

Development without Rights?

An Analysis of the Chinese Development Policies in Tibet in a Power and
Post-Development Perspective

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0.0 Abstract

While economic growth keeps reaching new highs in People's Republic of China (PRC), the inequalities and human rights violations are increasing with a matching speed. Minority areas continue to be characterized by extreme poverty and social unrest, and despite heavy growth rates since the 1990's, the Tibetan Autonomous Region remains worst off. At the same time the PRC has never invested more resources in development projects in the Tibetan Plateau. Whereas the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) keeps building more high ways, railways and 'modern housing' in the name of 'human development' in Tibet, more than one hundred individual Tibetans have put their own bodies on fire in what appears to be individual acts of protest against the CCP rule. Development is a normative and political concept, and in many cases imbedded with inexplicit ideological and cultural valuations and assumptions. Through qualitative, in-depth interviews with Tibetan refugees recent arrived from Tibet now living in exile in Dharamsala, India, this thesis indicate that the practical implementation of Chinese development efforts are imbedded with subtle practices of power abuses and limited respect and concern for indigenous knowledge. By imposing controversial conditions on marginalized Tibetan recipients, this research shows that 'development' has been actively utilized to further the halting of basic human rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion in the region. The PRC thus appears to have failed in winning a high degree of popular support for its development policies in the Tibetan Plateau. This can to certain extent be an explanations why some Tibetans continue to take on the drastic step of engulfing their bodies in flames to protest, and to put themselves in grate risks fleeing illegally to an uncertain state of refugeehood and exile in Nepal and India. The empirical findings of the case of development without human rights in Tibet under the PRC confirm Wolfgang Sachs bold statement from the post-development debate in the early 1990's: "It did not work".

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However, this study could not have been done without the kind help and assistance from the skilled and professional staff at the Tibetan Reception Center and the Tibetan Transit School in lower Dharamsala. Without your patient contributions, it would have been impossible for me to find the required amount of Tibetan informants, with the experience of recently having fled from Tibet, with their fresh memories still close to mind.

Last, but not least, I bow my head before all the Tibetans I interviewed for this project, for having demonstrated faith and courage by opening up your hearts and minds by talking to a complete stranger from Norway. A very special thank you goes in particular to the former political prisoners interviewed for the project. Although it at times was emotionally challenging for me to get so close to some of your most painful experiences with torture and imprisonment for your political activism, I want you to know that it was also a great inspiration for me witnessing that you have not given up, but are still standing strong and determined to struggle for truth and social justice in the Land of Snow, but from your new homes in Exile.

I dedicate this thesis to all Tibetan souls who self-immolated for the sake of social change in Tibet. Your absence in this World is a great loss, and you will always be missed and remembered.

And with these words, I wish you all the best of happiness, hope and well-being!

With love and respect,

Minoos Koefoed

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0.1 Acronyms

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CHP – Comfortable Housing Program

CTA – Central Tibetan Administration

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HDR – Human Development Report

HRBA – Human-Rights Based Approach to Development

IMF – International Monetary Fund

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

PLA – People’s Liberation Army

PRC – People’s Republic of China

TAR – Tibetan Autonomous Region

TRC – Tibetan Reception Centre

TTS – Tibetan Transit School

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

WB – World Bank

Development without Rights?: An Analysis of the Chinese Development Policies in Tibet in a Power and Post-Development Perspective

“(...)it seems more like the aim of the good facilities and development that comes with the Chinese, actually is to make the Tibetan culture, or I mean, our ways of life, our traditions, you know, to disappear into the Chinese”.

“Sonam”

(Former political prisoner from Tibet, interview 11).

1. Introduction

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has become the world’s fastest growing economy and is estimated to become the world’s leading economic power by 2030 (World Bank 2012). However, with an annual growth rate of almost 10%, the inequalities of wealth within the country seem to be rising with a matching speed (UNDP 2010)¹. These inequalities have reached the extent that the newly accumulated economic wealth and successive development boom seem to have affected the country in two diametrically different directions, splitting the nation in two distinct geographical units (Goodman 2004, Lu, Ding and Neilson 2004). On the one side, the economic and human development in the eastern provinces near the coast is by the United Nations compared with wealthy, industrialized European countries like Portugal and the Czech Republic (UNDP 2010). On the other side, the least developed regions in western China are compared with war-thorn, highly underdeveloped countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNDP 2010).

In the light of the wide-spread human rights criticism frequently directed towards the PRC of its ill-treatment of minority groups like the Mongols, the Uighurs² and the Tibetans, it seems inappropriate to ignore that the developed eastern provinces predominantly are inhabited by the Chinese Han and Hui majority (Amnesty 2012, USDS 2011, USDS 2012, HRW 2010, HRW 2008, HRW 2007). The underdeveloped western provinces, on the other hand, have the country’s highest concentration of ethnic minorities, among others, the two largest such groups, the Tibetans and the Uighurs (Cao 2009). An independent human rights

¹ The UNDP China report for 2010 is the latest available data accessible to date.

