability of the terms "ethnicity" and "nationality" in the literature, there is much confusion over minority nationality identity in China. The term *minzu* 民族 is used for both concepts of nationality and ethnicity (or *zhongzu* 种族) in China, the former being what the Chinese State has designated "56 nationalities". While "ethnicity" should more rightly refer to an individual's self-perceived identity, it is also often influenced by State policy. Gladney pointed out that in contrast to the limited term *minzu* ("nationality"/"ethnicity") used in China, Soviet ethnological vocabulary distinguished in Russian between *ethnos*, *nationalnost*, and *narodnost* ("ethnicity", "nationality", "peoplehood") (*ibid*.: Chapter 1, note 19). In China, "nationality" (*minzu*) is what the Chinese State has conferred upon the 56 ethnic groups identified mainly in the 1950s (*ibid*.: 6). This historical background explains a lot about China's "national" policy till today.

Leaving aside the Han-non-Han dichotomy, even the so-called "Han Chinese" as a homogeneous ethnic group, whether phenotypically or culturally, may not be what it has always been taken for granted. The great diversity of the mutually unintelligible regionalects is well known. The speakers of many of the Chinese regional languages are in fact simply

too numerous for the word "dialects" to be used as an appropriate term to designate their languages. For instance, the number of speakers of either Cantonese/*Yue* 粵 or Hokkien/Fujianese/*Min* 閩 is larger than the number of speakers of either Polish or Ukrainian, the two East European/Slavonic languages with most numerous speakers except Russian, or the speakers of Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish combined. In China, regional differences, including the distinction between the wheat-eating northerners and rice-eating southerners, have always been observed, or as one observer noted, the *Hanjen* 漢人 and the *T'angjen* 唐人, plus "national minorities" who have to different extents been Sinicized:

> The contradistinction between Han Chinese and national minorities repeatedly made [...] suggests that the Han Chinese constitute a homogeneous, discreet community from whom the national minorities are readily distinguishable. In fact, however, the cultural gap between "Han Chinese" and "minority" is often no greater than that between Han Chinese of different regions. There is an almost continuous ethnocultural spectrum extending from the northern, wheat-eating, Mandarin-speaking Chinese at one end to, at the other, the dark-skinned K'awa in the south who are primitive food-gatherers and speakers of a language of the Mon-Khmer family. In between are the more than 100 million "Han" Chinese of south-coastal China who speak dialects other than Mandarin and who, in fact, sometimes refer to themselves as *T'ang-jen* (men of T'ang, after the T'ang dynasty, seventh to tenth centuries) rather than as *Han-jen* (after the Han dynasty, third century B.C. to third century A.D.) and the more than ten million persons of the "national minorities" in south China who have been to varying extents acculturated to Chinese ways – to the point, in some cases, that they had no awareness of being different, of being a "minority," until they were informed of the fact by workers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences who came to their areas after 1949.
>
> (Moseley, 1966: 8-9)

While ethnic diversity may affect the role of the State, whether in terms of the various aspects of decentralization or the trend and pattern of budgetary policy, it is not the ethnic composition *per se* but its interaction with the socioeconomic structure of the society concerned that really matters. The Weberian approach views ethnic group as being not "natural" (as kinship group is) but "rational" and primarily political:

> Ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the latter. In our sense, ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity.
>
> (Weber, 1968 tr.[6]: 389)

Contrast the Weberian approach with Geertz's approach in his 1963 paper on the effect of "primordial sentiments" on civil politics:

> By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens" – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves.
>
> (Geertz, 1963: 109)

Today, studies on intergroup relations usually see ethnicity not as a "'given' of social existence", but a political construct linked directly to power relations and resource competition. The boundary marker of ethnicity is frequently mobilized to meet the rising need of identity investment for economic and political purposes (the "situation theories" of ethnicity, see Barth, 1969). Heiberg (1979) observed that for political purposes, descent has never been regarded by the Basques in Spain as a sufficient criterion for ethnic inclusion. "Basqueness" is measured instead in terms of the adherence to certain morally-loaded political and social prescriptions, or more specifically, whether one is a Basque nationalist.[7] Thus it is as an instrument for political mobilization that ethnicity often plays a key role in the interplay between group activities and public policy[8] which again is apparent in the case of the Uyghurs' ethnic identity in Xinjiang, as lucidly described by Gladney (2003: 3-4):

> Chinese histories notwithstanding, every Uyghur firmly believes that their ancestors were the indigenous people of the Tarim basin, which did not become known in Chinese as "Xinjiang" ("new dominion") until the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the identity of the present people known as Uyghur is a rather recent phenomenon related to Great Game rivalries, Sino-Soviet geopolitical manoeuvrings, and Chinese nation-building. While a collection of nomadic steppe peoples known as the "Uyghur" have existed since before the eighth century, this identity was lost from the fifteenth to the twentieth century […] The Islamicization of the Uyghur from the tenth to as late as the seventeenth century, while displacing their Buddhist religion, did little to bridge their oases-based loyalties. From that time on, the people of "Uyghuristan" centred in Turpan, who resisted Islamic conversion until the seventeenth century, were the last to be known as Uyghur. The others were known only by their oasis or by the generic term of "Turki". With the arrival of Islam, the ethnonym "Uyghur" fades from the historical record.

The emergence of a modern "Uyghur" ethnic identity is thus basically a political construct:

> Competition for the loyalties of the peoples of the oases in the Great Game played between China, Russia and Britain further contributed to divisions among the Uyghur according to political, religious, and military lines. The peoples of the oases, until the challenge of nation-state incorporation, lacked any coherent sense of identity. Thus, the incorporation of Xinjiang for the first time into a nation-state required unprecedented delineation of the so-called nations involved. The re-emergence of the label "Uyghur", though arguably inappropriate as it was last used 500 years previously to describe the largely Buddhist population of the Turfan Basin, stuck as the appellation for the settled Turkish-speaking Muslim oasis dwellers. It has never been disputed by the people themselves or the states involved. There is too much at stake for the people labelled as such to wish to challenge that identification. For Uyghur nationalists today, the direct lineal descent from the Uyghur Kingdom in seventh century Mongolia is accepted as fact, despite overwhelming historical and archeological evidence to the contrary.
>
> (Gladney, 2003: 4-5)

Similarly, answering the question "Who are the Chinese?", Moseley observed that "Han Chinese" as an ethnic marker began with its use for political mobilization linked to the May Fourth Movement:

> Psychologically, the Han Chinese only became a nation in response to Western imperialism; culturally, this movement was greatly reinforced by the literary reform movement led by Hu Shih and others. And nationalism has been a dominant feature of Chinese Communism. Yet much of China's heterogeneity – in speech, diet, and physical appearance – so often remarked upon by foreign visitors still remains. With reference to its ethnic component, being "Chinese" is a dynamic quality. "Chineseness" may be likened to a geographical zone, a blurred place on the map, through which an unending stream of peoples has filtered in a north-south direction […] On the whole, this southern movement was gradual and piecemeal, being characterized by an influx of Chinese colonizers from the north who mixed with the local people […] The indigenous populations that have remained unabsorbed sometimes live side by side in discreet communities with the Chinese, sometimes retreat back into the hills, and sometimes attempt to emigrate southward. Thus, in any given national minority region of south China today there is a whole range of comparative "Chineseness" among the inhabitants which altogether eludes the dichotomy, "Han Chinese"-"national minority."
>
> (Moseley, 1966: 10-13)

The above description does not apply to Xinjiang – China's "wild west" – and Tibet, in contradistinction to the southern regions or, with Chinese colonization greatly facilitated by railroads built by the Western powers, Inner

Mongolia to the north and the northeastern region formerly being Manchuria. Incidentally, Inner Mongolia had already been overwhelmingly Chinese by the time the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was created in 1947, and in the case of the northeast "the Manchus disappeared and Manchuria became safely Chinese, dooming in advance the Japanese attempt to establish an independent 'Manchukuo'" (*ibid*.: 13). In this contradistinction lies the root of the Chinese government's present problem of Xinjiang and Tibet:

> Outer Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet retained their uniqueness: although held by successive Chinese dynasties, the imperial administration was always unstable because it lacked the ballast of a sizable Han Chinese community.[9] They were tied to China without ever becoming Chinese. Outer Mongolia broke away altogether and succeeded in establishing an independent state […] With the modern transportation and communication facilities[10] developed by the Chinese Communists, the colonization of Sinkiang and Tibet is now proceeding, although it has encountered bitter resistance.
>
> > (*ibid*.)

3. Socioracial Fragmentation and Ethnoregional Dilemmas

If widening socioeconomic inequality and deepening corruption are the two most prominent manifestations of the internal structural contradictions of the path of policy development of the CCP post-1989 – not least of which is the authoritarian political centralism amidst *de facto* fiscal federalism and economic decentralization – a third manifestation, as mentioned earlier, social and socioracial unrest, closely linked to the previous two, is becoming an increasing headache for the ruling regime, rapidly growing with worrying frequency and escalating scale. While social unrest in general has been so frequent that they have grown into almost a part of daily life, those with a socioracial flavour[11] should be the most worrying for the ruling CCP including the recent two ultra-serious incidents of ethnoregional disturbance – the 14th March 2008 riots in Tibet and the 5th July 2009 riots in Xinjiang, with the latter claiming almost 200 lives, mostly Han, according to the Beijing government or as least 500, mostly Uyghur, dead[12] and nearly 10,000 Uyghur "disappeared" as alleged by Rabiyä Qadir 热比娅[13]. Whether the riots and racial attacks had been triggered by the police and army firing on unarmed Uyghur protesters – in other words, a mini-Tiananmen – as alleged by Rabiyä Qadir and Örkesh Dölet 吾尔开希 or simply Uyghurs going on a rampage against Han interests as claimed by the government, the ethnoregional content of this latest, probably the most deadly, incident of social unrest is unmistakable.

While the July Fifth riots in Ürümqi was triggered by the June 26th Uyghur-Han brawl – which was in turn triggered by the alleged rape of two

Han female factory workers by six Uyghur workers which the government condemned as an ill-intentioned rumour – at a Shaoguan 韶关 (Guangdong province) toy factory involving hundreds and ending up in the death of two Uyghurs, reciprocal resentment towards immigrants or settlers is equally familiar in the ethnic homeland regions of China, typically Tibet and Xinjiang. Such resentment of the local ethnic communities against large-scale migration of the country's Han majority into her ethnic regions is nothing peculiar. Such outburst of resentment, long suppressed under authoritarian rule, has become more and more a rule rather than exception in the major formerly Communist Party-ruled countries including the former Soviet Union and those in Eastern Europe. Similar conflicts, albeit with differing characteristics, are also witnessed all over the post-Cold War World, whether in Darfur or in Irian Jaya, whether stemming from the rise of ethnoreligious bigots or on the contrary, the demise of authoritarian rule that makes way for the spread of free market democracy (see, e.g. Chua, 2003)[14]. Similar development can be observed in the case of China, which can be explained by the underlying, natural and inevitable tendency of the development of "antisystem" in the overall social change referred to earlier in the special issue's prologue on a changing China, which a ruling regime may sometimes find it "inconvenient" to recognize:

> [Some groups] may oppose the concrete levels at which the [values and] symbols are institutionalized [i.e. common norms established and legitimized] by the elite in power and may attempt to interpret them in different ways. They may not accept the models of cultural and social order that they think are upheld by the "center" as the legitimator of the existing distribution of power and resources, and they may uphold cultural orientations different from or counter to those upheld by the center. Other groups may develop new interpretations of existing models […] Even if for very long periods of time a great majority of the members of a given society may identify to some degree with the values and the norms of the given system and be willing to provide it with the resources it needs, other tendencies develop in connection with intergroup conflicts, demographic changes, and the development of heterodox ontological visions and these changes may give rise to changes in the initial attitudes of any given group to the basic premises of the institutional system.
>
> (Eisenstadt, 1992: 417)

Thirty years of economic reform, by bringing about a sea change in economic life and rule of game, has unleashed forces and momenta – whether in March-June 1989, March 2008 or July 2009, whether with or without an ethnoregional content – that had caught the ruling establishment by surprise and overtaken its ability to catch up and understand and to effectively accommodate. Raised expectation of what is now perceived to be possible

Figure 2 Davies's J-Curve Theory of Revolution
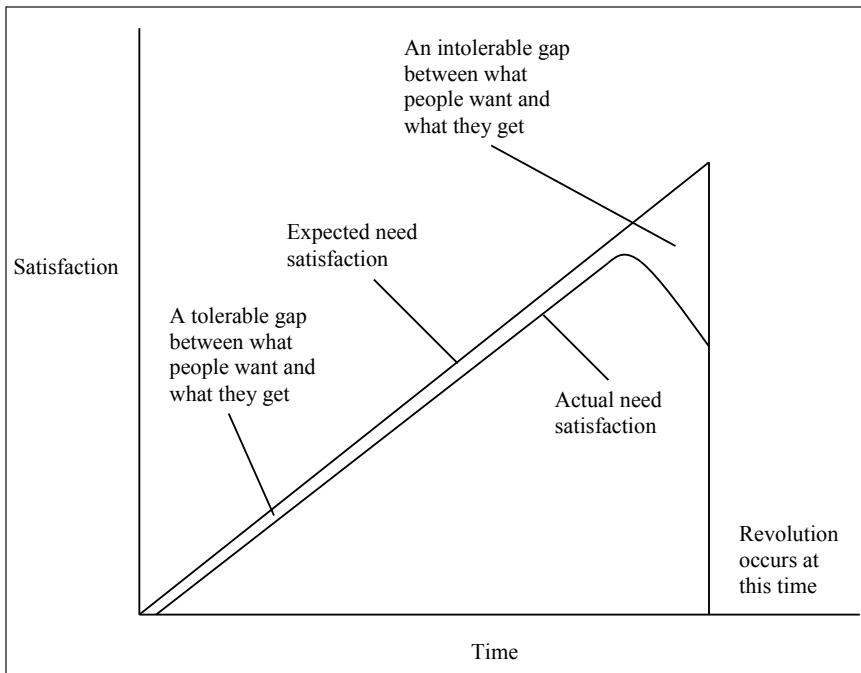
Source: Vander Zanden (1988: 584), Figure 21.2 (adapted from Davies, 1962: 6,
       Figure 1).

– paradoxically a result of the almost no-holds-barred shedding of egalitarian
"socialist" State monopolistic central-planned "*chi daguofan* 吃大锅饭"
[eating from one big wok] economic system for an unabashed rugged
capitalist about-face (or, officially, "socialism with Chinese characteristics") –
has fuelled the passion for speedier targeted change (see Figure 2 on typology
of political action in the issue's prologue on China's social transformation)
and in the context of ethnicity or ethnoterritoriality brought back the long-
suppressed ghost of identity investment which the ruling establishment could
be ill-prepared to accommodate (as depicted in Davies's J-curve shown in
Figure 2).

4. Peripheral Nationalism and the Ethnoregional Troubles

On the other hand, recent years have witnessed increasing nationalist
sentiment tacitly encouraged by the Han political centre – especially
among the young, many born or grew up after 1989, very much encouraged
by China's increasing international standing spurred by her new-found,

astounding economic strength and political and military might – a "centralist nationalism" that serves the CCP well. The "hundred years of national humiliation" stigma has been used time and again to explain or justify the upsurge of nationalism and the obsession over territorial integrity. Unity has been the greatest concern of the generation that holds dear to the conviction that China's shameful defeat at the hands of Western and Japanese colonizers would never be allowed to be repeated, and that, though not often explicitly stated, high degree of regional autonomy especially in the non-Han ethnic regions like Tibet and Xinjiang could be the prelude to separatism and pave the way to China's disintegration, as the cases of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have amply attested to.[15]

To understand fully the Chinese central State's unwavering position regarding such ethnoregional separatist sentiments, it is inadequate to attribute it, as quite often done, to "China's obsession with national security and the integrity of its historical borders" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 147). Instead, one needs to go back to the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism:

> Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question defines a methodology for dealing with specific questions concerning the status of communities called nations or nationalities […] According to Communists, the funda-mental cleavages of world society are along class rather than national lines. "Nations" are artificial units which came into being with the rise of capitalism and which are destined to disappear when capitalism is replaced with Communism; nationalism is a club used by capitalists to keep the world proletariat divided and subdued. When the proletariat seizes power throughout the world, then, according to the theory, nations and nationalism will vanish.
>
> (Moseley, 1966: 4-5)

Related to this, it is apparent that the national question has been central, not peripheral, to the revolutions in both Russia and China:

> […] the national question has been used by the Communists in both countries to promote the attainment of revolutionary goals as interpreted by Great Russians and Han Chinese, respectively. And when one realizes that more than half the population of Russia at the time of the October Revolution consisted of peoples other than the Great Russians, and that more than half the territory of China "liberated" in 1949-1950 was inhabited by peoples other than Han Chinese, it will be appreciated how immensely important the national question was to the success of both revolutions […] In concrete terms, what "Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question" as applied in Russia and China really means is that claims for national independence on the part of minorities in socialist countries is [sic] counter-revolutionary, and only in capitalist and colonial countries are such claims correct. Once the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, seizes

power, then the oppression of one nationality by another is impossible; anyone still demanding independence, therefore, can only be an agent, witting or unwitting, of world imperialism and therefore an enemy of "the people." By similar arguments it is demonstrated that national minorities do not need their own Communist parties, since their interests are abundantly guaranteed by the unique Communist Party of the country.

(*ibid.*: 6-7)

A correct perspective on the issue of ethnoregionalism and the root cause of ethnoregional secessionism and the accompanying peripheral nationalism – long regarded by the Party-State as irrational, ungrateful and unfathomable – free from the preconceived bias of "centralist nationalism" is important to understand the complexities of Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan and other chasms[16], for as Eisenstadt noted, such conflicts are but part and parcel of pluralism:

Conflict is inherent in any setting of social interaction for two basic reasons. The first reason is the plurality of actors in any such setting. The second reason is the multiplicity of the principles inherent in the institutionalization of any such setting – the multiplicity of institutional principles and of cultural orientations – and the power struggles and conflicts among different groups and movements that any such institutionalization entails.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 416)

On the other hand, the whole idea of the Confucian grand unity (*datong* 大同) in the Cultural China construct should not be taken for granted without paying due consideration to the will of all groups, whether dominant or subordinate, in the People's Republic of China. This so-called "grand unity" emphasized in the Cultural China construct, far from being a voluntary federalization by amalgamation, has always been a top-down arrangement in the millennia of China's history, shaped mostly by conquest and domination. As Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out in the case of the former Soviet Union, the disintegration of such an entity represents the dissolution not of a country, but of the command structure that has long gone against the genuine will of the constituent nationalities of the empire (Gorbachev, 1991).[17]

According to the 2000 census, Uyghurs are but only 45 per cent of the population of Xinjiang although the region was organized as a "Uygur Autonomous Region". Even if we add on the Kazakhs (7 per cent) and the Hui (5 per cent), Uyghurs and their Muslim co-regionalists contribute only to about 57 per cent of the population. Lin Huihsiang, writing in 1936, provided the following information:

Today's Hui 回 (Muslim) *tsu* 族 (nationalities) are mainly found in Hsinchiang 新疆, Kansu 甘肅 and Shaanhsi 陝西 – and mostly in Hsinchiang […] the T'uchüeh 突厥 (i.e. Turk) *tsu* were earlier found to the north of the Hsiungnu 匈奴 (Huns), later moved southward into Mongolia.

