

Towards an Understanding of the Internal Colonial Model

By John Liu

The civil rights movement, the outbreak of racial violence, and the growth of nationalist and separatist movements among America's racial minorities during the sixties were events social scientists failed to foresee. This was because the dominant model in the area of race relations up to this time was the assimilation/integration model, which was based on the proposition that America was willing to extend to her racial minorities the same rights and privileges enjoyed by white Americans. Within the framework of this model, social scientists focused on the barriers to assimilation and proposed strategies nonwhite minorities could adopt in order to facilitate their transition to full political and social equality.¹ The subsequent events of the sixties, however, forced social scientists to reassess this basic proposition.

From this reassessment, a new model in the field of race/ethnic relations emerged. Advanced by both social scientists and political activists, it is referred to as the internal colonial model. Those who advocate it assert that American society has never been willing to incorporate her racial minorities as equals. They contend, on the contrary, that racial minorities in America have been relegated to a position of underdevelopment and dependency in a socio-economic structure similar to that of a classical colony. Based on this contention, they assert that the situation of America's racial minorities is essentially that of an internal colony and that this approach in marked contrast to the assimilation one leads to a better understanding of race relations in America.

The purpose of this essay is to discuss the various interpretations of the internal colonial model as presented by its proponents. Since they base their analysis on the similarities between classical colonialism and internal colonialism, I will first discuss their views on the similarities. Then I will analyze important differences between the two.

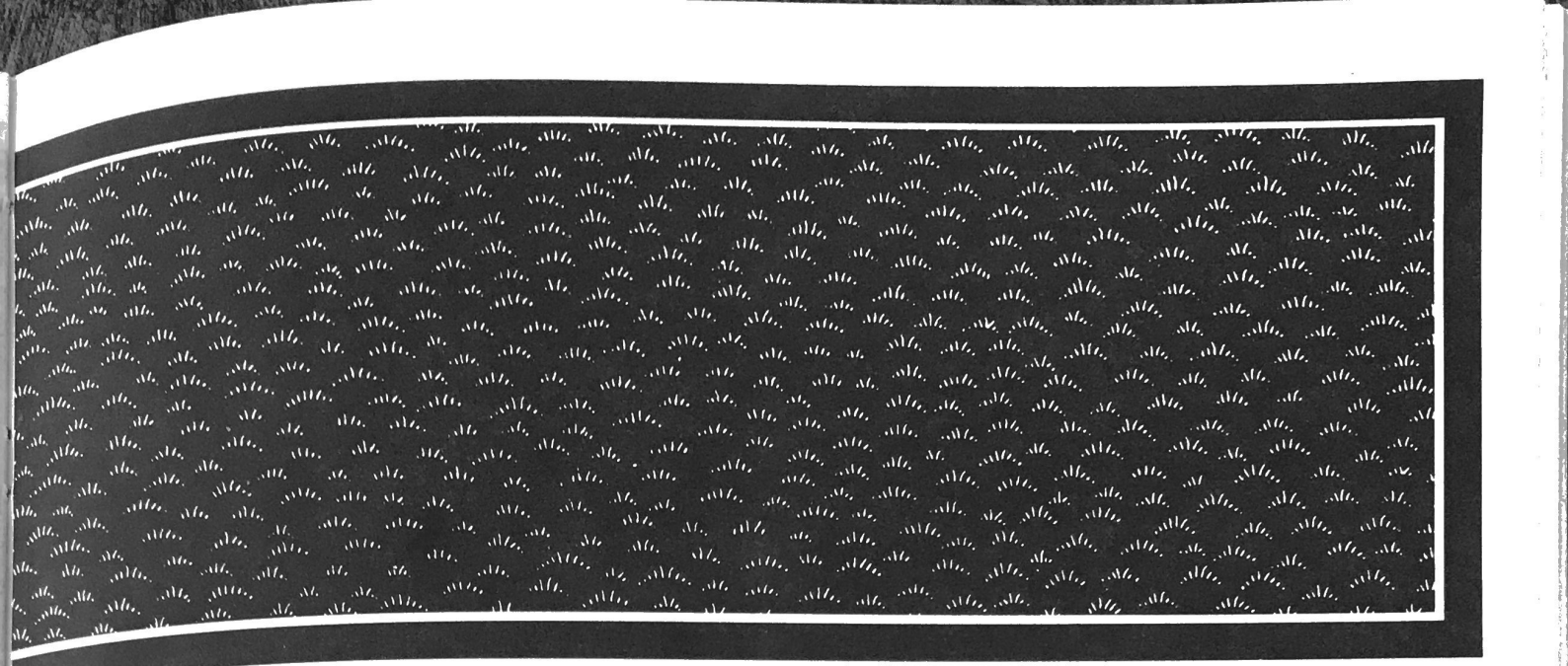
In this essay, colonialism refers to the process by which Europeans established their dominance over

nonwhite people during the past three hundred years. The basic characteristics of the colonial process are: (1) the forced entry of nonwhite populations into the colonizer's society; (2) the creation of a dual labor market economy; (3) the sharing of a single polity by the colonizer and the colonized in which the former is totally dominant; and (4) racial and cultural oppression, leading to the development of racist rules or norms. These characteristics form the framework in which the following examination of the similarities between classical and internal colonialism will proceed.²