² In the most recent World Human Rights Report by Amnesty International, the Uighurs and Tibetans and their respective Autonomous Regions are identified as suffering under the worst human rights conditions within the borders of the PRC (Amnesty 2012).

NGO, estimates that roughly 80% of the Chinese minority population live in this area (MRG 2009, Web). The Chinese development processes have therefore been criticized not only for increasing the gaps between rich and poor, but also for favouring the ethnic majority areas as a potentially discriminatory practise (Cao 2009). Rights groups furthermore suggest that “China’s rapid economic transformation has exposed the intrinsic and historical problems of the government’s policies towards ethnic minorities”, and states that ethnic minorities like the Tibetans, Mongols and the Uighurs bear

“(...)disproportionate costs of development and are facing attacks on their cultural identities. Their lands are being exploited for gas and oil, and [...]increasingly militarized by the PRC government, as part of its response against perceived insurgency threats” (MRG 2008, Web).

Despite its rapid economic growth since the 1990’s, the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and the other Tibetan inhabited areas, are characterized by lower levels of development than any other region within the PRC (Fischer 2012, UNDP 2010). It is therefore interesting that in the TAR, the GDP annual growth rate was for many years as high as 12%, far above the national average (Fischer 2012). However, Fischer (2012) argues how the high GDP growth rates in Tibet can be seen as misleading. That is because they might derive from the excessive economic inputs from the Chinese government in terms of direct financial subsidies (Fischer 2012). By the year 2010, he argues, “(...)direct budgetary subsidies from the central government to the TAR local government surpassed one hundred percent of the TAR gross domestic product (GDP) (...)” (Fischer 2012:6). Additionally, investments in fixed assets reached 91% of the TAR total GDP in 2010 (Fischer 2012).

Economic resources earmarked for various costly, prestigious and highly visible development projects such as railway construction, high road infrastructure and housing construction programs, thus pours into the region as a part of what is known as the Open Up the West Campaign. This is a program of development policies which aims at smoothening up the inequalities between the eastern and the western regions (Fischer 2012, Goodman 2004). Furthermore, in China’s 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), what was known as the ‘People-First’ development strategy was introduced in Tibet. Its articulated aim is to improve the lives of poor rural farmers and herders in Tibet in particular (Goodman, Childs and Wangdui 2010). The current 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) further the People-First strategy, and as its core stone lies the Comfortable Housing Program (CHP), which aims at providing ‘safe, modern housing’ to needy Tibetans (Goodman, Childs and Wangdui 2010). However, despite

enthusiastic self-praises by the CCP of their own success with developing Tibet through economic growth, infrastructure and housing facilities, the development projects in the region have been criticized for not taking sufficiently use of local labour, construction materials and indigenous knowledge, favouring hired workers and materials from mainland China and abroad (Fischer 2012). It has also been criticized for violating human rights, for instance by forcefully relocating Tibetan nomads and herders into fixed, modern houses against their will, and without any kind of compensation (HRW 2007, HRW 2006, Web, HRW 2013, Web).

At the same time, official Chinese newspapers and statements from Chinese officials tend to portray the PRC's involvement in Tibet as a sunshine story of success. For instance, according to the CCP controlled newspaper Xinhuanet, by the end of the 11th Five Year Progress Plan, the CCP have succeeded ensuring safe drinking water to as much as 1, 22 million people in the Tibetan Autonomous Region; provided electricity to 1,5 million Tibetan farmers and herdsman; installed phone lines in 85% of all villages; built high roads in 668 Tibetan townships and towns as well as in as much as 4,222 (80%) of the region's administrative villages; provided postal service systems in 80% of all towns and townships; and spent millions of yuan on constructing low-rent houses in Tibet aiming at improving the living conditions of low-income families in Tibetan areas, among other things through the so-called Comfortable Housing Program (Xinhuanet 2010). In 2011, the same newspaper thus proudly announced that the Tibetans in Lhasa are "the happiest people in China" (Xinhuanet 2011, 11th 11). The CCP suggests that Tibet:

"(...)is now enjoying a golden era of development, with a growing economy, an evolving society, a prosperous culture, a higher standard of living, coexistence among different religious and ethnic groups, and a happy working and family life enjoyed by local people" (People's Daily 2013).

It is therefore particularly interesting that since 2011, a wave of as much as 117 Tibetan monks, nuns and lay people have taken the drastic step of putting their own bodies on fire in what appears to be single acts of individual protests against the Chinese overall involvement in Tibet (ICT 2013, Phayul 2013, CNN 2013). There thus seems to exist a great contradiction between how the Chinese government interpret and evaluate the current state of happiness and contentment among Tibetans in Tibet, and how the Tibetans themselves appear to evaluate their well-being.

