Development in a Chinese perspective

An analysis of the implementation of the development of the west policy in a minority area

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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aba TQAP</td>
<td>Aba Tibetan Qiang Autonomous Prefecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
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<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
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<td>Ganzi TAP</td>
<td>Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture</td>
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<td>GDI</td>
<td>Gender-related Development Index</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liangshan YAP</td>
<td>Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>Newly Industrialised Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>People’s Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDPC</td>
<td>State Development Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>State Owned Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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1 Introduction
The Chinese economy has been one of the world’s most rapid growing during the last few decades. Within the country’s population though, there has been a rising income disparity. The economic reforms implemented after the opening of the Chinese economy in 1978 favoured the eastern coastal region and the major cities located there. These reforms and politics were part of a planned economic strategy to speed up China’s economy. There is no doubt that this strategy has led to an economic revival of the Chinese nation, and proved country’s ability as an actor in the world economy. But in its race for economic growth China is faced with the same problem as most other developing countries; the difficult balance between economic growth and equity. The Chinese leadership has been aware of the potential economic and political problems caused by rising disparity, and during the 1990s the focus of the economic development started to shift. The tenth five year plan, launched in 2000, contained a scheme for the development of the western regions of China.\footnote{In Chinese this plan is called xibu dakaifa or xibu kaifa. It has been translated in various ways, but in this thesis I will call it “the development of the west policy”. The word kaifa can be understood as develop, open up or exploit (Han-ying cidian 1995: 541), henceforth there also exists different translations of the plan.} This happened as part of a planned economic strategy of shifting the development focus from the coast to the interior, but also as a result of pressure from local governments and powerful actors in the west.\footnote{Holbig 2004: 336-337; McNally 2004: 432; Lai 2004: 438.}

With the implementation of the economic reforms the Chinese leadership based their politics on the belief that economic growth in some areas would trickle down to others. During the 1980s and 1990s it became apparent that this would not happen and several, unfortunately unsuccessful, projects were implemented in order to work against poverty and disparity. China has been trying to achieve what many other countries have tried before them; to equally distribute the newly gained wealth.

The development of the west policy implicates and embraces various topics and objectives. Different goals have been highlighted, but the aims to challenge the increased disparity and focus on economic growth through the building of infrastructure have, in addition to the aim of creating ecological sustainable development, been given most attention. To decide if development in an area is basically a result of the development of...
the west policy or an integral part of general development in China, can be difficult and sometimes almost impossible. There exists no clear and detailed answer to what the development of the west policy actually has outlined as its main goals, and the topics I discuss in this thesis will therefore only represent some of the relevant subjects. Detailed research in this field is sparse, mainly due to the policy’s short period of implementation. I have tried to combine my own findings with research done in related fields. Nevertheless, the work to find relevant and reliable sources has been a major task during the writing of this thesis.

The understanding of development and the thought behind major development theories can function as good background material when trying to analyse the development of the west policy. Because an overall description of the policy is not enough to answer my questions I have focused specifically on one area in China and the information I obtained there for more detailed discussions of how the implementation of the policy in fact works for the population. Looking at the development of the west policy in the context of general development theory discussions will therefore be of relevance. Development is a complicated and debatable concept and in chapter 3 I will go further into the explanation of the concept and how it is used in different ways in the literature. This will hopefully contribute to an understanding of the motives behind the complex and ambitious policy plan of the Chinese authorities.

When discussing development in the context of China the dichotomies “rural-urban” and “minority-Han” becomes just as important as the east-west division. Due to the enormous area the policy is targeted at I have chosen to focus on one specific area for more detailed and locally funded understanding of the policy. With information from Kangding, an area in Sichuan Province where the majority of the population consists of different minority groups, as background material, I will try to discuss different aspects of the policy. Kangding lies within an autonomous minority area in western Sichuan, dominated by harsh climate and undeveloped infrastructure. This location represents many of the main aspects of the policy and can therefore function as a relevant example for different elements of the policy and discussions related to these.

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3 I will give a description of the western area in concern in chapter 4.
4 For a more detailed description of the local area see chapter 5.
The aim of this thesis is to try to analyse and get an understanding of what the main objectives of the policy are, despite the unclear feature of the policy. This aim leads to discussions of development and the right to development, which is of outmost relevance for the general situation in China today. My main questions in this thesis will therefore be: Who is the policy meant to be working for, and who actually benefits from it? Is the pronounced objective of providing better living standards for a larger part of the Chinese population the main reason for implementing the policy?

The development of the west policy deals with a vide range of aspects, and discussing all of them will be an impossible task to undertake in this thesis. The topics I have chosen to discuss are linked to the area where I conducted my fieldwork. Henceforth, they can not be said to represent the whole area were the policy is being implemented, but at the same time, these topics are highly illustrative of the problematic aspects of the development of the west policy.

I have seen it as useful to analyse the policy on different levels. First of all I will go through what I have done in order to find information about the policy, and how I have conducted my field work. After making an overview of the theoretical background in chapter 3 I will go further into the history and the background for the policy in the first part of chapter 4. I will continue chapter 4 with a discussion of some of the possible motives for the implementation of the policy and then present development of the west policy within the context of development theory. The information I was able to gather in Kangding constitutes the background material for the two next chapters. In chapter 5 I first give a presentation of the area were I conducted my fieldwork, and thereafter I describe the major developments in the area. I also support my findings with research done by others about topics where relevant literature exists. In chapter 6 I go further into the development process in Kangding and try to answer my main question in this thesis: Who is the policy mainly working for?
2 Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, the development of the west policy was launched in 2000 as a part of the tenth five year plan. The initiative to launch the policy came in the end of 1999, and the policy was formulated and passed within a relatively short period of time. Even though there had been plans to develop and open up the west of China for some time, the actual strategy was not launched before 2000. The policy deals with a wide range of issues. The geographical area that is in concern is enormous. This leads to several challenges, and perhaps the most important one is defining the actual objectives of this policy and finding relevant literature that deals with these objectives. The policy is often being referred to (both by media and politicians) as if it has a clear definition, but in fact a clear definition of the policy does not exist. This makes it more difficult to identify which elements of the development in the west that are part of the policy. Due to the policy’s vagueness the quality and type of literature that is written about the policy is as diverse and overall as the policy itself. It deals with all kinds of topics, varying from specific measures done to estimate the environmental destruction in Xinjiang to problems with attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to companies in Chongqing. This chapter will deal with some of the methodological problems in this thesis, specifically the process of finding information about my topic, and how I have dealt with the methodological problems that have occurred.

2.1 My findings

I chose to write about the development of the west policy because of interest and curiosity regarding this massive policy. From visits in the west (Sichuan, Yunnan, Shaanxi) in 2000 I remembered clearly the huge slogans and banners advocating and promoting “the great development and opening of the west”. And it was presented as if this was something that was going to change the whole society in a moment. In Jiangsu in the east, where I lived during this time, I did not hear much about the policy, and even less when I returned one and two years later. When I asked students or teachers in Nanjing and Shanghai about the policy they mostly referred to it simply by repeating its main sayings. “What is actually happening in the west, and how are the living situations
for people in the west? How will their lives be affected by the development of the west policy? These were questions that often crossed my mind when I thought of the economic growth in China. Most of the people I talked with had heard about the policy, but knew not much more than I did myself.

I chose to start my search for sources on the Internet, as I assumed this would be the easiest way to find information about such a recent topic. Even though information from the Internet can be seen as less reliable than printed sources, in investigations about recent topics it can be a very useful source of information in an early stage of research. What I initially found were mostly brief comments and statements about the development of the west policy, which gave me little new information. As soon as I wanted to find more detailed information, especially connected to aims and projects, the problems started. It was hard to find good written material about the policy, whether I searched electronic or traditional written sources. I realised that it was going to be more difficult than I had thought to find the information I would need to write my thesis. My first impression had been that there exists a lot of information, both in Chinese and English, because I the policy was mentioned and referred to so frequently. After some time it became clear to me that people, both orally and in writing, simply just repeated what the government had proclaimed about the policy through campaigns and speeches. I realised that I was often doing this myself as well, but it soon became problematic when starting to question projects, specific examples and outcomes of the policy. At this point the easy accessible information was not adequate anymore.

A few years after the launch of the policy more comprehensive writings concerning it came from both outside and within China. Much of the English literature related to the policy have just recently been published and are mostly writings about the overall features and problems. Due to the relatively short period the policy has been implemented one would expect more research to be published in the near future. There are, however, several works that gives a comprehensive background about the economic development in China since 1978. China is following the path of the other South and

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6 Among others magazines as China Quarterly and Journal of Contemporary China have issued numbers in 2004 with special focus on the development of the west policy.

East-Asian economies, showing that economic development can follow different patterns than those advocated by western countries represented by the workings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. There has been much discussion and some research done about the Asian countries’ strategies and policies to achieve this development, and this type of research is also being conducted in China.

This type of literature gives good background information about the plans and measures the Chinese government has pursued to enable economic growth, and discussions about what sorts of plans they intend to follow in the future. Looking at some of the development plans that were put in action before and during the Mao-era can also be useful to understand the background and developmental history of the areas that face problems regarding the development plans today.

While working with this thesis I realised that it was essential to understand the background and motives the Chinese government had for initiating the policy. In most research about political actions there is no single and simple answer to this, but rather a mixture of many different political motives. Because the development of the west policy targets a specific geographical area a useful approach is to analyse the strategy as a development strategy, and analyse what kind of ideas about development it might be based on. To analyse development is a difficult task in itself because of the diversity of development thinking. The different motives and aims of the policy might be easier to disclose if the underlying development thinking is revealed. Within this theoretical framework I have tried to find information about the policy that might shed light on issues which concern my main questions.

As I will explore later, development in general is difficult to measure and define, and in the context of a diverse policy it can become even more difficult. When trying to decide if the developments that have occurred are parts of the workings of the development of the west policy or not these discussions become relevant. As the development of the west policy is such an extensive policy, working with many aspects of the society at the same time it is almost impossible to separate it from other developments and changes that are taking place. This is a common problem in all

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8 I define the Mao-era as the period between 1949 and 1978. The plans and programs that were implemented during this period were dominated by Mao Zedong’s political thoughts and strategy. Even though he died in 1976 the leadership that implemented his politics continued in power until 1978.
development research, especially in societies that are going through rapid change and becoming more national and internationally oriented. Even in the most remote areas people’s contact with the outside world, being the rest of China or other countries has increased tremendously, and this contact also represents a major factor for change.

I have chosen to look at writings and reports which refer to the development of the west policy as an actor of change or as a project working for development. I have used both Chinese and English written material, and numbers and figures from this material or in material issued by the government. I have used gross national product (GNP) and other statistical findings to illustrate some of the differences and disparities that exist, but also tried to use information about other aspects of development as access to education, transportation etc. to analyse the development of the west policy as a development strategy working with more than merely economic development. There are several problems with this way of studying such a diverse topic, problems which I will discuss beneath.

2.2 Sources and topics
It may seem as if the policy is made so general and all-embracing that it is difficult to actually detect its purpose and achievements. This has been a major problem while working with this thesis, and made it difficult to find a good starting point and working material. It is difficult to say for sure if the material I have used is really telling the facts about the policy. This puts the reliability and validity of my information in an uncertain position, but I have tried to confirm my findings with different kinds of sources from different actors in the debate.

When the policy was launched in 2000 it was given a lot of attention in Chinese media, and posters, large banners and information material were overwhelming in western areas. In its initial phase a lot of consideration was given to the shift of political focus from the eastern to the western area. Most of the material that was written in the beginning of this period dealt with the implementation plans and the opening up of the western area’s economy for foreign and domestic investors. It was impossible to foresee if these plans were likely to succeed or not, but some researchers showed their scepticism

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9 Among others see Todaro 1997; Kiely 1998.
10 See the end of the literature list for relevant websites about the policy.
already at this point. Much of this material, academic articles or newspaper articles, is very similar; they address the area in concern, the main problems and the main objectives of the policy. The availability of detailed information of concrete plans and projects in one specific area depends on the topic. As the policy showed the rising awareness about possible environmental problems and threats in China, much attention has been given to this aspect of the policy. This material has more detailed and comprehensive information, but unfortunately mainly details about the environmental aspect and not the human consequences of the implementation of the policy. Articles concerned with human aspects of the policy are less available. This is most likely due to the short period of implementation as well as the general lack of detailed research about development problems in China.

The sources for the written material are also worth paying attention to. Statistical information from China has tended to be less reliable than what is the norm in many developed countries, and it might therefore be debatable whether this information is totally reliable. Because of this I choose to use the information I find as examples of the different points of views one might have regarding the policy, and not necessarily as pure facts.

To analyse and write about the policy with both English and Chinese written material as a base is also problematic for several different reasons. As Wang and Hu points out different opinions exist among both Chinese and Western observers as to whether China has been on a path toward regional convergence or divergence. Researchers use different methods of measurement and units of analysis and indicators, and do not agree about the best way to approach changes in regional gaps. This also influences and colours their descriptions of the development of the west policy, but it is often not clear in their writings which perspective they have. This makes it even more important to be aware of the different points of view that can be taken towards the aims, workings and results of the policy. When using material from China it is also important to be aware of the different points of view people from the different regions have. To site Wang and Hu again:

11 Among others see Dillon 2000; Becquelin 2002.
12 Wang and Hu 1999: 5.
“Regions are not just geographic and economic entities, but also social and political ones. Residents of one region tend to care more about welfare of their fellow residents than about that of inhabitants of other region.”

This will of course affect the way both researchers and policy makers analyse the situation in their own region and how they compare the situation to that of other regions.

Much of the material that one can find about the policy on the Internet is published by the government agencies or newspapers that are under state control. This material is likely to give a more positive picture of the policy and its results than would more unbiased agencies. Government controlled websites provide quite a lot of information about the policy. These sites can provide useful information about plans and aims of the policy, but it has to be remembered that these sites are fully controlled by the government. This becomes obvious when you look at reports about the results of the policy, which are exclusively positive. I do not claim that these cases are fake, but rather that they only show one side of the situation, as there surely exist examples of less positive outcomes. This is also the case for most of the Chinese newspaper reports about the policy; most of them report positive outcomes, or new and more ambiguous plans for faster economic development. This type of sources makes it difficult for me to get an impression of what actually happens in the areas where the policy is being implemented. They only provide me with one side of the situation, and it is difficult to see this picture as representing the whole reality. There probably exists a lot of research and unpublished writings about the outcomes of the policy that are more nuanced, but it has been difficult for me to get access to this type of material. At least in the initial phase of new policies negative reports or reports showing doubt with new policies have not been welcomed by the Chinese leadership. Discussing the policy in informal conversations and also through observation gives a somewhat different picture of the policy, and gives an impression that there exist implications and problems with the implementation of the policy that one can not find addressed in state sponsored material.

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15 See relevant websites in the end of the bibliography.
2.3 How did I execute my research?

I also met several methodological problems because I necessarily have to use a lot of material that has been written by other people, based on their research. Flowerdew and Martin write: “[E]very student has to be aware of the potential and pitfalls of secondary data, which manifest themselves in two ways - in their availability and their use and interpretation”.16 The ability to control and check the data of my secondary sources is limited and therefore the reliability and validity of these sources is less. I try to minimise these problems. First of all I try to use more than one source to support my statements, and I also try to use sources that have applied different research strategies. This is called triangulation or investigator triangulation.17 These triangulations ensure that my findings have validity and when findings in one source are supported by findings in another source, one may assume that the findings are more reliable.

As I soon realised, focusing on the whole geographical area would be impossible and I had to decide which area I wanted to focus on. Because my network in China is limited and the development of the west is a relatively new topic it was not easy for me to find contacts and arrange a place to do a case study.18 In the initial research period much time was therefore used to find Chinese sources through databases and libraries in China. This work was conducted in Shanghai, where I lived during the autumn of 2004. Because many of the Chinese databases for magazines and periodicals are more accessible through the web based services of Chinese libraries or universities, this was easier to do while in China. The programs used for downloading or opening articles often differ much from those used in Europe, and this type of work is therefore more convenient to do in China. I also find it less complicated to search and find relevant Chinese information when I have the possibility to ask and consult Chinese students or scholars while doing it. They are much more experienced in searching these sources than I am, and know better how to find good information about desired topics. Even though I have used literature written in Chinese as sources for papers and essays before, I never had the need to do a systematic search about a topic. This was therefore a new experience for me. Shanghai is one of the cities in China where good libraries, bookstores and universities are easy accessible, also

16 Flowerdew and Martin 1997: 68.
17 Robson 2002: 175, 371.
18 As defined in Robson 2002: 178.
for foreigners. It might have increased the quality of my material if I had gotten the possibility to spend the whole period in a city in the western area, but as I did not, I still found it more useful to spend the semester in China rather than in Norway.

I conducted systematic search for articles and books written about or related to the development of the west policy, and after getting a relatively good idea about the main topics of the policy I also searched for relevant literature about these topics. In search for articles in magazines or periodicals I used the web based network for Chinese periodicals; zhongguo qikan wang (network for Chinese periodicals), which normally is accessible through libraries of some size or universities. This database gives access to most of the important academic magazines and periodicals that are published in China. As is the case for most western databases like this, it is possible to do simple or more advanced search, narrowing or expanding the field to search in. Even though this is a good database that can provide a lot of information I did not find as much information as I had hoped to do. As mentioned earlier, much of it was general information or about environment related topics. But there seems to be a lack of accessible literature that questions the government’s ability in this aspect. Like topics connected to how the government actually works to limit the economical gap, how this work is being conducted and how local people respond to it, and also a lack of literature that focus on problems and obstacles. I have no other option than relate to the literature I have found, and try to be aware of the problematic aspects of the policy without making too many assumptions.