CLASSICAL AND INTERNAL COLONIALISM – A COMPARISON

Forced Entry

Writers using the internal colonial approach argue that the development of internal colonialism in the U.S. is directly linked to the colonization of North America by the European colonists. This colonization not only involved the subjugation of the indigenous population but also the importation of slaves via the trade triangle, namely, the movement of commodities between the colonial powers, Africa and the colonies in the New World. The colonial powers provided the exports and the ships, Africa, the manpower (i.e., the slaves), and the colonies, the raw materials. Finished products were exported to Africa in exchange for slaves who, in turn, were shipped to the colonies and exchanged for raw materials such as sugar, tobacco, and cotton. These raw materials were then sent back to the "mother countries" to be made into finished products, thus completing the triangle. This trade triangle was one of the bases of capital accumulation in both the colonies and the mother country.³ Even after American independence, this triangle continued for another sixty years, except



that the New England states now provided the ships and exports instead of the mother country while the Southern states continued to supply the raw materials.

The continuance of the trade triangle after American independence, according to this view, provides a linkage between internal and classical colonialism. As Casanova contends: "It is well known that upon reaching independence, the old colonies' international and internal social structure does not suddenly change."⁴ In other words, the policies and structures which arise in the classical colonial situation continue to exist in an internal colonial situation.⁵ After 1776, the continuance of slavery and the slave trade as well as the retention of a genocidal policy towards Native Americans are other examples of this linkage. Moreover, the continuity of social and economic structures of former colonies further demonstrates that the political separation between a colony and its mother country is not the essential feature in understanding colonialism.

A people may be colonized on the very territory which they have lived for generations or they may be forcibly uprooted by the colonial power from their traditional territory and colonized in a new territorial environment so that the very environment itself is 'alien' to them. *In defining the colonial problem it is the role of the institutional mechanisms of colonial domination which are decisive.* Territory is merely the stage upon which these historically developed mechanisms of super exploitation are organized into a system of oppression. (Emphasis added.)⁶

Blauner contends one of the processes common to both the internal and classical colonial situation is the forced entry of the colonized people. Just as classical colonies were forcibly established by the colonialists through conquest, so the entry of racial minorities into American society has also been accompanied by some degree of coercion exerted by

the host society.⁷ Schermerhorn also argues that the continued existence of ethnic and racial minorities has been dependent upon the degree of coercion exerted by the receiving society. He presents a sequence of migration which reflects a descending order of coercion on the part of the receiving society: (1) slave transfers to a receiving society; (2) movements of forced labor from one area of the host society to another; (3) contract labor transfers including the so-called "coolie trade."⁸

Applying Schermerhorn's construct, it can be seen that racial minorities have entered under some degree of coercion on the part of American society. Blacks experienced both slave transfers and the forced movement of slaves from one area of the host society to another. An example of the latter is the mass movement of slaves from the tobacco-producing border states of Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee and Maryland to the cotton-producing states of the Deep South. Asians entered the U.S. as contract laborers, particularly those who went to Hawaii.⁹

In addition to this migration sequence, Schermerhorn suggests that the experience of Chicanos offers a fourth type of forced entry. Although Chicanos have recently entered this country as contract laborers, their initial entry was through annexation of the Southwest. Schermerhorn distinguishes annexation from colonization as being contiguous vs. noncontiguous domination, but he recognizes that both processes result in relatively identical relations of subordination. This is especially true in instances where annexation is historically preceded by an experience of colonization, as in the case of the U.S. annexation of the Southwest from Mexico. In these situations, the subsequent racial and cultural gaps that developed closely resemble the barriers that emerge in a colonial situation.¹⁰

Under conditions of forced entry, two options available to voluntary immigrants but denied to the colonized are: (1) free geographical and status mobil-

ity within the host society; and (2) the chance to develop mutually reciprocal ties with the host population.¹¹ The relative absence of these two options in the U.S. is reflected by the continued concentration of homogenous racial groups within certain urban areas (ghettos, barrios, and Chinatowns) as well as in certain geographical regions (e.g., Chicanos in the Southwest).