Another clear sign of Tibetan discontent towards the PRC government might also be seen in the empirical reality that large numbers³ of Tibetans every year put themselves at great personal risks by fleeing illegally from Tibet to Nepal or India, sometimes on foot, over the mountains of the Himalayas. Although the exact number of refugees leaving Tibet each year is uncertain, I argue that this situation rises questions regarding how the term ‘development’ adequately is to be understood in the Sino-Tibetan context.

If the PRC had improved the overall well-being of local Tibetans as they claim to have done, through successful development policies, why do Tibetans choose to leave? And why have more than one hundred single individuals put their own bodies on fire in what appears to be political protests against the PRC? If the PRC had improved the general well-being of local Tibetans in Tibet, would it not be logical to assume that overt protests against the CCP’s practises, like self-immolations, would have *declined* and not *increased*?

While the self-immolators are calling for greater religious freedoms, the return of the Dalai Lama and human rights in Tibet, before engulfing their bodies in flames: the PRC keeps building more high roads and railways, more modern houses, and implementing more mining projects in the name of development. But what kind of development do we talk about when 117 individuals have enflamed themselves in protest and desperation? Would human rights restrictions diminish single individual Tibetan’s abilities to benefit from large-scale development projects on the ground? Or perhaps ‘well-being’ to the average Tibetan person necessarily would entail something different than what ‘well-being’ would entail for the average CCP official? Is there a possibility that Tibetans would long for a different kind of ‘development’ as the one assumed beneficial to the Chinese Communist Party and its international allies?

The conventional understandings of the concept of ‘development’ have been criticized from a variety of scholars and professionals during recent times (Ziai 2007, Sachs 1992/2010, Escobar 1993, Bawtree 1997, Cavalcanti 2007, Nussbaum 2011). Some of the most eager such critics can be found among the scholars of the so-called ‘post-development school of thought’ (Ziai 2007). This tradition is commonly understood to have been established during the early 1990’s, first and foremost through the work by Wolfgang Sachs (1992/2010), Arturo

³ I have not succeeded in finding the exact numbers of how many Tibetans who flee to India or Nepal annually, and the number is highly instable and differs largely from year to year. However, representatives at the Tibetan Reception Center (TRC) in Dharamsala estimated that roughly 600-800 refugees had fled annually the latest few years, with a declining curve. They stated that the flow of refugees is highly sensitive to changes in the Chinese security policies, thus, it has become increasingly difficult for Tibetans to flee since the 2008-uprisings, after which the PRC severely increased its security measures and political repression in the Tibetan Plateau.

Escobar (1993) and Bawtree (1997). With its critical emphasis on concepts like *discourse* and *power*, post-development theory is heavily influenced by poststructuralism and the theoretical work by French philosopher Michel Foucault, as well as critical ideas and radical concepts borrowed from fields like postcolonialism, environmentalism as well as the emancipatory traditions of critical theory developed by the Frankfurt School (Ziai 2007).

As the Sino-Tibetan relation among other things is characterized by a somewhat intense and prolonged political conflict, I argue that it becomes especially important to apply a theoretical framework that is sufficiently sensitive to potentially underlying ideological, discursive and political power structures in this study. Therefore, in line with the radical theoretical tradition of the post-development school of thought, this thesis critically scrutinizes the Chinese development processes in Tibet based on the works by Sachs (1992/2010), Escobar (1993), and Ziai (2007). Additionally, I also believe that our understanding could be further elaborated and broadened up by also taking into account some of the findings in the various sociological debates surrounding the definitions, mechanisms and functions of the concept of '*power*'. By putting some of the insights drawn from the work by for instance Michel Foucault (1986) and Steven Lukes (1976) in connection with the insights from the post-development school of thought, I believe we will obtain a useful theoretical tool that hopefully can aid us reaching new insights into the Chinese development processes in Tibet, and its implications on the ground. My hope is to analyze these theoretical ideas in connection to my empirical material. This empirical material consists of personal interviews with Tibetan informants, where their experiences, thoughts and reflections of development processes are revealed and discussed. Previous research indicates that it is unclear "(...) how Tibetans are responding to and being affected by state-sponsored development initiatives, or how policies differ from one community to the next and from macro-level directives to micro-level implementations" (Bauer, Childs, Craig, Fischer 2010:7). I argue therefore, that out from a post-development logic where local knowledge and indigenous values plays such an important role: research based on empirical in-depth interviews with affected Tibetans should be seen as an important contribution to the existing literature.