After the conquest of Huike 回紇 by Hsiachiaszu 黠憂斯 (Kirghiz), they moved southwest into the regions of Hsinchiang and Kansu. After the suppression of the Muslim rebellion, Hsinchiang was changed into a province in the Eighth Year of the Reign of the Ch'ing dynasty Emperor Kuanghsü 清光緒八年 (i.e. 1882). Today the Muslim population there still constitutes eighty per cent.

<div align="right">(Lin, 1936: 42-43)</div>

If Lin's data were accurate, today's Uyghur (and other Muslim) population in Xinjiang is a far cry from that in the 1930s. On another note, the history of Xinjiang is a history of continuous rebellion and imperial, often brutal, suppression. Lin (1936) wrote:

Islam's entry into Hsinchiang 新疆 began in early 11th Century, but then it was limited to the southwestern corner of the region. The expansion became rather rapid by the Yüan dynasty 元朝. By the time of early Ch'ing dynasty 清朝 the southern part was completely populated by Muslims, who came to expand into the region's north after the time of Emperor Ch'ienlung 乾隆 […] Since the conquest of Huike 回紇 by Hsiachiaszu 黠憂斯 (Kirghiz), Muslims had migrated southwest from the north to south of the T'ienshan (天山) mountain. Since then the T'uchüeh 突厥 (Turk) people have been mostly residing in Hsinchiang. After the conquest of Weiwuerh 畏吾兒 (i.e. Uighur) by the Mongols, it belonged to Mongol's Chagatai Khan. During the Ming dynasty (明朝) located in this region were Hami 哈密, Huochou 火州, T'ulufan 土魯番 (i.e. Turpan) etc. which were semi-independent, among which the strongest being T'ulufan whose population, other than Muslims, also consisted of Ch'iang 羌, T'ufan 吐蕃 and Mongols […] By the time of Emperor Ch'ienlung, Amusana 阿睦撒納 of the Chunkeerh 準葛爾部 (i.e. Dzungaria) rebelled against the Ch'ing government; Muslim leader Hechomu 和卓木 took the opportunity to lead the Muslims to fight for independence from the Ch'ing court but was defeated and killed. Hence the Muslim region again came under Ch'ing rule in the 24th Year of the Reign of Emperor Ch'ienlung 乾隆二十四年 (i.e. 1759) […] The next rebellion came in the 25th Year of the Reign of Emperor Chiach'ing 嘉慶二十五年 stemming from Ch'ing officials' persecution of the Muslim people. This revolt led by Changkeerh 張格爾, offspring of Hechomu, was finally crushed by the Ch'ing army in the 7th Year of the Reign of Emperor Taokuang 道光七年 […] Muslim uprising occurred again in the 1st Year of the Reign of Emperor T'ungchih 同治初年 and Shaanhsi, Kansu and Hsinchiang almost all achieved independence. Shaanhsi's and Kansu's independence movements were crushed by Tso Tsungt'ang 左宗棠 who was sent in the 7th Year of the Reign of Emperor T'ungchih to the western region, who proceeded to crush the independence movement of Hsinchiang in the 2nd Year of the Reign of Emperor Kuanghsü 光緒二年.

<div align="right">(Lin, 1936: 37-41)</div>

That said, the case of Xinjiang is still much more complicated than a simple Muslim struggle for independence against Han colonizers, as Gladney (2003: 24-25) cautioned:

> The problems facing Xinjiang, however, are much greater than those of Tibet if it were to become independent. Not only is it more integrated into the rest of China, but the Uyghur part of the population is less than half of the total and primarily located in the south, where there is less industry and natural resources, except for oil […] however, unless significant investment is found, Tarim oil and energy resources will never be a viable source of independent wealth. Poor past relations between the three main Muslim groups, Uyghur, Kazak, and Hui, suggest that conflicts among Muslims would be as great as those between Muslims and Han Chinese. Most local residents believe that independence would lead to significant conflicts between these groups, along ethnic, religious, urban-rural, and territorial lines.

In fact, influx of ethnic Han into Xinjiang intensified only after the establishment of the People's Republic, with the numbers of Han settlers in Xinjiang rising from less than half a million in the early 1950s to 7.5 million by 2000 and 8.1 million by 2006.[18] On a historical timeline, Han Chinese colonization of the region has only been quite a recent phenomenon with large-scale Han migration into the region in the mid-19th century:

> […] it was not until 1760, and after their defeat of the Mongolian Zungars,[19] that the Manchu Qing dynasty exerted full and formal control over the region, establishing it as their "new dominions" (*Xinjiang*), an administration that had lasted barely 100 years, when it fell to the Yakub Beg rebellion (1864-1877) and expanding Russian influence. Until major migrations of Han Chinese was [sic] encouraged in the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing were mainly interested in pacifying the region by setting up military outposts which supported a vassal-state relationship. Colonization had begun with the migrations of the Han in the mid-nineteenth century, but was cut short by the Yakub Beg rebellion, the fall of the Qing empire in 1910 […]
>
> (Gladney, 2003: 4)

Such independence movements have not ended with the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, as the ensuing warlord era dismembered the region and the nascent republican China faced the danger of losing the territory on various occasions – the short-lived East Turkestan Islamic Republic in 1933 and East Turkestan Republic in 1944 which lasted till 1949 when the People's Liberation Army entered Xinjiang ("peaceful liberation") and the region was incorporated as part of the new People's Republic, later established as the "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" on 1st October 1955.

As the Uyghur population dwindled to just 45 per cent today (compare this with Lin's nineteen-thirties figure of about 80 per cent) while large-

scale Han Chinese settlement has caused the latter's proportion to burgeon to 41 per cent[20], Uyghurs' resentment against what they perceive as the Han Chinese empire's internal colonization and the exploitation of the region's rich resources by the Han Chinese central State is inevitable. Large-scale demographic transfer of members of a country's dominant ethnic group into a minority ethnic region of the country inevitably, for the ethnic minority, raises the spectre of internal colonization, plundering of local resources, dominant cultural assimilation, and unequal resource contest. In the case of Xinjiang, adding to such perception is the historical legacy left by China's use of Xinjiang as the testing ground for its nuclear weapons programme from 1964 to 1996, which according to recent Japanese research results by Professor Jun Takada 高田純, a physicist at the Sapporo 札幌 Medical University, have probably resulted in a "conservative minimum" of 194,000 deaths from related illnesses out of the 1.48 million people who were exposed to radioactive fallout from the testings, 1.2 million people afflicted with leukaemia, solid cancers and fetal damage, including 35,000 newborns who were deformed or handicapped. The 46 nuclear testings over the span of 32 years at Xinjiang's Lop Nur have been disastrous in particular for the ethnic minorities including Uyghurs and Tibetans as wind direction had brought nuclear dust to the Silk Road cities and townships in Xinjiang and Gansu, bringing about cross-generational legacy of cancer affliction – with Xinjiang's cancer rates allegedly 30 to 35 per cent higher than the national average – birth deformities and shorter lifespan.[21]

Similar phenomenon can be observed in Tibet. The Sinicization of Ürümqi is paralleled by the Sinicization of Lhasa 拉萨. The official population figures for Tibet differ much from certain unofficial ones. The official figures have been disputed by the Tibetan government-in-exile who claimed that "accelerating Han population transfer into Tibet […] has reduced the Tibetan people to a minority in their own land [… and today] there are over 7.5 million non-Tibetan settlers in Tibet including Chinese and Hui Muslims, compared to six million Tibetans" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 141). However, such allegations of population transfer were rebutted by the Beijing government – according to whose official figures Tibetans constitute 93 per cent of the Tibet's total population – who argued that "the only Han Chinese living in Tibet are specialists who have gone there voluntarily to help in the region's development [… and they] make up less than five per cent of the population and many of the people are there for only a few years before returning home" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 141). The figure of 93 per cent Tibetans was one given by the 2000 Census. In fact, official data for the year 2005 gave the proportion of Tibetans as high as 95.28 per cent and that of Han as only 3.91 per cent of the total population of Tibet.[22]

5. The Inverted Paradigm: State Policy-Induced Ethnogenesis, Reethnicization and Polarization
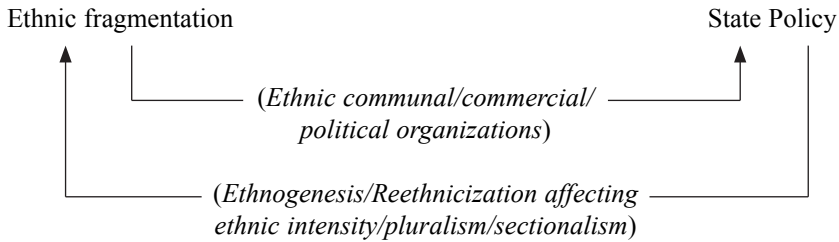
> *J'accuse*. [I accuse.]
>
> Émile Zola (1840-1902), *L'Aurore*, 13th January 1898

As a comparison with the case of China, let us look at an inverted paradigm in contrast to the discussion so far, using the case of Spain's Andalucía. Andalucía, of course, is Castilian. Nevertheless, what uneven development and public policy can do to fuel regional separatist sentiments is evident even in Andalucía where the population has little ethnolinguistic differences from the Spanish (Castilian) political centre, for while government responds to challenges from ethnic community organizations that seek to influence public policy, "within an inverted and complementary paradigm [...] ethnic communities take shape as response to stimuli which induce a process of ethnogenesis" (Gheorghe, 1991: 842-843). The shockingly rapid emergence since the late 1970s (with the advent of the *Comunidades Autónomas* project) of a politically disciplined and powerful regional cultural identity in Andalucía, which Greenwood (1985) argued to be as authentic as the Basque or Catalan ethnic movement, basically stems from the local people's grievances that they have been subjected to centuries of exploitation not merely by Andalucian capitalists, but by the Castilian political centre as well. This interesting phenomenon of public policy-induced ethnogenesis evident in the large southern impoverished region of Andalucía, which shares the linguistic identity of the Spanish (Castilian) centre, is the direct result of the post-Franco *Comunidades Autónomas* project. "The rapidity with which a politically disciplined and powerful regional cultural identity has emerged in Andalusia shocked everyone", commented Greenwood (1985: 222-223), "[...] the idea that the Andalusian movement is something qualitatively different from the 'true' ethnic movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia must be exploded."[23]

This phenomenon of public policy-induced ethnogenesis is also evident in the increasing support since the 1980s for Italy's *Lega Nord* (Northern League), whose leader has declared the aim to set up a state called "Padania" free from Rome's rule and from union with the poorer South.[24] Such centrifugal development in Italy, of course, reflects the increasing resentment of the more prosperous North for having to subsidize the poorer South and a tax revolt against Rome.[25] Although from the ethnolinguistic perspective the country is relatively homogeneous (with small Sard, Friul, German and Occitan minorities), Italy's late but rapid unification has left a legacy of widespread "pseudo-ethnic" sectionalism, which is no less ascriptive than that Greenwood found in Andalucía, across its numerous regions and compartments, partly reflected linguistically in the local *dialetti* or koinés.

Figure 3 Interrelationship of Ethnic Fragmentation and State Policy

Ethnic fragmentation   State Policy

(*Ethnic communal/commercial/*
political organizations)

(*Ethnogenesis/Reethnicization affecting*
ethnic intensity/pluralism/sectionalism)

In the case of China, such public policy-induced ethnogenesis is evident in, for instance, the most assimilated of minorities, the Zhuang whose ethnic consciousness was virtually created by the Han-dominated central Communist Party-State in the early 1950s[26], who have begun to press for preferential treatments from the central government, as the country's deadly race towards economic prosperity continues to widen economic disparities between the ethnic minorities and the Han majority, making it more and more challenging to manage ethnic nationalism and ethnoregionalism in the People's Republic (Figure 3)[27], as well as having dire implications for the prospects and consequences of further decentralization and possible federalization, a critical dimension to which this paper will later return.

6. Western Regional Development Programme

It is a fact that Beijing has been intensifying efforts in developing the western region of China, including Xinjiang, in particular after the launching of the Western Regional Development Programme (*xibu dakaifa* 西部大开发). However, such heavy economic support and financing of disputed or ill-integrated regions for national territorial cohesion is nothing unique. For instance, ethnopolitical conflict brought about by the annexation of East Timor obviously had an effect on fiscal allocation in Indonesia in the years before Timor-Leste (East Timor) officially freed herself in May 2002 from more than two decades of Indonesian occupation and became a sovereign state. In fact, as Shah and Qureshi (1994) showed, the Indonesian "province" of Timor Timur (East Timor) received the highest per capita general-purpose central transfer among all Indonesian provinces (Shah and Qureshi, 1994: 62). Timor Timur, together with Irian Jaya (a province with strong secessionist sentiment), also received special preference in SDO ("subsidy for autonomous regions") grant allocation (*ibid*.: 65). It could of course be argued that Timor Timur was Indonesia's poorest "province" – both Timor Timur and Nusa Tenggara Timur had the lowest per capita non-oil Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of just about

Table 3 China's Western Region: Major Economic Indicators, 2005

|	GDP (hundred million yuan)	GDP growth (%)	GDP per capita (yuan)	Fixed capital formation (hundred million yuan)	Urban income per capita (yuan)	Urban income per capita growth (%)	Rural income per capita (yuan)	Rural income per capita growth (%)
Sichuan	7385.1	12.6	8440.1	3462.1	8386.0	8.8	2802.8	8.6
Guangxi	4063.3	12.7	8762.0	1775.9	8916.8	9.0	2494.7	8.2
Inner Mongolia	3822.8	21.6	16026.0	2687.8	9137.0	10.3	2989.0	14.7
Shaanxi	3674.8	12.6	9844.0	1980.5	8272.0	9.4	2052.0	6.9
Yunnan	3472.3	9.0	7833.0	1743.0	9265.9	4.5	2041.8	6.5
Chongqing	3069.1	11.5	10978.0	2006.3	10244.0	10.2	2809.0	11.9
Xinjiang	2609.0	10.9	13030.0	1352.3	8100.0	8.0	2482.0	10.6
Guizhou	1942.0	11.5	4957.0	1014.7	8147.1	10.6	1877.0	5.2
Gansu	1928.1	11.7	7341.0	874.5	8086.8	9.6	1980.0	6.9
Ningxia	599.4	10.3	10308.0	444.7	8093.6	12.1	2509.0	6.3
Qinghai	543.2	12.2	10043.0	367.2	8057.9	10.1	2165.1	8.0
Tibet	250.6	12.2	9098.0	196.2	8411.0	2.6	2078.0	11.7

Note: Rural poor for whole of China in 2004 totaled 26.10 million, with incidence of poverty 2.8 per cent.
Source: *Zhongguo Fazhan Shuzi Ditu*, 2006, p. 225, and *Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao (2007)*, p. 39, Table 5.

360,000 rupiah or US$180 (*ibid.*: 54, 254, Tables 3.8, A5.10). Furthermore, Timor Timur (and Irian Jaya) had the lowest proportion of own-source receipts in total current receipts and Timor Timur had the lowest proportion of aggregate own revenues of local governments in total current revenues and proportion of own revenue in total receipts (*ibid.*: 84, 86) that qualified the "province" for higher central transfers[28], but the continuing destitution of the poverty-stricken region was very much a result of the occupation and brutal military campaign against the independence movement.

It is also a fact that Xinjiang has not fared badly in development and modernization in recent years. In terms of GDP, Table 3 shows that Xinjiang has had a moderate performance among the provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi of the western region and fared much better than Tibet which has been the worst performer. In terms of GDP per capita, Xinjiang is the best among them. Rural poverty is still a serious problem for Xinjiang, with rural incidence of poverty in the bracket of 5-10 per cent but not as bad as Tibet and Qinghai whose rural incidence of poverty is above 10 per cent (Figure 4). In terms of urbanization, Xinjiang is also a moderate performer, ranking 17th among the country's 31 provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi[29], compared to the least urbanized Tibet (ranked 31st) (Figure 5). Other key indicators, shown in Figures 6-10, reveal a similar picture.

Figure 4 China: Distribution of Rural Poor
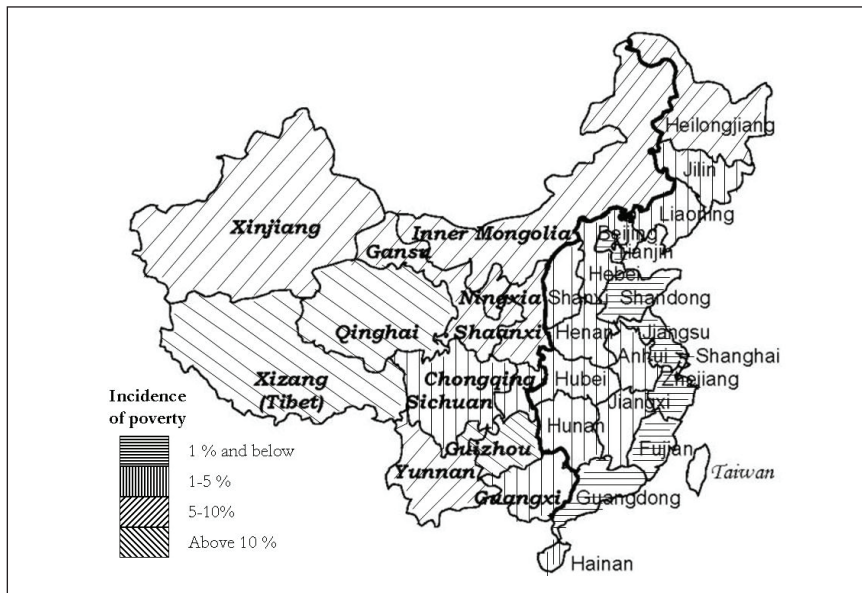
Source: Chen (2006: 176), Table 7-1. Data are for year 2003.

Figure 5 China: Urbanization in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces
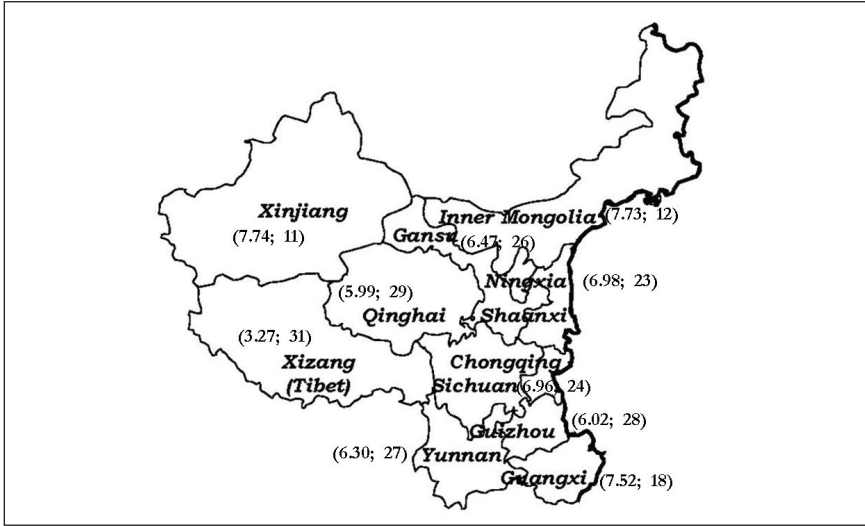   (Rate of urbanization; National ranking in rate of urbanization)
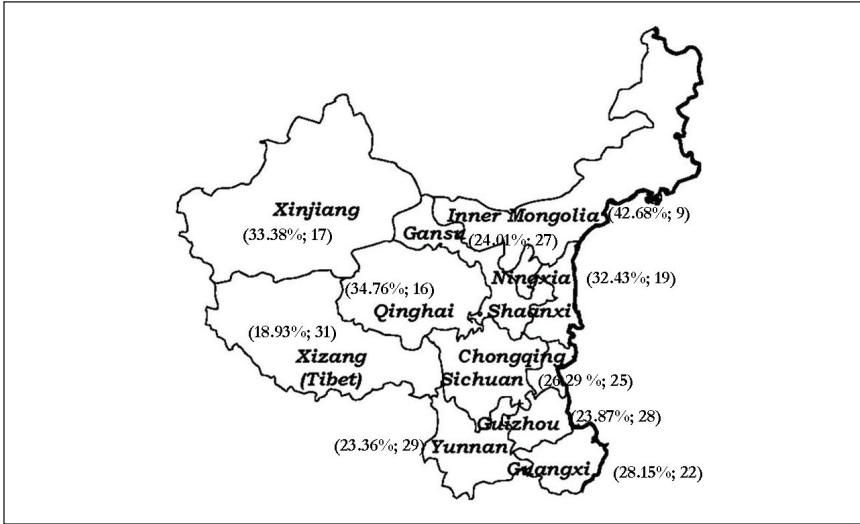
Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 232, Table 18 (original
        source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao*, 2004).