2.4 “Case study”

Even though I searched for both information and contacts in Shanghai I realised I had to find an area to focus on in order to find any of the more detailed information I wanted. Through my supervisor I managed to get a contact and go to Chongqing and stay at Southwest China Normal University. Chongqing is one of the main centres for the policy implementation and at this stage I planned to focus on Chongqing municipality. But it turned out to be as difficult as in Shanghai. Most of the students and scholars I talked to had the impression that the policy did not make a big difference in the cities, but had a greater impact on less developed and more rural areas. They had all heard much about the policy, especially in its initial phase, but only those who came from smaller or more rural places had seen examples of its actual workings. Through the advice of my contact I
decided to focus on a less developed area, which also is one of the focus areas for the policy in Sichuan Province. Kangding is a small city in western Sichuan, and the capital of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.\textsuperscript{19} This is a minority area dominated by Tibetans, but also inhabited by several other minority groups.

During my stay in Chongqing I managed to find some more relevant information about the policy at the library and I also spent some days at Sichuan Normal University in Chengdu where I searched the library and the same web based sources as before, but now with a specific geographical area in concern. I did not find as much relevant information as I had hoped to, and it seemed as if my assumptions about the lack of writings about specific areas of the policy were right. There exists quite a lot of information about the geographical area, but this information is mainly aimed at tourists and can almost be classified as pure propaganda information about the exotic parts of Sichuan Province. This material is therefore not giving much information about development problems in the area and the implementation of the development of the west policy.\textsuperscript{20} After a day trip by car I arrived in Kangding in the afternoon 24\textsuperscript{th} November 2004. Due to the short time at my disposal and the fact that I did not have any research permission from the local authorities, I had mixed expectations about how much information I would be able to gather. My contact revealed that I would probably not have been able to get permission even if I had gone through the formalities, because of the tensions between Han-Chinese and Tibetans that had been in the area. I could therefore not expect to be able to conduct any systematic research in Kangding.

I stayed in Kangding for two weeks, and I was lucky to be invited to live in the home of a local Chinese family. I got the possibility to participate in most of their daily activities, and learn about the area and the city through the numerous amounts of questions I asked them. The family members all grew up in the area, and were therefore capable of answering my questions about earlier situations and changes that had happened in the area. They helped me arrange some interviews with local farmers and teachers and also allowed me to interview relatives and friends in more informal situations. For the urban area of Kangding the number of Han-Chinese and Tibetans are

\textsuperscript{19} See chapter 5.1 for an introduction of the area.

\textsuperscript{20} See “China’s Tibet Online: Tibet and Tibetans in PRC Government Websites” written by the Tibet Information Network for a comprehensive discussion of these websites (TIN News Update 2003b).
almost equal. Staying with a Tibetan family might have provided me with different kind of information, but even though my hosts were Han I still got the opportunity to talk to Tibetans. Many of my family’s friends or relatives where either Tibetans or a mix of Han and Tibetan, and sometimes it was difficult for me to determine which ethnic group they belonged to without asking. At least from my point of view, in their interaction with each other ethnicity did not seem important. In conversations and daily activities ethnicity did not seem to play a major role. But in their action they clearly showed awareness of the ethnic difference. Those families in which one of the spouses was Tibetan were for example much more into Tibetan traditions and customs.

During my stay in Kangding the second largest work unit went through major structural changes, as it was being transformed from a state owned enterprise (SOE) to a privately owned company. This was a hot topic among the urban inhabitants in Kangding, not only because of the privatisation of this work unit, but because this privatisation was only one of many changes going on. Among them was the transformation of the largest work unit from a SOE to a private share hold enterprise, initiated one year earlier but first implemented during my stay there. These changes were all defined as part of the development of the area, and therefore of outmost relevance for my topic of study. The building and reconstruction of major roads, plans to build a local airport and the relatively new, but massive focus on Kangding and the area around as a tourist attraction, were all parts of the development goals in the area. This made it easy for me to find topics to talk about, and most people were willing to discuss these topics, even though they probably were less outspoken towards me than they would have been towards friends or relatives. For the first time since my research about the development of the west policy started I was able to get first hand information about some of the initiated plans and changes. This gave me much inspiration and motivation to continue to work with this topic despite the difficulties.

It was of vital importance that I could communicate with the local people mostly on my own, without too many problems. The local dialect is similar to the Sichuan dialect, but with more local words and phrases which differs from Mandarin. In situations where I had problems understanding the local dialect they either tried to talk Mandarin or get some other people explain it to me in Mandarin. This way of doing it mostly worked
well, but I discovered that it was easier to talk to people in private, one to one, than when other people were listening. This was regardless of the topic, and it seemed as if most of them thought it was embarrassing to speak Mandarin in front of others, if they didn’t speak it perfectly. My hosts were much more willing to explain things to me in Mandarin when we were alone, than when we were in public.

Except from three interviews which were set up as appointments, prepared and conducted as planned interviews, most of the information was gathered through informal conversations with my host family and their friends and relatives. I did not have the possibility to take notes during most of these conversations, but tried to write down all information gathered and the observations I had done during the day, either in the evening or during spare time in the morning. Often I also used the possibility to ask my host family about the meaning or details of conversations or happenings we had taken part in. In this way they often provided me with useful additional information, or helped me clear up misunderstandings. When I had time I also went for walks around the city on my own, and tried to get in contact with vendors or people I met in shops, but I did not gain much information in this way. Most likely because of the relatively short period I stayed there, and but also because the fact that I was the only foreigner in the city made people rather shy towards me.

As an outsider I also had to be aware of my own interpretations, based on my experiences and motives for doing this study. “There is no such thing as objectivity in social science research.” All research work will be influenced by the experiences, aims and interpretations of the researcher. Because of the short duration of my stay I did not have the opportunity to see people’s reactions and talk to them over an extensive time period.

Still, I discovered that most people found my topic both interesting and relevant, and important to study. Even farmers or workers in restaurants or tea houses knew about and often had opinions regarding the workings of the development of the west policy. This made me positive about the findings during my case work, despite the short time and the unstructured way I had gathered information. I did not find much written material in Kangding, neither statistics nor other details of structural changes. Contacting local

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21 Flowerdew and Martin 1997: 112.
authorities for interviews or other information was not recommended by my contact, and I had to rely much on the information that was given to me orally. This certainly put much of my information in a weak position when it comes to validity, and I have tried to be aware of this when using the information. Robson writes: “Validity has something to do with being accurate, or correct, or true. These are difficult (some would say impossible) things to be sure about.”\(^{22}\) If I had stayed in Kangding for a longer period of time, with other people and been able to conduct a more systematic research, my analysis might have been totally different from the one I present in this thesis. To assume that the information I gathered in Kangding is representative for the whole area where the policy is being implemented would also be misleading. But the weeks I stayed in Kangding still provided me with very much useful information. It enabled me to put the writings about the policy in a much more local and more tangible context which enabled me to come up with reflections that otherwise would have been impossible. Without this small case study I would have had problems with deciding which information about the policy to focus on, and also found it even more difficult to relate this information to everyday situations.

\(^{22}\) Robson 2002: 170.
3 Development

Issues concerning development and theories founded on different ideologies are important in order to understand the development of the west policy. This chapter will give an outline of different development theories. In this context terms like “developed”, “undeveloped”, “less developed” are relevant. Hodder writes that:

“[The] ‘developing world’ is the term often used to refer to what is otherwise known as the ‘third’, ‘less developed’, ‘developing’, ‘underdeveloped’, ‘undeveloped’ or ‘backward’ world; other terms include ‘emerging economies’, ‘transitional economies’ and ‘the south’.”

There are many words to describe the less industrialised part of the world, but most common ones are perhaps the third world, the South and developing world.

3.1 What is development?

It is difficult to give a precise definition of the word development. The word has existed in the English language for a long time, but its meaning has evolved over the years. The Dictionary of Human Geography states that “development is one of the most complex words in the English language”. Before the 1970s development was seen as an economic phenomenon solely referring to economical growth, and was normally measured through GNP or GNP per capita. Both the World Bank and other organisations used this method to measure and classify development, but during the 1980s it was clear that GNP growth would not automatically trickle down to the masses.

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23 Hodder 2000: 5.
24 The category “Third world” was invented by the French in the early 1950s in order to designate the territory between the two superpowers (Sachs 1992: 3). “They [concepts as Third World and underdevelopment] emerged as working principles within the process by which the West - and, in different ways, the East - redefined itself as the rest of the world. By the early 1950s, the notion of three worlds - the free industrialised nations, the Communist industrialised nations, and the poor, non-industrialised nations, constituting the First, Second and Third World respectively - was firmly in place. Even after the demise of the Second, the notions of the First and Third worlds (and North and South) continue to articulate a regime of geopolitical representation” (Escobar 1995: 31). According to the Brandt line China is part of the underdeveloped South, but in other classifications China is in the middle index or in the semi periphery compared to the rest of the world (Potter et al. 1999: 21). Generally, China is still seen as a developing country, with some degree of industrialization but still some fundamental changes away from a “developed” status.
of the population and therefore would not necessarily lead to any overall development.\textsuperscript{27} Development discourses today do not only deal with economic growth, but also other factors as housing, literacy, education and health facilities, equally distributed in the population. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has its own Human Development Index (HDI) which measures life expectancy, education and real GNP per capita, and recently, a Gender-related Development Index (GDI) has been used to incorporate gender inequality into the measurement of HDI.\textsuperscript{28}

Todaro concludes that development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic, and institutional processes, secured the means of obtaining a better life.\textsuperscript{29} He states that the three following points are equally important aspects of development: (1) raising peoples living standards - their incomes and consumption levels of food, medical services, education, etc., through relevant economic growth processes; (2) creating conditions conducive to the growth of people’s self-esteem through the establishment of social, political, and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect; and (3) increasing people’s freedom by enlarging the range of their choice variables, as by increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.\textsuperscript{30} This concurs with the UNDP 1999 report which points out that the relationship between economic prosperity and human development is neither automatic nor obvious, and more aspects than economic growth has to be taken into consideration when working with development.\textsuperscript{31}

However it is clear today that all individuals, states and institutions might not have the same ways of defining development. But as Potter points out:

“[M]ost development processes are influenced by development planning, and most plans are in turn shaped by development theories which ultimately should reflect the way in which development is perceived; in other words, the ideology of development.\textsuperscript{32}"

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{27} Chow and Lyter 2002: 26.
\textsuperscript{28} Kiely 1998: 3; Chow and Lyter 2002: 27.
\textsuperscript{29} Todaro 1997: 18.
\textsuperscript{30} Todaro 1997: 685.
\textsuperscript{31} UNDP 1999 in Chow and Lyter 2002: 27.
\textsuperscript{32} Potter \textit{et al.} 1999: 3.
\end{footnotesize}
### 3.2 Major development theories

Development theories aim to explain the disparities in the world. Why are some countries poor and others not? Why do some countries develop while others do not? Which is the best and most efficient way to promote development? Potter et al. states that the expression *development thinking* may be used as a catch-all phrase indicating the sum total of ideas about development, including pertinent aspects of development theory, strategy and ideology.33

It is possible to argue that development thinking actually started with the colonial expeditions. Many of the civilisations that were colonised were seen as backwards, unorganised and uncivilised compared to Europe, which had gone through its industrial revolution. According to the colonial powers these civilisations were in need of development. Potter et al. points out that little recognition was given to the fact that “traditional” societies always had been responsive to new and more productive types of development; had they not done so, they would not have survived.34 The constant economic exploitation of the colonies made it difficult for them to develop, and in this sense underdevelopment was the creation of development.35

In this early period of development thinking, development was normally seen as the same as modernisation, a transformation of “traditional” societies into “modern” societies.36 This modernisation involved mechanisation, rapid industrialisation and the transfer of the underemployed rural population to the productive urban-industrial sector.37 Modernisation theory dominated development thinking until the end of the 1950s. Main thoughts were that industrialisation was the only solution for societies dominated by poverty and that the economic development gained would spread to the rest of the population and create overall development.38 Main theorists were Myrdal and Hirschman.39 Hirschman saw polarisation as the early stages of economic development, and development in the core would trickle down to the more backward regions.40

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33 Potter et al. 1999: 44.  
34 Potter et al. 1999: 4.  
35 Among others see Frank 1966; Sachs 1992; Escobar 1995; Preston 1996.  
40 Potter et al. 1999: 46.
Investment in key sectors would, after some time, lead to development in the rest of society. Myrdal was more pessimistic and emphasised the need for state intervention in order to achieve economic development. Without intervention the underdeveloped countries would not have a chance in either gaining economic growth or being able to distribute the growth equally. Rostow's model of five stages of economic growth was seen as the pre-eminent theory of modernisation in the early 1960s. The most significant point in his theory is the argument that all countries have the same ability to go through these economic stages of development.

During the 1960s and 1970s many researchers and theorists started to doubt whether all countries could go through the same development as most of the western, or countries in the First world, had done. The new way of thinking was focused on Latin-America, and saw the development prospects in a different perspective, in which the former colonies did not have the same possibility for development because of their dependency to their former colonial powers. This thinking was rooted in neo-Marxist political theory and well known theorists are Frank, Baran, Amin and Wallerstein. Dependency theorists focus on the reasons for underdevelopment rather than the development process itself. During this period many saw development as a way of westernising the world, and within this situation the former colonies would stay in an underdeveloped and dependent condition. The core-periphery model provided by the American planner John Friedman is also well known, and can be seen as one way of describing dependency, but also a way of describing possible development paths. The five stages in his model assume a trickle down effect, which initially starts with small, independent local centres in no hierarchy and finally leads to a fully interdependent system of cities. The problem, as he himself has pointed out, is that without state intervention developing countries will not be able to reach the last stage, and end up in a core-periphery dependency. In the light of this model, the First world can be seen as the core, while the Third world is the periphery.

Dependency theory stresses that the biggest obstacles to development are not a lack of capital or entrepreneurial skills, but the international division of labour.

41 Potter et al. 1999: 51.
42 For further readings see Frank 1967; Wallerstein 1979; Amin 1984; Baran 1988.
43 Potter et al. 1999: 57.
Dependency theorists suggest that the only way to advance is to withdraw from the global economy.\textsuperscript{44} Even though theories of dependency and underdevelopment have been popular and often discussed in academia, the theory has had little influence on actual development strategies that have been implemented. Few countries have adopted this neo-Marxist thinking, and those who have, like Benin and some other African countries, have performed badly.\textsuperscript{45} Critics of this theory claim that even though capitalism can be seen as a western concept and lead to inequitable growth, it is still the only ideology suitable for developing a country today. If the dependency theorists do not come up with other, possible alternatives, capitalism, modernisation and integration in the world economy still have to be the main path to development.\textsuperscript{46} Warren, who has been one of the main critics of dependency theorists, says that even though it might lead to uneven development, it is not possible to develop without taking part in the capitalist system which dominates the world today.\textsuperscript{47}

In the 1980s and 1990s a new group started to influence development thinking: the neo-classical counter revolutionists. The neo-classical theory has greatly influenced the World Bank and the IMF. The theory emphasises the role of free markets and correct pricing policies, and blames bad governing and corruption rather than the dominance of the first world for the lack of development. The strategic adjustment programs (SAPs) by the IMF have pressed for economic liberalisation and the elimination of many market-inhibiting social institutions, and the conditions laid on their recipient countries very much reflect the thinking of neo-classical counter-revolutionists.\textsuperscript{48} State structures are the key, and the state is viewed as the primary force behind economic and social development. Development is possible, also in the regions that are underdeveloped; the important factor is how the state deals with its underdevelopment and manages to evolve in the world system.

\textsuperscript{44} Potter et al. 1999: 65-66.
\textsuperscript{45} Hodder 2000: 14.
\textsuperscript{46} Hodder 2000: 14.
\textsuperscript{48} Potter et al. 1999: 55.
3.3 Strategies for development

Despite the effort to find explanations to and strategies for development, many countries still face huge developmental challenges. The concept of development have been questioned in earlier periods as well, but not to the same degree as we have seen during the last two decades. Movements advocating anti-development and claiming the whole development discourse is irrelevant have gained supporters. This discourse has been concerned with questions regarding what can be seen as “good” and “bad” development.\(^{49}\) This is increasingly important as the globalisation process has made it almost impossible to separate questions of development from discussions about influence from the powerful actors in the world economy (states or institutions) or from environmental problems.

Development theories have laid the foundation for development strategies, both in developed and less developed areas. Many more theories and names could have been mentioned here, as the development discourse is varied and encompassing. The first theories continue to exist as new theories emerge, and many development strategies are based on the earlier theories as much as on the more recent ones. Potter et al. writes that development strategies can be defined as “practical paths to development which may be pursued by international agencies, states in the First, Second and Third Worlds, non-government organisations and community-based organisations, in an effort to stimulate change within particular nations and regions and continents”.\(^{50}\)

During the 1980s the poor people’s income fell by 10-14%, the disparity between poor and rich increased, and the environmental issues connected to development became more obvious. Many saw the breakdown of the socialistic planned economy system in Eastern Europe as a proof that the capitalist system was the only solution. When the Asia-crisis occurred the need for a new development thinking was pressing. Not even the Newly Industrialised Countries (NIC)\(^{51}\), whose development strategies had been approved and cherished by the World Bank and IMF, managed to keep their position in

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\(^{49}\) Hodder 2000: 17.

\(^{50}\) Potter et al. 1999: 43.