Economic Dependency – Dual Labor Market

A second common feature of both classical and internal colonial situations is the development of a split-labor or dual labor market economy. In both situations, there is a primary market "offering relatively high-paying wages, stable employment, with good working conditions, chances of advancement and equitable administration of work rules" for members of the dominant group (the colonizers).¹² However, for the colonized, those people who experienced a forced entry, there is a secondary market where wages, employment, working conditions and chances for advancement are well below those available to the colonizing population.¹³ Some writers have argued that a dual labor market creates a condition in which the colonized are "super-exploited." As Harris states:

One way of putting the idea of an internal colony would be to argue that the rate of exploitation is higher for black labor than for white labor or that, in other words, there is 'super-exploitation' of black labor . . . The question to be asked is whether there is a systematic pattern of underpayment of black labor relative to whites *for the same task, same level of skill, and same level of productivity*.¹⁴

Bonacich's definition of a split labor market also implies super-exploitation. According to her, a split labor market "must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labor *differs for the same work, or would differ if they did the same work*." (Emphasis added.)¹⁵ While these writers have defined a dual labor market in terms of super-exploitation, it is suggested here that a clearer indicator of a split labor market can be seen in the existence of *task segregation* which tends to minimize the actual competition between white and colonized labor. Task segregation is apparent in the persistent overrepresentation of minorities in the semi-skilled occupations and their corresponding underrepresentation in the professional occupational categories. A pattern of task segregation can also be historically demonstrated. Although the classical example is the sole use of black slaves in growing cotton, task segregation occurred with other racial minorities as well. In California during the second half of the 19th century:

There were several labor markets co-existing in time and space. Each was relatively insulated from the income and job competition of the others. The

Chinese labor was concentrated in the low-priced, low-wage fields, primarily in agriculture and import-competing industries. The majority of the white workers were in the high-priced, high-wage fields and in non-competing industries.¹⁶

The Japanese and Pilipino workers in Hawaii developed the sugar industry, an occupation which attracted few white laborers. Mexican labor provided between 65% to 85% of the common labor used to develop the Southwest's agriculture between 1900 and 1929, which in that year produced 40% of the nation's supply of vegetables, fruit, and truck crops.¹⁷

Using either super-exploitation or task segregation to define a split labor market does not change what Blauner has referred to as the "colonial labor principle," i.e., the use of colonized labor solely to advance the development of the colonizer's economy. In the classical colonial situation, the cheap labor force provided by the colonized and the exploitation of the colony's natural resources are regulated by the colonizer for the purpose of maintaining the hegemony of the mother country – not only in relation to the colonized but also with regards to competing international rivals. As Maunier notes, colonial possession functions to guarantee the economic and political autonomy of the mother country by providing the latter with an uncontested market for finished products as well as a readily available source of raw materials.¹⁸ Similarly, in the internal colonial situation, colonized labor has frequently been engaged in one sector of the economy in order to produce a single commodity (e.g., gold, silver, tobacco or cotton).¹⁹ Blauner asserts that:

Like European overseas colonialism, America has used African, Asian, Mexican and to a lesser degree, Indian workers for the most unskilled jobs, in the least advanced sectors of the economy, in the most industrially backward regions of the nation. In a historical sense, people of color provided much of the hard labor (and the technical skills) that built up the agricultural base and the mineral-transport-communication infrastructure necessary for industrialization and modernization, whereas the Europeans worked primarily within the industrialized, modern sector.²⁰

As a general rule, the colonized labor force has been typically concentrated in those areas where labor has been most needed.²¹ In contemporary times, this has meant an increasing urbanization of racial minorities and their concentration in the service sectors of the economy. Although the geographical setting has changed, the economic development of the ghettos and barrios is still tied to the decisions made in the white community and continues to reflect the pattern of white economic dominance.²²

Expansion into the petty bourgeois market by the corporate sector is limited since few business ventures within the ghetto can generate enough profits to sustain an extended period of corporate

growth. Furthermore, the cost of training labor and innovating technical procedures may be prohibitive in many areas. But most important, corporate expansion into ghetto markets is inherently unstable, following the ineluctable pattern of boom and recession that characterizes the international market.²³

This economic dependency is experienced by other racial minorities as well. Almaguer notes that Chicanos have been affected by the decreasing number of unskilled jobs in the private sector of the economy. This decrease has resulted in the need to train a new educated work force. But because Chicanos in general are excluded from higher levels of education, they have continued to remain dependent upon unskilled jobs.²⁴ Dean Lan, in his study of San Francisco Chinatown's sweatshops, also demonstrates how garment factory employment in the Chinese-American ghetto is directly tied to the economic fluctuations in the white economy.²⁵

In addition to economic dependency in the labor market, the dependency of racial minorities as well as their supporting role within the colonizer's economy can also be seen in the function that welfare fulfills. Because the income of many racial minorities are below the poverty levels, they receive welfare payments to help them survive. However, these payments also play a significant role in maintaining the circulation of commodities for the benefit of the dominant white economy:

Government spending in poor communities is as transient as water in a dishrag. No sooner is money poured into them than private entrepreneurs wring it out again . . . The people we call welfare recipients are, in fact, *conduits*. They *conduct* money from one sector of the economy (the public treasury) to another (into the hands of private entrepreneurs). The *real* welfare recipients are those people who prey on the conduits every welfare check day.²⁶