By doing that, this thesis seeks to answer the following two research questions: 1) based on the experiences and personal experiences of Tibetan arrivals in Dharamsala, to which extent, and in which ways, can the exercise of '*power*' be understood as present in the practical undertaking of the Chinese development policies in Tibet?, and 2) To which extent

have the Chinese development policies been effective in winning popular support among Tibetan individuals, and why?

This thesis suggests that there seems to exist a predominant perception among many recent arrived refugees from Tibet that the Chinese development policies in the region is not really aimed at improving the well-being of ordinary Tibetans, but rather to improve the Chinese reputation in the international arena. The Comfortable Housing Program and the construction of high ways and railroads are seen by many as mere “show off” from the side of the Chinese government. In many cases development aid and compensation was offered only on political conditions such as signing documents where the Tibetan recipients where to confirm that they did not support the Dalai Lama, or that they fully supported the work of the Chinese Communist Party. This indicates how ‘development’ can be utilized actively to halt human rights such as freedom of speech and religion. Such empirical findings are particularly interesting as they necessarily are invisible in development statistics.

This thesis furthermore shows that a promise of increased economic, cultural and social development for Tibet has been one of the main arguments in the official Chinese discourse that historically has been applied when explaining and justifying the PRC’s presence in Tibet. This includes its military entrance to the territory in the late 1949, namely what the CCP terms “the peaceful liberation of Tibet” (CCP 2011).

This thesis goes as far as to boldly suggest the possibility that the Chinese development attempts in Tibet perhaps not appears to derive from a genuine wish to improve the well-being of the local population in Tibet, but rather as a political means to continue and justify its political grip on this otherwise resource-rich and the geopolitically important region.

1.1 Thesis Outline

Chapter one elaborates on my research objectives and methodology. After that, a section on ethical consideration becomes appropriate, marking the end of the first chapter.

Chapter two will present and discuss the multifaceted theoretical framework applied in this research project. I will start out with introducing the term ‘development’, and problematize different definitions from different critical angels. Then, I will gradually narrowing it down to a theoretical discussion on different forms of what is termed ‘power’, and end up with a discussion on the post-development school of thought, including its main critiques.

In chapter three, I seek to present and discuss a brief literature review, combined with a brief historical background for the development processes in Tibet under the PRC.

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the 20 qualitative interviews that I did with the Tibetan recent arrived refugees in Dharamsala during my four months fieldwork. Then, I seek to discuss and analyse these empirical findings according to the theoretical discussion in chapter two.

In chapter five, I seek to pull my concluding remarks and present suggestions for further research.

1.2 Research Objectives

My research objective with this project is not to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the overall development processes in the Tibet and its effects on the ground. Although such a study would have been a valuable contribution to the existing literature, it would be a far too pretentious task for a limited research project like this. Neither is my aim to undertake a general analysis of the overall human rights conditions in the Tibetan areas. Several independent, high-quality and well-documented contributions with that regards are already accessible in the existing literature (US 2011, HRW 2010, HRW 2007, HRW 2008).

My objective with this research project is two-folded. On the one hand, I seek to explore how Tibetans who have chosen to flee from Tibet to India reflect around, and understand the current development processes in their respective geographical areas, as well to investigate their personal experiences with both development projects and human rights violations.

Secondly, my objective is to analyze the Tibetan interviews according to previous literature on the development processes in Tibet under the PRC out from a power and post-development perspective in particular. An analysis of how the development policies in Tibet could be seen as entailing different forms of ‘power’, based on empirical material grounded in qualitative interviews with Tibetans remains unexplored not only in Tibetan studies, but also in development studies. This study, then, seeks to fill these academic gaps.