\(^{51}\) “A small group of countries at a relatively advanced level of economic development with substantial and dynamic industrial sector and with close links to the international trade, finance, and investment system (Argentina, Brazil Greece, Hong Kong, Mexico, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain and Taiwan)” (Todaro 1997: 707).
the world economy. Development thinking entered a crisis; few of the development strategies that had been applied in underdeveloped countries worked, and uneven distribution dominated in those countries where GNP had risen. The response to this crisis in development thinking can be separated into a TINA (there is no alternative) and THIS (this is no alternative) thinking. The TINA perspective sees capitalism as the only way to gain development, while the THIS theorist wants to find a new alternative. As they have not managed to do this, most development strategies today still see capitalism as the only path for development. Capitalism is the ruling force in the industrialised world, and for the developing world to be able to become a part of the world economy they have to industrialise. Industrialisation is a form of modernisation, a way of making a society more complex. 52 Countries where a majority of the workforce is occupied in primary industries are classified as developing countries, despite the fact that they might have some well developed industries.

Most development theorists today do not regard industrialisation as solely beneficial, and carries the risk of causing dependency as it to a large extent relies on the infusion of capital, technology and business organisation from outside. 53 Some of the East Asian countries are by the World Bank and IMF still seen as examples of successful industrialisation and development planning. Despite the Asia-crisis in the end of the 1990s they have survived as economic actors in the world economy, and the development (economic, social and cultural) these countries have gained the last 20 years can not be disputed. There are many discussions about what kind of development strategy these countries used and the largest disagreement are between the neo-liberalists and the neo-structuralists. The neo-liberalists claim that the only reason why these countries managed to develop was their liberal economic reforms and free-market thinking, while the neo-structuralists point to the strong and regulative state system in these countries. The opposite arguments have been used to explain the crisis in the 1990s. Most analysts today agree that these countries used a selective industrialisation strategy (SI) to succeed, a

52 Industrialisation can be defined as: “the process whereby industrial activity comes to play a dominant role in the economy of a nation or region. Industrialization may take place spontaneously or as a result of some process of development planning” (Johnston et. al 2000: 388). “Industrialization: The process of building up a country’s capacity to process raw materials and to manufacture goods for consumption or further production” (Todaro 1997: 698).
combination of an import substitution industrialisation strategy (ISI) and an export oriented industrialisation strategy (EOI). The reason why the NICs in Latin-America have not had the same success is said to be their reliance on an ISI strategy.

There are discussions today as to whether China follows the same path as the other East Asian economies, or adheres to its own development path, with “Chinese characteristics”. Regardless of this, it is clear that China is following a development strategy based on a higher degree of industrialisation and modernisation, and that FDI and export oriented production are important elements in this strategy. Their recently gained membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) also shows how important a position in the world economy is to China. Since the focus in this thesis is development inside China and not China’s overall development in the world economy, I will not go further into this discussion here. But it is still important to have the general economic development of China in mind when talking about development within the Chinese territory.

Depending on what is seen as the most important aspects of the policy, the Chinese strategy for the development of the west can be seen as adhering to different development strategies. I will focus on two different development strategies here; the diffusion model and the inter-colonial model and in the next chapter I will look at the development of the west policy in the light of these two strategies and discuss their relevance for the policy.

The diffusion model is based on development in one core area, and believes that this development will spread to other areas as long as the economic development of the core continues. This development can either be within one country or one region, or both at the same time and the theory is close to the core-periphery model. A core has to develop first, and will eventually lead to the development in the rest of the area, but this development will come later and maybe not to the same degree as in the core. According to the diffusion model all areas can not go through the same development path. Natural cores exist, but a core can not be created everywhere. Development in the core will then lead to further development in the periphery as well. Hence, the model relies on a trickle down effect, and a belief that development in the periphery depends on assistance from the core.
Even though the motives for implementing a development strategy based on the diffusion model might be to create equal development, the efficiency of the trickle down effect is increasingly questioned. Many experts now agree upon that even in regions that experience substantial economic growth poverty levels often remain the same or deteriorate further.

“Gains made by the poor - if any - are often much less significant than gains made by the non-poor, both in absolute and relative terms. Therefore, in terms of economic and social capacity, poor people end up comparatively more disadvantaged.”

The inter-colonial model is in one aspect based on the same premises as the diffusion model. The development in one area, based on its comparative advantages and other factors, creates an economic leading core. This core will have the possibility to extract resources from other, less developed areas but can also lead to development in other areas. But development based on an inter-colonial model might create even larger disparities and poor areas may become even poorer. The developed area uses its technology and advantages to extract resources from the less developed area, leaving nothing or just small amounts of capital behind. As the name of the model indicates, it can be seen as a model following the paths of the European colonialism in the 18th and 19th century, and is therefore not seen as the best path for development. The discussion of what kind of development this model might lead to, will therefore be similar to the discussions concerned with the consequences of colonialism. A possible outcome of this model is often seen as underdevelopment rather than development of an area. Colonialism might lead to the diffusion of knowledge, building of infrastructure and improve the conditions for further development. But, based on earlier experiences, it is plausible that most of the development that occurs is controlled by and favours the “colonial” elite and will not improve the living standard for the majority of the local population.

This means that the diffusion model can be seen as a comparatively more fruitful development model, because it might also lead to development in the periphery, while the inter-colonial model represents a more negative approach where extracting resources is really the main drive instead of improving the living conditions for the local population.

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54 Becquelin 2002: 3.
In recent years much research has been done to find the reasons behind unsuccessful development strategies. Becquelin mentions what is seen as important aspects of successful anti-poverty strategies. There are four basic features that should be parts of successful anti-poverty strategies, based on experience from the implementation of different development strategies in poor countries and regions. Accountability, non-discrimination, equality and participation have been seen as vital and substantial components in order to succeed lifting people out of poverty.

“Accountability prevents programs from going off track due to incompetence, corruption and waste; non-discrimination insures that certain groups of people are not perpetually marginalized or forced into poverty because they are denied access to resources on the basis of their social, religious or ethnic background; and equality and participation ensure that affected communities have a way to express their needs and have their voices heard.”

If we look at the development of the west policy mainly as an anti-poverty strategy these four elements all become relevant. According to earlier experience with development strategies these four elements have to be in place in order to succeed the goal of less inequality. Due to the inequitable development some participants in the development debate has seen it as important to discuss whether development can be seen as a fundamental human right. These discussions led the United Nations to adopt the Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986. The Declaration established the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.

The UNDP devoted its Human Development Report 2000 to the human rights and development theme. Because of the great disparity that are seen within many countries and regions today it is not only important to be aware of civil and political rights (CPR), but also make sure that peoples economic, social and cultural rights are being met (ESCR). In some areas economic disparity is rooted in ethnic discrimination; one

57 UNDP 2000a.
58 Human rights discussions often have civil and political rights as their main focus, and the traditional human rights discourse was mainly focused on these topics. During the work for human rights, especially in less developed countries, it has been a rising awareness about other aspects of the society that necessarily
particular group in society is not able in the same extent as other groups to participate in or gain from the development taking place. I have seen it as relevant to look at the development of the west policy in the light of the declaration from 1986. The declaration emphasises the right of all members of a society to take equal part in economic and social development. In 2001 China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Civil Rights (ICESCR) and has referred to this covenant several times when talking about their economic development. With its ratification of the ICESCR China is obliged to follow international standards in its development work, and it is therefore interesting to see the implementation of the development of the west policy as part of this work.

3.4 Concluding remarks
Development is a complex concept, and it is important to be aware of the different aspects of development, and how the understanding of it has changed. The understanding of development as modern and civilised is something that is still valid for much development thinking. However, it has become more obvious than before that development can not be seen as only positive. Many of the discussions within development thinking have been concerned with the question of whether development is possible in all societies. Some have blamed underdevelopment on western world’s colonialism; others see it as consequences of natural conditions. Even though the dependency theorists have gained much attention within development thinking, their theory has not had much influence on development strategies. To become an integrated part of the capitalist market is still seen as the only viable way to obtain economic development.

These theories are all relevant for China and the development of the west. In addition to the theories the rather new emphasis on development as a human right is also worth noticing. China has been

have to be fulfilled before a discussion of civil and political rights can become relevant. Economic, social and cultural rights have been given more focus in recent years, and many countries and organisations see these rights as equally important and essential as the civil and political rights.
4 The development of the west policy: a presentation

In this chapter I will give a presentation of the policy; the geographic area of concern, how the policy has been formulated and what seems to be its main focus. As it has been difficult to identify the policy’s main objectives I will try to describe what seem to be some of the main goals of the policy based on the sources I have consulted. Instead of giving an exact description a quotation from Goodman’s introduction in China Quarterly’s theme number about the policy gives a good description of some of the main problem in his regards:

“The apparent relative shortage of resources to support the development of the western region is matched by the lack of coherent and consistent statements that detail the campaign. There is no single document that summarizes the drive to Open Up the West.”

4.1 Background

The economic disparity between the east and west of China is neither new nor unfamiliar to the Chinese leadership. When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gained power in 1949 the economic disparity between the coast and the interior was one of the main challenges facing the country. More than 70% of the industrial output was concentrated in the coastal areas and Yang states that China was a typical dual economy, with a vast agricultural hinterland surrounded by a few industrial cities. During the whole period from the beginning of the 1950s until the end of the 1970s the interior region allocated almost 60% of total state investment in fixed assets to interior regions. This investment came as a result of military and political considerations, and much of it was economically inefficient. Especially during the Third Front project between 1964 and 1972 the government made huge investments in the west. The main reason behind this investment was to establish military and industrial bases far from the more vulnerable coast and boarder areas. During a speech in 1956 Mao revealed that he was in favour of

60 Yang 1990: 233.
61 Yang 1991: 45.
62 San xian. Some places also translated as the “third line” (Kirkby and Cannon 1989:7).
building most of the heavy industry in the interior. Barry Naughton has written an article about the Third Front project and claims that the project was a “purposive”, “large-scale” and “centrally directed” program of development. The investment in the interior during this period occurred at the expense of the development of the coast. In the end of the 1970s it became clear that the investment strategy needed to be altered. China wanted to become a part of the world economy. Another major reason for the need of a shift was that a majority of the industries in the interior were extremely inefficient. Despite the heavy investments, poor planning and bad adjustment to local conditions meant that many of the SOEs in the interior were more of a burden than contributing to the rising economy. Even today, some of the major problems in the interior are connected to inefficient SOEs dating back to the Third Front period.

The Third Front project involved much of the area that today is part of the development of the west policy; Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia, a part of Shaanxi, and the western, mountainous parts of Henan, Hubei and Hunan. It is impossible to know how the relationship between the interior and the coast had been if the Third Front project had not been implemented. Yang claims it is likely that the interior would have had at least the same amount of development problems as they have today. Several researchers on the other hand, point out that the costal areas were being underdeveloped and undermined during the Mao-era, but despite the higher proportion of state investment to the interior, the productivity in the coastal region still outperformed the interior.

“Thus, the increasing regional development gap in post-Mao China may very well represent a return to the path that would have prevailed had the central government not been as intrusive as it was during the Maoist period.”

Even though the Third Front project was supposed to use the knowledge and techniques acquired from the then Soviet Union to develop its industries, most of the construction projects that had some potential were so poorly planned and designed that most of them

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63 Yang 1990: 234.
64 Naughton 1988: 351.
65 Naughton 1988: 354.
became economic disasters. Despite these facts, which Naughton acknowledged before Yang, Naughton writes that the Third Front project led to important achievements “that would eventually have been required in any long-term development strategy for China”.68 Sichuan Province was chosen as the heart of the Third Front project and due to the lack of navigable waterways and long-distance highways the construction of the Chengdu-Kunming railway was one of the main infrastructure projects during this period. Other important routes between Sichuan-Guizhou, Guizhou-Kunming and Hunan-Yunnan were also constructed during the Third Front.69

Yang points to four reasons for the rising economic disparity between the interior and the coast after the economic reforms were initiated in the end of the 1970s: the preferential policies favouring the coastal region, the price structure of industrial production, decentralisation, and the widening economic gap between the coast and the interior.70 Deng Xiaoping’s development theory of “two overall situations” (liang ge daju)71 made it clear that the government played a central role in safeguarding the development of the whole country. But this development had to be done step by step. Thus it was decided that a deliberate stimulation of the economy and the incremental market liberalisation would first take place in the eastern part of China. The coastal region went through a steady and rapid economic development. This was due to the region’s comparative advantages and the preferential policies that focused on more FDI and less obstacles for private enterprises. During the 1980s and 1990s it was clear that the western region was increasingly falling behind in terms of the development taking place in the eastern part of China. To be able to reverse this trend some changes had to be done.72 To quote a statement of Tian about the west:

“[I]n contrast with the coastal areas, the western region is remote and underdeveloped. In 1999, the region’s share of national GDP was

68 Naughton 1988: 375.
70 Yang 1991: 47.
71 According to this theory, the successful development and opening up of the coastal region could pave the way for development in the inland. The coastal region was therefore the main focus of the speeding up of the economic development, and the inland would have a higher priority later.
and its share of value added industrial output was 14.4%.”73

4.2 Geography

The definition of the “western” area has changed over time. The first way of defining the area under the rule of the CCP was the division between the coastal and interior area that existed in the 1950s. In the 1960s the regions were classified into first-line, second-line and third-line regions, and when the sixth five year plan was launched in 1981 the government operated with a coastal, interior, and minority division. The seventh five year plan was based on the existing level of economic development at that time and the regions were divided into the eastern or coastal region, the middle region and the western region.74 Today the different regions are normally referred to as the western, central and eastern region, but sometimes the interior and coastal are is used instead of western and eastern. The development of the west policy deals mostly with the western region, but parts of the central and north-eastern regions have also been subjected to the policy.

When we talk about the development of the west today the area of concern includes six provinces; Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou, five autonomous regions; Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi and Ningxia, and one centrally planned municipality; Chongqing.75 Even though Inner Mongolia and Guangxi are not normally included in the western region, they are still a part of the policy, and will therefore be part of the area I refer to when writing about the development of the west policy in general.76 The western region also boarders ten countries; among them are Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

4.3 Population

The western area covers about 71% of China’s geographical area but is inhabited by only 28% of its population.77 80% of the Chinese minority population (not Han) live in the

73 Tian 2004: 613.
74 Hsu 1991: 130.
75 Tian 2004: 612-613.
76 See appendix 2 for a map of China with provinces.
77 According too the population census in 2000 (Shen 2004: 638).
In 1998 the eastern region accounted for 56% of the national GDP, while the western region only accounted for 14%. In an article in *Journal of Contemporary China* Shen presents a table of key development indicators calculated with data from the *China Statistical Yearbook 2001*. This table shows that the western region is less developed in many aspects; both in terms of the level of urbanisation and the share of employment in the secondary sector were much lower than national average. In the western region a particularly low proportion of the rural labour force were employed in the non-agricultural sector and this has had an important impact on the income of the rural population.

There exists many different ways of measuring economic development in China. However, all methods show a disparity in average income between the west and the east. The GDP per capita in the western region constituted only 43.6% of the GDP of the eastern region in 1998, and in 2000 it further decreased to 42.7%. The disparity is particularly striking in rural areas. The income per capita in urban areas in the western region was 65.1% of the eastern region, while the income in rural areas was only 47.6% of that in the eastern rural areas. In 2002 the national GDP per capita average was 9,251 RMB; the eastern average was 14,171 RMB, while the western was only 5,462 RMB. The sources for these numbers vary and they are therefore not compatible, but they give more or less the same picture of economic disparity between the east and the west.

### 4.4 The Policy

The development of the west policy is seen to have been initiated with the speech held by Zhu Rongji in June 1999 when he stressed the development and opening up of both the central and western parts of China, particularly stressing the development of the west. He said that the development of the western region was the greatest and most important

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78 Yang 2004: 3-4.
80 Shen 2004: 648.
81 Lin and Chen 2004: 669.
82 Shih 2004: 428.
task for the next century.\textsuperscript{84} In addition to the environmental improvements, Zhu Rongji’s speech emphasised the building of infrastructure and transportation facilities as major tasks of the policy.

In \textit{China Quarterly} Heike Holbig writes:

“[The] Open Up the West policy is best described as ‘soft’, an amorphous set of diverse policy agendas and instruments not designed to form a complete and coherent programme, but rather to appeal to as many interests as possible simultaneously. As a consequence of this ‘soft’ nature, policy implementation is found to depend to a great extent on the specific interpretations and arrangements of the provincial jurisdictions involved.”\textsuperscript{85}

The objectives of the policy are diverse and varied. It is difficult to determine which aspects of the policy that are the most important ones. The initiative to develop the west can be seen as one part of the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the end of the 1970s to transform the Chinese economy. Many of the incentives for economic change that were implemented in the east in the beginning of the 1980s have never been introduced in the west. Thus, much of the policies introduced to develop the west are the same as those that already have been implemented in the east. The reorganisation and privatisation of the SOEs, the opening up of some cities and areas for foreign investment and the focus on private enterprises and companies are all examples of policies to develop the west. At the same time they are also examples of the overall plan for economic transformation that is taking place in the whole country.

It has been claimed that the main aim of the policy is to limit the increasing economic disparity between the east and the west.\textsuperscript{86} How this is going to be done is less clear. To introduce the same economic policies in the west as those implemented in the east in the beginning of the 1980s may perhaps increase economic output, but it might not be as easy as it was in the east. The reason why the east was chosen to lead the economic transformation is the same as why the east is more developed than the west today. There

\textsuperscript{84} Wang and Wei 2003: 2.
\textsuperscript{85} Holbig 2004: 335-336.
\textsuperscript{86} Peoples Daily Online 2001; Goodman 2004: 319.
are several reasons for this. The natural conditions in the east are far better than in the west and the proximity to the sea makes export both cheaper and more efficient.  