Political Dependency

The maintenance and perpetuation of this economic dependency point to a third dimension shared by both the internal and classical colonial situations: the fostering of political arrangements which institutionalize the inequities between the dominant society and her racial minorities. In the classical colonial situation, political dependency is maintained by keeping the colonized people in a separate and subordinate legal category. In an internal colonial situation, political dependency persists in spite of the legal equality between the colonizer and colonized. Viewing the barrio as an internal colony, Barrera outlines several mechanisms that have been employed to perpetuate political dependency among Chicanos.²⁷

1. The most obvious and direct mechanisms are those involving force and intimidation. Notable examples are the actions taken by the Texas rangers

to prevent Chicanos from politically organizing and the violence encountered by civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama.

2. Disenfranchisement measures such as poll taxes, English literacy tests and grandfather clauses.

3. Gerrymandering of voting districts to dilute the voting strength of racial minorities. Thus, while the Mexican community in East Los Angeles is the largest outside of Mexico City, Chicanos have been able to elect only one Congressman (Roybal), one State Assemblyman (Alatorre) and no city councilperson.

4. Setting candidacy requirements which hinder the participation of racial minorities in the electoral process.

5. Co-opting selected individuals which serves not only to deprive the community of potential leadership but also provides the colonizer with tokens to be displayed. "Tokenism," according to Flores, perpetuates the system in two ways because:

(1) it offers a member of the nonwhite community as success symbols for each group and thus makes a truly closed system appear open through selective social mobility, and (2) it provides the system with apologists of individualism.²⁸

Another means of maintaining political dependency is to grant a limited amount of local or community autonomy while remaining in control of the local tax base. Without control of the local tax base, communities cannot sustain or carry out any programs without prior approval from the white political structure.²⁹ In short, racial minorities do not control either the institutions which affect their immediate lives or those institutions which could effect meaningful change.

Racial and Cultural Oppression

One final feature shared by classical and internal colonialism is the use of racial and cultural oppression in maintaining social order. Unlike previous race models, the colonial theory asserts that racism is not merely an ideology but an integral part of the social structure. Balandier's comment on the importance of race and culture in the classical colonial situation could also apply to internal colonialism: "The colonized society is different from the colonial society by race and culture. In these respects, the antinomy appears absolute: it was expressed in the language by the opposition of 'primitive' and civilized, pagan and Christian, technical culture and 'backward cultures.'" ³⁰ This polarization of the dominant and the subordinates is essential for the maintenance of colonial society. As Memmi states:

The colonizer-colonized, people to people relationship within nations can, in fact, remind one of the bourgeoisie-proletariat relationship within a nation. But the almost airtight colonial groupings must also be mentioned. All the efforts of the

colonialist are directed toward maintaining this social immobility and racism is the surest weapon for this aim. In effect, change becomes impossible.³¹

Racism allows the colonialist to exert economic and political domination and is crucial to perpetuating the system. By destroying any unique sense of history or humanity that the colonized may entertain, racism and cultural oppression perpetuates the system which nurtures it. Malcolm X points to some of the mechanisms involved in this destruction. One means is to destroy a people's tongue, through which their history and ways of living are transmitted from generation to generation. Thus slaves were forbidden to speak in their native tongues.³² But specific sanctions against the colonized using their native tongue may not be necessary. The fact that economic and political transactions are conducted in the language of the colonizer dictates the learning of that language. As Memmi eloquently shows, this dependency on the language of the colonizer leads eventually to a cultural dependency. The colonized must not only rely on the colonizer's language to conduct daily affairs but also to express their sentiments (e.g., in petitions of grievance), even if this means using terms which rob the colonized of their historical identity.³³ Malcolm X notes that when Blacks accept the designation "Negro," nothing is revealed of their past, their native tongue, or even their color.³⁴

In lieu of the colonized's displaced culture, the culture of the colonizer is set as the standard. This culture socializes both the colonized and the colonizer to the "rule of the game." These rules, in turn, serve three functions: first, they legitimize the system of stratification based on the colonizer's presumed racial and cultural superiority as well as their actual monopoly of power; second, they instruct both the colonized and the colonizer as to how they should socially interact with each other; and third, they direct economic behavior. Fanon comments on one such rule:

The native intellectual had learnt from his masters that the individual ought to express himself fully. The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought.³⁵

Applied to the political realm, this means that the colonized are socialized to present any grievance on an individual rather than collective basis. In fact, the rules define any collective action not only as illegitimate but also as an admission of the individual's weakness to stand up and fend for him/herself. The colonizers, on the other hand, are socialized into a paternal role of treating grievances as evidence of the colonized's inability to understand their obligations. The colonizers often view the demands of the colonized as equivalent to the tantrums of small

children, who, because of their immaturity, are unable to see that the actions of the parents are in the best interests of the children. These rules of behavior are not only crucial in providing a rationale for the current state of affairs but instrumental in socializing each new generation to its proper role in society. The social structure of a colonial society is erected so as to reinforce the illusion that the existing inequitable social relations are immutable.