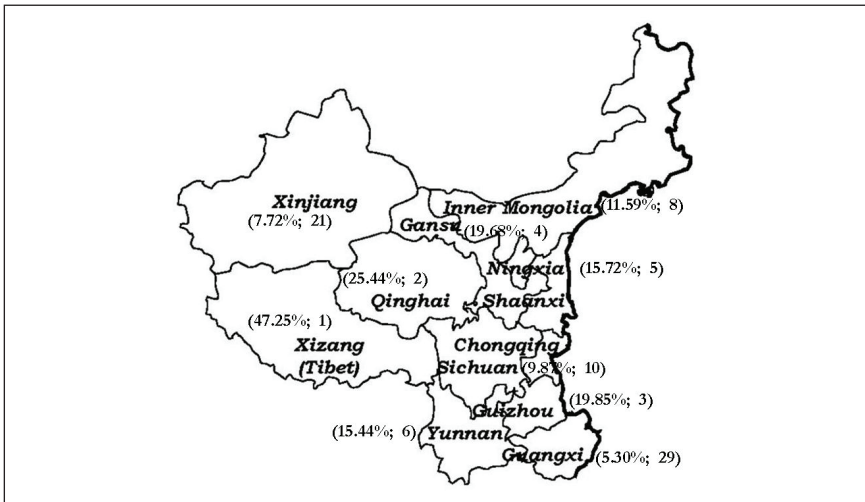Figure 6 China: Gini by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi
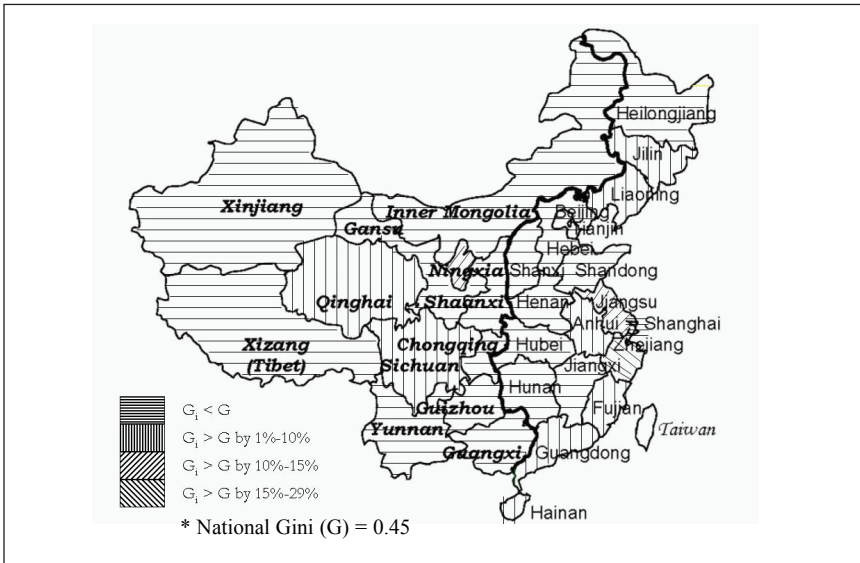
Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 161-162), Table 5-3(2).

Figure 7 China: Average Education Level in Ethnic Zizhiqu and
Multiethnic Provinces, 2000 (Years of schooling;
National ranking of education level)

Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 231, Table 17 (original
source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao*, 2004).

Figure 8 China: Illiteracy in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces,
2000 (Illiteracy rate; National ranking of illiteracy rate)

Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 230, Table 16 (original
source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao*, 2004).

Figure 9 China: Incidence of Absolute Poverty by Province/Zizhiqu/
Zhixiashi, 2005
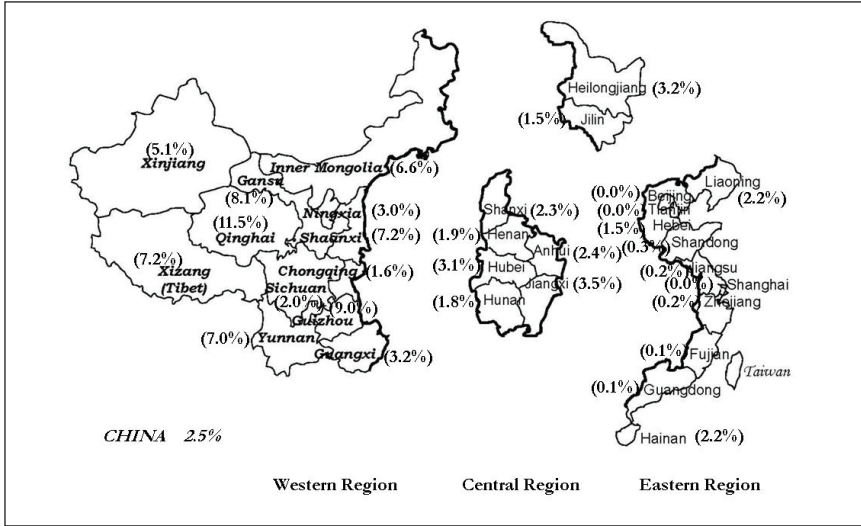
Source: *Zhongguo Fazhan Baogao 2007*, p. 39, Table 2.3.

Figure 10 China: Population Engaged in Agriculture in Ethnic Zizhiqu and
Multiethnic Provinces (Million people in 2000; Growth in million
1990-2000; Growth rate)
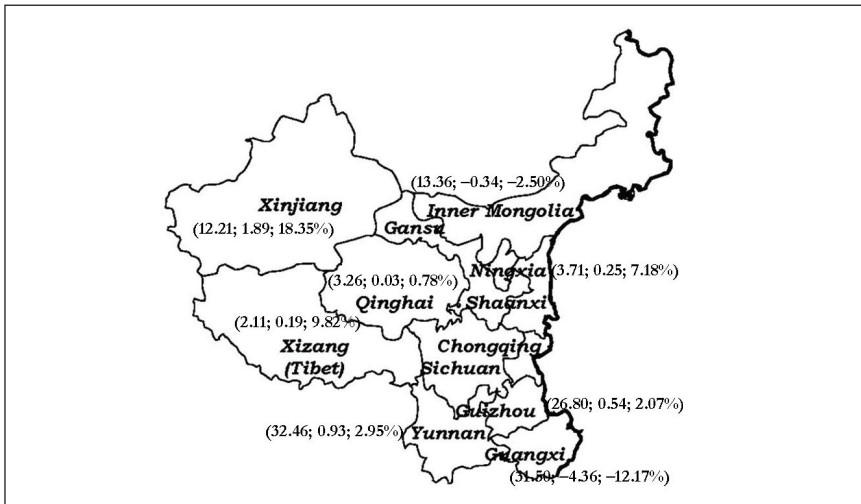
Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 232, Table 19 (data from
the 2000 Population Census).

However, implementing the western regional development project within a cautious political framework is not without risks either. First, with strong constraints in the devolvement of central power, it could be difficult to coordinate the interests of the central and local governments over the power of authorization and permissions and to determine how far the right to independent development could go. Besides that, it may not be easy to adjust the interests of local governments over limited financial resources and projects to be implemented. Finally, there is the fact that 80 per cent of the ethnic minorities in China live in the western regions and national border areas where the new regional development strategy is targeted. Without accompanying decentralization of political power and the conferring of substantial degree of regional autonomy in the control and use of local resources, ethnic minorities may perceive the central State's projects as attempts at internal colonization – for instance, the mixed feelings of the Tibetans towards the Qinghai-Tibet railway – leading to their outright opposition to the whole regional development strategy itself, thus exacerbating the already simmering ethnoregional tensions, even culminating in repeated disturbances such as the deadly 14th March 2008 riots in Tibet and 5th July 2009 riots in Xinjiang. Paradoxically, further devolution in China that seems to be the logical extension of the already decentralist process of economic reform may yet be arrested by the lack of the will for political change – which is crucial to the maintenance of long-term stability – due to the illusory confidence brought about by the economic success itself.

7. Regional Development and Resource Politics

In a way as in Spain where ethnic division is territorial with her ethnic minorities concentrated in Catalonia (*Catalunya/Cataluña*) and the Basque Country (*Euskadi/País Vasco*) which constitute the economic backbone of the country, in China where the major ethnic division is also largely territorial, the country's major ethnic minority groups including the Uyghurs and Tibetans are concentrated in the resource-rich western provinces and zizhiqu (Figure 11).[30] It was forecasted that by 2010, the western region's coal, petroleum, natural gas and a whole range of abundant mineral resources will be adequate to guarantee China's economic development or exports, and hence the western region – being the major energy source for the whole of China, providing 34 per cent of the nation's coal, 78 per cent of hydroelectricity and 59 per cent of natural gas (*Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao 2006*, p. 268) – is poised to become the country's important reserve base of strategic resources.

The geographical demarcation of the western region for the *xibu dakaifa* programme was nevertheless not an easy process, since being incorporated

Figure 11 China: Distribution of Mineral Reserves
           (Region as Proportion of All China)
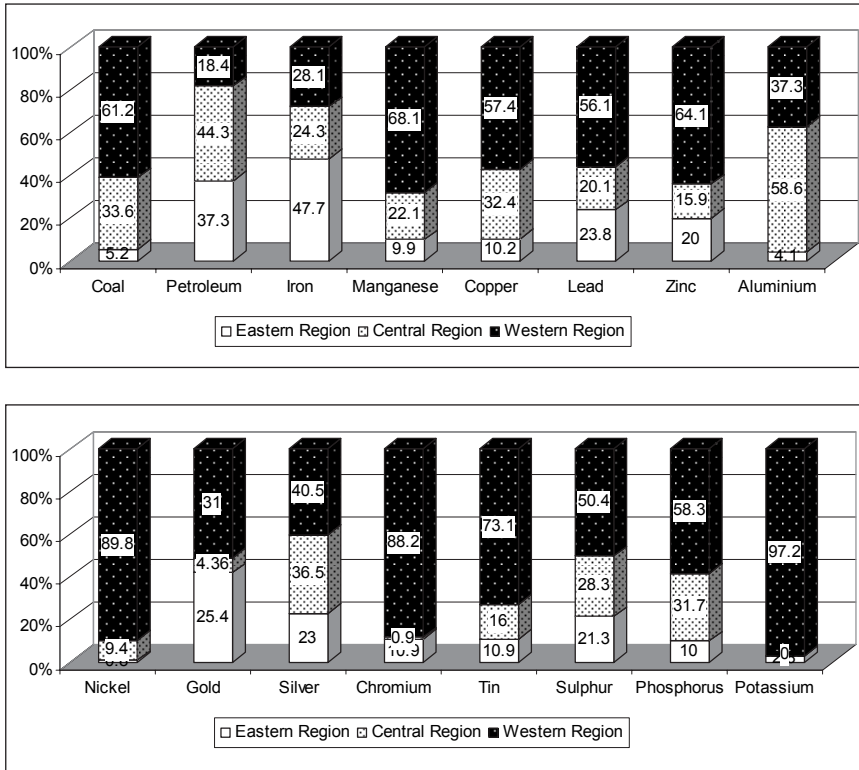
Source: *Zhongguo Diqu Jingji Fazhan Zhanlüe Yanjiu*, 2003, p. 122, Table 7-4.
         (Computed from "Quanguo Kuangchan Chuliang Hui Zongbiao 全国矿
         产储量汇总表". Calculated with reserve volume as at end of 1997.)

as a part of the western region means that the regional government concerned
would be entitled to receive various benefits, including priorities in obtaining
projects funded by the central government and other fiscal subsidies. That
explains why regional governments all over the country at that time of
demarcation were swept into a frenzy trying to get their regions classified
as "western" – in a course of events resembling the *fiebre autonómica*
(autonomy fever) when the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas project was
first introduced after the death of the *Caudillo* – no matter how unconvincing
their arguments were. However, given the fiscal constraints of the central
government, continued fiscal help from the central government could be
problematic. Hence, fund-raising would depend on the ability to attract
domestic- and foreign-capital enterprises. That explains why many regional

governments had raced to announce preferential policy measures as soon as the proposal was made for the *xibu dakaifa* strategy (*IDE Spot Survey*, 2001: 24). Such interregional scrambling for future benefits even at the early stage of the strategy can provide a glimpse into the potential resource contest between regions, especially given the understandable difficulty to coordinate and adjust the interests of regional governments over the distribution of the resources for the strategy.

Furthermore, the reassertion of old regionalisms and the development of new regionalisms in particular with an ethnic overtone have always constituted a challenge to countries facing an inevitable long-term prospect of decentralization and devolution, as apparent in the *fiebre autonómica* that threatened to bring about the virtual disappearance of the central Spanish State when the country's *Comunidades Autónomas* project was first introduced after the death of the *Caudillo*. The undertaking of costly projects, such as the creation of regional public television networks, regional institutes for business development and promotion, the development of major infrastructures, etc., by the Autonomous Communities in a concerted effort to compete with each other in the levels of performance and achievement, for political legitimacy and consolidation, have served to further exacerbate the existing rivalry over public resources and worsen the conflict between the Communities as well as between the centre and the periphery, with significant implications for the development of ethnoterritorial consciousness and interethnic relations in Spain. Even the fact that the Han Chinese command an unequivocal majority of 92 per cent of the total population of China needs not render the country immune to such threats.

The following section aims to take this discussion a step further by analyzing the socioracial problems of China's ethnic regions, with particular reference to the case of Xinjiang, with regard to the possible theoretical implications of the impact of continued Han Chinese influx on interethnic relations which will in turn affect regional stability in the objective environment created by the State's ethnic and regional policies.

8. From Ürümqi to Lhasa: Perception of Superordinate-Subordinate Power-Size Configuration

One important aspect of the numerical structure of ethnicity refers to the role played by the relative size of ethnic groups in the societal power structure. The superordinate-subordinate relationship in a multiethnic society is related to the concept of "minority" which avoids some of the definitional problems accompanying the concepts of "race" and "ethnicity", especially those related to the nature and significance of different types of group markers. The concept of "minority", instead, focuses on the size and strength of the groups involved,

in terms of variations in the economic, political and social balance of power. Wirth (1945: 347) defined a minority as "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination". This definition has been criticized because it makes the existence of minorities completely dependent on the feelings of minority group members, despite his caveat that minorities "objectively occupy a disadvantageous position in society" (*ibid*.: 348). Wirth's emphasis on the disadvantageous social position of the minority leads to his neglect of the latter's numerical relationship to the wider society. For him, collective perception of their distinctive disadvantages is the decisive criterion that distinguishes minorities from other subordinate populations irrespective of their number, nature and disadvantage, as a people "whom we regard as a minority may actually, from a numerical standpoint, be a majority" (*ibid*.: 349).

Disregard for the numerical aspect, in addition to the importance attached to subjective definitions of the situation by the minority, leads to the view that every instance of group conflict in society is by definition, a "minority problem" (van Amersfoort, 1978: 219). Many researchers besides Wirth have shown the same disregard for the numerical aspect, e.g. Wagley and Harris (1967), preferring to emphasize the power dimension of the "minority" concept. Nevertheless, whether the concept of a minority group depends upon actual numbers, is more than a matter of definition, since power and numerical dimensions are ultimately linked to each other. As Stone (1985: 43-44) remarked:

> [...] this basic demographic fact [of actual numbers] will affect many different aspects of race relations, not least the question of the "costs" for the dominant group of promoting racial justice: whether such policies can be pursued in a relatively peaceful, evolutionary manner, or whether they are more likely to lead to persistent conflict and violence.

When analyzing the possible impact of public policy on ethnic conflict, such disregard for the numerical aspect diminishes any projected result. Smith (1987: 343-4) emphasized this numerical dimension in his critique of Wirth's definition:

> To lump together all disadvantaged populations irrespective of size without prior study of the relationships between their demographic ratios, organisation and differences of collective status, assumes in advance the irrelevance of these variables or the randomicity of their distribution. Such assimilation of demographic fractions and majorities is sociologically unsound because the situations of aggregates often differ as functions of their relative size and organisation or lack of it.

Relating the numerical dimension directly to the question of political power, van Amersfoort (1978: 221) noted that in a modern democratic state the "characteristic problem for a minority group is not so much that it is difficult to ensure formal rights, but that the numerical situation restricts the possibility of translating such rights into social influence". A useful redefinition of the concept of "minority" is that by Schermerhorn (1970: 14):

> Combining the characteristics of size, power, and ethnicity, we [...] use "minority group" to signify any ethnic group [...] that [...] forms less than half the population of a given society, but is an appreciable subsystem with limited access to roles and activities central to the economic and political institutions of the society.

For Schermerhorn only those subordinate ethnic groups that are numerical minorities of nation-states qualify as "minority groups". He thus implicitly endorsed all other criteria set by Wagley and Harris (1967: 10) to distinguish (ethnic) minorities, whose membership must be transmitted by rules of descent and endogamy, from other disadvantaged collectivities (whose disadvantages are due to social mobility, e.g. refugees, captives, and other disadvantaged categories such as women, slaves, proletarians and peasants). The "ethnic group" is defined by Schermerhorn as "a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood", and the "dominant group" as "that collectivity within a society which has preeminent authority to function both as guardians and sustainers of the controlling value system, and as prime allocators of rewards in the society" (Schermerhorn, 1970: 12-3).

For a fundamentally bi-ethnic region like Xinjiang[31], it is apparent that the relationship between State policy and ethnic conflict and antagonism is influenced by the subordinate group's aspirations, the dominant group's orientations and their dynamic interaction. Figure 12 constructs a power-size configuration of ethnic groups similar to Moscovici's diagram of group power-influence configuration (Moscovici, 1985: 26). Based on this paradigm, a typology of multiethnic societies can be constructed, as illustrated in Figure 13.