When the development of the west policy was declared official state policy in the end of 1999 a “State Council Leading Group for Western Region Development” (guowuyuan xibudiqu kaifa lingdao xiaozu) had already been appointed. Premier Zhu Rongji was head of and Vice-Premier Wen Jiabao deputy head of a group of 17 members (later 23), all of them with the rank as ministers or heads of Central Committee departments. The tasks of the Leading Group have been defined as guiding, organising and executing various stages of the new policy. Most of the Leading Group members are high ranking leaders mainly involved in macroeconomic and financial work, administration of infrastructure and resources, and in propaganda and public relations. In addition to the Leading Group, in January 2000 the Western Region Development Office (guowuyuan xibu diqu kaifa lingdao xiaozu bangongshi) was established within the State Council responsible for implementing the policy. According to their official website, the Office will focus on four areas, based on the instructions from the Party Central Committee and the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC) (guojia fazhan jihua weiyuanhui). These four areas are: (1) to make an overall plan for development of the west, (2) to formulate the policy and measures for speeding up the development of the west, (3) to speed up the construction of infrastructure in the west, (4) to strengthen protection and construction of ecology and environment in the west. The SDPC begun its work with the policy even before the Leading Group was formally established, and in the end of 1999 they had a plan for the implementation of the policy ready. Through the Western Region Development Office the SDPC has from the very beginning formulated the central parts of the policy. Zeng Peiyan, who is the minister in charge of the SDPC, has stated that the western region should take “the strengthening of

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87 Wen and Tisdell 2001: 68.
88 Holbig 2004: 344.
89 In some literature also translated and referred to as Office for the Leading Group for Western Region Development.
90 Shen 2004: 638.
91 http://www.sdpc.gov.cn
92 Also called State Planning Commission, in 2003 the commission became a part of the State Development and Reform Commission (guojia fazhan he gaige weiyuanhui) (Holbig 2004: 346).
93 http://www.chinawest.gov.cn
94 Holbig 2004: 347.
ecological construction and environmental protection as a basic starting point for its large-scale development”. Based on his sources Holbig writes that the main plan constructed by the SDPC focuses on four fields: infrastructure construction; ecological protection; industrial restructuring; and the development of science and technology (S&T), education, and human resources, and in 2000 a fifth field of “strengthening of reform and opening-up” was added.

In 2000 the SDPC announced ten major projects, mainly concerned with setting up infrastructure. The most costly among them are three large scale construction projects; the west-east gas pipeline, the west-east power transmission project and the Qinghai-Tibet railway. Many of these major projects have attracted a lot of media attention and have frequently been written about both in local and central newspapers. These reports have portrayed the policy as a huge, successful strategy and less focus has been given to the amount of resources these projects demand, and how they affect local people’s life.

Despite of its “soft” nature Holbig identifies at least five separate agendas of the policy, all of them very diverse and sometimes even competing. The policy’s quest for equality, foreign investment, infrastructure, management of the nationalities, and sustainable economic development almost concern all parts of the society. Nicolas Becquelin has a critical approach to the policy and also sees the potential for possible conflicts between these objectives, as they might be designed for other purposes than those stated by the government. He finds the policy very ambiguous, and points out that “economic policies alone are unlikely to be sufficient if these ambitious goals are to be achieved”. Others, mainly state officials, stress the policy’s goals as extremely good and promising for the Chinese development.

“Development of the western region in China is an important strategy formulated by the Chinese government aimed at shortening regional development gaps, promoting balanced, fast and sustained development of national economy and implementation of the goal of

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96 Holbig 2004: 347.
97 Also called the “Three Constructions”.
98 See Hoh 2004 for some information about the building of the railway.
becoming rich for the whole nation. The basic essence and final result of the strategy is to entirely eradicate poverty. Therefore development of the Chinese western region provides both an important historical opportunity for development of poor western area and giant impetus for poverty reduction development. It also has significant effect on poverty reduction development in the new era as well as on alleviation eradication of poverty phenomenon.”

Feng’s statement clearly shows the emphasis on economic development of the western area and the importance of poverty reduction. There seems to be an overall agreement among state officials that economic development in the western area will mean less tensions and a more stable political situation.

Yang stresses the minority aspect of the policy and writes that the development of the west actually can be seen as the development of minority areas. He quotes Premier Zhu Rongji’s speech on the central conference for minority work in 1999 when he declared that “the implementation of the strategy to develop the west is actually to speed up the development of minority and ethnic areas”. There is a close link between the minority and poverty aspects of the policy. According to statistics, by 1994 the impoverished parts of the ethnic minority areas were mainly located in western China. Among the 348 ethnic minority autonomous counties across the country, 257 were poverty-stricken counties given priority in aid. These 257 counties accounted for 43.4% of the 592 impoverished counties on the state’s priority list. This shows why some might claim that the main goal of the development of the west policy is actually the development of poor, minority areas. The minority aspect of the policy has been emphasised, especially by foreign observers, but it is important to remember that the majority of the population in most of the western area still is Han-Chinese. In the same way as the western area varies greatly in access to natural resources and industrial development, it also varies greatly when it comes to its minority population. While Tibet has 96% and Xinjiang 62% minorities, Gansu only has 8% and Sichuan 5%. Also in this aspect, as with the degree of economic development, the variations may be larger within one province and region than between the western and eastern regions (as the

100 Feng 2001.  
eastern region also has some areas with large minority populations). But despite these facts, the work for greater equality and economic development of poor minority areas are more relevant in some areas than in others, which is the case for the area where my study has been conducted.  

According to Goodman there has also been a different focus on the policy within the government. PRC leaders and official discussions have tended to focus on nation building and development of the state capacity, while the tenth five year plan has put more emphasis on the inequality and relative socioeconomic disadvantages between the east and the west. From his point of view Shih sees the policy as a fulfilment of Deng Xiaoping’s “grand strategic plan”. He therefore also sees the work against inequality and ethnic tensions as major goals, but he emphasises that structural factors do not provide satisfying explanations for the timing of the policy. He points to more political aims behind the policy as both Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao have “deep ties” with the western region and Jiang Zemin might have wanted to pre-empt the future leaders by launching the policy during his period. He further writes that:

“[Given] this incentive structure, top bureaucrats in the State Council had a strong incentive to use the GDW [Great Development of the West] campaign as a springboard to consolidate their power in the Politburo and to add more administrative accomplishments to their resumes.”

In 2002 Goodman highlights the ulterior political motives for the launch of the policy, Shih’s arguments are mainly the same as his.

Many have seen the environmental focus of the policy as very important. For the first time in its development history the Chinese government has declared that economic development has to be conducted with the awareness of potential ecological implications and an environmental sustainable development should be pursued. Shen, like many others, stresses the environmental aspect of the policy, and claim that to stop the

104 See chapter 5.1 further details about the area in focus of my study.
108 Goodman 2002: 133.
ecological degradation is one of the major tasks of the policy.\textsuperscript{110} He writes that within China the western region has the most serious ecological crisis, and this poses a threat to the whole country.\textsuperscript{111} The main ecological problem in much of the western area is the lack of arable farmland, and the ecological degradation caused by the increased population pressure in mountain and desert areas.

\begin{quote}
“Approximately 80\% of the eroded area and 90\% of the desertified area are in the western region, where the Yellow and Yangze Rivers both originate and where deforestation poses an increasingly severe threat to those living downstream.”\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

Several of the different goals mentioned here are also parts of other large programs for China’s development. As mentioned earlier many of the economic incentives that have been implemented in the west, are just as much parts of the overall development and reorganisation of the economy. The objective of poverty reduction is part of the Development-oriented Poverty Reduction Program for Rural China,\textsuperscript{113} which was started during the 1990s. The same argument is valid for the ecological aspects of the policy, which actually are more or less a continuation of reforesting programs that were implemented prior to the initiation of the development of the west policy.\textsuperscript{114} Due to this, it is difficult to pinpoint the main focus of the policy and how the realisation of its goals is going to be achieved. The financial support for the policy and the funding of projects are aspects that are very important, but which I will not discuss here. Partly, some see the funding of the policy as one of the main problems, while others see it as a way for local authorities to gain more funds from the central government after designing development projects that suit the policy. Nevertheless, to call the policy “soft” because of its overall feature and composition does not seem to be unfair.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[110] Shen 2004: 639.
\item[111] Shen 2004: 637.
\item[112] Lai 2002: 444.
\item[113] The State Council’s Leading Group for Poverty Reduction was established in 1986. In 1994 China launched an ambitious Poverty Reduction Plan to eradicate abject poverty by the end of 2000 (UNDP 2000b).
\item[114] I will come back to these projects later in the thesis in chapter 5.3.1.
\end{footnotes}
4.5 The development of the west policy seen in a development perspective

It is clear that the development of the west policy can not be seen as a development strategy that is separated from the strategy for development of the whole Chinese economy. It is unquestionably both a part of this strategy, as well as other projects designed to improve people’s living conditions in China. Many of the policies that have been implemented since the opening up of the Chinese economy in the end of the 1970s are part of the process leading to a “well off society” (xiaokang shehui)\textsuperscript{115}, which has been emphasised by the Chinese government.

There is also not much doubt that through the economic liberalisation and development of the country, the Chinese leadership has secured the rather fragile political position it had after the failures during the Mao-era. If the Chinese will follow the same path as the other Asian economies is not easy to determine, but there are some similarities when it comes to the combination of loosening up its economy, especially towards foreign investment, and at the same time keeping a firm state control over some parts of the economy. But despite China’s socialist background statistics, at least from some sources, show that the Gini coefficients\textsuperscript{116} rose from an estimated 0.28 in 1978 to 0.45 at the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This puts China in the same league as countries in Latin America, and far worse than the other East Asian countries.\textsuperscript{117}

The development of the west policy can be called nothing else than a top-down approach to development. Becquelin describes it as a “top-down, one-size-fits-all, central state-imposed approach to development”.\textsuperscript{118} A top-down approach is not seen as the best way to gain development in poor, underdeveloped areas. In the previous section I have tried to show some of the different views of what the main goals of the policy are, here I will try to look more into what kind of development model the policy seems to follow. Some researchers have pointed at some of the more, in their view, plausible reasons for the development and opening up of the west. Goodman thinks there is good reason to

\textsuperscript{115}Used by both Deng Xiaoping in the beginning of the 1980s and later by Jiang Zemin in his speech at the 16\textsuperscript{th} Party Congress when he put forward a radical idea of developing China into a xiaokang shehui (a well off society) by 2020 (Wong 2003). Also Wen Jiabao used the expression during his Report to the National People’s Congress on March 5, 2004 (Wong 2005: 3).

\textsuperscript{116}A common measure of income inequality used by among others the World Bank.

\textsuperscript{117}Wong 2005: 4.

\textsuperscript{118}Becquelin 2002: 1.
question the aims of the policy and uses terms like “colonialism, internal colonialism and colonisation” when analysing the policy.\textsuperscript{119} Shih keeps his belief that the development of the west policy has more political motivations, and therefore claims that the leadership during the present period does not care how sustainable the policy is. He claims that Chinese bureaucrats do not have sustainable development as their main goal and therefore support large construction projects in the west without thinking of their long-term consequences.\textsuperscript{120} According to Goodman much of the policy exists on paper only and has yet to be and initiatives to attract foreign and private investment has been given little attention. It is difficult to find out from his writings whether he believes the policy is made in accordance with any specific development model, but he points to an inter-colonial model as he argues that the main motives of the local elite seem to be to secure their power in stead of ensuring sustainable development.

Shih claims that the political decision makers had the possibility of constructing a more realistic and doable, political strategy for the west. But they chose one that was similar to the one already implemented in the east, fully aware of the huge differences between the regions. They did this only to secure their political power, not caring about the possible consequences.\textsuperscript{121} This line of argument is similar to the discussion concerning possibilities for development in the former colonies in the South. According to Shih the development of the west policy will not lead to any significant development in the west, but rather merely strengthen the present leadership and elite in the central government. In this sense it can be seen as a kind of inter-colonialism because the policy is only used to reach some overall political goals that only benefit the already advantaged elite.

Becquelin, though, sees the development of the west policy as a “top-down approach in contrast to the model of opening used by the special economic zones in the coastal areas”. He argues that there has been little consultation with the local authorities in formulating the policy and provincial and local governments are unsure how the policy will affect them. He shows his scepticism towards the government’s efforts for poverty alleviation, obviously only relying on a “trickle down” effect and the allocation of funds

\textsuperscript{119} Goodman 2004: 327.
\textsuperscript{120} Shih 2004: 428
\textsuperscript{121} Shih 2004: 444-445
channelled through the bureaucracy. Yang calls the development strategy initiated in the end of the Mao-era an “uneven regional development strategy”. Writing in the end of the 1980s he claims that the Chinese government followed an “efficiency oriented development strategy”, relying on the trickle down effect from developed to less developed regions. Yang claims that the Chinese leadership relies on China’s “socialist system” to make such a development process smooth and beneficial to all.

As statistics have shown this trickle down effect between the regions obviously did not work as efficient as the government had planned. When we now see that the development of the west policy contains many of the same strategies for increased development as were implemented in the east, it can be easy to doubt the effects. In the discussion of the development of the west policy it is important to keep in mind that there are also great disparities in economic development within the eastern region. The largest disparities in China today exist between rural and urban areas, more than between the western and eastern regions. But as with the Poverty Reduction Programs, the Chinese government obviously finds it easier to target areas instead of groups. They target counties defined as poor, instead of working to solve poverty and disparity in general. As a consequence it is also difficult to analyse benefits and effects of the development projects.

4.6 Concluding remarks

Despite China’s economic growth during the last decades the country still has huge development problems. The disparity is particularly obvious between the developed coast and the underdeveloped interior. In its efforts to work against this disparity the Chinese government has implemented several poverty reduction programs, but all with minor effects. With the implementation of the development of the west policy the western region is promised the economic development they have been waiting for.

There is no doubt that the development of the west policy deals with a wide range of topics, and most of these topics are discussible. Given the background for and the design of the policy there are many parts that seems both questionable and undoable.

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122 Becquelin 2002:3.
124 Yang 1990: 241-244.
125 Yang 1990: 244-245.
Some of the main topics for discussion are the environmental aspects, the inter-colonial tendencies, the struggle for political power and the possible aim of controlling the minorities.

Due to the diverse goals of the policy and extreme variety within the targeted area, no conclusions can be made about the policy without simultaneously making exceptions. Nevertheless it is clear that it is possible to find arguments that support other reasons for developing the west than those that are officially stated. I have only mentioned a few of the discussions about the policy in this chapter, and as the implementation of the policy goes on there certainly will be more to add in the debate.
5 Local perspectives: the case of Kangding

In this chapter I will present Kangding, the field site of my study, and the main development issues in the area. Due to the diversity and unclearness of the development of the west policy itself, it is not relevant to only focus on projects and plans that are directly linked to the policy. After a brief introduction to the area and an overview of its history I will describe the major changes. I will then try to link these changes to the consequences of the policy, and discuss what might be the main obstacles for implementing the policy. I will also try to explain why the area where I executed my field study is important for the overall success of the policy.

5.1 The area and its history

Kangding County (Kangding xian) is a part of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Ganzi TAP) (Ganzi zangzu zizhizhou) in the western part of Sichuan Province. The city of Kangding, which is in the centre of Kangding County, is also the capital of the prefecture and the seat of the local government. The local government exercises jurisdiction over the 18 counties in Ganzi TAP. Ganzi TAP occupies the whole north-western part of Sichuan Province, and bordering Tibet Autonomous Region (Xizang zangzuqü) in the west. Established in 1955 Ganzi TAP was the first autonomous prefecture in China. Geographically most of Ganzi is part of the Tibetan plateau, and traditionally it has been the centre of the Kangba (Khampa) Tibetan culture. The Kangba Tibetans officially belong to the Tibetan ethnic group (zangzu), but traditionally and culturally the Kangbas have seen themselves as a separate group from the Tibetan group.

126 Many of the names in the area are originally Tibetan, like Zheduo Mountain (Zheduo shan) which is a Chinese phonetic rendition of the Tibetan Zhedela, or they are given new Chinese names like Kangding, which is called Dartsedo in Tibetan. To avoid misunderstandings I will therefore sometimes mention the Tibetan names or terms in brackets.
127 Often called Garze in English written literature, which is closer to the Tibetan pronunciation of the name.
128 These counties are (from north to south): Shiqu, Dege, Ganzi, Seda, Luhuo, Baiyu, Xinlong, Daofu, Batang, Litang, Yajiang, Danba, Kangding, Luding, Derong, Xiangcheng, Daocheng, Jiulong.
129 I use the term Tibet instead of Tibet Autonomous Region in the rest of the thesis; I will also use the better known Lhasa instead of the Chinese Pinyin version Lasa.
130 Tibetans are classified as one of the 56 nationality groups (minzu) in China. Although non-Han Chinese groups are often called shaoshu minzu (minority nationality, ethnic minority) the term minzu (nationality, ethnic group) is often referring only to the ethnic minority groups (Hansen: 1999: xinfl). Zu (clan, race, tribe, and group) is also a term often used to refer to the different ethnic groups.
that has had Lhasa as its political centre.\textsuperscript{131} It is difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the Kangbas or the Kang (Kham) culture, but they live in an area covering parts of three provinces in addition to Tibet. The area includes the eastern region of Tibet, south-western Qinghai, western Sichuan and north-western Yunnan. Ganzi is generally considered to be the heartland of the Kangba culture.\textsuperscript{132} Kapstein also mentions that even though the Tibetans in western Sichuan used to regard Lhasa as the centre of their spiritual and cultural world: “[T]he people of Amdo and Kham were proud of their own independent traditions.”\textsuperscript{133} Kolås writes that Tibetans historically have distinguished between three major regions of Tibet (Ü-Tsang, Amdo and Kham), and for some Tibetans these are understood as mutually exclusive categories similar to ethnic categories.\textsuperscript{134}

In the beginning of the 20th century Ganzi was part of what the Qing Dynasty leaders called the Sichuan Border Region (Chuanbian), which later was named Xikang. The area of Xikang had emerged gradually during the first part of the 20th century, much because of the increasing Chinese migration to the area.\textsuperscript{135} In 1927 the Nationalist government appointed Liu Wenhui, one of Sichuan’s leading warlords at the time, to be the military commander of the Kang area. In 1939 the area was officially established as a province, with Kangding as its capital.\textsuperscript{136} The province was called Xikang and Kangding was at that time known as Dajianlu, even though the name had been changed already in 1908.\textsuperscript{137} It was governed by Liu Wenhui until 1949 when he decided to surrender and join the Communists. The Red Army had been in the area since the middle of the 1930s, but for a long period they did not gain control over the area. According to Barnett in maps from the end of the 1940s the western part of Xikang Province borders Lhasa, however he claims that the Chinese did not exercise political control beyond the Jinsha

\textsuperscript{131} “From the collapse of the Tibetan kingship in the 10th century until the 1950s, the people of Kham maintained a large degree of independence from both Lhasa and China, aided by the rugged nature of their homeland. Kham itself was never controlled by a single king, but was comprised of a patchwork of two dozen or more kingdoms” (Bibliography.ms 2005).