In sum, according to the internal colonial approach, internal and classical colonialism share a common social structure, characterized by an inequitable dual labor market, based on the forced entry or participation of colonial labor, and fostered by a political system which seeks to perpetuate these inequalities through the socialization and institutionalization of racial and cultural oppression. Now let us turn to the differences between classical and internal colonialism.

CLASSICAL AND INTERNAL COLONIALISM – A CONTRAST

The literature dealing with the internal colonial model has mainly been concerned with drawing parallels between the classical and internal colonial situations. As yet there has been no systematic attempt to analyze the differences. This section will contrast these two situations by focusing on three areas: (1) the legal status of the colonized; (2) the colonizer/colonized population ratio; and (3) the nature of decolonization.

Legal Status

One of the basic differences between the two situations is that the classical colonial model considers the colonized legally subordinate while the internal colonial model considers them legally equal.³⁶ Although the presence or absence of formally equal legal status may seem trivial on its face, the consequences of *de jure* equality are important. First, the granting of the rights of citizenship to the colonized tends to obscure their condition from the outside world. Thus, while the U.S. has been criticized for its treatment of her racial minorities, this criticism has never approached the gravity of criticism that has been leveled against either Rhodesia or the Union of South Africa, where the Africans are legally kept in an inferior position. Nor has there ever been any type of official sanction placed against the U.S. such as the official U.N. embargo against Rhodesia. While it may be argued that such criticism and sanctions are by and large ineffectual, such actions nonetheless affect the exercise of power by these countries both in terms of international and domestic politics.

Secondly, critics argue that the granting of *de jure* rights to racial minorities in the U.S. also has a bearing on the goals of their political movements.

Because of the existence of equal rights, the direction of their political movements has tended to be channeled towards the exercise of these rights rather than towards the fundamental reconstruction of society. According to O'Dell, the civil rights movement has primarily been directed against the ideology of white supremacy rather than against the institutional basis of that power.³⁷

Population Ratio

A second difference between classical and internal colonialism can be seen in the colonizer/colonized population ratio. In classical colonialism, the colonizers are numerically the minority while the colonized are the numerical majority.³⁸ In the internal colonial situation, the colonizer/colonized population ratio favors the colonizer either because of: (1) massive settlement; (2) intermarriage; (3) genocide of the indigenous population; (4) immigration restrictions; or (5) a combination of these four courses of action. This situation has ramifications.

First, a principal reason as to why the colonizers in an internal colonial situation can grant *de jure* equality to the colonized is simply due to the fact that the latter does not constitute a numerical threat to the political and economic hegemony of the colonizer.³⁹ To grant such equality in the classical colonial situation would be tantamount to being expelled. This is precisely why Rhodesia cannot allow Black majority rule. In the U.S., statehood was not granted to New Mexico and Arizona until sixty years after the signing of the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty, even though one of the provisions of the Treaty called for the granting of early statehood to the territories of the Southwest.⁴⁰ A prominent factor in this delay was that New Mexico alone, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, had over 50,000 Mexican inhabitants who would have been eligible for immediate citizenship.⁴¹ McWilliams, observing this point, suggests that "when one compares the celerity with which California and Nevada were admitted to the Union with the prolonged struggle for statehood in New Mexico, it is readily apparent that forces were at work, both within and without the states, to delay admission until an Anglo-American majority had been established."⁴² For the U.S. to have granted New Mexico statehood immediately after the Mexican-American War would have meant giving political control to the majority Mexican population. In short, the numerical strength of the colonizers generally allows them to grant *de jure* rights without affecting their political, economic, and cultural dominance.

A second ramification of this ratio is its effect on political strategies. In the classical colonial situation, strategies of the colonized leaders are centered on winning the majority's participation in a national liberation movement to counterbalance the colonizer's technological and military superiority. The determination of political strategy in an internal colo-

nial situation would be more complex. As mentioned earlier, the existence of *de jure* rights has tended to channel political movements in the direction of political reform. Yet, being a numerical minority prevents their effecting any of these reforms. Hechter observes that "this often results in politics of 'stable unrepresentation.'"⁴³ The size of the colonized population also would greatly reduce the possibility of successful armed rebellion on the basis of their strength alone. In either case, their population size necessitates establishing broader support by forming coalitions or alliances with other minorities or with members of the larger society, or with both. Such a strategy offers a wide range of possible outcomes, depending on the resolution of two problems: (1) with whom to form coalitions (e.g., white liberals, the working class, students); and (2) what the basis of these alliances are to be (e.g., the pooling of legal resources, acceptance of a revolutionary program, third world coalitions).