Excluding case 4 which is by definition not applicable, Figure 13 shows a threefold typology of multiethnic societies. Case 2 represents a J*d*-N*s* type of society which combines a subordinate demographic minority with a dominant demographic majority – a typical example is China as a whole with her demographically (92 per cent) and politically dominant Han Chinese majority. Case 3 is an N*d*-J*s* society in which the numerical majority is dominated by a demographic minority – as the local Uyghurs and other real

Figure 12 Power-Size Configuration of Ethnic Groups

Power
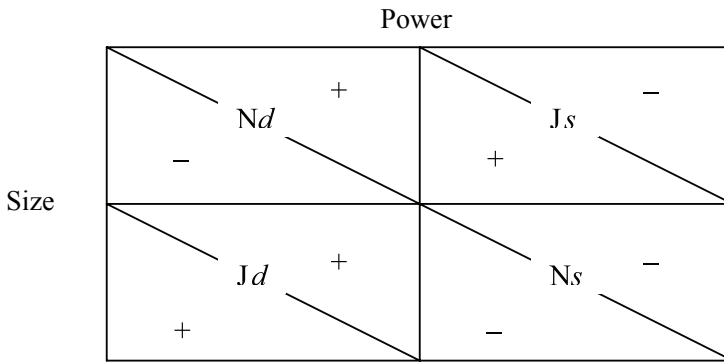
Notes: Jd = dominant demographic majority (Schermerhorn's "majority group")
       Js = subordinate demographic majority ("mass subjects")
       Nd = dominant demographic minority ("élite")
       Ns = subordinate demographic minority ("minority group")

Figure 13 Typology of Multiethnic Societies

Superordinate
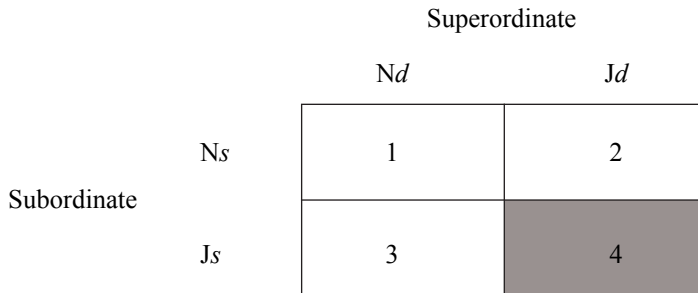
Note: Typology based on the paradigm presented in Figure 12.

and exotic minorities in Xinjiang possibly perceive themselves in relation to the minority Han Chinese settlers (around 40 per cent) backed by the Han Chinese-dominated central State, hence as an extension of the Han Chinese-dominated central State power. The subordinate-superordinate intergroup relationship in a society with no obvious demographic majority (an Nd-Ns society) is represented by case 1 – the mainly bi-ethnic relations in Xinjiang between the Uyghurs (about 45 per cent) and Han Chinese (about 40 per cent) or if we take the estimates of the Tibetan government-in-exile, the relations between the Tibetans (about 44 per cent) and Han Chinese settlers (together with the minority Hui settlers totaling about 56 per cent). If the non-Han

nationalities see the Han influx into Xinjiang as in a way an extension of the Han dominance of the central State, to them the Xinjiang society then belongs to the N*d*-N*s* category, while the continued influx of the Han following increasing economic prosperity of the region is seen as moving the society towards a J*d*-N*s* configuration, or probably it could have already to a certain extent reached that stage, if some unofficial data on population composition are accurate. Indeed, if we look at cities – the centres of prosperity – while the populations of Kashgar/Qeshqer (Kashi 喀什) and Hotan/Xoten (Hetian 和田) are still in the main Uyghur, that of the capital city Ürümqi/Ürümchi (Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐) is already almost 80 per cent Han.[32] Official data, in fact, show that Ürümqi's population is currently 12.62 per cent Uyghur and 74.70 per cent Han.[33] Similar situation is also apparent in Tibet and Lhasa.

Schermerhorn's concept of a minority mentioned above, which he redefined as a variety of ethnic group, is part of the fourfold typology he developed to take account of the numerical and the power dimensions (Schermerhorn, 1970: 13):

Figure 14 Schermerhorn's Fourfold Typology of Dominant-Subordinate Relations

	Size	*Power*	
	Dominant Groups		
Group A	+	+	Majority Group
Group B	–	+	Élite
	Subordinate Groups		
Group C	+	–	Mass subjects
Group D	–	–	Minority Group

The fourfold typology illustrated in Figure 14 includes not only "majority group" and "minority group", which are dominant and subordinate respectively in terms of both size and power, but also "élite" and "mass subjects" where numerical superiority and power do not coincide. Societies that combine the subordinate numerical minorities ("minority groups") with dominant demographic majorities ("majority groups") (D+A, such as China as a whole), are contraposed as the structural opposites of those in which the numerical majority of "mass subjects" are dominated by a demographic minority, the "élite" (C+B, such as Xinjiang and Tibet, if one sees the minority Han settlers as an extension of the Han Chinese-dominated central State power). While it is undeniable that the typology provides a comprehensive picture of the dominant-subordinate relationship, the C+B case, other than

cases of internal colonization of a country's ethnic regions, is rare in today's world after the demise of Western colonialism in the Third World and the end of White rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Nevertheless, the fact that such configuration is rare other than internal colonization does not imply its total disappearance – two obvious examples are Rwanda and Burundi where the Hutu majorities are still politically dominated by the Tutsi minorities.

Cases 2 and 3 in Figure 13 thus correspond to Schermerhorn's AD and BC configurations respectively. However, since societies containing disadvantaged demographic minorities do not necessarily have the complementary majorities that Schermerhorn postulated (e.g. Niger, Nigeria, Liberia, Benin, see Smith, 1986), the inclusion of case 1 is necessary, examples of which as we have seen above are China's Xinjiang and possibly Tibet.

Such a typology can be considered exhaustive, since "race relations are essentially group power contests" (Baker, 1978: 316) wherein symmetrical power relationships among groups are rare and often transient:

> Whatever the power relationship (symmetrical, where both are equal, or asymmetrical, where one is dominant), each group may initiate action or respond to the acts, or anticipated acts, of others [...] Given changing circumstances over time, group power capabilities (measured in terms of group resources, additive resources, mobilization capabilities and situations) may alter, thereby transforming the character of group power relations. At any given moment in time (T1) the power of A may be equal to that of B (symmetrical), at a later period (T2) that of A may be superior to that of B (asymmetrical, with A dominant), or at another point (T3) that of A may be less than that of B (asymmetrical, with A subordinate).
>
> (Baker, 1978: 317-8)

The infrequency of a symmetrical power relationship was also noted by Hoetink in his study of slavery and race relations in the Americas:

> A race problem exists where two or more racially different groups belong to one social system and where one of these conceives the other as a threat on any level or in any context [...] One of the groups will commonly be perceived and perceive itself as dominant; the chances that two racially different groups within one society would attain an equilibrium of power, though not absent, are exceedingly small.
>
> (Hoetink, 1973: 91)

Hoetink (1973: 47-8) basically saw the multiethnic horizontally layered structure as a special form of *Herrschaftsüberlagerung* – "a stratification consisting of at least two layers of which the upper layer has, as it were, moved over the lower one (by military conquest, colonial usurpation, and so forth) or the lower layer has been pushed under by the upper one (by

subjugation, the importation of forced labour, and the like)". In societies with such horizontal ethnic division, stimulation of solidarities based on economic or class position may have an aggravating, rather than an ameliorating, effect on ethnic conflict. By contrast, in those societies where ethnic divisional lines between the main population segments run vertically, it is likely that a functional relationship between economic differentiation and the increase of interethnic (horizontal) solidarities, such as those based on economic position, will emerge. These foster intercommunication and may serve to mitigate existing ethnic antagonisms. The two patterns of ethnic division are conceptually linked to the two different types of plural society – the hierarchic plurality (based on differential incorporation) and segmental plurality (based on equivalent or segmental incorporation). A society may combine both these modes of incorporation and form a complex plurality. Smith (1986: 198) noted that the segmental and differential modes of incorporation generate quite distinct ethnic tensions and problems. Hoetink (1973: 146-7) linked the two different patterns of ethnic division to the stability of multiethnic societies:

> It is interesting that the modern societies that often are put forward as examples of reasonably well-functioning cultural heterogeneity, such as Belgium, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, all have vertical cultural boundaries, to the point that their cultural segments even have territories of their own with a certain degree of cultural and sometimes political autonomy. Although European history shows many cases of repression, expulsion, or political elimination of such territorially limited cultural minorities, and although it would be naïve to underestimate the still-existing cultural and political tensions in countries like Belgium or Great Britain, it is correct to assume that a minimum of horizontal interpenetration and communication gives these systems a certain viability.

To this list, Hoetink added Suriname, Guiana and Trinidad.

9. Xinjiang and Tibet: Perception of Interethnic Power Shift in the Ethnic Regions

Nevertheless, symmetrical power relationship between groups in a society is rare and even if it emerges, tends to be transient, as observed by Hoetink, cited in the preceding section. For various reasons ranging from demographic growth to economic ethos to social mobility, one of the groups usually achieves dominance in the long run, thus pivoting the vertical lines of ethnic division into horizontal ones, as illustrated in Figure 15 which represents the relative positions of ethnic and class categories, but not their relative sizes, and expresses a combination of the horizontal and vertical principles of social differentiation – similar to that presented by Warner (1936) in his caste-class configuration for the US Deep South.

Figure 15 Vertical *v* Horizontal Ethnic Division
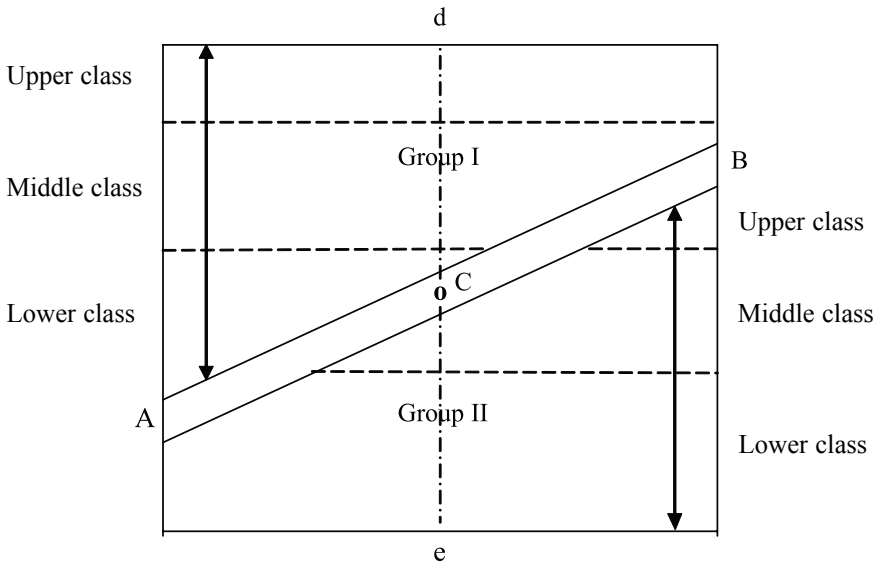
The diagonal boundary A-B incorporates the status gap and divide ethnic group I from ethnic group II (Warner's "castes"). The two double-headed vertical arrows indicate that movement up and down the class ladders within each group can and does occur, but there is no movement across the ethnic boundary A-B (Warner's "caste line"). Han Chinese penetration into Xinjiang and Tibet under the CCP rule would have at first created a temporary vertical ethnic boundary positioned at d-e, indicating a system of combined equality and separation – the upper class of one ethnic group (Uyghur/Tibetan) would be equivalent to that of the other (Han), while the lower classes in each of the parallel groups would also be of the same social status. However, a possible perception of the non-Han nationalities is that the tilting of the ethnic boundary as shown in Figure 15 into the position A-B would have occurred somewhere along the timeline as, being an extension of the politico-economic power of the Han-dominated central State, Han economic dominance in these ethnic regions grew due to various factors including political, economic and cultural environmental preconditions, initial endowments, long-established networks, etc.[34] With the ethnic line tilted in the way shown in the diagram, within each class level to which they have risen, members of group II (Uyghur/Tibetan) are thought of as socially inferior to members of group I (Han) of the same class, until as individuals they become assimilated (Sinicized) by the latter. It is a perception of the non-Han ethnic people that they are often looked upon as backward, dirty, lazy and superstitious by the dominant Han who pride themselves on assiduity and having a "5000-year culture". Marginalized by

centuries of Han Chinese imperial expansion, China's ethnic minorities have historically been viewed as *manyi* 蠻夷, i.e. "barbarians", and it was only after the revolution that the "dog" radical 犭 – implying sub-humanity – in most of the Han Chinese names given to the ethnic minority groups was eventually replaced with a "human" radical 亻. Paradoxically parts of the CCP's affirmative action policies for minorities such as exemption from the one-child policy, employment quotas and in particular legal leniency on minority offenders (in non-political cases) have added to the negative stereotyping of ethnic minorities in the eyes of the dominant Han population.

Returning to the configuration in Figure 15, it should be noted that a substantial degree of horizontal interpenetration and communication across the ethnic line is indeed possible and in fact necessary for the viability of the system, thus compromising the sharpness of the line A-B as a boundary. On the other hand, if the ethnic boundary is pushed further round its axis (C) towards a horizontal position, one group then becomes unequivocally dominant and the other, subordinate – the exact power distribution and extent of dominance depend on the skewness, i.e. the angle of slant of the ethnic boundary. The test of the existence of a superordinate-subordinate relationship is to verify a group's dominant behaviour towards the other within the same class.

Alternatively, as Marden and Meyer (1962: 42) did for the United States, the structure of differentiation can be comprehensively expressed by superimposing the class pyramid of the subordinate ethnic group upon that of the dominant community (Figure 16). The former is then dropped less than a full horizontal segment to express the inferior position of each class segment of the subordinate group to others within the class. Such a representation could of course be just a simplification of a real-world phenomenon, as the latter is often complicated by the phenomena of class compromise and clientelism[35]. However, a rejection of race and class reductionisms should provide a more rational theoretical foundation to analyze the complex relationship between the variables of ethnic diversity, class structure, and the role of the State.

Seen from another angle, in contrast to the vulgar Weberian perspective which argues that the increased ability of a bureaucratic State to realize internally generated goals will reduce the power of all societal groups "outside" the State, Poulantzian neo-Marxism posits that an "autonomous" State, capable of wide ranging and coherent interventions in socioeconomic relations, increases the social power of the dominant class, whose objective and needs it necessarily functions to meet (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1985). A dominant ethnic faction (Han) whose emergence in the ethnic regions is depicted earlier as inevitable in Figure 15, thus, in line with the latter theory, would be served by a powerful State (the country's Han-dominated one-party central State) whose interests it concurs in.

Figure 16 Marden and Meyer's Model of Dominant-Subordinate Relations and
Class Structure
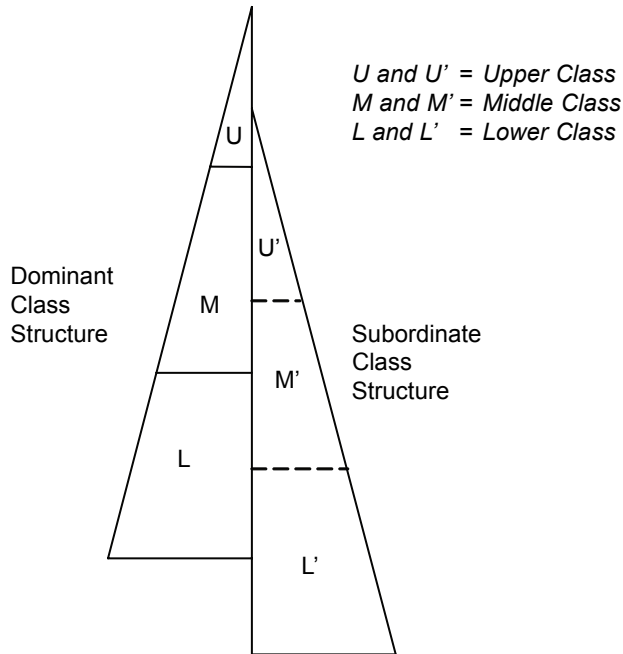
Meanwhile, interethnic socioeconomic inequalities in ethnic regions like Xinjiang and Tibet are playing an important role in accentuating interethnic resentment and discord through expanding social distance, while contradictions, as illustrated in Figure 17, generated between incompatible class fractional identity and ethnic allegiance tend to breed discontent and instability. With D denoting the dominant ethnic group, S subordinate ethnic group, E élite and M masses respectively, the vertical division in Figure 17 shows the dominant-subordinate ethnic grouping, while the horizontal one indicates the élite-masses socioeconomic class grouping. Three types of relations are evident here: *vertical relations*, between dominant élite and their masses (a), and subordinate élite and their masses (b); *horizontal relations*, between dominant élite and their subordinate counterpart (c), and dominant masses and their subordinate counterpart (d); *diagonal relations*, between dominant élite and subordinate masses (e) and subordinate élite and dominant masses (f). Intra-ethnic relations are shown by vertical arrows, interethnic ones by the horizontal and diagonal. While intra-ethnic relations in Xinjiang between the dominant (Han) élite and dominant (Han) masses (DE-DM) represent an extension of the overall intra-Han relations of the country, the SE-SM relations are between the ethnic minority élite (Uyghur cadres and

Figure 17 Ethnic and Class Relations
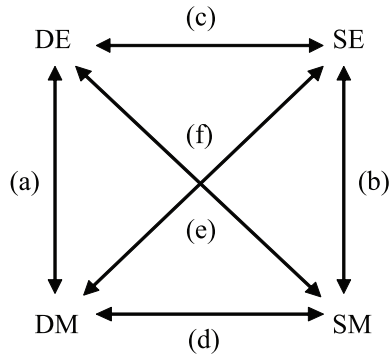
other Uyghur élites co-opted by the State) and the ethnic minority (Uyghur) masses who may perceive the former as cronies of the Han-dominated central State, as reflected in the Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti's accusation against Nur Bekri (Baikeli 白克力), chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, in the former's blog "Uighur Online" before he was taken away on 7th July 2009.[36] On the other hand, relations between the dominant (Han) élite and the ethnic minority (Uyghur) élite (DE-SE) could be perceived by the latter as being characterized by cronyism and clientelism[37], while those between the dominant (Han) masses and ethnic minority (Uyghur) masses could be perceived by the latter as representing a projection of the general biases, stereotyping and mistrusts as illustrated earlier in Figure 15. Similar configuration is also applicable to the case of Tibet.