\textsuperscript{132} For more information about Kang history and culture see Epstein 2002.

\textsuperscript{133} Kapstein 2004: 232.

\textsuperscript{134} Kolås 2005: 186-187.

\textsuperscript{135} Barnett 1993: 411.

\textsuperscript{136} Barnett 1993: 411.

\textsuperscript{137} Barnett 1993: 442.
River (Jinsha jiang), which today forms the border to Tibet.\textsuperscript{138} In 1951 Xikang Province was abolished and the Ganzi area became a part of Sichuan Province. In the mid 1950s the Communists established the Tibetan Autonomous Region west of the Jinsha River. Barnett mentions that there was severe fighting and resistance in the area, however these accounts are rare to come by, and Barnett learned about them only after visiting the area.\textsuperscript{139} I experienced the same during my stay, and it is also difficult to obtain information of what exactly happened in the area in the mid 1950s. Most of the available material tends to be highly CCP biased. According to these accounts there were severe uprisings “hidden behind a religious motive” starting in Ganzi, and later spilling into the Changdu (Qamduo) area in Tibet. But the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) troops managed to suppress the armed “rebellion” and to consolidate their power in the area. Some of the “rebels” fled to other parts of Tibet while others fled to India.\textsuperscript{140} Chinese control in the area has been relatively short and it is still seen as a border area of China even though it lies within the Chinese territory.

Kangding County covers an area of 11422.75 km\(^3\). The city of Kangding is situated amongst high mountains, and its centre is the meeting point of the Dadu and Yala Rivers (Dadu he, Yala gou). The altitude in Kangding is about 2900 meters above sea level, and the average temperature is therefore rather low (7°C). The conditions are similar in the rest of Ganzi TAP, as the average altitude is above 3500 meters. Main livelihoods are agriculture and animal husbandry. Animal husbandry, mainly focused on the Yak industry, is the most important source of income in Ganzi. Traditionally, but especially in recent years, harvesting different kinds of mushroom and herbs has been one of the main private household incomes.

5.2 Kangding’s history of ethnic diversity
Historically Kangding County used to be an important trade centre and it was the most important transportation juncture in the area. It is located just inside the Zheduo Pass (Zheduo shankou) and used to be the key link between the Tibetan and Chinese areas. Barnett, who visited Kangding during two periods (1948 and 1988), writes that Kangding

\textsuperscript{138} Barnett 1993: 414-415.
\textsuperscript{139} Barnett 1993: 449.
\textsuperscript{140} China International Press 1997.
was, when it comes to economics, the best developed area in the region. Today the city of Kangding is still the capital of Ganzi TAP, and is by far the largest and most developed urban area in the county and the prefecture. I have not managed to establish the exact population figure in the city of Kangding, but according to statistics from 1995 63.7% of the population in the county are classified as farmers (nongye renkou). According to my informants, the Han Chinese predominantly lives in the urban area, while the Tibetans generally live in the rural area. The proportion of Han is therefore larger than the Tibetan in the city of Kangding, despite the Hans being a minority in the county. I do not know if there are unregistered Han migrants from other parts of Sichuan living or working in the prefecture. Based on information from other minority areas where economic development has occurred, it is likely to assume that there are (or will be in the future) Han migrants coming from other parts of China to seek work in Ganzi.

According to official statistics from 1990, a majority of the population in Kangding County are Tibetans. With a population close to 100 000 people in 1990, just above 40 000 Han and almost 55 000 Tibetans, Kangding County has the largest population in Ganzi Prefecture. The population in Ganzi TAP was 846 154, Tibetans accounting for 77.62%, Han 19.45%, Yi 2.3% and other minority groups 0.63% according to statistics from 1994. According to recent statistics from the Ganzi development and reform commission website, the population has increased slightly to 894 000 people, 78% Tibetan and 18% Han. Official statistics show that the population in Kangding had passed 100 000 in 1994, the Han population had declined to just under 40 000 people and the Tibetan group constituted the majority of 60 000. The second largest minority group in Kangding is the Hui with 850 inhabitants.

Because of its long trading history Kangding is an ethnically diverse city. Despite covering a small geographical area there are no less than three large Buddhist

146 http://www.gzfz.gov.cn/ganzisite/
147 The route from Kangding to Tibet is known as the “the old tea and horse route” (chama gudao). The route was the southern branch of the Silk Road, linking Tibet and central Asia with Yunnan and the south of China in complex trade networks throughout much of the Qing and early twentieth century.
temples, one mosque, one Christian and one Catholic Church in the city. Also Barnett commented on this fact in 1948, when the urban population was only about 8,000, and when he went back in 1988.\textsuperscript{148} Because of its strategically important geographic position Kangding has also been an important area for the CCP, both when they gained power in the 1950s and later during the Tibetan uprisings and the Cultural Revolution.

One rarely hears about uprisings and ethnic conflicts in the area, but they obviously exist. The Kangbas are known to be strong and independent, and stories tell they gave the Communists a hard fight during the 1950s, and also, from what I have been told, during the Cultural Revolution. Uprisings and protests take place today as well. Just two years ago two Tibetans from Ganzi were sentenced to death because of what was officially called uprisings and “splitting of the ethnic groups” and “nation hostile” activities.\textsuperscript{149} During my visit in the area I heard little about such incidents. It was clear though, both because it is difficult to get official research permission in the area and because of what some of my informants (well educated Chinese citizens who themselves do research in the area) told me: it is a politically sensitive area due to tensions between the local government and the Kangbas.

“To calm down Kang we first have to develop Kang (or make Kang prosper), to calm Kang we first have to get through to Kang (or open Kang) (an Kang bi xian xing Kang, an kang bi xian tong Kang).\textsuperscript{150}” This frequently quoted statement by Zhu Rongji in 2001 demonstrates the area’s importance in the overall development of the west policy. The building of infrastructure and transportation facilities are seen as the most important tasks. Because of its geographical proximity to Tibet it is also reasonable to assume that the Chinese government sees it as strategically important to have an established position in the Kang area, as well as improving the infrastructure and accessibility to Tibet. Minorities constitute only 5% of Sichuan’s population, however looking at information about Ganzi TAP the picture is completely different. This shows how ethnic diversity can be greater within a province or region than between the western and the eastern part of China. Due to the large Tibetan population in Ganzi questions concerning nation building

\textsuperscript{148} Barnett 1993: 463.
\textsuperscript{150} People’s Daily Online 2001.
and the securing of border regions are relatively more important than in other parts of China where the Han constitute the majority of the population. This is also one of the reasons why Kangding is seen as an important area for the development of the west policy. Not only is it a poor area with many of the infrastructural problems the policy is designed to negotiate, but it is also an ethnically and culturally diverse area, in a politically sensitive border region.

Looking at the development of this region in a broader perspective, tensions in the area may not only affect the political aim of nation building, but can also hinder economic development. As Chai argue:

“The issue of widening income gap between East and West China poses a serious threat to the stability of China’s economic reform program and hence her prospect of becoming Asia’s next economic giant and the world’s new growth centre. It is well known that the Eastern region is mainly populated by the Han Chinese whereas the Western region mainly by the ethnic minorities. As the experience of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia show, the rising income disparity between the Han Chinese and the ethnic minorities is likely to fuel the ethnic conflict generated by the increased democratisation and local aspiration under the reforms.”\(^{151}\)

Thus the emphasis on economic development in areas where minorities constitute a considerable percentage of the population, other issues than creating sustainable equitable economic growth might be at play.

### 5.3 Development in Kangding and Ganzi

#### 5.3.1 New environmental protection programs

Following the devastating floods of the Yellow and Yangze Rivers in 1997 and 1998, intense investigations of how to prevent similar catastrophes were conducted by the government. The degradation of land and forests areas was given focus, and deforestation was seen as one of the main causes for the floods. Winkler writes that the floods were blamed on upstream deforestation, even though this assumption was not supported by scientific evidence. Nevertheless the floods triggered the reconsideration of logging practices in the headwaters of Asia’s greatest rivers which emerge from the south-west

\(^{151}\) Chai 1994 in Wen and Tisdell 2001: 70.
China’s minority areas. In August 1998 the government announced immediate logging bans in natural forest in 17 provinces. Two programs were set up to ensure the protection and reforestation of these areas; the Natural Forest Protection Program (tianbao gongcheng) and the Sloping Land Conversion Program (tuigeng huanlin). After an announcement by the central authorities in August 1998 the governor of Sichuan declared a logging ban that affected Ganzi TAP, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture (Aba TQAP) (Aba zangzu qiangzu zizhizhou), Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture (Liangshan YAP) (Liangshan yizu zizhizhou), Ya’an, Panzhihua and Leshan Cities (Ya’an shi, Panzhihua shi, Leshan shi).

The tianbao and the tuigeng huanlin projects were later both incorporated into the development of the west policy, as part of the policy’s aim of ensuring an ecological sustainable development. The main focus of the tianbao project is the preservation of forest areas and the reforestation. The tuigeng huanlin project is working to convert cultivated land back into forestry and pasture. Before 1998 there had already been initiated similar programs in Sichuan, because farming on land with slope led to sever ecological problems, but all with limited outcome. The new tianbao and tuigeng huanlin projects that were introduced in 1999 were designed with more economic investments from the state to engage peasants, local governments and state agents to participate more actively. According to Shen the idea of this program is to give grain in exchange of forestry: The state provides grain and capital to encourage and compensate peasants to restore forestry on slope farmland to reduce soil erosion.

Ganzi TAP has been much affected by both of these projects, especially after the projects were incorporated into the development of the west policy. Due to population pressure in the area farmers are constantly searching for ways of extending their farmland, often in areas where the soil is ill suited for farming. Shen writes that various estimates

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152 Winkler 1999: 18.
154 The Program is called tianbao gongcheng in Chinese which can be translated as Natural Protection Project, but I will call it the tianbao project.
155 Some places also called the Land Conversion Program. In Chinese the Program is called tuigeng huanlin (convert farmland to forest) and I will refer to it as the tuigeng huanlin project.
156 Forest Trends 2002.
have been produced on the extent of land degradation in the 1990s in China. These estimates show that Sichuan was affected seriously by soil erosion and pasture degradation.\textsuperscript{159} Farming on land with slope of 15 degree or more will most likely cause soil erosion and land degradation. Ganzi TAP has, in addition to its mountain and highland areas, also vast areas of forest. The logging industry used to be the most important industry in many parts of Ganzi.\textsuperscript{160} Those of my informants who are well informed about the conditions in most parts of the prefecture because of their jobs and positions, told me that in some of the counties in southern Ganzi as much as 96\% of the income came from the logging industry. When I talked about the ban with my informants I only discussed the general effect the ban would have on the economy in Ganzi TAP, so I do not know if the information I got described the situation for private households or for the local state enterprises. From the information I have gathered later I have learned that much of the logging industry has mainly been owned and administrated by central or local government.\textsuperscript{161} Thus most of the surplus has been channelled to government administrations and has not contributed to the income in private households. Local governments have also gained a great deal of tax income from these businesses.

Winkler has gathered information about the consequences of the ban in Ganzi TAP, and he claims there have been “serious financial constraints”. According to Winkler the effect of the ban in Ganzi TAP often overlooks the challenges facing the local areas. He reports that most of the government’s revenue in the affected areas has depended heavily on the logging industry.\textsuperscript{162} According to Winkler Zhao also reports the same findings, claiming that in many Tibetan autonomous prefectures the logging industry provided around 70\% of the cash revenue.\textsuperscript{163} This information also coincides with the findings of Hansen who reports that in some counties in Liangshan YAP lost up to 85\% of their revenue when the ban was legislated.\textsuperscript{164} This represents new economic difficulties for local governments and creates a greater dependence on subsidies from the central administration. This takes place at the same time as local governments are

\textsuperscript{159} Shen 2004: 654.
\textsuperscript{160} Conversation International 2005.
\textsuperscript{161} CCICED 2002; Winkler 1999 and 2003
\textsuperscript{162} Winkler 1999: 19.
\textsuperscript{163} Zhao 1992: 56 in Winkler 1999:19.
\textsuperscript{164} Hansen 2004:71.
supposed to engage in further development of infrastructure and improvement of the education system. Thus unless other sources of income are found or the central government increases the allocation of resources to the local governments it will be difficult to achieve sustainable economic development in these areas.

There are indications that the recent economic development and rising employment opportunities in minority areas in western Sichuan during the 1980s and 1990s mainly have been created by the logging industry. Not only were those people working in the timber industry themselves badly affected when the new ban was put into action, also those involved in the transportation of timber as well as people engaged in the roadside restaurants and hotels suffered economically as a result of the ban. Hansen and Kolås confirm this impression, and Hansen states that “the logging industry indirectly supported the minority people”. During my stay in Kangding I did daytrips together with my host family to other parts of Kangding County, north-west of Kangding. My host family told me that those roads used to be packed with trucks loaded with timber, and many of the small businesses thereby depended on the truck drivers. The road was in a bad condition, some places only gravelled and other places paved, but with holes and badly in need of maintenance. Despite these conditions my informants told me that the roads have been improved during the last years, much due to the previous increase in logging industries.

One of my informants in Kangding (who, because of his position is well informed about the conditions in Ganzi TAP) told me that the new ban was a huge shock for most of the counties engaged in the logging industry, as it was implemented without any “warning” or transition period. The farmers who earn their living by selling timber get some compensation from the state, however those relying their income on providing services and products to the bypassing truck drivers do not get any compensation at all. Some of the state owned logging industries also get some compensation, but many of those collectively owned enterprises or people who were only hired seasonally or on short term contracts get nothing. They now have to find new ways of making a living.

165 Winkler 1999: 19
166 Kolås 2005; Hansen 2004: 71
and my informant said that the economic conditions have been extremely difficult in some areas, especially in the beginning of 2000 when the earnings fell drastically.

Extreme consequences of the environmental protection programs like those in some parts of Ganzi are not often commented about in China. A report from Xinhua News Agency draws a totally different picture when they write that:

> “China’s massive natural forest conservation program has not only had positive environmental effects, but also helped improve the livelihoods of large groups of forest dwellers, especially those ethnic groups in southwest China region”.

I do not know to what extent the logging industry was responsible for the ecological degradation in the area around Kangding, but despite the positive ecological impacts from the new projects most of those I talked to, both urban citizens in Kangding and rural residents, believed the government had not thoroughly assessed the possible consequences prior to implementing the two projects. Winkler calls the logging ban a typical centrally planned program that does not take local conditions into consideration. The first phase of the logging ban is scheduled to last until 2010. Due to the negative effects of the ban in some regions, there have been discussions of how to adjust the programs to better suit local conditions. Unfortunately I have not found any information as to whether there actually will be a revision of the ban or when it would be implemented and none of the people I talked to in Kangding knew about this either. During my stay in Chengdu, before going to Kangding, I also visited the Academy for Western Development at Sichuan University. They study the workings of the development of the west policy in Sichuan Province. Their focus is mainly the ecological aspects of the policy, but they did not know about any major changes that so far had been done in the environmental protection programs.

I did not go to any areas in Ganzi TAP where the logging industry had a dominant position, but I travelled in areas in Aba TQAP in the beginning of 2001, which at that time were also affected by the new ban. Similar to the areas I heard about in Ganzi, large

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168 CCICED 2002.
169 For more information about Sichuan University (Sichuan daxue) and the Academy for Western Development (xibu kaifa yanjiuyuan) see http://www.scu.edu.cn.
areas in Songpan, Aba, had relied heavily on logging industries and tried to develop other sources for income, mainly tourism. In Kangding I got more first hand information about the *tuigeng huanlin* project than the *tianbao* project. I interviewed with several farmers who all were affected by the project. They did not live in the city of Kangding but close to the urban area so I was able to visit this community several times. These farmers all saw the *tuigeng huanlin* project as a major part of the development of the west policy. When it first started (they remembered it was in the beginning of 1999), they were very sceptical towards the project. They all believed that giving up their farmland would put them in an extremely vulnerable economic situation. After they realised (and trusted) that the government would compensate their loss with grain and cash, they started to change their point of view and by 2001 all those I talked to had stopped the cultivation of most of their farmland and started planting trees and bushes instead. They all said they were quite satisfied with the compensation from the state, and they think the local government does a good job allocating the compensation: They give them the money they are entitled to. The farmers said they feel lucky to live in an area with hardly any corruption within the local government, because they had heard of other areas where people were not given their compensation and thus were put into a difficult situation following the implementation of new projects.170

Shen writes that the grain and cash compensation will be given in five to eight years depending on what kinds of trees are planted on the farmland.171 All of those I interviewed believed that they would not be able to retain their current living standard without the support from the state. Henceforth I was astonished when most of them were unsure for how long the state would provide them grain and money. Some thought the compensation period would last for five years, others more, but most of them believed that they would be able to find other sources for income in time.