Nature of Decolonization

The third area – and the most controversial – in which internal and classical colonialism differs centers around the nature of decolonization. Classical colonialism is usually thought of as involving a process which includes the conquest of an overseas territory and the establishment of an administration to run the political and economic affairs of that territory by a colonial power.⁴⁴ Casanova states that the term "colony" has come to be understood "in both official circles and in common language, as possession of a territory in which European emigrants dominated indigenous people."⁴⁵ Given this usurpation of territory and of political and economic administration, national liberation movements have fought not only for political independence but also for the immediate return of their land and control of its administration. Decolonization in this situation involves the *simultaneous* and inseparable demands for political autonomy and for nationhood with the returning of native land.

In the internal colonial situation, there are two different positions concerning the nature of decolonization. One position agrees with the classical demand for both political independence and territory. However, given the circumstances of an internal colonial situation, this position contends that the two demands should be separated for strategic reasons. Eldridge Cleaver in discussing the black power movement contended in 1968 that:

Black power as a slogan does not attempt to answer the land question. It does not deny the existence of the question, but rather frankly states that at the present moment the land question cannot be dealt with, the *black people must put things first, that there are a few things that must be done before we can deal with the land question. We must first get some power so that we will be in*

a position to force a settlement of the land question. (Emphasis added.)⁴⁶

Following a similar line of reasoning, Earl Ofari argues that one of the things that needs to be accomplished is the establishment of an economic base capable of supporting an independent black nation. According to his observation:

Simple ownership [of land] means little. Blacks must have complete collective control over the means of production. If this is not the case then the land is either rendered useless and nonproductive or becomes prey for neo-colonialism.⁴⁷

People who support this position contend that internally colonized people have neither the political nor economic resources to immediately establish an independent nation. This lack of resources dictates the separation of political independence from its territorial aspects. Decolonization, according to this position, means that these goals are *sequential* rather than simultaneous as in the case of classical colonialism.

Critics of advocates for the establishment of a separate nation represent a second position. They view the demand both for political independence and for a separate territory as unrealistic. These critics argue that while racial minorities in America have suffered many of the same grievances that other colonized people in the Third World have undergone, their strategies and goals cannot be similar because the establishment of an independent nation is no longer a viable option. While assessing the Chicano experience as internal colonization, Almaguer concludes:

Unlike his brother in the Third World, the Chicano because of his internal colonization, no longer holds the classical option of national independence.⁴⁸

Concerned about the possible implications of depicting the situation of blacks in America as an internal colony, William Tabb writes:

The colony analogy becomes misleading when it is used to suggest the possibility of meaningful black independence within the context of American society.⁴⁹

Writing from a Marxian perspective, James Boggs' comments catch the essence of this second position. He remarks:

In developing a revolutionary ideology for the U.S., it is necessary to be very scientific about the difference between the role that black people have played in the development of this country and the role that colonized people play in the development of the imperialist country which exploits them. In relation to U.S. capitalism, blacks have played a role which is both like and unlike that of colonial peoples, but they have also played an integral part in the internal development of this country from its very beginning. *This country has no history separate and apart from the history of black people inside it. By the same token, the history of*

*black Americans can't be separated from their history in the development of this country. Therefore, nationalism can't possibly have the same meaning as nationalism in countries like Kenya, or Ethiopia or Ghana. (Emphasis added.)*⁵⁰

The source of disagreement between both these positions, as Boggs suggests, revolves around the issue of whether or not the colonized have an extant history and culture independent from that of the colonizer's. For those who answer in the affirmative, the demand for independence and nationhood is a reaffirmation of the colonized's distinct identity. For those who answer in the negative, the absence of a distinct history and culture removes any objective basis for creating a separate nation. Thus, they believe the efforts of America's racial minorities during the decolonization stage could be directed toward reconstructing the society of which they are an integral part.

In summary, the essence of both classical and internal colonialism is the colonizer's monopoly of political, economic and military power. In both situations, racism provides the rationale for the colonizer's dominance. It is reflected both in the split labor market based upon the forced participation of the colonized and in the development of a political system designed to maintain the colonizer's privileged position.

The differences between internal and classical colonialism result from the manner in which political dominance is exercised. In the classical colonial situation, because the colonized are the numerical majority, the colonizer is prevented from granting the former rights of citizenship. While the size of the colonized population inhibits obtaining *de jure* equality, it does provide a basis for the establishment of an independent nation. In the internal colonial situation, the colonized have *de jure* as distinguished from *de facto* legal rights principally because they are in the numerical minority and therefore are not in a position to effectively use the colonizer's political system to their advantage. These legal rights in no ways change the colonized's economic and political dependency upon the colonizer but instead tend to obscure the latter's monopoly of power. The size of the colonized population also makes the attainment of independence and nationhood more problematic than is the case in classical colonialism.