The configuration presented in Figure 17 is in fact based upon Bonacich's (1979: 56-57) configuration of class and ethnic relations resulting from imperialism (Figure 18). While segments A and C in Bonacich's model represent the "imperialist (white) bourgeoisie" and "workers in the imperialist nation" (and segments B and D refer to their non-white counterparts in the colonies and semi-colonies), in the present context they may well be the dominant ethnic bourgeoisie and proletariat whose existence is a direct consequence of internal colonization and closely linked to the interests of the dominant central State and its ruling regime. While Bonacich's model refers to classes in the Marxian sense of the word, Figure 17 refers to "élite" instead. According to Brass (1985: 49), the term "élite" is not a substitute for "class", but refers to formations within ethnic groups (e.g. the aristocratic class) and classes (e.g. the secular élites) that often play critical roles in ethnic mobilization. Each of these élites may choose to act in terms of ethnic or class appeals. What determines their action is neither their ethnicity nor their class, but rather their specific relationship to competing élites in struggles for control

Figure 18 Bonacich's Model of Ethnic and Class Relations Resulting from Imperialism
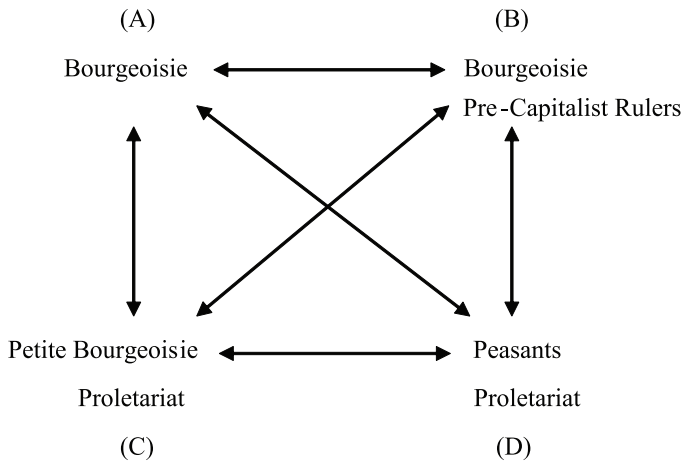
over their ethnic group, or in competition with persons from other ethnic groups for scarce political and economic benefits and resources.

An editorial of a US daily[38] relates the tourists' perception of Lhasa, Tibet: roadside sellers are Tibetans, shopkeepers are Han; manual labourers are Tibetans, clerical workers are Han; trishaw pullers are Tibetans, taxi drivers are Han; Tibetans or Hui might become mayor or chairperson of the "autonomous region" but the municipal or district secretary is almost always a Han; the Han people frequently get rich whereas the Hui people in the cities are mostly in the process of looking for a job or unemployed *nongmingong* 农民工 (rural-to-urban migrant workers). Seen in terms of such stratification and the rigidity in social mobility, the visibly ethnic patterns of employment and the strong identification of ethnicity with class as exist in China's ethnic regions could lead to a displacement of class-based frustrations by ethnic ones. Furthermore, while class mobilization may act to override ethnic distinctions, ethnic mobilization can obliterate internal class distinctions (Brass, 1985:23):

> Elites who seek to gain control over or who have succeeded in gaining control over the state must either suppress and control [...] or establish collaborative alliances with other elites. When elites in conflict lack the bureaucratic apparatus or the instruments of violence to compete effectively, they will use symbolic resources in the struggle. When elites in conflict come from different cultural, linguistic, or religious groups, the symbolic resources used will emphasize those differences.

(Brass, 1985:29-30)

Bonacich's purpose was mainly to show how imperialism complicates class struggle by dividing classes along ethnic lines, and how her "split labour market theory" (Bonacich, 1972) could be invoked to explain such complications. However, the latter may not necessarily emerge in the form of conspicuous ethnic conflict. For instance, not only could élite members of the different ethnic groups who are appointed leaders of the ruling class share a desire to minimize conflict among themselves, but each group could also try to accommodate members from the other group into their respective spheres of predominance.

It is notable in this regard that the championing by former billionaire (China's number eight richest person in *Forbes*' list of 1995 with wealth worth two hundred million yuan) Rabiyä Qadir, who was once a CPPCC member, of the Uyghur cause has been doubted by some quarters of the exiled Uyghur community who regard her "being persecuted" to be in reality the result of uneven spoils sharing from government-business collusion (*guan-shang goujie*).

Observations have been made that members of China's ethnic minorities are appointed to leadership positions in the ethnic regions, for instance, in the following comments by Tan (2004):

> Contrary to the bash-China writers' portrayal, the minority policy of China is better than most countries, and in fact better than that of the U.S. (in relation to the American Indians) and Malaysia (in relation to the Orang Asli). China's constitution requires minorities to be represented in the local government. Thus, in a Yi majority area the county head has to be a Yi, and a Tibetan in the Tibetan autonomous region. In the one-person one-vote system of democracy practiced in Malaysia that is still largely ethnically based, it is almost impossible for an Orang Asli to be elected in a state or national election. Even where positions are bureaucratically appointed, it is rare, if any, for an Orang Asli to be appointed to such a position. In fact, the main officials of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs are not Orang Asli. Whereas in China there are many nationalities affairs commissions, these are mostly run by cadres who are minorities themselves, although in sensitive regions, government-trusted Han officials may hold the real power. Of course, China has more security concerns over certain minorities in certain regions, especially Xinjiang and Tibet.

To fully comprehend Tan's assertion in the context of the political economy of ethnic relations, it should be noted that the dominant group may perceive a subordinate group as "exotic" rather than "real" (Hoetink, 1973: 177-91). Another example of such an "exotic" minority in Malaysia, besides the Orang Asli (i.e "aborigines") is the small *Gente Kristang* community (autoglossonym, from Portuguese "*Gente Cristã*") in the state of Melaka, descended from the 16th century Portuguese settlers and occupiers. Defined as "deviating in somatic and/or cultural respects, without being conceived subjectively as a

menace to the existing social order" (Hoetink, 1967), "exotic" groups (or Cox's (1948) socioracial "strangers") are not perceived as "real", because they are not subjectively comprised within the "societal image" of the dominant. Thus they do not attract the latter's hostility, as do "real" subordinate groups viewed as a menace. The case of the Ainu アイヌ and the Burakumin 部落民 in Japan and that of the Amerindian natives and Afro-Americans in the United States today are good examples of these two polar subordinate situations – the Ainu and Amerindians being in some way viewed as "exotic" *vis-à-vis* the other two "real" minorities; instead of bitterness and hostility, they are met with "a mild benevolence, a condescending philanthropy" on the part of the dominant society (Hoetink, 1973: 179). Such distinction between the two types of subordinate groups was vividly described by DeVos in his study of the Burakumin: "The basic attitudes held [by the dominant Japanese society] toward the Ainu are not as pejorative as towards the outcastes [i.e. the Burakumin] [...] the Ainu have been treated ambivalently very much as the American Indians have been, in contrast to the caste distinctions which underlie the treatment of American blacks." (DeVos, 1972: 326) Paradoxically, China's largest minority, the Zhuang, could actually be more "exotic" than "real". Being the most assimilated of minorities, the Zhuang's ethnic consciousness was virtually created by the Han-dominated central Communist Party-State in the early 1950s (see, for instance, Kaup, 2000).

By the same token, appointment to leadership positions begs the question: exotic or real? Whether members of an ethnic minority are appointed to leadership positions could ultimately be perceived by the ethnic community concerned as irrelevant, as it does not reflect the extent of autonomy and self-determination which the community may regard as crucial for the preservation of communal interests – be they political, socioeconomic or cultural – or in short, who holds the real power? For instance, at the time of the riots, while the chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Zizhiqu is Nur Bekri, a Uyghur, in the eyes of the Uyghurs real power is allegedly in the hands of the Party secretary Wang Lequan 王乐泉, a Han.[39]

10. Class or Ethnicity? – The Rise of Peripheral Ethnonationalism

> The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds […] If your pupils have fewer bruises, they are always hindered, always enchained, always sad.
>
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762),
> *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, Book II, Para. 209[40]

Rex (1986: xiii), in his remark that "what we call 'race and ethnic relations situations' is very often not the racial and ethnic factor as such but the injustice of elements in the class and status system", emphasized the economic, political and social balance of power rather than biological or

cultural characteristics of groups. Differences in power and the dynamic change of power resources over time are seen as the key to explaining racial and ethnic conflicts. Such a perspective enables parallels to be drawn, for instance, between the "religious" conflict in Northern Ireland and racial violence in the British urban areas, which at first sight may not seem to share much similarity. As Stone (1985: 38) argued:

> It is true that the sectarian gunman who enters a public house in Belfast and demands to know the religion of the drinkers before deciding who to murder has an identification problem not faced by the white racialist intent on attacking blacks in the streets of Brixton or Bradford. However ... [both] incidents of violence take place against a background of differential group power, perpetuated over the years in customary patterns of social relations and institutions, and both are to some degree a legacy of colonialism.

Such a focus upon power differentials and the conceptual problem associated with "race" and "ethnicity"[41] have led to the argument that the notion of "minority" is central to the analysis of race and ethnic relations (see the earlier discussion on the concept of "minority" in Section 7). Nevertheless, it is useful to compare Rex's remark with Cox's thesis (1948) that perceives race relations as mainly proletarian-bourgeois, and hence political-class, relations. For Cox, racial prejudice is a weapon to exploit others rather than a defensive reflection of group solidarity. Racial categories exist in the social life of capitalist societies because they serve the interests of the ruling class; the contradictions in these economies have not yet reached the point at which the actual character of the underlying system is apparent to workers (Banton, 1983: 88). Such reductionist Marxist legacy of perceiving ethnic problem as class problem, coupled with the fact of the absolute demographic dominance of the Han Chinese dwarfing the minorities out of a critical mass, could be clouding the CCP regime from effective understanding of China's ethnic problem, including that in the volatile ethnic regions of Xinjiang and Tibet. On the contrary, Wolpe, in his critique of reductionist Marxism which conceives classes as unitary entities, posited a different view:

> [...] classes exist in forms which are fragmented and fractured in numerous ways, not only by the division of labour and, indeed, the concrete organisation of the entire system of production and distribution through which classes are necessarily formed, but by politics, culture, and ideology within that division of labour, for example, gender, religion, the mental-manual divide and racial differentiation. Classes, that is, are constituted, not as unified social forces, but as patchworks or segments which are differentiated and divided on a variety of bases and by varied processes [...] Race may, under determinate conditions, become interiorised in class struggles in both the sphere of the economy as well as the sphere of politics.

> (Wolpe, 1988: 51-52)

Such a broadened understanding could serve to lead to a more balanced analytical framework on the trichotomy of polity, society and economy and in particular the political economy of State and ethnicity by taking into consideration both the two major dimensions of ethnopolitics – ethnic politics which includes both government responses to challenges from ethnic communities and the efforts of ethnic organizations seeking to influence State policy, and the politics of ethnicity which views ethnicity as a consequence of political action (Gheorghe, 1991), the latter "inverted paradigm" as we have observed earlier in Section 5 being exemplified by the waves of reethnicization in the Eastern European countries after the fall of the Communist Party totalitarianism and the phenomenon of ethnogenesis in Andalucía and among some highly Sinicized ethnic minorities of China such as the Zhuang and the Hui, as well as in the new-found ethnic intensity of the ethnoterritorial groups like the Uyghurs and Tibetans. Besides, in this regard, it is also instructive to compare Cox's thesis with the theories developed by Bonacich (1972) and Kuper (1974). Bonacich's "split labour market theory" is essentially a theory of ethnic relations which emphasizes the material bases of ethnic antagonism. It refers to labour markets which are divided along ethnic lines, so that higher-paid groups of workers are distinguished from cheaper labour by their ethnic characteristics. Although Bonacich described it as a "class" theory of race and ethnicity (Bonacich, 1979: 17) and located the origin of ethnic antagonism within the development of capitalism, her theory differs significantly from Cox's approach in that it attributes ethnic antagonism to the competition which arises from a differential price for labour, rather than to the strategy of the ruling class to keep two sections of the working class separate.

In his study of the revolutions in several African countries, Kuper (1974) found that, despite the existence of class differences, once revolutions started they developed along ethnic rather than class lines. Although class conflict is the source of revolutionary change in many societies, Kuper observed that in plural societies "it is the political relations which appreciably determine the relationship to the means of production, rather than the reverse, and the catalyst of revolutionary change is to be found in the structure of power, rather than in economic changes which exhaust the possibilities of a particular mode of production" (Kuper, 1974: 226). While Cox attributed the main forms of alignment and conflict, including ethnic ones, to the relation of groups (classes) to the means of production, political relations in plural societies, according to Kuper, influence relations to the means of production more than any influence in the reverse direction. Thus, conflicts developed in plural societies tend to follow the lines of ethnic cleavage more closely than class division. Such trend of development is apparent in the Eastern European countries after the collapse of Communist Party totalitarianism including the strife-torn Balkans as well as the increasingly the volatile ethnic

regions of China exemplified by the troubled Xinjiang and Tibet, and the potential impact on the long-simmering peripheral ethnonationalism in Inner Mongolia from the recent rise of increasingly anti-Han-Chinese ethnocentrism of the neo-Nazis in the Republic of Mongolia[42], that first country in Asia to come under Communist Party dictatorship and also first country in Asia to release herself from that yoke. A relatively high-profile case related to peripheral ethnonationalism in Inner Mongolia, as highlighted by the Amnesty International, is that of Hada who was tried behind closed doors in the Inner Mongolia Zizhiqu in 1996 and sentenced to 15 years in jail for separatism and spying and his support for the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance that sought greater rights for China's ethnic Mongolians.

11. Uttering the "F" Word: Is Federalism the Solution?

The term "federation" was in fact never officially used in China or Spain or Indonesia – countries in search of a solution to ethnoregional problems. Such notwithstanding, post-Franco Spain has in reality evolved into an incipient federation, while in China, just like in Indonesia, the term "federal" is still very much a taboo, although the existence of the Chinese *de facto* fiscal federalism is irrefutable. In a sense, post-1981 Spain has outgrown the fear of both fiscal and political decentralization along federal lines being a prelude to territorial disintegration, but China and Indonesia have not. Nevertheless, the idea for the reorganization of a post-CCP China along federal lines has resurfaced amidst the anguish, agony and bitter frustration among the exiled Chinese intelligentsia in the aftermath of the 1989 tragedy, in combination with the continuing cross-Strait tension, the "Handover" of Hong Kong and Macau to China respectively in 1997 and 1999, and the recurrent Tibet crises. Suggestions vary in arrangement details, including a prominent confederation proposal by exiled dissident and federalist Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其 (1992)[43] encompassing the "loose republics" of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (in an arrangement like that of the European Union) and "close republics" consisting of the rest of present-day China (in an arrangement akin to the US's). Yan obviously had in mind some sort of coexistence of federal and confederal systems within a single country – two systems such as those explained by Dorff (1994: 100): "[…] in a true federation, the central government can make decisions directly affecting individuals in the regional units without the formal compliance of the regional governments; in a confederation, the central government has authority over the regional governments, not over individuals, and hence must rely on the cooperation and support of the regions in order to exercise authority."

 Political federalization has come under the limelight again in the case of China with the arrest and jailing of prominent dissident writer Liu Xiaobo 刘

晓波 for organizing the signing of "Charter 08" (*Ling-ba Xianzhang* 零八宪章)[44] that included an Item 18 "A Federated Republic" among its recommendations on national governance, citizens' rights and social development:

> A Federated Republic. A democratic China should seek to act as a responsible major power contributing toward peace and development in the Asian Pacific region by approaching others in a spirit of equality and fairness. In Hong Kong and Macao, we should support the freedoms that already exist. With respect to Taiwan, we should declare our commitment to the principles of freedom and democracy and then, negotiating as equals, and ready to compromise, seek a formula for peaceful unification. We should approach disputes in the national-minority areas of China with an open mind, seeking ways to find a workable framework within which all ethnic and religious groups can flourish. We should aim ultimately at a federation of democratic communities of China.[45]

While a nascent federalist structure has already been observed to be emerging in China as a result of rapid economic and fiscal decentralization, there could be inherent dangers to bring decentralization beyond the fiscal into the political along federal lines. Acute interregional economic inequalities could be viewed as incompatible with the very concept of federalism, and it is hence debatable as to whether federalization should come before or after sufficient interregional equalization in countries with high levels of interregional disparities such as contemporary China, taking into consideration the possibility of centrifugal forces triggered by interregional equalization efforts such as the tax revolts in modern federations like Belgium or would-be federations like Italy (*ibid.*: 274).

Though focusing on dyadic (or bicommunal) federations and confederations, Duchacek (1988: 15-18) identified four prerequisites for the possibility of federalism or confederalism as a cooperative framework which, for the present context, could also be considered applicable to non-dyadic cases: 1) territorial diffusion of power; 2) pluralistic democracy; 3) commitment to establish or maintain a composite nation; and 4) compound majoritarianism, all of which are not clearly evident in the case of contemporary China, especially in view of the recent ethnoregional disturbances. A line of thought similar to Duchacek's is reflected in van Amersfoort's (1978) typology of "majority-minority" relations via a combination of the orientations of dispersed and concentrated subordinate groups with three dimensions of dominant group aspirations. Using the terms "dominant" (or "superordinate") and "subordinate" that convey more accurately the power dimension, instead of van Amersfoort's "majority" and "minority" which can be semantically confusing when size and power do not coincide, Figure 19 illustrates a number of probable outcomes produced

Figure 19 Van Amersfoort's Typology of Dominant-Subordinate Relations
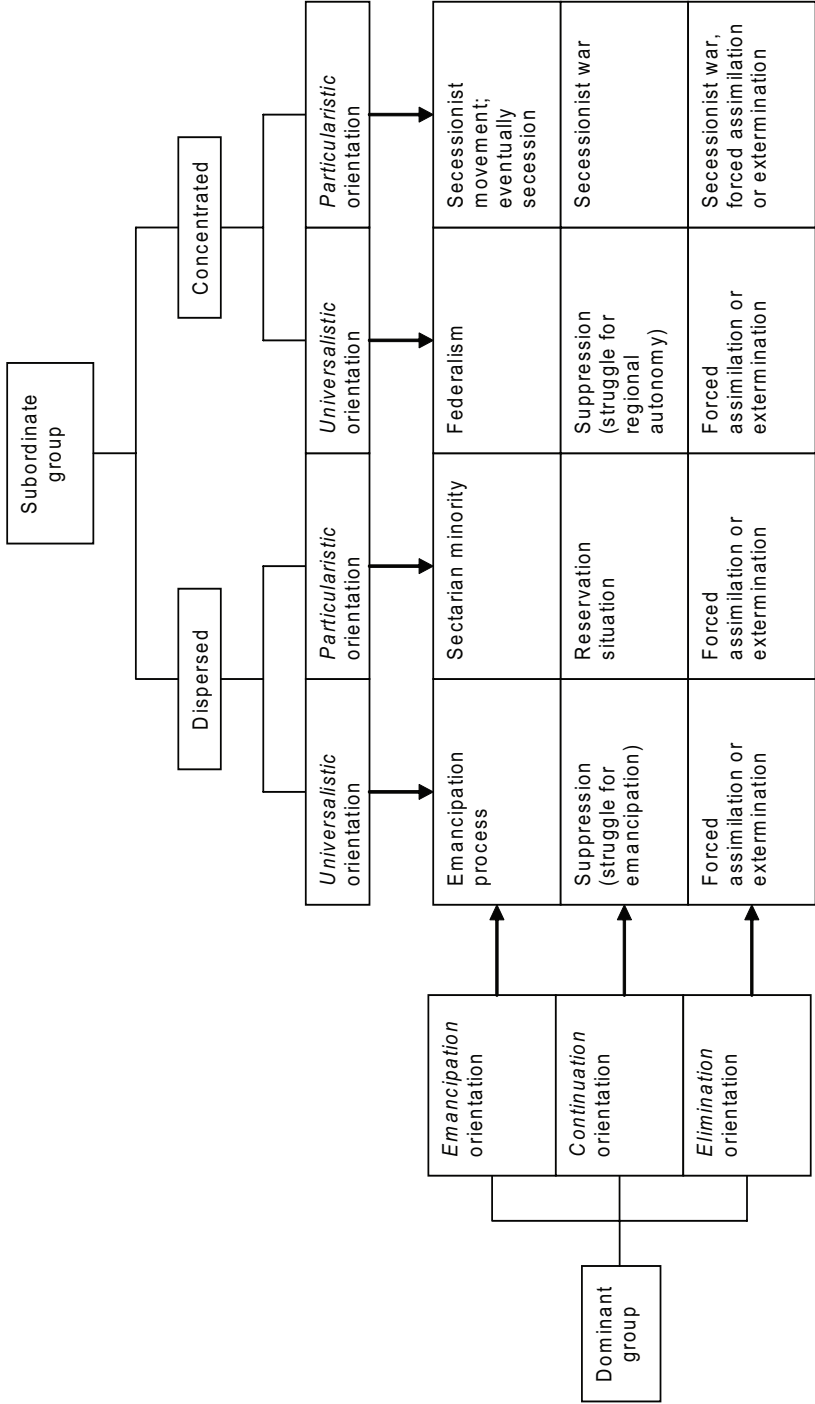
by this configuration. Ethnic consciousness and ethnic intensity, which are associated with the homeland/immigrant dichotomy and territorial policies in countries with considerable degree of sectionalism, play a crucial role in determining public policy in a multiethnic society. From this perspective, the goals of the dominant and subordinate groups are of particularly great importance. Figure 19 clearly demonstrates that a stable relationship between the dominants and subordinates free of conflict is an exception rather than a rule, since only two out of a total of twelve cells formed by the interface of dominant-subordinate orientations – those marked "emancipation process" and "federalism" – suggest the prospect of a stable form of participation in society by subordinate groups. Federalism, as a "process and institutional framework for territorial management of power and resources […] appropriate for those communities that occupy geographically delineated areas and are both willing and able to preserve and exercise self-government within these areas" (Duchacek, 1988: 16), is thus far from a prevalent phenomenon even in the world context.