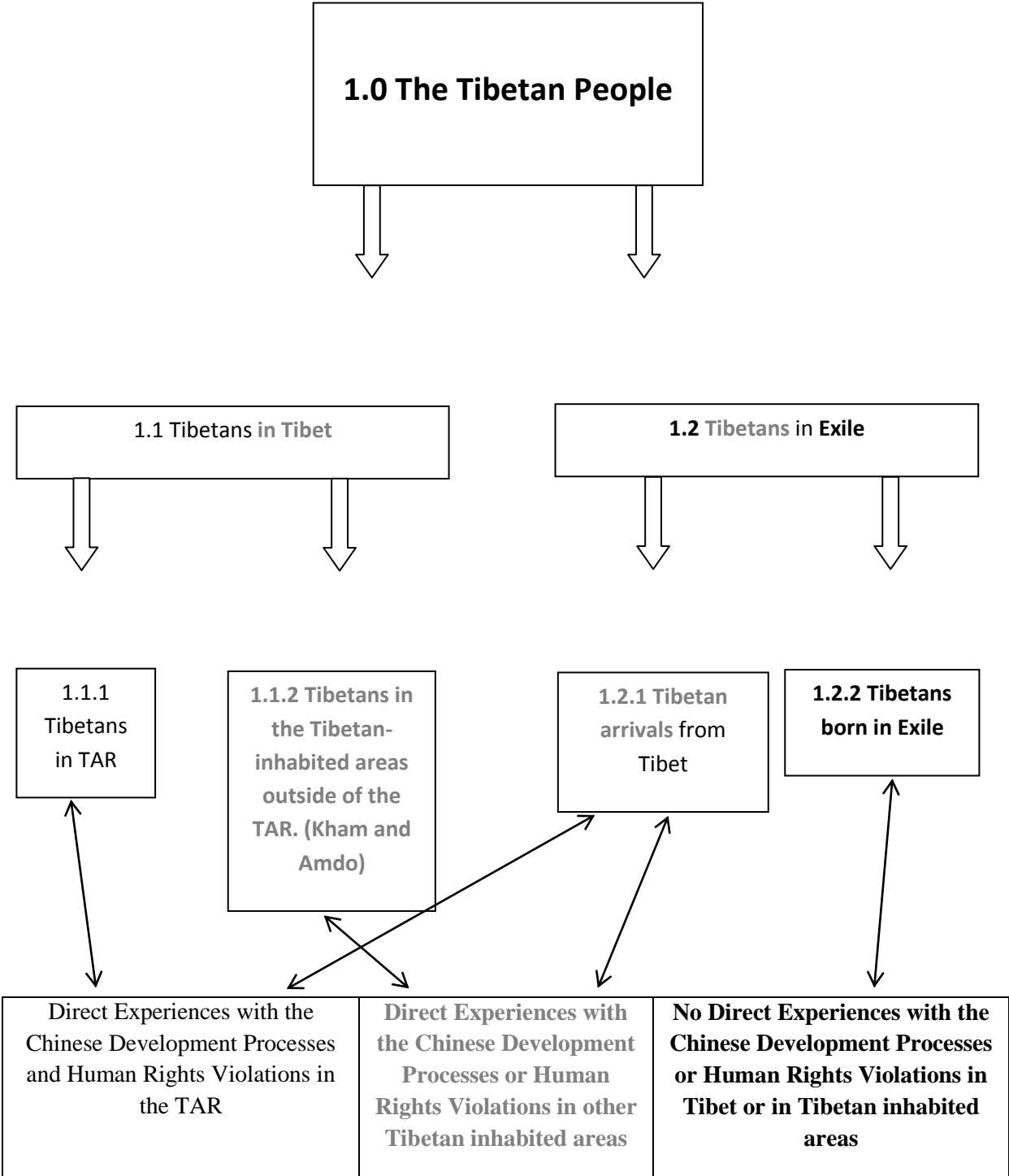
Development policies are too often developed above the heads of the people they are meant to benefit. Statistics aiming to measure levels of development have often proved to be inadequate methods to evaluate the deeper, empirical effects of development policies on the ground (Nussbaum 2011). Furthermore, practical development projects are likely to affect

individual households and single individuals in their daily lives, and are in most cases gradually implemented through highly multifaceted and complex political processes. Therefore, in regions where the human rights violations are as present, large-scale and systematic like in the case of Tibet, it seems reasonable to assume that these two political aspects interact and affect each other in a variety of ways. Development does not happen in a vacuum. I argue therefore, that it becomes inadequate to analyze the effects and efficiency of development merely out from statistics based on changes in averages or other simplifying development indicators, measurable in mere numbers and figures. Thus, qualitative in-depth interviews with individuals from Tibet who have recent first-hand experiences of practical development policies have the potential of shedding particularly valuable insights into the effects of development in general, and the intersections between human rights and development.

As I am solely using informants among the Tibetan exile community my approach will naturally be from the perspective of Tibetans who flee. I do not, thus, pretend to represent the views and experiences of the Tibetan people at large. Any attempt of pulling generalizing remarks on how Tibetans as a whole reflect upon, experience or analyze these issues would most likely fail as the Tibetan people cannot adequately be understood as one homogenous or unified group. On the contrary, due to historical developments as well as the current political situation, the Tibetan people are, firstly, geographically divided: one part of the population is still in Tibet, while the other part is scattered in exile.

Table One on the forthcoming page shows how the Tibetan people is divided in different categories related to whether they have direct experiences with Chinese development processes. As the table clearly shows, there is only one group of Tibetans staying in exile whom at the same time have direct experiences of these processes. This is group 1.2.1: Arrivals from Tibet. As the table also shows, the group representing the exiles is clearly divided in two, I.2.1 and I.2.2. The majority of the exiled population seems to be represented in the latter group, namely those who are born in exile and thus have never seen Tibet. It would therefore be wrong to assume that this study deals with development from a Tibetan exiled approach in general. On the contrary, this project is based on the perspectives of recent arrivals from Tibet, currently staying in India. The vast majority of my informants have not stayed in India for more than one year.