CONCLUSION

This essay has presented some of the defining characteristics of the internal colonial model by examining the similarities and the differences between the classical and internal colonial situations. In discussing these characteristics, at least two major discrepancies between the internal colonial and the assimilation/integration models appear. First, the assimilationist model approaches the problem of race

relations in terms of nonwhite *adaptation* to the dominant white society. This follows from their assumption that America is an open society for anyone willing to adopt the dominant group's values and norms. In contrast, the internal colonial model emphasizes the political and economic struggles that occur between the colonizer and the colonized. From this perspective, racial minorities are not passive actors merely adopting the standards of the dominant society but rather are active participants in *conflict* with the dominant group over differing conceptions of self-interest.

Second, the assimilationist model tends to analyze race relations in terms of class — as defined by income, occupation, consumption patterns and self-perception — rather than race. In simplified form, its supporters contend that racial minorities are at the base of the social hierarchy not because of race per se but because they possess lower class characteristics (e.g., present as opposed to future time orientation, large families, lack of education). These theorists argue that once racial minorities acquire middle class habits and orientations, they like previous immigrant groups will be upwardly mobile. On the other hand, race or more specifically racism, plays a crucial role in the internal colonial mode. Unlike assimilation theorists, advocates of the internal colonial model do not conceive of racism only in terms of attitudes. On the contrary, they assert that racism is built into the very social fabric of society, to such an extent that explicit racist attitudes are no longer needed to maintain the super-subordinate relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. They contend that racism has been institutionalized and therefore will continue to exert an influence on social interaction relatively independent of class and status criteria.

These contrasts between the assimilation/integration and internal colonial models indicate that the latter in challenging the status quo raises different questions. For instance, because a racial minority in an internal colonial situation is a numerical minority, if any particular minority wants to effectively challenge the colonizer's authority, political coalitions would be needed. Chinese, Japanese, Pilipinos, and Koreans are all racial minorities. But what is the nature of social interaction among these various groups? If these groups form alliances with each other, will the basis strictly be political or will cultural elements be involved? If Asian Americans decide to act as a bloc, what will their relationship be to other minorities in America such as Blacks and Chicanos? When the model is applied to these various racial minorities, will the model be equally applicable to the experiences of each of the nonwhite minorities in American society?⁵¹ Only by answering these types of questions, will we be able to determine to what extent the internal colonial model contributes to our understanding of race/ethnic relations in American society?

In writing this essay, I have tried to present the internal colonial argument as concisely as possible. I did so not in the belief that the model is necessarily valid. On the contrary, the internal colonial and the assimilation models share one glaring deficiency, the inability to state succinctly the relationship between race and class. Any model that is valid will need to handle this complex relationship. However, while the model is not necessarily *valid*, this in no way means that the model is not *significant*. A model can be wrong or poorly constructed yet still provide valuable insights. The internal colonial model falls into this category.

As the previous paragraph suggests, the internal colonial model directs attention toward areas which by and large have been ignored by previous race/ethnic models. For instance, the internal colonial model raises the whole problem of the relationship among the various racial minorities in American society. Obviously, there can be no theory which ignores this problem. Yet, besides the internal colonial model, no other perspective has explicitly examined this question. Because the internal colonial model raises many important unexplored questions, the model should be further explicated. The tentative answers it provides may be of value in the development of a valid and comprehensive theory of race/ethnic relations in American society. ★

Notes

1. For a prime example of this approach, see Nathan Glazer's "America's Race Paradox" in Peter I. Rose, ed., *Nation of Nations: the Ethnic Experience and the Racial Crisis* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 165-180.
2. The approach used here is largely adapted from Robert Blauner's work. See his *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). This essay, however, will be based on the proposition that internal colonialism is one possible outcome of the colonial process. Neo-colonialism represents an alternative outcome. Since both situations are possibilities, the variables which differentiate internal from classical colonialism should also explain some of the differences between internal and neo-colonialism.
3. Ronald Bailey, "Economic Aspects of the Black Internal Colony" in Frank Bonilla and Robert Girling, eds., *Structures of Dependency* (n.p., 1973), pp. 164-165.
4. Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, "Internal Colonialism and National Development," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 1:4 (1965), p. 32.
5. *Ibid*, p. 32.
6. J. H. O'Dell, "A Special Variety of Colonialism," *Freedomways*, 7:1 (Winter, 1967), p. 8. See also William K. Tabb, "Race Relations Models and Social Change," *Social Problems*, 18:4 (1965), p. 32.
7. Blauner, pp. 53-54.
8. R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 98.
9. While "contract labor" does not imply coercion per se,

conditions, such as the credit ticket system, under which the Chinese, for example, were brought to the U.S. constituted a form of economic coercion.