While democratization and the federalization process (the latter refers to the *Comunidades Autónomas* project, as the term "federal" is not officially used) of the Spanish polity after the death of Franco have been looked upon by many countries with ethnoterritorial problems undergoing political transition as a model to emulate, van Amersfoort's model suggests that a federal solution may be an exception rather than a rule among nations given the different objective realities facing different countries.[46] For instance, in China, unlike in Spain, the lack of a stable democratic political institution and the existence of economic deprivation can render intergroup compromise difficult or impossible. In short, variations in one or more of these socio-politico-economic parameters can result in a drastically different form of State response to the objective exigencies presented by a country's ethnic fractionalization and of societal reaction to State intervention.

While the present taboo against a federal arrangement with high regional autonomy[47] has had deep roots from earlier times[48], it is currently being further enhanced by CCP's fear of losing its monopoly of political power as federalization would inevitably tend to go hand in hand with democratization. Adding to that is the enigma of Taiwan[49] and the problem of Tibet with their perceived links with foreign, especially American and Indian, interests. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union[50] always hanging like the sword of Damocles to remind the present leaders and people of China of the peril of democratization and regional autonomy, and the fact that federalization or reaffirmation of federalism in whether Russia, the East European countries or post-Franco Spain both followed the disgraceful dethronement of dictatorial, authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, the present Chinese ruling regime's reservation against such federalization by devolution is plainly understandable.

After all, the eventual disintegration of the Russian empire (the "prison of nations", or in its modern form, the former Soviet Union) in December 1991 has left China to be the world's lone surviving former empire still remaining intact, having escaped that ignominious fate of dissolution that befell, besides the Russian empire, all in the 20th century, the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and the Western maritime empires (*ibid.*: 276-277). Incidentally, one ethnic region did escape from China, namely Outer Mongolia that formed the independent Mongolian People's Republic in 1924, with Russian support, though not recognized by China until 1946. Also, as we have seen earlier, the Uyghurs in fact established, with Russian help, a short-lived East Turkestan Republic in 1944, but it collapsed after the 1949 Communist victory in China's civil war, and the region was reincorporated into China as the Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu in 1955. Besides these, the island province of Taiwan has been *de facto* independent since 1949, regardless of the fact that it is not diplomatically so recognized by most countries of the world for *Realpolitik* reasons and that the government of the island state continues to technically consider itself the legitimate "Republic of China" government-in-exile with jurisdiction over all China.[51] Finally, adding to the federal taboo is the tendency to recycle the "black hand" (*heishou* 黑手) theory – the "shopworn conspiracy theories that blame mass protests primarily on the CCP's foreign and domestic enemies, reflecting the classic Leninist insistence that social protest in a Communist country cannot just happen, it must be instigated" (Tanner, 2004: 143) – which seems apparent in the State's response to the 2009 Xinjiang crisis or the 2008 Tibet riots. Similar State response can be observed following the July Fifth Xinjiang riots when Nur Bekri, chairman of the Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu, declared on 18th July 2009 the source of the riots being "the triumvirate of terrorist, secessionist and extremist forces"[52] and Wu Shimin 吴仕民, vice-chairman of China's State Ethnic Affairs Commission, stated on 21st July 2009 that the July Fifth riots had absolutely nothing to do with China's nationality (ethnic minority) policies. "In a world that is obsessed with vertical accountability we easily judge and label situations that appear to be in a crisis as dysfunctional, to be in a state of failure […]," Reeler (2007: 15) noted, "Whilst this might be true in some situations […] developmental crises […] unconsciously and quite naturally evolve, often as a social system grows beyond the relationships and capacities that hold it together." Not all crises are failures, Reeler further observed:

> Take a pioneering organisation that grows in size and complexity beyond the ability of the pioneers to lead and manage […] The unavoidable and typical crisis of the pioneering organisation often manifests in a breakdown of relationships, of leadership legitimacy, of commitment, and signals the need and the opportunity to rethink its nature, its identity, structure or power

> relationships, its functioning and culture, which, once done, can give way to
> a new lease on life, a new phase of growth and development. Transformation
> requires and is borne out of the ripening and surfacing of crisis.
>
> (*ibid*.: 16)

This means, in other words, facing up to domestic realities and pondering the possibility of transformative change (see Figure 4 and Figure 21 in the special issue's prologue on China's social transformation), without which any solution to the root problems leading to either the 1989 tragedy or the recent Xinjiang and Lhasa riots would remain illusive.[53]

Buchanan (1995: 23), writing on the path dependency of constitutional reform towards competitive federalism (Figure 20), remarked that any reform, constitutional or otherwise, "commences from some 'here and now,' some status quo that is the existential reality. History matters, and the historical experience of a political community is beyond any prospect of change; the constitutional-institutional record can neither be ignored nor rewritten […]" If the "here" is a centralized and unitary political authority, constitutional reform must embody devolution – a shift of genuine political power from the centre to the separate constituent political units.

Figure 20 Competitive Federalism: Constitutional Reform Schemata

Fully autonomous   Competitive   Centralized
separate states   federalism   unitary polity
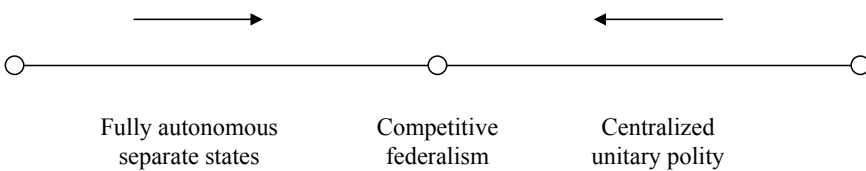
Source: Buchanan (1995: 24), Figure 1.

One of the basic features of a federal system, according to Bakvis and Chandler (1987: 4), is that it provides "incentives for structuring group/class conflicts along territorial lines". When the territories concerned represent the centres of concentration of distinctive socioracial communities, ethnic conflicts are translated into territorial rivalries and the process of fiscal federalization becomes an arena of ethnic resource competition. Evaluating the role of asymmetrical federalism[54] in explaining India's ability to "hold together", Tillin (2006: 62) noted that linguistic reorganization of the Indian states "involved the accommodation of linguistic differences, but not on a basis that allowed differential protection to any regional language, and not on a basis that formed otherwise coherent 'ethnic' or 'cultural' federal sub-units." Notably, Manor (1996) argued that "ethnic" identities in India tend to be crosscutting rather than compounding but once states were reorganized

along linguistic lines, their inhabitants discovered all the things that divided them[55], which in our present context could be leading down the ominous path to the state of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, vindicating Thomas Hobbes's portentous judgement in his 1651 treatise Leviathan, "The condition of man [...] is a condition of war of everyone against everyone." This "state of nature" – the war of all against all, Hobbes argued in *Leviathan*, could only be averted by a strong central government. Such, just as for India, as we have observed so far, could also have the same resonance for the case of the other Asian giant, China.

Nevertheless, Dorff (1994), exploring the role played by federalism in the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, warned that federal *structures*, when not accompanied by federal *process*, could have contributed to the fragmentation of these countries. According to Dorff, the argument that federalism in USSR, Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia ameliorated ethnic conflict "seriously understates the role of the center and the peculiar control mechanism offered by the centralized, hierarchical Communist party organization". Citing Verdery (1993) and Roeder (1991), Dorff pointed out that these one-party states' federalist structures, without federalist processes, initially used to suppress, not accommodate, ethnic differences, had actually helped to create a political environment ripe for disintegration via ethnic mobilization once decentralization began, as regional leaderships bent on protecting the interests of their territorial constituencies at the expense of other regions and the federation:

> Strong central authority and a hierarchical Communist party structure militated against accommodative and cooperative processes. When the power of the center began to weaken, the political system shifted not toward a decentralized politics of accommodation but to a politics of cutthroat competition between the center and the periphery and among the units of the periphery.
>
> (Dorff, 1994: 104)

Hence, the danger of fragmentation coming from democratization and federalization is real but not inevitable, as shown by the two examples illustrated in Figure 21.

In this regard, it could be highly equivocal to keep seeing the dis-integration of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union as a sword of Damocles warning against federal structures. On the contrary, the fate of these disintegrated nations could be a lesson to take heed of at this juncture just passing the 20th anniversary of the 1989 tragedy, in particular after the foreboding events of last two years' massive, deadly ethnoregional riots, to begin early the federal process. Definitely, a federal process is always full of pitfalls, especially for a country still facing the problems of high

Figure 21 Federal Sustainability

Breakdown: States shirk then exit	*Sustainable Cooperative Federation*	*Breakdown: States shirk, do not exit, centre extracts what it can*
		Central power

US: Articles of Confederation ⟶ US: Constitution

Early Post-Soviet Russia ⟶ Later Post-Soviet Russia
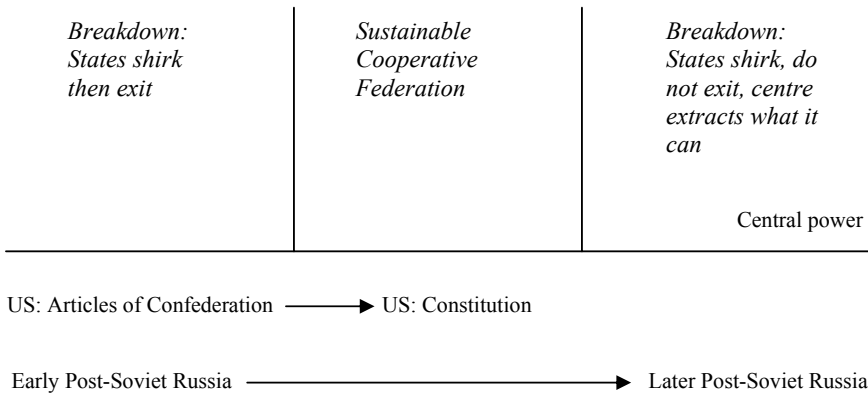
Source: de Figueiredo, McFaul and Weingast (2007: 175), Figure 3.

incidence of poverty, ethnoterritoriality, sectionalism and ethnoregional socioeconomic disparities. Inevitably, it is also a process abounding with right and wrong options and choices. Again, consider the case of Spain whose regional structure bears substantial similarity to the Chinese – for instance, only three out of Spain's seventeen *Comunidades Autónomas*, comprising less than 30 per cent of the country's population, are non-Castilian ethnic regions, in contrast to countries like Belgium or the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia where the state is composed of constituent regions each of which populated predominantly with a differentiated ethnic community. As up to 1.5 million people walked the Gran Via, Diagonal and Passeig de Gràcia (Paseo de Gracia) boulevards in Barcelona on the eve of Spain winning in the 2010 World Cup final demanding greater autonomy and claiming nationhood for Catalunya (Cataluña), bringing again to the fore Spain's dilemma in pondering her options whether to move on from the State of the Autonomies to a full-fledged federation – through a whole spectrum of scenarios as summarized by Brassloff (1989: 41-45) into the evolutionist minimalist regional autonomist, radically revisionist neo-centralist, radically European regionalist, nationalist particularist, mixed federo-regional and, lastly, the federalist maximalist in which the presently evolving State of the Autonomies may develop all its potential and end up operating as a federal state – it could also be timely for an Asian giant in astounding transformation to ponder new options other than a *dictablanda*[56] or even a *democradura* with the perpetually uneasy coexistence of economic decentralization with political centralism or, as a former vice-premier pointed out, being constantly trapped in the perennial "cycles of decentralization and recentralization"[57] that breed unending chaos and instability.

12. Conclusion

This paper has examined China's ethnoregional disparity, ethnoterritoriality and peripheral nationalism as well as decentralization and the related, controversial issue of federalism by scrutinizing various crucial aspects including the political, economic, sociological and historical. More specific elements like the country's seemingly paradoxical *de facto* fiscal federalism amidst political unitarism, ethnoterritoriality, poverty, interregional disparity, threat of centrifugal forces, ethnogenesis, reethnicization, and the fear of balkanization or spectre of "China deconstructs" have received particular attention. To summarize and conclude, as Tillin (2006: 45) noted:

> There is considerable disagreement about the role of federalism in countries containing more than one territorially concentrated ethnic group or nation. The collapse of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia led to renewed questioning of the desirability of federal systems in heterogeneous countries, even though their democratic shortcomings limited the federal character of their polities.

Similarly, Snyder (2000: 40) advised that "[w]herever possible, democratizing states should try to promote civic identities and guarantee rights at the individual level. For the same reasons, ethnically based federalism and regional autonomy should be avoided, since they create political organizations and media markets that are centred on ethnic differences." Particularly notable for our present context is, as Bunce (2004) observed, that the way federal or quasi-federal systems were organized along the ethnic territorial boundaries in the Communist Party-ruled authoritarian countries contained the building blocks for later ethno-nationalist movements, making federalism undesirable in multiethnic, democratizing countries due to its potential for institutionalizing and politicizing ethnic differences. Yet, citing Stepan (1999: 20) and Bermeo (2004: 475-477), Tillin (2006: 46) argued that "it has been shown empirically both that long-standing multinational democracies tend to have federal systems and that federal systems of government have been better than unitary systems at eliminating violent conflict".

Nevertheless, for Chinese leaders, the Russian experience, as Konitzer and Wegren (2006: 503) succinctly related below, may provide a warning:

> Among the political legacies bequeathed to Vladimir Putin were a decentralized political system and a nascent federalist structure that successfully avoided the disintegration of the Russian Federation following the breakup of the Soviet Union […] However, some analysts argue that Yeltsin's famous 1990 edict to Tatarstan and Bashkortostan to ''take as much sovereignty as you can swallow,'' and the ''parade of sovereignties'' that followed, meant that Russia's decentralization went too far and threatened

> Russia's federal integrity […] Since Yeltsin left the political scene at the end of 1999, a major turning point in Russia's political development has been political recentralization, with some analysts charging that Putin is trying to establish a ''unitary state'' by ''aggressively pursuing an anti-federal policy'' […]

Such fear might not be unfounded. Recalling Stepan's (1999) observation that no successful federal unions were created by independent states since the 19th century, and that by Lake and Rothchild (2005) that most recent attempts of territorial decentralization also failed or were viewed as mere transitional arrangements, Roust and Shvetsova (2007: 244-245) noted:

> The problem is that federal arrangements are inherently unstable […] In order to succeed, federal constitutions (and schemes of political decentralization in general) require special safeguards to counter their tendency to move toward either extreme decentralization or overcentralization […] As it is difficult to implement credible safeguards, prospective member states cannot trust each other and thus seek to avoid the federal form and the risks associated with federal instability […] federal stability (robustness) requires for itself a well-functioning democratic process, which satisfies a fairly restrictive condition. The requirement to the democratic process is, of course, only a necessary, not a sufficient condition for the federal success. Yet […] only the states with well-developed (properly institutionalized) democratic electoral competition have a chance to form a resilient federal union and sustain their federal constitutional arrangements not just in form, but in their political practice as well.

Finally, on a brighter note, while admitting that the process of the institutionalization of authoritarian rule in China since reform began has generated limited momentum towards a more open political system, Pei opined that

> Though little has been achieved thus far in the way of actual demo-cratization, the institutional foundations for genuine democracy are slowly taking shape. The maturation of the rule of law, the NPC, and village self-government are important components of this evolutionary process […] While centralized bureaucratic empires are extremely vulnerable to centrifugal forces and tend to collapse when the political authority of the center drastically declines, a federalized system with a well-defined division of political authority can create numerous political safety valves to reduce the stress on the center and limit its political liability. In China, genuine political decentralization founded upon an emerging economic federalist structure augurs well for future *regional* democratic break-throughs.
>
> (Pei, 1995: 77)

It need not be reiterated that China is a highly decentralized country, at least economically or fiscally, and there will be continuing debate on the future need for and the direction of decentralization – in its various manifestations: political, fiscal, administrative – and the concomitant prospects for federalism, again in its various manifestations, which could be as sensitive and subversive in China as in Indonesia, would keep returning to haunt a colossal country in breathtaking transformation. To move beyond the present *de facto* fiscal federalism, any plan for federalization should no doubt be conducted with caution, and the very necessity, feasibility and all attendant hazards have to be considered in real earnest, as Saunders (1995: 78) noted:

> Federalist elements are closely linked with other aspects of the system of government. They are likely to work differently, although not necessarily unsatisfactorily, when separated from them, or even from the historical, political, and economic setting in which they developed.

Yet, as Duchacek asked in the abstract of his 1988 article on bicommunal polities where permanent asymmetry makes a simple majoritarian formula for decision-making processes unacceptable: "What other decisional frameworks have a greater chance for success: federalism, federalism with a heavy dose of confederal ingredients, regional confederation, consociationalism or secession?" A confederal modification of federalism has so far appeared to be the answer, according to Duchacek (1988: 31):

> Despite its obvious deficiencies, the confederal-consociational modification of federalism is more acceptable to two asymmetric and antagonistic communities than a concept of a federal overarching cultural political union with its promise of majoritarian decisionmaking. Despite a constant threat of veto and thus potential immobilism, both basic and current issues have to be negotiated and renegotiated time and again.

Though China is not dyadic in terms of ethnic composition, her ethnic Han absolute dominance in demographic make-up *vis-à-vis* her ethnic minorities does give her a certain similarity to a dyadic case. Moving forward along a more comprehensive federalist line may or may not be the only feasible or necessary or even correct step from her present stage of fiscal decentralization, but such doubt and reservation could inevitably be tempered by Duchacek's (*ibid.*) disarming and familiar query in his observation on the prevalent reserved reaction to the confederal nonmajoritarian formula and its piecemeal and irritatingly slow implementation by compromise and consensus: "If not that, what else?"