1.3 Table 1) illustrating the Relations between Different Groups of Tibetans and Development Practices in Tibet



Note: Table showing different categories of Tibetans and their relations with human rights violations and the Chinese development processes in Tibetan areas in the PRC.

1.4 Research Methods and Research Design

In this research project I have chosen to apply a qualitative research design and methodological approach, grounded on a constructivist epistemological understanding. Primary data-collection through fieldwork has been required in this study as the previous literature does not currently provide the sufficient information necessary to adequately answer my research questions.

As my main research methods for primary data-collection I have chosen to conduct a number of in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with recent Tibetan arrivals in the Tibetan exile community in Dharamsala. The reason why I have chosen precisely the Tibetan community in Dharamsala and not the Tibetan settlements for instance in Nepal or Bhutan, which both are countries with a substantial Tibetan refugee population, is because Dharamsala is the religious and political centre of the Tibetan exile community worldwide. Both the Tibetan Government in Exile as well as the Tibetan people's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, have their offices in Dharamsala. Naturally, thus, Dharamsala is the final destination of most recent arrivals from Tibet.

I am well aware that important methodologically questions arise already at the port of this choice. It could be argued that many Tibetans who have taken the drastic step to flee from China to the main political centre of the Tibetan community in exile perhaps would be more inclined to have rather pessimistic views on the Chinese practises and policies to begin with. It could also be argued that the politicized environment in Dharamsala might have affected the views and opinions of my informants. However, when it comes to the latter issue, I believe it is possible to avoid that problem by solely interviewing arrivals who have spent very little time in India (maximum one year). In addition, all my informants live relatively isolated from the larger exile community where literally all political activities occur (see below for details). Furthermore, I do not aspire to utilize a sample representative for the whole of Tibet. There are particular reasons why the Tibetans who have chosen to flee to exile is an interesting group for my research area. As Table One above shows, this group has recent, first hand experiences with both development processes as well as the current human rights conditions in the region. At the same time, unlike their fellow Tibetans inside of Tibet, they benefit from the relatively safe political context of India in the sense that they can speak freely about any topic concerning politics in Tibet without running risks of arrests or violent repression. A study like this could hardly been done inside of Tibet due to its politically sensitive nature. As I see it, Dharamsala appears to be the only place in the world where this particular study could have been undertaken. In addition, this is a particular group which

obviously is discontent about something regarding the situation in Tibet as they choose to leave. Precisely because of that, I argue, it is likely that these particular Tibetans have reflected and thought about what they are dissatisfied with in Tibet (reasons for fleeing), as well as what they hope to get/achieve/experience in India which they do not feel they can do/get in Tibet (aspirations for their new life in India). I argue that these appears to be good reasons for doing the study in this particular exile community.

As my overall research design I have chosen a case study design. I believe that the case of Tibet in general, and the case of Tibetans who flees from Tibet to exile in particular, might prove to be particularly useful in deepening our empirical and theoretical understanding of the eventual validity of post-development approach to change, and certain power theories.

Furthermore, my informants in this research project are all recent arrivals who have still not begun their “normal” lives in exile. The majority of these have been interviewed at the Tibetan Transit School (TSS) or the Tibetan Reception Centre (TRC) in lower Dharamsala. The TRC is a centre for recent arrivals coming either directly from Tibet to India, or through Nepal, where they stay for up to one month before they have found an occupation in India. The TSS is a school for Tibetan adult arrivals from 18 to 30 years of age. There, basic courses are offered for a time span of up to five years, aiming to empower the new arrivals to obtain the skills required to function independently in their new, Indian society. Both institutions are located a bit isolated from the rest of the Tibetan community which primarily is centred in McLeod Ganj, upper Dharamsala.

Some of the recent arrivals at the TTS and TRC are not merely political refugees in the conventional sense of the term, a group which perhaps would be inclined to have particularly strong, negative opinions also about Chinas involvements in Tibet, including the Chinese development politics. Some of the Tibetans that escape to India are also religious pilgrims, searching to see the Dalai Lama or to join the undisturbed activities in the monastic institutions throughout the country. Although religious pilgrimage at first glance might appear far less dramatic than political refugees who often face immediate threats of arbitrary arrests and torture if they do not succeed escaping, the free and undisturbed practise of the Buddhist religion is nevertheless often seen as an urgent and absolute necessity for devoted Tibetan Buddhists, nuns and monks. Additionally, the monastic institutions are far from disconnected from the multifaceted arena of politics. Traditionally in Tibet, there existed no separation between religious life and politics. The Dalai Lama himself used to serve as both the political as well as the religious head of the state. Monks and nuns also played key roles in organizing and participating in the various popular uprisings in the Tibetan Plateau. This is also the case