10. Schermerhorn, pp. 96-97.
11. Blauner, p. 56.
12. Michael J. Piore, "Public and Private Responsibility in On-the-Job Training of Disadvantaged Workers" (Cambridge: M.I.T., Dept. of Economics, Working Paper, no. 23, June, 1968), cited by Tabb, p. 439. See also Harold M. Baron, "Black Powerlessness in Chicago" in Norman R. Yetman and C. Hoy Steele, *Majority & Minority: the Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972), pp. 391-400.
13. Tabb, p. 439.
14. Donald J. Harris, "The Black Ghetto as Colony: A Theoretical Critique and Alternative Formulation," *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 2:4 (1972), pp. 10-11.
15. Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonisms: the Split Labor Market," *American Sociological Review*, 37:10 (October, 1972), p. 549.
16. Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850-1880: An Economic Study* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, for the Dept. of History, University of Wisconsin, 1963), p. xi.
17. Tomas Almaguer, "Toward the Study of Chicano Colonialism," *Aztlan*, 2:1 (Spring, 1971), p. 12.
18. Renee Maunier, *Sociology of Colonies*, trans. E. O. Lorimer (London: Routledge, 1949).
19. Casanova, p. 30.
20. Blauner, p. 62.
21. Bailey in Bonilla, p. 170.
22. Tabb, p. 436.
23. Harris, pp. 19-25.
24. Almaguer, pp. 16-17.
25. See Dean Lan, "The Chinatown Sweatshops: Oppression and an Alternative," *Amerasia Journal*, 1:3 (Nov., 1971), pp. 40-57.
26. Quote by Charles V. Hamilton, cited by Bailey in Bonilla, p. 178.
27. Manuel Barrera et al., "The Barrio as an Internal Ghetto" in Harland Hahn, ed., *Urban Affairs Annual Review*, 6 (1972), pp. 488-490.
28. Guillermo V. Flores, "Race and Culture in the Internal Colony: Keeping the Chicano in His Place" in Bonilla, p. 214.
29. Almaguer, pp. 18-19 and Tabb, p. 436.
30. George Balandier, "The Colonial Situation" in Pierre L. van den Berghe, ed., *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), p. 43.
31. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 74.
32. *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 36.
33. Memmi, pp. 108-109.
34. Malcolm X, pp. 31-37.
35. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Garden Grove Press, 1968), p. 47.
36. "The crucial distinguishing characteristic between internal and external colonialism does not appear to be so much the existence of separate territories corresponding to metropolis and colony, but the legal status of the colonized. According to our usage, a colony can be considered 'internal' if the colonized population has the same formal legal status as any other group of citizens, and 'external' if it is placed in a separate legal category." Barrera, p. 483.
37. J. H. O'Dell, "Colonialism and the Negro American Experience," *Freedomways*, 6:4 (Fall, 1966), pp. 296-297.
38. "The important fact is that this dominant society (i.e., the society of the colonizer) remains a very small minority: there is a great disequilibrium between the colonials and the mass of the colonized. The colonials fear, more or less consciously, that group size alone will become the criterion of hierarchy." Balandier in van den Berghe, p. 39.
39. In calculating the colonizer/colonized population ratio, the numerator refers to the total colonizing population. However, in geographical regions which are isolated in terms of communication and transportation and not yet under the effective economic and political control of the colonizer, the numerator is determined by the number of colonizers in that region. When these regions are populated primarily by colonized people, they are unlikely to be granted citizenship rights until the region achieves a population ratio in favor of the colonizer; or the region becomes integrated into the colonizer's political-economic-communication infrastructure. The experience of Mexicans between 1848-1900 exemplifies the first case while Asian Americans in Hawaii exemplify the second. Mexicans did not receive citizenship until an Anglo majority was achieved in the Southwestern states. On the other hand, when Hawaii was admitted to the Union, Asian Americans still constituted the majority population. However, because Hawaii was already effectively integrated into the U.S.'s economic and political system, their numbers no longer constituted a threat to the overall system.
40. Almaguer, p. 17.
41. Joan W. Moore, "Colonialism: the Case of the Mexican-American," *Social Problems*, 17:4 (Spring, 1970), p. 465. Moore also notes that the Spanish population of this area was politically organized. Even today, political participation of Mexican-Americans is higher in this state than in any other.
42. Quoted in Almaguer, p. 17.
43. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 40.
44. O'Dell, *A Special Variety . . .*, p. 8.
45. Casanova, p. 29.
46. Eldridge Cleaver, "The Land Question," *Ramparts*, 6:9/10 (May, 1968), p. 52.
47. Earl Ofari, "Marxism, Nationalism and Black Liberation," *Monthly Review*, 22:10 (March, 1971), p. 32.
48. Almaguer, p. 18.
49. Tabb, p. 442.
50. James Boggs, "Beyond Nationalism," *Monthly Review*, 25:8 (January, 1974), p. 42.
51. Barrera cautions users of the internal colonial model that "the general concept appears to apply to a number of cases and is valuable in emphasizing the structural similarities and common historical origins of the positions of Third World peoples inside and outside the U.S. However, it should not be used to obscure variations in individual cases." p. 467.