Appendix

Ethnic Fractionalization of 240 Countries/Regions

Rank	Country/Region	EFI
1	Congo, Democratic Rep. of the (formerly Zaire)	0.885
2	Uganda, Republic of	0.883
3	Kenya, Republic of	0.877
4	India, Republic of	0.876
5	South Africa, Republic of	0.873
6	Cameroon, Republic of	0.852
7	Mali, Republic of	0.844
8	Philippines, Republic of the	0.838
9.5	Nigeria, Federal Republic of	0.827
9.5	Tanzania, United Republic of	0.827
11	Cote d'Ivoire/IvoryCoast, Republic of	0.826
12	Lebanon, Republic of	0.821
13	Mauritius	0.814
14	Zambia, Republic of	0.813
15	Chad, Republic of	0.810
16.5	Guinea-Bissau, Republic of	0.806
16.5	Papua New Guinea, Independent State of	0.806
18	Yugoslavia, Socialist Fed. Rep. of (pre-Jan 1992)	0.795
19	Suriname, Republic of	0.789
20	Senegal, Republic of	0.788
21	Madagascar, Democratic Republic of	0.776
22.5	Sierra Leone, Republic of	0.771
22.5	Angola, People's Republic of	0.771
24	Gabonese Republic	0.765
25	Gambia, Republic of The	0.764
26	Central African Republic	0.757
27	Ethiopia (pre-May 1993)	0.756
28	Indonesia, Republic of	0.754
29	Qatar, State of	0.746
30	Liberia, Republic of	0.745
31	Guinea, Republic of	0.742
32	Ghana, Republic of	0.741
33	Afganistan, Republic of	0.739
34	Bolivia, Republic of	0.735
35	Burkina Faso	0.734
36	Mozambique, Republic of	0.727
37	Cayman Islands (UK)	0.720
38	Ethiopia (post-May 1993)	0.717
39	Sudan, Republic of the	0.715
40	Canada	0.714
41	Belize	0.711
42	Guam (US)	0.705
43	Eritrea	0.699
44	Malawi, Republic of	0.691
45	Togo, Republic of	0.689
46	Virgin Islands (US)	0.688
47	Congo, Republic of the	0.685

Appendix (continued)

Rank	Country/Region	EFI
48.5	Monaco, Principality of	0.684
48.5	**Malaysia**	**0.684**
50	Kazakhstan, Republic of	0.679
51.5	Kuwait, State of	0.675
51.5	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.675
53.5	New Caledonia (Fr.)	0.671
53.5	Niger, Republic of	0.671
55	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (former)	0.670
56	East Timor	0.667
57	Laos/Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.665
58	Kyrgyzstan, Republic of	0.664
59	Namibia, Republic of	0.663
60	Iran, Islamic Republic of	0.661
61.5	Mauritania, Islamic Republic of	0.660
61.5	Benin, Republic of	0.660
63	French Polynesia (Fr.)	0.656
64.5	Micronesia, Federated States of	0.655
64.5	United Arab Emirates	0.655
66	Andorra, Principality of	0.651
67	Pakistan, Islamic Republic of	0.648
68	Guatemala, Republic of	0.645
69	Morocco, Kingdom of	0.643
70	Peru, Republic of	0.637
71	Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of	0.635
72	Nepal, Kingdom of	0.634
73	Guyana, Co-operative Republic of	0.628
74	Ecuador, Republic of	0.615
75	Latvia, Republic of	0.612
76	Colombia, Republic of	0.601
77	Cuba, Republic of	0.591
78	Djibouti, Republic of	0.585
79.5	Tajikistan, Republic of	0.583
79.5	Nauru, Republic of	0.583
81	Fiji, Republic of	0.580
82	**Belgium, Kingdom of**	**0.574**
83	Macedonia, Republic of	0.573
84	Bahrain, State of	0.566
85	Yugoslavia, Federal Rep. of (post-Jan 1992)	0.561
86	Hawai'i (US)	0.560
87	Bhutan, Kingdom of	0.555
88	Christmas Island (Australia)	0.552
89	Cape Verde, Republic of	0.551
90	Liechtenstein, Principality of	0.550
91	Brazil, Federative Republic of	0.549
92	Moldova, Republic of	0.546
93	Georgia, Republic of	0.545
94	Mexico/United Mexican States	0.542
95	Thailand, Kingdom of	0.535

Appendix (continued)

Rank	Country/Region	EFI
96	Switzerland/Swiss Confederation	0.531
97	Estonia, Republic of	0.528
98	French Guiana (Fr.)	0.526
99	Brunei Darussalam, State of	0.525
100	Zimbabwe, Republic of	0.522
101	Burma, Union of	0.520
102	Gibraltar (UK)	0.517
103	Yemen, Republic of (post-May 1990)	0.507
104	Iraq, Republic of	0.502
105	Tonga, Kingdom of	0.500
106.5	Man, Isle of (UK)	0.498
106.5	Chile, Republic of	0.498
108	Venezuela, Republic of	0.497
109	Yemen Arab Republic (pre-May 1990)	0.495
110	Turks and Caicos Islands (UK)	0.493
111	Cocos Islands (Australia)	0.487
112.5	Nicaragua, Republic of	0.484
112.5	Uzbekistan, Republic of	0.484
114	Jordan, Hashemite Kingdom of	0.481
115	Palau Islands (US)	0.480
116	Singapore, Republic of	0.479
117	Panama, Republic of	0.477
118	Bermuda (UK)	0.476
119	Svalbard (Norway)	0.468
120	Czechoslovakia (former)	0.464
121	Albania, Republic of	0.460
122	Turkmenistan	0.455
123	Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of	0.452
124.5	Northern Mariana Islands (US)	0.444
124.5	Norfolk Island (Australia)	0.444
126	**Spain**	**0.436**
127.5	Dominican Republic	0.429
127.5	Sri Lanka, Democratic Socialist Republic of	0.429
129	Sao Tome and Principe, Democratic Republic of	0.420
130	Botswana, Republic of	0.418
131.5	Ukraine	0.417
131.5	Syrian Arab Republic	0.417
133	Oman, Sultanate of	0.406
134	Puerto Rico (US)	0.405
135	Northern Ireland (UK)	0.403
137	United States of America	0.395
137	Equatorial Guinea, Republic of	0.395
137	Jamaica	0.395
139	Algeria, Democratic and Popular Republic of	0.375
140	Belarus, Republic of	0.373
141	Croatia	0.371
142	Cyprus	0.358
143	Lithuania, Republic of	0.345

Appendix (continued)

Rank	Country/Region	EFI
144	Western Sahara	0.343
145	West Bank (of the Jordan River)	0.339
146	Barbados	0.333
147	Turkey, Republic of	0.330
148	Cook Islands (NZ)	0.327
149	United Kingdom of Great Britain & N. Ireland	0.325
150	Aruba (Neth.)	0.320
151	Russian Federation	0.311
152.5	Grenada	0.308
152.5	Azerbaijan, Republic of	0.308
154	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.306
155	Israel, State of	0.303
156	Bangladesh, People's Republic of	0.285
157	Rwanda, Republic of	0.275
158	San Marino, Most Serene Republic of	0.272
159.5	Quebec (Canada)	0.270
159.5	Egypt, Arab Republic of	0.270
161	American Samoa (US)	0.269
162	Bulgaria, Republic of	0.264
163	Viet Nam, Socialist Republic of	0.262
164	Burundi, Republic of	0.258
165	Somalia	0.256
168	Bahamas, The Commonwealth of the	0.255
168	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	0.255
168	Argentina/Argentine Republic	0.255
168	Netherlands Antilles (Neth.)	0.255
168	Saint Helena (UK)	0.255
171	Slovakia	0.254
172	Lesotho, Kingdom of	0.253
173.5	Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat	0.241
173.5	Comoros, Federal Islamic Republic of the	0.241
175	Cambodia, State of	0.238
176	Costa Rica, Republic of	0.237
177	France/French Republic	0.235
178	Uruguay, Oriental Republic of	0.218
179	New Zealand	0.217
180.5	Romania	0.202
180.5	El Salvador, Republic of	0.202
182.5	Italy/Italian Republic	0.196
182.5	Niue (NZ)	0.196
184	Mongolia	0.187
185	Swaziland, Kingdom of	0.186
187.5	Saint Lucia	0.185
187.5	Guadeloupe (Fr.)	0.185
187.5	Martinique (Fr.)	0.185
187.5	Honduras, Republic of	0.185
190	British Virgin Islands (UK)	0.180
191	Slovenia	0.170

Appendix (continued)

Rank	Country/Region	EFI
192	Hungary, Republic of	0.168
193	Sweden, Kingdom of	0.164
194	Antigua and Barbuda	0.150
195	Western Samoa, Independent State of	0.138
196.5	Germany, Federal Republic of (pre-Oct 1990)	0.134
196.5	Germany, Federal Republic of (post-Oct 1990)	0.134
199	Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of (former)	0.133
199	Solomon Islands	0.133
199	Reunion (Fr.)	0.133
201	Armenia, Republic of	0.128
202	**China, People's Republic of**	**0.125**
203	Finland, Republic of	0.122
204	Libya/Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahi.	0.117
205.5	Seychelles	0.115
205.5	Saint Kitts and Nevis, Federation of	0.115
207.5	Czech Republic	0.114
207.5	Vanuatu, Republic of	0.114
209	Ireland, Republic of	0.113
210	Cyprus (Greek sector)	0.097
212.5	Macao (China)	0.096
212.5	Malta	0.096
212.5	Paraguay, Republic of	0.096
212.5	Australia, Commonwealth of	0.096
215	Haiti, Republic of	0.095
216	Japan	0.079
218.5	Montserrat (UK)	0.077
218.5	Iceland, Republic of	0.077
218.5	Netherlands, Kingdom of the	0.077
218.5	Tuvalu	0.077
221	Greece/Hellenic Republic	0.068
222.5	Denmark, Kingdom of	0.059
222.5	Dominica	0.059
224.5	Marshall Islands, Republic of the	0.058
224.5	Norway, Kingdom of	0.058
226	Poland, Republic of	0.047
227	Cyprus (Turkish sector)	0.045
230	Tunisia, Republic of	0.039
230	Kiribati	0.039
230	Taiwan (Republic of China)	0.039
230	Hong Kong (China)	0.039
230	Falkland Islands (UK)	0.039
234.5	Gaza Strip	0.020
234.5	Saint Pierre and Miquelon (Fr.)	0.020
234.5	Mayotte (Fr.)	0.020
234.5	German Democratic Republic (former)	0.020
237	Portugal, Republic of	0.019
238	Austria, Republic of	0.012
239	Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	0.004
240	Korea, Republic of	0.002

Notes

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1. As Lijphart (1977: 56) remarked, "The notion of a multiple balance of power contains two separate elements: (1) a balance, or an approximate equilibrium, among the segments, and (2) the presence of at least three different segments." However, cooperation among groups becomes more difficult, as the number participating in negotiations increases beyond three or four. On the other hand, a moderately multiple configuration is preferable to a dual segmentation as the latter entails a constant tension between "a [majority] hegemony or a precarious balance [and it leads] easily to an interpretation of politics as a zero-sum game" (*ibid.*). Bi-ethnic states are thus a special, problematic type of multiethnic state. In a bi-ethnic state, a gain for one ethnic group is easily perceived as a loss for the other. By contrast, in societies with more than two major ethnic groups it may not be apparent who loses when one ethnic group improves its position. This can lead to a logrolling situation, in which each group cares primarily about its own gains and nobody is conscious of the possible costs of a policy decision. The scenario is outlined in Steiner's study on consociationalism in Switzerland (Steiner, 1974). It also implies that ethnic tension could be more easily aroused by preferential policies in bi-ethnic states than in those with more than two ethnic groups.

2. According to the "critical mass" theory – advanced, among others, by Semyonov and Tyree (1981) – societies are considered multiethnic only if minorities constitute more than ten per cent of their population.

3. Affirmative action and preferential treatment are "race-conscious" and "group-centred" strategies in contexts where the dominant policy form, particularly in liberal democracies, is individual-centred and "colour-blind" (Edwards, 1994: 55).

4. For a detailed discussion of illiteracy, illness and the poverty trap in China especially in her ethnic regions, see Yeoh (2008a: 43-46).

5. Including that of the highly Sinicized Manchurian Qing (Ch'ing 清) dynasty.
6. Year refers to publication date of English translation. Weber's original manuscript was written between 1910 and 1914.
7. Or in a different setting, take the case of Malaysia. According to Cheah (1984), the Malay ethnic identity (*bangsa Melayu*) was a creation after 1939 in response to the perceived threat from the increasingly politicized immigrants from China and India. The notion of a Malay race had therefore hitherto been absent, as Cheah elaborated: "[...] the Malays rose to confront what they considered threats posed by the immigrant races to their rights, but the Malays themselves had not been united as a race or a 'bangsa', and moreover they had not found a way to solve differences among themselves [... Such differences] were nurtured by the strong provincial feeling among the 'provincial Malays' (such as the Kelantan Malays, Perak Malays and so on), DKA Malays (those of Arab descent) and DKK Malays (those of Indian descent) [... There were also] tribal divisions, such as the Bugis, Minangkabau, Javanese, etc." (translated from Cheah, 1984: 83) The first open suggestion of a "Malay people" (*orang Melayu*) came only in 1939 when Ibrahim Yaacob (or I.K. Agastja by his Indonesian name) championed the notion of a unified Malay race across Malaya and Indonesia which he christened *Melayu Raya* (Great Malay) or *Indonesia Raya*. The boundary marker of ethnicity was thus mobilized to meet the rising need of identity investment for politico-economic purposes. An even more blatantly political ethnicization came after the 1969 riots in the creation of the "Bumiputera" race (*kaum Bumiputera*). *Bumiputera* (a term of Sanskrit origin meaning literally "prince of the land; son of the soil") became an official collective term grouping together the Malays, the aboriginals and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak (both on the Borneo island) after these two regions joined the Peninsula in 1963 to form Malaysia. It excludes "immigrant races" like Chinese, Indians and Europeans, but not Arabs and Malays from Indonesia.
8. See Yeoh (2008b: 81). While emphasizing the importance of the ethnic factor in understanding the role of the State does not diminish the significance of contention between social classes, it serves to avoid the pitfall of reductionist Marxism, in which, as Wolpe (1988: 15) remarked, ethnicity "becomes merely an external instrument for the reproduction of class interests which are assumed to be *entirely* defined by the economic relation of production".
9. This contradistinction in proportion is apparent in the fact that "while the Han population in Sinkiang and Tibet was nil, in 1949 Han Chinese comprised more than half of the total population of all China's national minority areas averaged together" (Moseley, 1966: 14).
10. Did the completion in 2006 of the Qinghai-Tibet (Qing-Zang 青藏) railway, said to bring modernity and economic progress to Tibet, also signal a new phase of Sinicization of Tibet? This is a fear that the 14th Dalai Lama's Tibetan government-in-exile has not been hesitant to voice.
11. One of the most notable of such incidents, before the more recent riots in Lhasa and Ürümqi was the Han-Hui conflict in October 2004 that occurred in the Nanren 南仁 village and two other nearby villages in Henan province's Zhongmou 中牟 county, which allegedly killed more than 100 people including

at least 15 policemen, and injured more than 400 people. Though the conflict was probably triggered by a local traffic accident and rooted in strong historical-cultural factors including perceived overall Han dominance and backlash against certain preferential policies for the ethnic minorities, simmering tensions might have been exacerbated by China's economic success that led to a growing gap between rich and poor, especially in the countryside. Other than the Nanren conflict, there was also the unconfirmed news of another serious Han-Hui conflict in August 2007 in the Shimiao 石庙 township in Huimin 惠民 county of Shandong province, close to the Hui county of Shanghe 商河, that resulted in at least a death and more than twenty injured. This was not the first such open conflict in Shandong which earlier experienced the well-known "Yangxin 阳信 incident" in 2000 when six Hui were killed during a thousand-strong Hui protest against a "*Qingzhen Zhurou* 清真猪肉" [halal pork] shop sign.

12. 东方日报, 9th July 2009.
13. 东方日报, 30th July 2009.
14. Yale professor Amy Chua, in her highly controversial book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (2003) contended that the spread of free market democracy breeds ethnic violence in developing countries by simultaneously concentrating wealth in the hands of the ethnic minority and empowering the impoverished majority that resents the former. "The global spread of democratization reflects the powerful assumption in Western policy and intellectual circles that markets and democracy go hand in hand", wrote Chua, "But in the numerous countries around the world with a market-dominant minority, just the opposite has proved true. Adding democracy to markets has been a recipe for instability, upheaval, and ethnic conflagration […] As markets enrich the market-dominant minority, democratization increases the political voice and power of the frustrated majority. The competition for votes fosters the emergence of demagogues who scapegoat the resented minority, demanding an end to humiliation, and insisting that the nation's wealth be reclaimed by its 'true owners.' […] As popular hatred of the 'outsiders' mounts, the result is an ethnically charged political pressure cooker in which some form of backlash is almost unavoidable." (Chua, 2004: 124)
15. The spectre of China's disintegration has never ceased to haunt the generation of Chinese who have had the first-hand experience of China's humiliation at the hands of the Western powers and Japan up to the Second World War, to whom the *bainian guochi* 百年国耻 ("hundred years of national humiliation") is still crying out loud for redemption. This is the generation that today still makes up the leadership echelons in China, and leaders and respected intelligentsia in the overseas Chinese communities. This is the generation whose outlook having been shaped by their personal experience, among whom Beijing's stance that the benefits of stability under one-party rule far outweigh the risky endeavour of democratization and decentralization and that the human rights of the 1.3 billion-strong populace to be free from starvation and to be sheltered far outweigh the Western notion of freedom of speech and freedom of political choice would find resonance. This is a generation that the yearning and love for a great "Cultural China" (*Wenhua Zhongguo* 文化中国), and a China that could stand tall among

the community of nations, a China that is fast becoming a superpower, is all that counts in bestowing pride on one's Chinese ethnicity. Probably little else matters.