Their scepticism towards the project had, during the first years of its implementation, turned into an optimistic view. Because they do not cultivate much land anymore they have more time to engage in other activities. The workload of the family

170 Reports from other parts of Sichuan and China clearly show that this is a huge problem in many areas, and leads to clashes between farmers and local governments. See for example The Epoch Times 2004; Association for Asian Research 2004; Washington Post 2005.
171 Shen 2004: 659.
members have obviously declined as all of my interviewees underscored that the most positive consequence of the *tuigeng huanlin* project was that their children now had more time to study. This means that they probably would get better results and have better opportunities to attain higher education in Chengdu. The farmers I interviewed also mentioned preferential treatment provided to them by the authorities, as part of the *tuigeng huanlin* project and the development of the west policy (or at least they perceived these advantages were part of the policy). They are now able to obtain loans from the local bank, with a guarantee of the lowest interest rate on the market. This gives them the opportunity to set up other businesses, as for example raising pigs. This is one of the major industries in other parts of Sichuan, but is now prevalent in the western area as well. Some of those I interviewed clearly acknowledged the positive environmental impacts in their local area as a result of the *tuigeng huanlin* project. They showed me hilly areas close to their homes which had been in danger of being washed away due to soil erosion. Following the planting of trees and bushes the erosion had been stopped.

One of those I interviewed was the leader of a village with 43 households and 138 people. She said that today 80% of the families in her village had children in higher education. She was very proud of these numbers and said this was due to the new development in the area (new opportunities, less workload), but also because she looked upon the people in her village as good, hardworking and diligent people (*hao, renzhen he nuli*). Her positive outlook was quite surprising to me (based on the information I had read about the environmental protection programs before I came to Kangding), thus I enquired specifically the people in the village if they thought there had been some negative consequences of the *tuigeng huanlin* project. Their answer was: Of course there had been some problems and conflicts (*maodun*). The local government had encouraged most of the farmers in this area to start with animal husbandry in order to secure their household income and the lending policy of the local authorities favours those engaged in this kind of activity (this information was given to me by the farmers and I have not been able to confirm this according to official records). The biggest obstacle to animal husbandry is the planting of trees and bushes as the animals need gracing land. Henceforth, many farmers have problems finding gracing land for their animals and this creates a conflict between the *tuigeng huanlin* project and the new ways of earning
income. According to the farmers animal husbandry in the area is mostly limited to pigs, as they stay close to the house and are not as dependent on grazing land as other animals.

Even though most of the farmers I talked to see the *tuigeng huanlin* project in a positive light, there are clearly some problems connected to it. Most of them relied heavily on the subsidies given by the state, and had not (at least not yet) managed to find other sources of income to replace these subsidies. Other informants, Tibetan urban citizens of Kangding, said several of their relatives living within Kangding County or Ganzi TAP rely solely on the grain and cash given to them by the government. In the areas were these farmers live the transportation facilities are much worse than in the area around Kangding and it is therefore more difficult to find other income sources to rely on. After research in Yunnan Hansen pointed at the negative consequences of the projects, despite their environmental benefits:

“Often, compensation is paid out as financial support over a fixed number of years; for many peasants, this is a short-term solution that compares unfavourable to the long-term consequences of their loss of land. Although from an environmental standpoint, the government’s efforts to reforest the southwest are essential, they create at the same time new social problems, not least in poor, remote minority areas. The ban on logging was introduced suddenly and with no prior investigation of the social impact on those border regions that depend on timber production for income. When efficiently enforced, the ban causes many areas to lose their main source of income, and local unemployment rates rise significantly. This has already happened in several of the poorest minority areas in southwest in Yunnan and Sichuan.”

The farmers I interviewed were both Han Chinese and Tibetans, and some of them lived in mixed marriages or were themselves Han-Tibetans. The farmers outside Kangding, about whom I obtained second hand information. The only farmland most of the farmers living close to the urban area of Kangding kept was some level land farmland for growing vegetables. Still there exists hilly farmland that is being cultivated, also in the small village where I interviewed the village leader. The village leader said some farmers continue cultivating their land because they do not want to rely on the compensation from the state.

\[172\] Hansen 2004:71.
Even though the farmers I talked to all said the *tuigeng huanlin* project had been positive and contributed to improve their living standard, they were very unsure about the future. Most of them wanted to start tourist related businesses. They believe that the beautiful nature, clean air and water and hot springs in the area will attract a lot of wealthy Chinese tourists in the future. They see the poor transportation facilities as the greatest challenge for development in the area. Thus they do not want to start building recreation centres and tourist facilities until the infrastructure has improved. They do not feel that there has been a lot of the policy-based development yet, but they think it will come in the future, it has just not “arrived yet” (*hai mei dao*). They see this development as part of the development of the west: “Now it is our turn to develop.” After improving the infrastructure they will be able to sell fruit and other goods in more urban areas of Sichuan. The development of the west policy is to them proof that the government has not forgotten about the area.

Other reports highlight more severe economic problems as a result of the *tianbao* and *tuigeng huanlin* projects than I have first hand information about in Kangding.

“Although there has been a significant reduction of exploitation in vast areas of natural forests, and hundreds of thousands of hectares of sloping land have been planted with trees and grasses, there have been huge unintended, negative socioeconomic impacts on both local households and forest enterprises.”

I believe that a longer and more systematic field work in Kangding could have answered many of the questions regarding the impact of the environmental projects. The information I got might be one-sided (mostly from farmers living close to urban Kangding, thus giving them more alternatives) and unreliable (because I did not have time to gain the full trust and confidence with my informants it is difficult for me to know how honestly they answered my questions), but I still think my impression represents much of the reality in this area.

5.3.2 Privatisation of state owned enterprises

As part of the development and “opening up” of the area, most of the SOEs or companies are now being privatised. This includes not only large production enterprises but also

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smaller ones as state owned hotels and restaurants. The privatisation process is similar to the one that took place in the eastern part of China in the 1980s, but the process is running at a much faster pace. One of my informants, who has lived and worked in Kangding the last 25 years, described how rapidly the changes were taking place: “Kangding is taking a huge step forward” (kuaguoshi).

The two largest SOEs have been privatised within a year. The largest enterprise (in numbers of employees), a transportation company (yunsong gongsi), has been converted into a shareholder enterprise. The second largest, an electricity company (dianli gongsi) has been sold and is now a privately owned enterprise. Both of these enterprises had a transition period of one year from state owned to private. The transportation company had been sold just one year before I came to Kangding, so the take-over by the new owners was being launched during my fieldwork period. The electricity company was sold the same day as I arrived in Kangding and negotiations in connection with the private take-over was taking place during my stay there, but was not completed before I left. The largest hotel in Kangding had also been sold to private investors last year, at the same time as new private ones were being built.

The privatisation of the state owned enterprises is clearly a part of the development of the west policy, as one of the policy’s main goals is to lead the western area through the same transformation towards a market economy as the eastern area has undergone. To privatise the SOEs also means to make them more efficient (if they are not closed down or used for other purposes), and demand for labour decreases. This means that many of the former workers become laid-off. Even though the government (through the enterprises) gives the workers some compensation, it is not likely that they are able to live on this compensation for more than a short period. I do not know how many employees for example the hotel had prior to and after being privatised. But because my host family and many of their close relatives worked in the electricity company I was able to gather some information about the sale of this company. Because they tended to compare the sale of the electricity company with the sale of the transportation company that took place a year earlier when they discussed what was going to happen and what kind of compensation they would be given, I was also able to get quite a lot of information about the privatisation of the transportation company. My host family also
have friends who used to work in the transportation company, but who has started other businesses in the service sector following the privatisation.

The transportation company used to have more than one thousand employees and the electricity company more than six hundred. Both companies used the same compensation system. If the workers decided to quit their jobs immediately, before it was decided how many employees that would loose their jobs, they were given an extra amount of money. Those who have been employed in the electricity company were promised an extra compensation of 10 000 RMB if they decided to quit before New Year (before 1. January 2005). All the workers who quit or laid-off will be given 2615 RMB for each year they have worked in the company. In the transportation company the amount was only 1500 RMB for each working year. My host family, a couple in their forties with one daughter, had been working in the electricity company since they started working in their early twenties. Because of their long tenure in the company they will receive a relatively high amount of money, but this does not mean that their future is secured. Earlier the company used to give its employees pension after their retirement, but those who are made redundant or decide to quit will not be entitled to their pension. My host family reckoned that it will cost them (as a couple) about 40 - 50 000 RMB to buy a pension insurance. They can of course use the money they receive as a compensation to buy this insurance, but if they do so they have to find new jobs immediately as the insurance money will not be paid out before they have reached their pension age. To quickly find new jobs can be difficult. It is therefore risky to spend all their compensation on insurance, but, as they are not to far from pension age, they also have to think of their future. Finding a job that will give them pension is not likely. They saw this as a huge dilemma, and by the time I left Kangding they had not yet decided what to do. Of course they could be so lucky that they would keep their jobs, but they had no guarantee. Many of the workers in the company are not skilled workers, without other responsibilities or experience than to pay attention to machines and instruments. Those who have jobs that do not require any qualifications are most likely those who have to go first, as the new owners have plans to make the company more efficient and profitable.

For most of those I talked to in Kangding, both those working in these companies and those working in other businesses in the city, the privatisation of these two companies was seen as the biggest change and “development” in recent years in addition to the development of the tourist industry which I will describe later. They saw it as an inevitable consequence of the development of the west policy and one step towards the emergence of a market economy in the area. Some of those I talked to, one lawyer, a teacher and a businessman, said that even though the privatisation of the SOEs had some bad consequences, in the long run Kangding needed to undergo the same restructuring as was taking place all over Sichuan in order to survive. Even though they saw the change as unavoidable and necessary, those workers I talked to were concerned about their future economic situation.

During my stay in Kangding demonstrations were held in front of the local government building. Especially the young workers in the electricity company have only worked in the company for a few years, thus the compensation will be marginal. Many of them therefore considered to quit their jobs in order to get the extra 10 000. If they stay in their workplace they still risked to lose their jobs during the private take-over, and the extra 10 000. They decided to demonstrate to force the local government to give all those who have to quit their jobs the extra 10 000 no matter when they quit. Even though this did not lead to any clash between the demonstrators and the local government, the atmosphere was tense and the demonstration lasted until two o’clock in the morning. Some of the relatives of my host family are young people with two children and see the situation as quite impossible if both of them loose their jobs. The day after the demonstration meetings were held between the local government and the workers. Hundred of the workers were attending and the police ensured that the demonstrations were under control. But they did not manage to reach an agreement of revising the compensation plan.

175 All couples in Kangding are allowed to have two children whether they are Han or Tibetan. During my stay in Kangding I spent most of my time with couples with children, and many of them only have one child. This they explained mainly with the increasing living and education expenses.
5.3.3 The development of the tourist and service industry

The topics I have written about so far in this chapter lead to one of the main development focuses in Ganzi TAP today: the development of the tourist industry. How are the farmers, logging industry workers and unemployed going to find new sources of income without being forced to move in order to ensure a stable income? The last years Ganzi TAP has concentrated on developing the tourist industry, which is seen as the main source of income in the future. This is similar to the focus in many other minority regions in the south-west.176 When the development of the west policy was launched tourism was singled out as an important development strategy for the western regions.177

“Kang Ding is a little town located in eastern part of Garze [Ganzi], Tibetan-inhabited areas in Sichuan Province. It has a unique culture and picturesque scenery. For ten thousands of years, it has been considered as the multi-cultural core of Tibetan and Han Nationality, and the mixture of Western and Eastern culture. It has Buddhism temples, mosques, Catholic churches and various assembly halls for Han Nationalities. The TV series of the Love Song of Kang Ding is based on this wonderland.”178

This is one of the descriptions of the area that is possible to find on the Internet. Last year (2004) the promotion of the TV soap series “Love Song from Kangding” (Kangding Qingge) led to increased interest in Kangding and Ganzi. This TV series was broadcasted during my visit in Kangding, and it was quite a hot topic for discussions. The series is about a Tibetan princess living in Kangding during the beginning of the 20th century. At that time Kangding was a centre for trade between Han and Tibetans as well as Europeans. Because the series had been recorded in Kangding and was supposed to tell a story from the area most of my informants (farmers, workers, researchers, etc.) were interested in how the story was being told. They mostly discussed the authenticity of the series, how the different actors played the Tibetan characters, and what implications the series would have for the area. Some of those I met in Kangding also had minor roles in the series.

176 Among others see Oakes 1998; Kolås 2005.
178 China Tibet Information Center 2004.
It is interesting to see how much the region now emphasises the old “Love Song from Kangding” story. They say it is widely known in China, and also abroad, and they reckon that this will attract a lot of attention and increase tourism. The song itself is well known throughout China, but until a few years ago few could place Kangding on the map. The story also mentions Paoma Mountain (Paoma shan), which is the closest mountain to the city of Kangding, and used for traditional Tibetan gatherings/festivals. A rather large and famous Buddhist dagoba (baita) is situated at the top of the mountain, and just last year the area was renovated, and a large stand was going to be built. Paoma Mountain is a year-round tourist attraction in Kangding, but throughout the year there are no special gatherings there. Despite this some local people seem to try to make a living by offering horse rides to tourists (even though the walk to the top takes less than one hour). Even at the time when I went there, when there were hardly any other foreigners or tourists in the area, they sat at the end of the mountain with their horses all day waiting for someone to hire them.

My informants told me that the promotion of Paoma Mountain is seen as one of the most important efforts to promote Kangding as a tourist attraction. Some of those who themselves have been travelling in other parts of China complained about the bad facilities in Kangding, and were sure that better and more modern and luxurious facilities would attract wealthy Chinese tourists. As well as being mentioned in the famous love story the mountain is beautifully situated in an area with magnificent scenery. The top of the mountain also provides a beautiful view of Kangding city in the bottom of the valleys surrounded by high mountains. However, it is difficult to say whether these features alone can attract enough tourists to make Paoma Mountain a profitable investment.

Most of my informants agree that Chinese tourists in general are more demanding and picky than foreign tourists, and therefore the facilities need to be upgraded. One of those I interviewed, a respected teacher and translator of Tibetan literature, often participated in meetings and conferences discussing the economic development of Kangding. He told me that just recently he participated in a meeting about the tourist-aimed development of Paoma Mountain. One of the investors that has already built a cable car at the mountain now wants to develop the area further and invest more money. This investor also wanted to invest in a project with the intent of transforming a former
factory to a luxurious hot spring heath resort for wealthy Chinese tourists. Other investors had also been interested in this project but had yet to raise the capital needed. The company that already owns the cable car at Paoma Mountain is, as most of the companies that have been or are investing in Kangding, not from the local area. Most of them are from the provincial capital Chengdu, but even large investors from Beijing have been involved in projects in the area. The teacher told me that one investor from Beijing is planning to invest between 200,000 and 300,000 RMB in the development of tourism in Ganzi TAP.

If this promotion of Paoma Mountain and Kangding in general is going to succeed is difficult to predict. According to my informants (I have no official numbers of this information) the county and prefecture are using most of their resources in the promotion of the prefecture as a tourist attraction. Winkler’s article confirms this focus when he in 1999 writes that the state tourism agency planned to promote Ganzi TAP as an international tourist destination in order to compensate the loss of timber money.\(^{179}\)

During my stay in Kangding I did not gain any detailed information about future construction projects or plans for the city centre, but some of my informants said that there exist plans about a total make-over of the city. In the end of my stay I got some brochures which describe some of the investment plans for Kangding. One of the brochures displays Kangding as an amazing investment opportunity with the construction of what will become “the number one commerce centre in Ganzi Prefecture” (Ganzi zhou shangye diyi cheng) the “Old Tea and Horse Route Commerce Centre” (chama gudao shangyecheng). See appendix 1 for some of the pictures in the brochure. The mixture of Tibetans in traditional outfits, Buddhist monks and modern Chinese is particularly interesting and gives some indications about what type of development the investors want to create in Kangding. The use of “ethnic tourism” mixed with modern shopping and living facilities is clearly aimed at Chinese tourists from other more prosperous and less “ethnic” areas of China.

\(^{179}\) Winkler 1999: 19-20.
5.3.4 Transportation and communication

One of the major obstacles to the development of tourism and also to the development of other industries, as already mentioned, is the bad transportation facilities. Consequently the development of the transportation network is of vital importance for the economic development of Ganzi TAP. This is also one of the main focuses of the development of the west policy.

The roads in the area have improved a lot the last years, especially the road between Chengdu and Kangding. The trip from Chengdu used to take at least two days of travelling only a few years ago, today it takes about seven hours. Several tunnels have replaced dangerous and bad roads, and the Two Wolf Mountain tunnel (Erlang shan suidao) has in particular shortened the trip between Ya’an and Kangding. I was told that most of the roads in the prefecture have been improved during the last decade. Earlier most of the area only had mud roads, and the local government was only able to pave 150-200 km of road each year. I am not sure if my informant referred to the whole prefecture or only Kangding, but at least there have been great improvements the last years. My informant told me that he thought Kangding and Ganzi had developed in such a fast phase because of the money given through the development of the west policy and also because of Zhu Rongji’s special interest in the area. This teacher, as well as several others of my informants, told me that Zhu Rongji has been in the area several times. Based on what people in Kangding told me many of the inhabitants seem to think these visits have contributed to a better implementation of the development of the west policy. They think that attention from central government officials decreases the chances for corruption and wasteful money spending by the local governments.

Within Kangding County there are also plans to build a local airport, mainly to attract more tourists to the area. The airport will be 38 km west of the city of Kangding with an altitude of about 4200 meters. In November - December 2004 the work had just begun, but there is no doubt that it will change the mountain area between Kangding and Tagong to a great extent.