for the on-going wave of self-immolations, where the majority of the self-immolators have been monks and nuns (ICT 2012). Although the Dalai Lama now has resigned from his political powers, monastic institutions and religious practise continues to be highly politicized both within Tibet as well as in the Tibetan exile communities. In a society like the Tibetan, where the Buddhist religion has played such a crucial social and political role, I argue that it becomes inadequate to understand the leaving Tibet for permanent or temporary religious pilgrimage as disconnected from political and human rights considerations in the region. I argue therefore that religion in the case of Tibet under the PRC could be seen as a highly political matter. Any argument that seeks to diminish the gravity of the situation for individuals leaving Tibet for religious reasons, would fail in their understanding of the importance and significance of religion in the Sino-Tibetan conflict.

Other Tibetan arrivals come to be reunited with distant family members, to receive a proper education, or simply to seek better opportunities than what is currently available in Tibet. In my study, I seek to interview individuals independently of their reasons for leaving Tibet.

The interviews were conducted in English, with a Tibetan interpreter. I utilized a voice recorder in the majority of my interviews when my informants permitted it. In cases where they did not allow me to record their testimonies, I took notes with pen and paper. In either case I transcribed the interviews shortly after the interviews were conducted. That I did in order to avoid loss of personal interpretations and expressions transmitted for instance through body language, irony, modes of talking and other forms of non-verbal language. All the recorded interviews have been carefully transcribed before I started the process of analysis. I have chosen to base my empirical research on personal Tibetan interviews as I believe that,

“(…) detailed examples can (…) be educative for the reader, who might not be able to imagine such different life-conditions without the help of narrative. Narratives help such readers focus on a wider range of problems and issues, and also cultivate the imagination, producing an acknowledgement of the equal humanity of people whose lives typically are ignored by privileged elites. Examples also clarify the theoretical argument by showing exactly how to positions differ.” (Nussbaum 2011:81).

1.5 Challenges during Fieldwork

During fieldwork, I experienced both challenges and advantages due to my role as an outsider and as a researcher. First of all, I faced practical difficulties in finding suitable interpreters. That was not because there is a lack of Tibetans with the required knowledge of the English language, but rather because there was a lack of Tibetans who additionally had the required proficiency in the multiple Tibetan dialects, some of which differ radically from Central Tibetan⁴.

Furthermore, one could of course argue that it would have been an advantage to know the Tibetan language sufficiently well so that I could have done the interviews in the native language of my informants myself. However, limitations in time and resources made it impossible to obtain such a high level of familiarity with the complex Tibetan language. I am also well aware that certain dimensions and nuances in the empirical findings in my interviews perhaps could have been lost due to slightly incomplete interpretations, for instance in cases where my interpreters were not native Khampa speakers. However, to some extent I managed to solve that problem by working with a variety of different interpreters. Some of these interpreters appeared to have had a better proficiency both in the Khampa-dialect as well as in the English language, than others. Furthermore, as I recorded most of my interviews on a digital voice recorder, I had the opportunity to verify the validity of the translations by showing some of them to close Tibetan friends in Dharamsala who had the required proficiency in the respective Tibetan dialects. When doing that, however, I was careful not to reveal the identity of my informants in order not to break my ethical promise of confidentiality.

However, having spent as much as roughly five months in the Tibetan refugee community for my fieldwork, I believe that I to some extent was able to obtain deeper insights into my research topic than what I assume otherwise would have been possible. That is amongst other things because it enabled me to spend more time with my informants, some of which I got to know quite well, also on a personal level. It also enabled me to go back to informants and do follow-up interviews in certain cases. Additionally, as I had already spent one year in the community since the autumn 2011, I also feel that I was in a favorable position in the sense that I already had several useful contacts; I knew the community very well; and

⁴ The Central Tibetan dialect, also known as Standard Tibetan or the Ü-Tsang dialect, function as a lingua franca among Tibetans in India. However, inside of Tibet itself, the Chinese language has the role as lingua franca. Therefore, many arrivals from Tibet do not speak Central Tibetan, but only local Tibetan dialects.

was well-known to a number of Tibetan activists and individuals working in Tibetan NGOs. In my experience, I feel that my familiarity with the Tibetan refugee community in Dharamsala, as well as with Tibetan culture, customs, traditions and history: made it easier for me to gain trust among my informants during, and when scheduling, interviews.