16. For instance, Mikhail Gorbachev may be a sinner blamed for the disintegration of the Russian-dominated Soviet Union in the eyes of the Russians, but could be remembered in history as the person who liberated the many long-tortured subordinate nationalities from the "prison of nations", especially from the perspective of the non-Russian citizens of the Soviet Union, who have long languished under Leninist-Stalinist totalitarianism, not to mention particularly the horrors of the Stalin years, ever since the days their quest for national self-determination was hijacked by the Bolsheviks: "According to history, the Empire of the czars was a 'prison of the peoples' and Lenin opened it. But history is never quite that simple. At the start of the twentieth century the empire was already showing signs of weakness; all its subject peoples were beginning to resent its domination and looking for ways to escape from it. Lenin's genius lies in having grasped the breadth of these desires for emancipation, and in having understood that by utilizing those desires – which had nothing to do with the working class – he could assure the victory of the workers in his own country." (Carrère d'Encausse, 1979: 13)

17. China's leaders, from Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao have been vehemently against adopting Western liberal democracy for China, both for the fear that the Communist Party will lose its political dominance or China might disintegrate like the former Soviet Union. The nightmarish scenario of China's disintegration, and the most likely prospect of losing Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, probably also Qinghai and Ningxia, and of course Taiwan, and having China shrunk by half, alone is enough for the Communist Party leaders to convince many, not least among the overseas Chinese community leaders to shun the idea of democratization and regional political autonomy. The death of the Soviet Union hangs like the sword of Damocles to remind people that "[… when] Mikhail Gorbachev launched his radical political reform and initiated the process of political democratization in the former Soviet Union, scholars in the West argued that Gorbachev must be 'right' and China's Deng Xiaoping must be 'wrong.' […] However, when Gorbachev's reforms eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Deng Xiaoping was proven 'right.'" (Zheng and Lye, 2004) The prevalence of such views that have fed into the collective fear somehow serves well in justifying the stance of China's current regime despite the value-loaded nature of judging right and wrong in this case. Soviet Union's disintegration is definitely wrong in the context of the preference for stability and territorial unity, but this is highly judgmental. Firstly, that a "nation" divided is destined to herald misery for the people might not be borne out by modern empirical evidence – the outstanding record of economic prosperity, political stability and human welfare of the many successor states of the former Austro-Hungarian empire, the Kalmar Union (the Danish empire) and, closer home, even the success of Taiwan. Of course, to generalize such successes could be as empirically unsound as to be consumed by the combination of ethno-national pride and the morbid fear of losing territorial domination, but sometimes, as the

proverb goes, the best things might just come in small parcels. Schumacher, in his now classic *Small Is Beautiful* (1973) proposed the idea of "smallness within bigness" – a form of decentralization whereby for a large organization to work it must behave like a related group of small organizations. "Man is small, and, therefore, small is beautiful", Schumacher might just have a point. Secondly, the aspiration for a unified nation under the Han Chinese domination from the point of view of the Han Chinese should be indisputable, but whether this is true from the perspective of other non-Han Chinese people – "Chinese" as defined as "China's citizens" – especially those that are ethnoterritorial would deserve further investigation.

18. See *2000 Population Census of China* and *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2007*.

19. It took a brutal campaign of ethnic genocide to deliberately exterminate the Dzungars and it has been estimated that more than a million people were slaughtered.

20. These data were from the *2000 Population Census of China*. Official data for the year 2006 gave the proportion of Uyghurs as 45.92 per cent and that of Han as only 39.62 per cent of the total population of Xinjiang. See *Xinjiang Tongji Nianjian 2007*, pp. 82-87, Figure 4-7, which gave the year 2006 figures of 9,413,796 Uyghurs and 8,121,588 Han out of a total population of 20,500,000 people of Xinjiang.

21. *Times* (UK), 19th April 2009; 东方日报, 21st April 2009; *Scientific American*, July 2009; 东方日报, 1st August 2009. Not allowed into China, Takada obtained his results based on estimation by extrapolating his model with Xinjiang's population density. Not allowed while in China to probe into the existence of disproportionate number of cases of malignant lymphomas, lung cancers, leukemia, degenerative disorders and deformed newborns, Enver Tohti, a Uyghur medical doctor who moved to Turkey 1998 ostensibly as part of his medical training and now works with Takada, claimed to have uncovered medical records showing Xinjiang's higher-than-national-average cancer rates with a team of British documentary filmmakers whom he smuggled back into Xinjiang as tourists.

22. See *Xizang Tongji Nianjian 2007*, pp. 33-34, Figure 3-4, which gave the year 2005 figures of 2,549,293 Tibetans and 104,647 Han out of a total population of 2,675,520 people of Tibet.

23. Reference should be made here to the controversial hypothesis of Rabushka (1974) that a larger public sector makes ethnic conflict more likely.

24. From its humble beginnings in the 1980s, the Northern League – complete name *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania* (North League for the Independence of Padania) – has since been transformed from a marginal protest force to a national movement strong enough to bring down the 1994 Centre-Right coalition by withdrawing from it. While having had its ups and downs over the years, the real or potential political force it represents could never be totally counted out in the Italian political arena. "Padania" (the ancient Italian term for the Po valley), as proposed by the Northern League, would contain the most powerful industries of Italy, its best agricultural land, almost all its financial wealth and its greatest cities including Venice (the proposed capital), Turin, Milan, Bologna and Genoa.

25. It is exactly the same sentiment that is threatening the Belgian nation, driving Flanders away from Wallonia.

26. See, for instance, Katherine Palmer Kaup's *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (2000).

27. A challenge that the unprecedented 2004 Han-Hui conflict in Henan had amply attested to.

28. Summarizing Shah and Qureshi's (1994) findings, Bird and Vaillancourt (1998: 18) noted: "[...] in Indonesia, Timor (one of the poorest provinces) has a per capita own-source revenue equivalent to 4 percent of Jakarta's [...] however, owing to transfer from the central government, Timor's per capita expenditures are 40 percent of those in Jakarta."

29. Referring to the 31 *sheng* (i.e. provinces of Anhui 安徽, Fujian 福建, Gansu 甘肃, Guangdong 广东, Guizhou 贵州, Hainan 海南, Hebei 河北, Heilongjiang 黑龙江, Henan 河南, Hubei 湖北, Hunan 湖南, Jiangsu 江苏, Jiangxi 江西, Jilin 吉林, Liaoning 辽宁, Qinghai 青海, Shaanxi 陕西, Shandong 山东, Shanxi 山西, Sichuan 四川, Yunnan 云南 and Zhejiang 浙江), *zizhiqu* (i.e. "autonomous regions" – each a first-level administrative subdivision having its own local government, and a minority entity that has a higher population of a particular minority ethnic group – of Guangxi 广西 of the Zhuang, Nei Monggol/Inner Mongolia 内蒙古 of the Mongols, Ningxia 宁夏 of the Hui, Xizang/Tibet 西藏 of the Tibetans and Xinjiang 新疆 of the Uyghurs) and *zhixiashi* (municipalities under the central government – Beijing 北京, Chongqing 重庆, Shanghai 上海 and Tianjin 天津).

30. As Cook and Murray (2001: 126-127) succinctly summarized: "Three of China's four largest coal fields are in this area, as well as four of the most important oil fields. Some 140 kinds of mineral ores have been detected along with large reserves of bauxite for processing into aluminium, and gold. The Qaidam Basin in the middle of Qinghai Province, home to a large Tibetan population, for example, is described by local officials as the province's 'treasure bowl', containing proven oil reserves of 200 million tons, as well as 4.5 billion tons of mostly high-quality coal with low ash and sulphur content. Under the Kunlun and Qilian mountains are large proven caches of iron, manganese, chromium, vanadium, copper, lead, zinc, nickel, tin, molybdenum, antimony, mercury, gold, silver, platinum, beryllium and selenium. The iron reserves are estimated at 2.2 billion tons, and the province claims the country's largest lead and zinc mines, and is a primary producer of asbestos. The Hui people in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, meanwhile, are sitting on large proven reserves of oil and natural gas, along with mineral resources such as copper, iron, silver, gold, aluminium and nickel. The growing prosperity of Xinjiang is being built on the back of developments in the vast and inhospitable Tarim Basin, where experts reckon there are reserves of up to 100 billion barrels of oil and 8,300 billion cubic metres of natural gas."

31. "Bi-ethnic" in terms of major power structure and socioeconomic relations, though the region's population consists of more than two ethnic groups.

32. 世界日报 (*World Journal*) (US), editorial on 16th July 2009, reprinted in 东方日报, 18th July 2009.

33. See *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2007*, pp. 82-87, Figure 4-7, which gave the year 2006 figures of 254,722 Uyghurs and 1,507,720 Han out of a total population of 2,018,443 people of the city of Ürümqi.
34. In another setting, for instance, in a country like Belgium, the tilting of the ethnic line is evident, with Flanders overtaking Wallonia economically since the 1960s and bringing with it increasing politico-economic leverage on the part of the Flemish community. It is Wallonia's fear of Belgium being slowly transformed into a Flemish-dominated country, coupled with the continued insecurity felt by the Flemish community over its new-found power, which is fuelling the interethnic discord of the country and threatening to tear the country apart.
35. Gunther (1980: 223, 258) described public investment decision making in Spain during the Franco era as more closely conforming to the "clientelistic", rather than "corporatist", model. For more on the clientelist model, see Brown (1989) and Clapham (1982: 6-7).
36. 东方日报, 10th July 2009.
37. Brown (1989) was of the opinion that while in some types of clientelist systems the patron-client networks may serve to cut across and weaken ethnic communal ties (especially where the patron-client relationship arises out of the competition for individual goods such as contracts or jobs), clientelism may also promote the politicization of regional and ethnic communalism, where the focus of competition is on communal goods such as public amenities and development projects. Anyway, the politicization of ethnicity tends to become the more likely result of clientelism where leaders at the state-level seek to mobilize popular support so as to promote their political positions. Appeals to ethnic solidarity provide a useful basis for such mobilization, while at the same time cutting across and inhibiting class alignments. A notable impact of the personalized politics of clientelism is "to promote the politics of competitive ethnicity, in which inter-ethnic rivalry is pursued through the activities of entrepreneurs, patrons and brokers" (*ibid*.: 52). Factional instability which may ensue is minimized where one patrimonial leader and his entourage are able to acquire monopoly control of the State and thence of resource distribution, while ethnic communal clienteles are "politically mobilized by their communal influentials who act as brokers, delivering their communal group support to the patrimonial élites in return for the promise of state resources" (*ibid*.).
38. 世界日報 (*World Journal*) (US), editorial on 16th July 2009; reprinted in 东方日报, 18th July 2009.
39. 东方日报, 8th July 2009.
40. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, translated by Allan Bloom with introduction, New York: Basic Books, 1979.
41. There is a tendency in academic circles to distinguish between socially defined and biologically defined races – "ethnie" and "race". An ethnie or ethnic group is said to exist when three conditions are present – "a segment of a larger society is seen by others to be different in some combination of the following characteristics – language, religion, race and ancestral homeland with its related culture; the members also perceive themselves in that way; and they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common

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origin and culture [and] a nation [is] an ethnic group that claims the right to, or at least a history of, statehood" (Yinger, 1986: 22). In contrast with "racial groups" which are biological categories based on immutable, physical attributes fixed at birth, "ethnic groups" are defined by a much wider range of cultural, linguistic, religious and national characteristics, with a more flexible form of group differentiation. Therefore, the term "racial" should more appropriately be used to describe group distinction on the basis of phenotypical (i.e. physical) characteristics, while "ethnic" refers to those based solely or partly on cultural characteristics (Yeoh, 2003: 26). The term "ethnic" can also be generalized to be a blanket concept (Hoetink's attribute "socioracial") to cover both the above distinctions. The term "cultural" here mainly covers the ascriptive attributes "ethnolinguistic" and "ethnoreligious". The emphasis on language and religion in empirical research is due mainly to the fact that they are the relatively less vague factors in the fourfold categorization of ascriptive loyalty (Hoetink, 1975: 23-4). While "racial" – meaning phenotypical – differences is only skin deep, ethnic boundary as a process (*à la* Barth, 1969) tends to be tenacious and uncompromising, the manifestation of the age-old fourfold ascriptive loyalty of race, territoriality, language and religion (Yeoh, 2006: 224). However, racial and ethnic characteristics thus defined often overlap in any one group while extremely deep divisions are often found between groups whose racial as well as ethnic differences are actually imperceptible, e.g. the Burakumin, the so-called "invisible race" of Japan.

42. 光华日报 (*Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, Malaysian Daily), 4th August 2010.
43. Yan Jiaqi 严家其 (严家祺) was a political advisor of Zhao Ziyang during the 1980s and a prominent intellectual supporting the student-led pro-democracy movement of 1989. Fled to Paris after the June Fourth massacre, he participated in forming the Federation for a Democratic China of which he was elected first president. Yan's confederation proposal was for a *Chunghua Lienpang Kunghekuo* 中華聯邦共和國 ("Federal Republic of China"), a "Third Republic" – the first republic being the *Chunghua Minkuo* 中華民國 (Republic of China) and the second, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo* 中华人民共和国 (People's Republic of China).
44. Charter 08, signed in December 2008 by over three hundred prominent Chinese citizens, was conceived and written in emulation of the founding of Charter 77 in former Czechoslovakia in January 1977 by over two hundred Czech and Slovak intellectuals, including the future Czech president Václav Havel. Charter 08's number of signatories, local and overseas, later increased to about 7000 by March 2009 (东方日报, 14th March 2009). Liu Xiaobo, the leading dissident arrested and jailed, also played a prominent role in the 1989 Tiananmen 天安门 demonstrations and hunger strikes. Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 8th October 2010.
45. Translated from the Chinese by Perry Link. <*http://crd-net.org/Article/Class9/Class10/200812/20081210142700_12297.html*>
46. Ethnic division may be territorial in some countries but not in others, thus making it difficult for federalization along ethnic lines. An ethnic faction can be a homeland group while the other or others may be immigrants, giving rise to imbalance in ethnic intensity, national legitimacy and power of negotiation.

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47. For instance, the 14th Dalai Lama's proposal for Tibetan autonomy has always been accused by Beijing as a disguise for his alleged Tibetan independence agenda.

48. One of the earliest proposals in China of decentralization along federal lines is probably that found in the oath of the Hsing Chung Hui 興中會 (Revive China Society), founded in 1894 by Sun Chung-shan 孫中山/Sun Wen 孫文/Sun I-hsien 孫逸仙 (leading revolutionary, founder of republican China, more popularly known outside China as Sun Yat-sen) – the establishment of a *hechung* 合眾 government, i.e. government of a "union of many". In fact, with fourteen provinces proclaiming independence from the Ch'ing 清 dynasty to reunite as the Republic of China/*Chunghua Minkuo* 中華民國 during the Hsinhai 辛亥 Revolution, Sun Yat-sen in 1912 took the title "President of the Provisional Government of the United Provinces of China" – *liensheng* 聯省 ("united provinces") presumably suggesting a less regionally independent arrangement than *lienpang* 聯邦 ("federation") or the US-style *hechungkuo* 合眾國 ("united states"), partly reflecting reservation against earlier *liensheng tzuchih* 聯省自治 ("united autonomous provinces") proposals since the 1920s, lest too much regional autonomy might jeopardize the country's badly needed ability at that time to resist foreign aggression as well as might legitimize the hated rule of the regional warlords. Regional autonomy has in fact not really always been a no-no as was usually presumed in the political discourse within the People's Republic of China. In fact, a soviet federal republic, modeled after the union republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was obviously on the cards, with autonomous constituent republics planned for the ethnic regions like Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang/Eastern Turkestan, at the time when a Chinese Soviet Republic was established in Jiangxi province and then during the *changzheng* 长征 ("Long March") a small autonomous republic for Tibetans was set up in Sichuan province. By the time of Yan'an 延安, such nationality policy had undergone a transformation, and in 1947 the Inner Mongolia "Autonomous Region", the first of its kind in China, was created, not "Autonomous Republic". Before the complete consolidation of power, the PRC which was established in 1949 consisted of six semi-independent "greater administrative areas". The central government in Beijing, just transferred from the People's Government of North China, in effect only had direct control of northern China and Inner Mongolia, while other "greater administrative areas" enjoyed a substantial level of autonomy, all of which but ended by 1954.

49. The Republic of China (ROC), controlling only the Taiwan 台灣 province, is today recognized by 23 mostly small countries. The ROC lost most of her diplomatic allies after she was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, as many countries dropped her to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC), including Costa Rica, one of Latin America's most democratic countries, on 7th June 2007 – a bitter irony, according to Taiwan – within four days of the year's anniversary of the 1989 tragedy.

50. Judgement on the event, positive or negative, of course depends on from whose point of view, e.g. the Great Russians or the peoples of the captive nations of the former USSR.

51. For Taiwan's ratings on political rights and civil liberties *vis-à-vis* China, see Figure 16 in this issue's prologue on social transformation. *En passant*, probably also noteworthy is that with the collapse of the Ch'ing Dynasty that led to the repatriation of the imperial troops from the region, Tibet (today China's Xizang Zizhiqu) was in every respect virtually on her own from 1911 to 1950.

52. 东方日报, 20th July 2009.

53. The State's difficulty to face up to domestic realities is probably manifested in the continued repression in the aftermath of the riots including the arrest of ethnic Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti of China's Central Nationalities University and founder of the "Uighur Online" on 7th July 2009 and the revocation of licenses of civil rights lawyers who took up cases related to the Xinjiang riots (东方日报, 10th July 2009, 15th July 2009 and 17th July 2009). After a storm of protest from Chinese intellectuals and academics against the arrest, Ilham Tohti was finally released on 23rd August 2009 (东方日报, 11th September 2009).

54. There are two types of argument, normative and functional, noted Tillin (2006: 46-47), made in favour of asymmetrical federalism: "The normative case rests on a moral argument about the desirability of cultural group rights and the politics of recognition in multinational liberal democracies. Crudely, this theory of federalism elevates asymmetry to a system-wide attribute of a federation that reflects the acceptance and recognition of difference across a polity. The functional case relies instead on arguments about what exists and what works. This argument often uses the adjective 'asymmetrical' interchangeably with 'creative' or 'flexible' to denote individual instances in which solutions have been sought (successfully or otherwise) within a federal constitution to one-off problems of governance. The functional argument is sometimes underdeveloped, but used simply to code India as a case of asymmetry for comparative purposes."

55. Citing Manor's argument, Tillin opined that an emphasis on asymmetry as a normative concept in India could "lead to a sidelining of other factors in the country's nationalist discourse, and historical inheritance, which downplay the significance of subnational differences", for, citing Nandy (1992), Indian public culture "does not have space for the Other, instead it has an open, blurred definition of the self which allows it to accommodate Others with which it might be in conflict" (Tillin, 2006: 62).

56. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 9) opined that a transition from authoritarian rule could produce a democracy, but it could also terminate with a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) (cited in Diamond, 2002: 24).

57. Bo Yibo, the former Chinese vice-premier, was in fact expressing the reformers' feeling towards the lessons of the multiple cycles of administrative decentralization and recentralization in China: "A [more] important and fundamental lesson of the [1958] attempt to improve the economic management system is: We only saw the vices of overcentralization of power, and sought to remedy the situation by decentralizing powers to the lower levels. When we felt too much power had been decentralized, we recentralized them. We did not then

recognize the inadequacies of putting sole emphasis on central planning (and in particular a system dominated by mandatory planning) and totally neglecting and denying the role of the market […] As a result over a long period of time (after the 1958 decentralization) we were trapped within the planned economy model. Adjustments and improvements could only work around the cycles of decentralization and recentralization. Moreover the recipients of more powers are invariably the local governments, rather than enterprises." (Bo Yibo 薄一波, *Ruogan Zhongda Juece yu Shijian de Huigu* 若干重大决策与事件的回顾 [Looking back at some important decisions and events], 1993, p. 804, cited in Li, 2003: 1.)

58. $$EFI = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left(\frac{n_i}{N} \right) \left(\frac{n_i - 1}{N - 1} \right)$$

where n = the number of members of the *i*th group and N = the total number of people in the population. The index is constructed through the computational procedure of Rae and Taylor's index of fragmentation (F), defined as the probability that a randomly selected pair of individuals in a society will belong to different groups (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 22-3). The index varies from 0 to 1. The value is zero for a completely homogeneous country (the probability of belonging to different groups is nil). The value 1 occurs in the hypothetical society where each individual belongs to a different group. The fragmentation index is identical to Rae's measure of party system fractionalization (Rae, 1967: 55-8) and Greenberg's measure of linguistic diversity (Greenberg, 1956):

$$A = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^{n} (P_i)^2$$

where P = the proportion of total population in the *i*th language group.

For data sources of the computation of EFI for this appendix table, see Yeoh (2003: 33-36), Table 2.

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