Even though the roads in the area have been improved the need for funds is huge in this aspect of the policy. In addition to the roads that are being built, those that have

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been constructed earlier constantly need upgrading or maintenance. Sometimes money for maintenance of already existing facilities represents a bigger problem than the construction of new. This is because there are more funds from the central administration going to new projects than funds for maintenance. Local governments are often expected to finance this on their own and this leads to fast degradation of newly constructed roads and facilities. This gives the local government much responsibility, both in regards to maintenance and funds. Local governments often try to get funds through toll and other fees for those using the roads. There also exist many stories of local governments which spend money meant for the construction and maintenance of roads for their own benefit.

5.3.5 Migration
Labour migration within China, especially from poor, interior regions to the more developed coastal region, has been given much publicity in recent years. Because Sichuan is one of the provinces that are known to have a lot of out-migration I assumed that this was also the case in Kangding and Ganzi. The people (farmers, workers, researchers) I talked to in Kangding though, did not confirm this assumption. They said that there is almost nobody who leaves the area to seek jobs. Based on what they told me it seemed as if it is quite common to seek jobs within the prefecture, but not to leave the area and find jobs in Chengdu or other urban areas. They said that most of the local people are not willing to leave the area. I am not sure if this is because the area itself has enough opportunities or if it has to do with them not being willing to leave the local culture. I can not confirm with numbers if this information is correct, and it is possible to find some indication that there are also people who leave Ganzi for some period to earn money in other areas of the prefecture.\footnote{See for example one news report about Tibetan girls from Ganzi who are working as prostitutes in Tibet. TIN News Update 2003c.}

5.3.6 New emphasise on Tibetan culture

“Whatever official representations of Tibet and Tibetan culture may be, some Chinese are now encountering Tibet in other terms – whether through advertising and media or owing to their interest and inclination. Ironically, therefore – despite the trials Tibetans have faced and continue to face attempting to secure the survival of their culture in China – Tibetan culture has begun to emerge in some
respects as part of Chinese culture overall. This may yet prove to be an ephemeral and relatively unimportant development, but it is a trend that has the potential to affect (for better or worse) China’s policies toward Tibetan religion and culture in the future.\footnote{Kapstein 2004: 260.}

Partly because of the new emphasise on tourism more people have started to recognise Tibetan culture and traditions as unique and special. This does not necessarily mean that the Tibetans themselves get more respect, but at least it increases knowledge about their culture and recognise it as something worth paying attention to. One of my main informants has been living in Kangding for more than twenty years and holds an important position in the educational departments in Kangding. He clearly notices increased interest in the Tibetan culture and language, and sees this as a positive development. Today it is possible to study Tibetan culture and language as a unit and as main subject at some universities and colleges, earlier this was extremely rare. In Kangding there is also a school for the education of cadres (ganbu xuexiao). This is an educational institution for cadres who are intending to work in the area, and there have been great changes in their education program during the time my informant has lived in the city. Today all the cadres have to pass an examination in Tibetan oral language, and also be able to write simple messages and information letters in Tibetan. The local authorities have clearly experienced that it is important to establish better contact and communication with the local population, which after all is dominated by Tibetans.

This change can not necessarily be seen as a part of the development of the west policy, but it is clear that the general development of the area has been much affected by the policy. The change might be a part of the authority’s effort to gain increased control over the local population, but it is also likely to see it as an attempt to improve communication and cooperation with the locals. After all an economic development of the area in the scale the authorities aim at clearly demands better cooperation and more contact between local authorities and local inhabitants. My contact, who himself is ethnic Han but has a great understanding of and interest in the Tibetan culture and language, sees this development as very positive for the local people. He sees it as a way towards more recognition of the Tibetan culture and language, and thinks that the future might lead to better conditions and increased power for local Tibetans. He is himself working
with the translation of Tibetan texts into Chinese, and has gained more respect and attention for his work during the last years.

5.3.7 Kangding compared to the rest of Ganzi
Based on the information I got in Kangding it is likely to assume that the situation there is rather different from the situation in the more remote and less urban areas of Ganzi (in fact most of Ganzi). Kangding is after all the most developed area in the prefecture, and all main administrations have head offices there. How the government plan to promote development in the rural areas is not clear. The improvement of the infrastructure will of course open for more possibilities, but it is still not easy to see how this can help increase the income of those who want to live in these areas. The government still has a long way to go in the building of infrastructure: It will need both time and money.

For the time being some of the Tibetan families in other areas of Ganzi base their income solely on the subsidies given by the government through the tuition huanlin project. I was told about this by their Tibetan relatives in Kangding, but it agrees with the information given by McNally in his article in The China Quarterly.183 The future development in remote areas seems to be very uncertain, and it is difficult for me to determine how the development has been in these areas. Many of those I talked to in Kangding were still waiting for the great improvement they thought the development of the west policy will give them. They had great expectations of the economic development the further investments from the central government would imply. These expectations were mostly based on the information and news reports that has been given about the policy, and also on the promises of economic development given by Zhu Rongji during his visit in the area.

5.4 Concluding remarks
Many changes are taking place in Kangding and Ganzi, due to the overall development in China, but also as a consequence of the implementation of the development of the west policy. These changes will certainly be irreversible and cause new ways of living for most of the population.

183 McNally 2004: 442.
The population in urban Kangding experience the same as the eastern population did in the beginning of the 1980s with the privatisation of the SOEs and the transition to a market oriented economy. At the same time they also have to deal with the new aspects of development: The ecological sustainable development. With this combination of considerations, in addition to the immense task of improving the infrastructure, the local government has turned to tourism. As many other minority areas in the south-west Ganzi TAP has decided to focus on the development of tourism as main source of income, both for the local government and for the population. This has led to a new focus on Tibetan culture, and the further development of Ganzi as a tourist destination will indisputably lead to much change also in the future.

Because of the development of the west policy’s short period of implementation many questions still remain unanswered. Much rely on the local government’s ability to find sustainable sources for income, and on their abilities in using this income to the best of the population.
6 Equality versus control: who is the policy working for?

In this chapter I will go further into the discussion of who the development of the west policy actually benefits. Based on the previous chapters I will try to discuss how the equality aspect of the policy is being implemented. Who is the development primarily aimed at? With the other possible reasons for wanting development of the western area in mind, can the governments’ claimed motive of a higher degree of equality be questioned? When I try to answer these questions I will use the information I got in Kangding as background material. When discussing equality within the context of the development of the west policy I focus on equality defined as equal distribution of those facilities and possibilities that are available, and equal opportunities to take part in and gain from the economic development that is being created.

6.1 Equality

Why is equality central in the discussion of the development of the west policy? As the definition of equality states; it means to have the same rights and status, and also the same in measured quantity.\textsuperscript{184} It is stated, both in speech and print that the development of the west policy primarily works for a more equal economic distribution.\textsuperscript{185} Even though the growth of the Chinese economy has led to better living conditions in some parts of the country, this is not the case for all regions or all people. The development in poor areas, if development has occurred, has not been proportional compared to the development in other areas. The World Bank estimates that more than 160 million Chinese still have consumption levels below a dollar per day, often without access to clean water, arable land, or adequate health and education services.\textsuperscript{186} There are continuous discussions of how to define poverty, and the number of poor people in China can be difficult to estimate. In an evaluation of its assistance in China the World Bank concludes that the main conclusion to be drawn is not “that poverty is relatively high or

\textsuperscript{184} “Equality: the state of being equal. Equal: the same in quantity, quality, size, degree, rank, level, etc.; even balanced; having the same rights or status” (Lummis 1992: 38).
\textsuperscript{186} World Bank 2005.
low, but that a large proportion of the population is close to the poverty line, however defined.”¹⁸⁷

“Disparities in territorial development have existed in China for a long time. Today these disparities are highly disturbing: the absolute differential (as measured by per capita GNP) between the poorest province (Guizhou) and the richest one (Shanghai) is 14 to 1. Following the launch of reforms in 1978, the differential between provincial per capita incomes narrowed initially, and then began to widen once again in the 1990s”¹⁸⁸

This is particularly relevant for those remote areas that already are geographically disadvantaged and also for those areas that are dominated by minorities. The Chinese government has stated that the development of the west policy, together with the Poverty Reduction Program,¹⁸⁹ primarily will work to achieve better living conditions in the western part of China, and lessen the economic disparity between the eastern and western regions. The majority of the Chinese minorities live in the west, and there have been discussions of problems regarding inequality between the Han-Chinese and minority groups.¹⁹⁰

When discussing equality in China it is also necessary to question if an equal society is a utopian thinking. Socialist thinking has tended to focus and blame capitalist societies to be dominated and depended on inequality. The focus has been on power for the people and equal economic status and opportunities. The “liberation”¹⁹¹ done by the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) when the CCP gained power in 1949, was claimed to be the liberation from feudal thinking and laws, and rescue from the coming capitalist values (according to most history books written after 1949). The CCP ranked the farmers to be the best socialist workers, and former landlords and those engaged in profitable businesses as the worst. They tried to create an equal, socialist society without social classes. With their work units, which provided housing, food and medical service and

¹⁸⁹ For a description of this program see end of chapter 4.4.
¹⁹⁰ Wen and Tisdell 2001: 72.
¹⁹¹ This was the “liberation” from the feudal society, which according to CCP, all suppressed the people and only took advantage of their power. In Chinese writings the terms “before liberation” (jiefang qian) and “after liberation” (jiefang hou) are often used about the time when the Communists gained power in order to emphasise this so-called “liberation”.

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their legal system, which made trade and commercial activity almost illegal, the Chinese
government tried to be independent from the capitalist world system and create a society
without social classes. This might have lead to some development and less disparity in
China, but as Peter Nolan writes: “[W]ith good reason China’s post-Mao leadership
characterized their own economy pre-1978 as one with equality in poverty.” 192 Most of
the Chinese population could be characterised as poor but with their basic needs fulfilled.
Nolan further writes that the Chinese system did well in keeping control and meeting
“basic needs”. In normal times this contributed to low mortality rates and high life
expectancy compared with other developing countries, but the same system was also
capable of launching mass movements which had disastrous results. 193

There are discussions on how to measure economic disparity, but most research
still agree that this disparity has widened in China the last twenty years. Since the
economic reforms started in 1978 China’s income distribution has become increasingly
unequal. According to World Bank figures the Gini coefficient, a low 28.8 in 1981
reached 38.8 in 1995, and the World Bank writes: “A change of this magnitude is highly
unusual and signals deep structural transformation in the distribution of assets and their
returns.”194 Some have become richer than they ever imagined was possible while others
still have problems filling their basic needs. “Some have to become rich first, but the
others will come after” is a frequently used slogan by Chinese leaders, first declared by
Deng Xiaoping in the end of the 1970s, as well as the “some areas will lead, others will
follow” slogan. 195 Much due to statement like these, an expectation that the less
developed areas also will get their share of the economic growth has been in existence for
a long time. After the spread of TV and better communication facilities the huge
economic gap between the coastal region and poor interior areas is even more apparent.
The question of inequality is more relevant than ever before, and the development of the
west policy claims to work against it.

Programs aimed at poverty reduction and more equal distribution is not new in
China, and during the economic reform period, starting in the end of the 1970s, there

192 Nolan 1990: 12.
have been several attempts in addressing the increasing disparity. The ninth five-year plan between 1996 and 2000 had regional income disparity as one of its key targets, but did not manage to reverse the trend. According to Wen and Tisdell it is difficult to implement policies to reduce regional disparity in China mainly because policy-makers believe there is incompatibility between efficiency and equity goals.\textsuperscript{196}

The World Bank, OECD and UNDP reports all acknowledge the formidable economic growth China has achieved during the last decades, and also give the Chinese leadership credit for its work against poverty.\textsuperscript{197} According to the World Bank: “...[N]o other country has been more successful than China in reducing poverty the past 20 to 25 years.”\textsuperscript{198} But during the recent decade it has been obvious that China also has major development problems to handle. In the beginning of the economic reform period it seemed as the economic development benefited most parts of the country, but after the middle of the 1980s most figures show an increasing economic disparity between the coastal and the interior regions. There are several possible reasons for this, and as the World Bank report from 2004 points at, one of the most important might be the shift of development strategy from agricultural growth to export-led development in coastal regions.\textsuperscript{199}

Poverty Reduction Programs have been a part of the Chinese political plans for quite some time, but as I have mentioned earlier, they tend to be aimed at regions instead of people. Lipton and Ravallion call this regional targeting a “blunt instrument” for reaching the poor.\textsuperscript{200} An evaluation done by the World Bank states that:

> “About half of China’s rural poor do not live in poor counties, and a majority of people living in targeted counties are not poor. Thus coverage (of the poor) was weak and leakage (to the non-poor) substantial.”\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{196} Wen and Tisdell 2001: 73.
\textsuperscript{197} World Bank 1997; OECD 2002; UNDP 2002.
\textsuperscript{198} World Bank 2004: 16.
\textsuperscript{199} World Bank 2004: 17.
\textsuperscript{201} World Bank 2004: 17.
6.2 Equality as part of the development of the west policy

When questioning how the economic growth has been distributed among the residents of Kangding and Ganzi it is difficult to make any conclusions without having access to official statistical material. This kind of material would not necessarily have answered questions of distribution either, as this depends much on how the material is collected and classified. Still, my interviews and informal conversations in Kangding gave me some impression of what the situation is like in the area and of how some of the inhabitants experience the ongoing economic development.

My first impression during the stay was that there certainly have been immense changes in Kangding. It seemed as if there are new construction projects on “every corner”, and people were talking about changes and new plans all the time. After getting a deeper impression of what kind of changes that are taking place, my view became more nuanced. The only “conclusion” I had in my mind when I left was that there are undoubtedly huge changes going on. These changes are rapid and will have a great impact on how the situation in Kangding will develop in the future. They may have occurred regardless of the development of the west policy, but they have unquestionably been speeded up and influenced by it. It might be possible to claim that the changes that have taken place in Kangding have given most inhabitants a higher income. At the same time though, the living situation and the stability of most people’s life have been dramatically changed. Based on the beginning of this chapter the apparent question is whether the development in Kangding is equally distributed within the population and if the different ethnic groups are getting equal access to the positive effects of the development.

One change that has influenced a large amount of the urban population in Kangding is the privatisation of the SOEs, as I described in the previous chapter. One could assume that in a mountainous minority area as Ganzi TAP this aspect of the policy is rather unimportant, but for the urban population of Kangding this change is of high importance. Because the transportation and electricity companies were the two largest enterprises in Kangding, their privatisation touch a large number of people. At the same time the implementation of the tianbao and tuigeng huanlin projects\(^\text{202}\) force a large part

\(^{202}\) Explained in chapter 5.3.1.
of the population who earlier were engaged in logging or farming to seek jobs in other sectors. Most of the laid-off workers and former farmers I talked to said they primarily rely on the development of tourism for future income. But it can be questioned whether the development of the tourism industry is going fast enough, and therefore will be able to provide adequate income to all those in need.

Several of the Kangding inhabitants I talked to seemed to be quite optimistic about the development, but at the same time they also showed their frustration with some aspects of the development. This was particularly apparent with regards to the sale of the electricity company. Those of my interviewees who work for the company, including my host family, told me that none of the citizens in the city or district had the opportunity to invest in the electricity company. Some local people wanted to invest, but they did not get financial support. Neither the local bank nor other banks in the area wanted to support them. In the end, an investor from outside the prefecture invested in the electricity company with financial support from the local bank. Those who I talked to were not happy about this. They saw it as a deception by the local government: To choose investors from the outside instead of locals, and granting loans to outsiders instead of locals.

Much due to the dissatisfaction about this sale, the local government had promised that some of the surplus from the sale would go to the workers, and therefore to sell to an outside-investor would benefit them all (because then they were able to get a better prize). According to my host family there had been a great surplus from the sale, but the local government was after all not willing to share this. I did not have the possibility to check if this information was correct or not and therefore base this solely on what my host family and other workers in the company told me. These people said they felt cheated for some of the positive aspects of the privatisation because of these happenings, and they felt that the economic development of the area in this aspect benefited others (from outside Kangding) more than themselves. An outside ownership of the electricity company will also lead to raised household expenses in a period when incomes are less reliable than they used to be. Until now the electricity price has been extremely low, but it will most likely rise sharply after the private take-over. This is a natural consequence of most privatisation of SOEs, but for the local people I talked to
this was felt as a contradiction to the aim of giving them “raised standard of living” and “more economic opportunities”.

The investor who last year bought the local hotel (which used to be the largest hotel before new private hotels emerged during the last few years) has also invested in other businesses in Kangding, and in the development of local tourism. When the hotel was sold locals showed their interest in buying, but this investor, who is from Chengdu, was preferred. These private take-over cases show that investors are most likely from outside the prefecture. Investments from outside the prefecture can of course also lead to development of the local area and benefit all inhabitants. Jobs will be created, and some of the investments might lead to future projects and future investments. But this still means that local people themselves are not those who profit the most from the privatisation and development, because they are not able to invest and to be influential when it comes to decision making. This implies that even though there might be opportunities created that enables the locals to find new jobs, the ones who really earn money are the investors from outside Kangding and Ganzi. It is therefore also likely to assume that most of these investors are Han, and therefore the development of the area will be lead by Han instead of those who are the majority in the area; the Tibetan. Kolås’ social anthropology dissertation focuses on tourism and ethnicity in Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Diqing zangzu zizhizhou) in Yunnan Province. She reports how the local government in Diqing has shifted its reliance in revenue from the commercial logging to the tourist industry, following the logging ban in 1998 and the privatisation of the hotels and other tourist related industries. In various ways the local government has managed to profit from the focus on tourism and make up for their earlier reliance on logging.203 In her chapter about the political economy of tourism though, Kolås writes that “there is serious cause for concern that people in Shangrila might end up as marginalized ‘ethnic performers’ in a market dominated by more powerful actors”.204 Similarly Winkler writes that the tourist industry, at least in its initial phase, mostly will benefit a small local elite and travel agencies from Chengdu.205

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203 Kolås 2005: 214-216. Similar to those cases mentioned earlier forestry provided 70-75% of prefecture revenue in Diqing before the logging ban was put into action.
If outside investors actually manage to create sustainable development in the area, the whole area will benefit as long as the system works in the way it is supposed to. If local governments use their revenue to improve education, health service and similar facilities, the economic development will benefit all inhabitants even though most investors are from other places. Improvement of education and health services is also one of the main goals of the development of the west policy. This implies that the major responsibility for the implementation of equal development is on the local governments and their ability to distribute.

At its website the Transnational Radical Party claims that development in minority areas, “primarily benefits Chinese settlers, Chinese investors and Chinese authorities [Chinese meaning Han]”. It further claims that the economic development in minority areas is Han controlled, and development decisions and population transfer are aimed at “maintaining political control over territories, not at raising the living of Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongols as such”. These statements are given by a political Non Governmental Organisation and can not be seen as an academic source for information. Nevertheless, these assertions may function as an indicator of the prevalent attitudes among those affected by the development of the west policy. In the light of discussions about the aims of the development of the west policy the migration of Han into the western area becomes relevant. Some researchers reckon that the central government wants to create economic development in remote areas in order to attract Han migration. This migration might not only solve some of the population pressure in other areas of China, but also consolidate Han dominance in minority areas, and thus secure the power of the central government. The government uses different incentives to speed up local development and attract Han. These incentives include flexible and light taxation system, price subsidies and priority on the appropriations to local governments. Incentives are not only increasing the economic development in the area but are also likely to attract Han investors and migration from other areas.

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207 Lai 2002: 460; Becquelin 2002: 7. There exists a rather large amount of non academic writing advocating this belief, among others see International Campaign for Tibet 2002.
208 Wen and Tisdell 2001: 73.
If these contentions are valid for Kangding is difficult to determine owing to my lack of information about Han migration to the area. Based on information from other minority areas where economic development has been pursued it is reasonable to assume that there will be a dominance of Han in the group that profits most from development in the area.\textsuperscript{209} The information I got about the development in Kangding so far seems to confirm this impression.

The early period of development studies in the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by the modernisation school, as I wrote in chapter 3.1. Within this school the differences between the modern and traditional societies were explained in terms of deeply embedded cultural traits. It was therefore assumed that traditional traits of third world societies would dissolve through contact with modernity.\textsuperscript{210} Development was then primarily understood as modernisation and civilisation, and at that time this was seen as a positive phenomenon. Today development is seen in a broader perspective which includes ecological problems, unequal distribution etc. The Chinese word for development (fazhan) is mostly seen as positive, and seldom implies negative consequences. It is not questioned in the same way as development as been questioned within development thinking in the western world.\textsuperscript{211} Development is a way to prosperity, a way towards a “well off society” (xiaokang shehui),\textsuperscript{212} and it seems as if this type of society is thought of as unquestionably positive. Those who are not willing to work towards this “well off society” are seen as backwards, old fashioned and unintelligent. This includes those who are not following the family planning policy, those who question the economic development and those who show scepticism towards the methods of development projects.

One of my main aims in the initial phase of this thesis was to get an impression of how people in Kangding understand development, and if the development of the west policy is part of this understanding. During interviews and conversations I tried to get an impression of what my various informants, with their different backgrounds and living situations, think of as development, and if they experience the changes in Kangding as

\textsuperscript{209} Winkler 2003; Kolás 2005.
\textsuperscript{210} Schech and Haggis 2002: 3.
\textsuperscript{211} Frank 1966.
\textsuperscript{212} See chapter 4.5 note 114.
development. Even though I asked all my informants similar questions about this topic it has been difficult to draw any conclusions from their answers. As with many other aspects of the Chinese society used to campaigns and plans, people often seem to simply repeat what they have heard: “[D]evelopment is the opening up of the area, better economic situation and a more modern society”, “development is better transportation facilities.” But some of them also thought of development as prospects of better living conditions for those other parts of Ganzi TAP, which is even less developed than Kangding County. It became clear to me that even though there is a mix of Han and Tibetans living in Kangding, and also many mixed marriages, there is still a cultural gap between these ethnic groups. Despite this, and despite the fact that my host family as well as most of the other Han I talked to all had a very good relationship with Tibetans, most of them seem to think that the changes the Han have brought in to the Tibetan culture only can be seen as positive. A sentence that was repeated when we talked about Tibetan habits or traditional customs, was: “They used to be so backwards, very uncivilised and undeveloped, but today most Tibetans are like us, though there are still some of them who live in the traditional way.” Kapstein has written about how many Han see the Tibetan culture as backwards and as one of the main reasons for underdevelopment in south-west China. According to him the CCP leadership in Sichuan has declared that “Tibetans have been devoting too much of their energy and resources to their religion”, and that this is felt to be wasteful. The Tibetan language is by many seen as unsuited in modern science, technology and commerce, and it is an “undeniable fact that Chinese is the language needed to succeed in China today”.

According to Kolås there is a common and accepted division between the “backward”, “isolated”, “uncivilised” and “poor” interior and the “advanced”, “wealthy”, “developed” and “civilised” coastal areas.

There has been a general view in China that Han people are the most educated and most “civilised” ethnic group. This became particularly clear during the effort to identify ethnicity by the CCP. The “ethnic identification (minzu shibie)” project in the 1950s resulted largely in the ethnic groups division that exist today. Except from the

aspect of “ethnic identification”, an important part of the project was also to make appropriate development campaigns that could raise the “civilisation level” of the various groups.\footnote{Harrell 1995: 23-24.} There exists a general assumption that Han is the most modern, most civilised group. According to Harrell peripheral people can be treated equally with Han if they are educated, cultured and behaving like Han, because Han culture sets the standard.\footnote{Harrell 1995: 26.} In his book about tourism and modernity in Guizhou Oakes writes that the minority population in the province represents “a drag” to the development of the province, according to provincial leadership, because they “lack sufficiently developed ‘culture’ in order to achieve modernity”.\footnote{Oakes 1998: 9-10.} Similar to the situation in Ganzi, Guizhou has embraced tourism in its efforts to become modern. Through the development of tourism the hope is that the minorities will become “modern” and thus Guizhou as province also will.\footnote{Oakes 1998: 10.} This is compatible with the impression given to me by some of the Han I talked to at universities in Sichuan and Chongqing. They said that the culture of the minorities, in addition to the geographical features of Ganzi, has been the main reason why the development has been slow. In her study of minority education in Lijiang Hansen also confirms the impression that Han are seen as the most developed ethnic group, and because of this higher level of development “the Han are obliged to help minorities to develop”.\footnote{Sixiang zhenzhi 1993 in Hansen 1999: 73.} From my point of view this is in the core of the equal distribution question. As long as the CCP and government administrations keep their view of minority groups as “uncivilised” and “backwards” the work to develop minority areas will also be led by Han and conducted in a “top-down” approach. In such a development it is unlikely that the minorities gain equal amounts of power in decision making and investments, and equal economic development will not be the case.

The authorities’ wish to improve minorities’ situations could be genuine, but because of the disadvantaged situation the minorities already have, their chances to gain a maximum from the policy are limited. As long as the minorities are not seen as equal in respect to Han an equal distribution of economic development will be difficult. Similarly, poor farmers who are job seeking migrants in more developed areas are also seen as
“backwards” and “uncivilised” by urban Han residents and economic development in poor regions are in general difficult to create with equity. So from my point of view equal distribution of economic development is not only a problem in poor minority areas, but in poor and undeveloped areas in general, both in rural and urban contexts. The fact that minorities are overrepresented in poor undeveloped areas compared to their representation in general makes them a more disadvantaged group than the Han.221

There are still possible steps that can be taken to minimise the undesired inequality consequences of inequality during the implementation of the development of the west policy. In chapter 3.3 I mentioned four basic features that are seen as important in anti-poverty strategies: Accountability, non-discrimination, equality and participation. The most relevant question might therefore be whether the government has tried to take account of the possible consequences of this policy. If one presumes that they are not willing to take these aspects into consideration, the possible motives of gaining control over both the minorities and the natural resources in the western area become more relevant. Making the policy in order to gain accountability the local governments should have the competence to implement the policy, and corruption should be avoided. As mentioned earlier corruption is a major problem in many parts of China, and the residents in Kangding saw the lack of corruption in their district as the major reason for the comparatively positive prospects for development. Non-discrimination and equality should insure that all groups are given the same access to resources. Participation is connected to the right to organise and participate locally in the policy making. This is not valid for the development of the west policy. The policy can be seen as a top-down approach to development that does not consider local conditions, and local governments have had little influence on the policy making. Wen and Tisdell argue that regional disparity normally is a combination of natural economic factors and policy influences, especially in places where markets are incomplete. They draw the conclusion that China’s regional disparity is a result of political rather than natural economic factors.222

Bhalla has written a comprehensive book about the uneven development in the Third World, based on India and China. He has examined uneven development in the

221 Wen and Tisdell 2001: 72.
terms of development strategies and their outcomes and writes in his conclusion: “[I]t has been showed that the design of development strategies is often deliberately geared towards imbalance. The outcomes of such strategies may be even or uneven.” He thereafter concludes that the outcomes of growth in China have been uneven, and the access to technology, health and education unevenly distributed even though the intentions of the planners and policy-makers to implement uneven development strategies were to achieve rapid development as well as equity. According to Bhalla the blame for uneven outcomes can be laid both on poor design of strategies and weaknesses in implementation, which again is a consequence of political forces. He writes that both in China and India “the political factors seem to have been quite important in explaining development outcomes.” In cases where overall economic development of a region is seen as the main objective, economic efficiency will not be compromised by equity considerations. Some provinces and local governments have selected growth pole theories as a guide in development policy making, and concentrate on tourism as a growth pole. Like in Ganzi tourism has been selected as a key industry for economic development in Yunnan Province. If we then look back at the overall comments on the development of the west policy, from Shih, Becquelin and others referred to in earlier chapters it is debatable whether the central government has done enough to secure an even development and equal opportunities with the implementation of the development of the west policy.

“Adopting strategies that had been employed successfully by their Asian neighbours, policy-makers made rapid growth their top priority, well aware of the trade-off between increasing incomes and income equity that had been experienced in most developing countries.”

This was written by Rozelle in the middle of the 1990s, when the development of the west was less than a plan, and the development of the coastal region was still the main focus. In many ways, though, this quotation resembles the reactions some have to the policies of the development of the west. As long as economic growth is the top priority in

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225 Rozelle 1996: 64.
policy making and implementation, income inequality is just as difficult to avoid now as it was before. Rozelle on the other hand seems quite optimistic with the growth pole theories China has followed, hoping that when the rural residents’ incomes rise, China’s rural economy will get through “a new round of growth with equity”.226

6.3 Concluding remarks
Because the development of the west policy claims to primarily work for the economic development of minority and poor areas, the question of equitable economic development becomes relevant. From its socialist period during the Mao leadership China has today emerged as a country with huge income disparities. The development of the west policy is supposed to work against this disparity, but already in its initial phase it can be discussed how equal the distribution of the economic development in fact is.

As the case of Kangding shows the economic development seems to be directed more by Han from outside the prefecture, than by local Tibetans. Other cases from Yunnan and Guizhou also seem to confirm this impression. These cases lead to the discussion of how the cultures of different ethnic groups are valued in China. There still exists an impression that Han-Chinese is the most civilised and developed group, and therefore the development should be led by them. As long as this notion prevails it will be difficult for the Chinese leadership to gain any economic equitable development in the areas of the west, areas that are populated mainly by different ethnic groups.

7 Conclusion
Economic development in China is increasingly unequally distributed. There is a rising disparity between regions, but also locally within regions and provinces. The economic distribution between the east and the west has been given increased attention in recent years, but the differences between urban and rural areas are even more alarming. The Chinese government has tried to address this disparity with the implementation of the development of the west policy. Recent development in Kangding is a local example of the workings of the policy. The people of Kangding live in an area which is both rural, poor, dominated by minorities and situated in the west and will thus give a valuable insight into the workings of the policy.

Kangding has undergone major changes during the last years, and among the most important ones are the privatisation of the SOEs, the new environmental programs and the emphasis on the development of tourism. The implementation of the new environmental programs has influenced both Kangding and the rest of Ganzi. Many have lost their major source of income and others rely solely on the compensation given to them by the state. Some local governments have also been heavily affected by these programs, and tourism is by many seen as the main source for future income. The privatization of the SOEs is also affecting a large proportion of the residents in Kangding, and many seem to be dissatisfied with the fact that most private investors are from other areas. The government in Ganzi has followed the steps of neighbouring autonomous regions and started developing the tourist industry. This has led to more activity in Kangding, but the area still has a far way to go in order to achieve a sufficient infrastructure.

The development of tourism has nonetheless given Kangding hopes for the future, but the question of who benefits the most from the development of the tourist industry remains. Even though the picture is far from clear, it may be doubted if the development in Kangding and the rest of Ganzi is benefiting Tibetans to the same degree that it benefits Han. This is supported by research in similar areas in Yunnan and Guizhou. The underlying argument in my assumption is the existing attitude within China of Han as the most “developed” and “civilised” ethnic group. As long as this idea exists, equitable
development in minority areas will be difficult to achieve because the development will always be led by Han.

Through the description of relevant development theories I have also tried to show how the development of the west policy and its different outcomes can be questioned based on the design of the policy. The stated goals of economic and ecologic sustainable development can be seen as having other and more hidden agendas. Some researchers have pointed at political motives for the implementation of the policy, others claim the policy primarily is designed to consolidate the power of the CCP in minority and border areas. It is evident that the policy may “hide” many motives because of its unclear feature, and at the same time the diverse goals can also appeal to a large amount of political goals.

In regards to the question of equitable development I have discussed the concept of equality and its relevance to the development of the west policy. The discussion of the equity within the policy is based on the situation in Kangding and how people there see the development as well as research from other areas. The implementation of the development of the west policy has most likely led to similar situations in other areas in the west. If these changes will have the same effect on the local area and lead to the same developments as in Kangding is impossible to say.

Through my analysis of the policy on different levels I have tried to show some of the developments caused by the policy, and discussed what I see as the most important aspect: equitable development.
List of Chinese characters

Names of Chinese authors and historical persons

Deng Xiaoping  邓小平
Liu Wenhui  刘文辉
Mao Zedong  毛泽东
Wang Luolin  王洛林
Wei Houkai  魏后凯
Yang Qingzhen  杨清震
Zeng Peiyan  曾培炎
Zhu Rongji  朱镕基

Chinese place names

Aba zangzu qiangzu zizhizhou  阿坝藏族羌族自治州
Baiyu  白玉
Batang  巴塘
Changdu (Chamdo)  昌都
Chuanbian  川边
Dajianlu  打箭炉
Daocheng  稻城
Daofu  道孚
Dadu he  大渡河
Danba  丹巴
Dege  德格
Derong  德荣
Diqing zangzu zizhizhou  迪庆藏族自治州
Erlang shan suidao  二郎山隧道
Ganzi zangzu zizhizhou (Garze)  甘孜藏族自治州
Jinsha jiang  金沙江
Jiulong  九龙
Kangba (Khampa)  康巴
Kangding xian (Dartsedo)    康定县
Leshan shi          乐山市
Liangshan yizu zizhizhou  凉山彝族自治州
Litang           理塘
Luding             泸定
Luhuo              炉霍
Panzhihua shi     攀枝花市
Seda               色达
Sichuan daxue     四川大学
Sichuan sheng     四川省
Shiqu              石渠
Songpan            松潘
Xiangcheng        乡城
Xikang             西康
Xizang zangzuqu   西藏藏族区
Xinlong            新龙
Ya’an shi          雅安市
Yajiang            雅江
Yala gou           雅拉沟
Zheduo shan       折多山

**Chinese terms and phrases**

* an kang bi xian xing kang, an kang bi xian tong kang
  安康比现兴康，安康必现通

  * baita
  * chama gudao
  * dianli gongsi
  * fazhan
  * ganbu xuexiao
  * guowuyuan xibudiqu kaifa lingdao xiaozu

  安康比现兴康，安康必现通

  * 白塔
  * 茶马古道
  * 电力公司
  * 发展
  * 干部学校
  * 国务院西部地区开发领导小组
guowuyuan xibu diqu kaifa lingdao xiaozu bangongshi

guojia fazhan jihua weiyuanhui
guojia fazhan he gaige weiyuanhui
guowuyuan
haimei dao
hao
jiefang hou
jiefang qian
kangba
kuaguoshi
liang ge daju
maodun
minzu
minzu shibie
nongye renkou
nuli
qingge
renzhen
san xian
shangye diyi cheng
shaoshu minzu
tianbao gongcheng
tuigeng huanlin
xiaokang shehui
xibu kaifa yanjuyuan
yunsong gongsi
zangzu
Zhongguo xibu da kaifa zhengce zu

国务院西部地区开发领导小组办公室
国家发展计划委员会
国家发展和改革委员会
国务院
还没到
好
解放后
解放前
康巴
跨过式
俩个大局
矛盾
民族
民族识别
农业人口
努力
情歌
认真
三线
商业第一城
少数民族
天保工程
退耕还林
小康社会
西部开发研究院
运送公司
藏族
中国西部大开发政策
族


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Xibu wang (Western China website).
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Yunnan sheng jingji xinxi zhongxin (Yunnan economic information network).
http://www.yn.cei.gov.cn
Appendix 2

Areas claimed by the People’s Republic of China: Provinces, regions, and provincial-level cities.

Source: Chang 2001: ix.