One could argue that my previous role as an activist in the community and elsewhere could be seen as a deficit in my research project. This could for instance be due to the likelihoods of bias and excessive personal identification with some of my informants. However, by subjecting my research to thorough theoretical scrutiny, as well as by applying a rigorous theoretical framework in my analysis as will be demonstrated in Chapter two, I nevertheless argue that I have been able to obtain the necessary intellectual distance to my research area, as well as to my informants. Additionally, I will actually go as far as to argue that my previous role as an activist in several cases also worked to my advantage.

For instance, at one occasion, when talking to a former political refugee who had previously spent substantial time in Chinese prisons due to human rights activism, it was in the initial phases of our conversation, difficult for me to make him open up. He did not seem to feel comfortable talking freely to me about his experiences. In my view, he appeared skeptical about my motivations for doing the study in the first place. However, after a while, it came to a point where I expressed that I felt a certain kinship with the former prisoners because I had myself been imprisoned for human rights activism. Not within the borders of the PRC like him, but, as I articulated it: “in Israel, another occupying nation”. When that was said, his face lit up, and he enthusiastically shook my hand, as if it now had become clear that we in a way were fellow peers on a political level, despite of our many differences. The whole situation ended up in one of the most personal and profound narratives of political repression in Tibet that I had experienced thus far.

With the exemption of five individuals, all of my informants had their origin in eastern Tibet, outside of the TAR. The majority of my informants came from the Kham-region, eastern Tibet. However, two of the five informants from within the TAR also came from eastern Tibet, more precisely, the city of Chamdo, which is located in a geographic area where Kham and the TAR overlaps. It could have been interesting to dig deeper into the demography of the Tibetans who flee, scrutinizing potential reasons behind why individuals from Kham generally seems to be overrepresented among the refugees in Dharamsala, and why there seems to be so few people from Lhasa. However, such a task reaches far beyond

the limited scope and aim of this research project. I nevertheless suggest that further research seems to be needed in order to adequately discuss the underlying reasons behind this apparent tendency.

In addition to the recent arrivals, I have also interviewed three staff members at the Tibetan Reception Center in lower Dharamsala. The purpose of these interviews was to broaden up my overall, contextual understanding of the issue of Tibetans who flee. These interviews, thus, were dealing more generally with how the wave of arrivals from Tibet has changed over time, and what could be the reasons behind this change. They are in that way thematically separated from the other interviews, and will thus not have a direct impact on the analysis that will be presented later in this thesis.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

As the Tibetan refugees are such a marginalized social group in both Tibet as well as in India, and because this study deals with highly politically sensitive issues, some remarks on ethical considerations are required.

Stories of family members of exiled Tibetans, who have been imprisoned, tortured, sanctioned or monitored by the Chinese authorities as a result of their exiled family member's political activities: flourish among the Tibetan community in Dharamsala. As a result, many Tibetans are convinced that the Chinese government bribes Tibetan, Chinese and international individuals to provide information about the activities and sayings of the exiled population. The freedom in exile is thus often seen is incomplete, and relative to that of Tibet. Although the empirical validity of this fear might require more in-depth investigations, many Tibetans in Dharamsala nevertheless experience this threat as real and existent. It would be naïve to assume that a complex security related context like the one present in the Tibetan exile community in Dharamsala would not affect the sayings of my informants.

Adding yet another aspect to the complexity of the situation, in Tibet itself, spreading information to foreigners about politically sensitive issues like human rights violations or criticism of Chinese political policies: is associated with extreme dangers. That is because such activities frequently are punished under separatist or “splittist” charges by the Chinese police, leading to multiple years in prison, commonly with heavy torture, and sometimes even “disappearances” or extrajudicial killings (HRW 2012).

It cannot be taken for granted that the fears of such extreme dangers have been embodied to such an extent that some recent arrived Tibetans would modify their critique of the Chinese policies when talking to a foreign researcher, even in India. In any case, I have

done my best to watch my steps with care, sensitivity and respect in order to assure that I in no way might have put my interviewees or their family members in Tibet in any real or imagined danger.

The principal of informed consent have thus been especially important in this particular research project. Furthermore, I cannot be certain that my own activities are not being subjected to Chinese surveillance. Therefore, I have put all my efforts into hiding the identities of my informants, before, during and after I conducted my fieldwork.

For instance, I have changed all names of my informants, as well as avoided mentioning the names of the villages in which they are from. I did not even write their names in my field notes, but referred to their narratives according to the number I gave their interviews, and have not sent any of the interviews or the interview notes over the internet.

2. Theoretical Framework:

A Combined Power and Post-Development Approach

I will in this chapter present my theoretical framework, consisting on a discussion of the terms ‘development, ‘power’ and ‘post-development’. I will here start out with a general discussion on ‘development’ and its historic evolvments as I see it directly relevant to my chosen research topic.

Throughout history, there have been many different definitions and understandings of the complex, multifaceted concept we know as ‘development’. I argue that in order to adequately understand and analyse the implications of the Chinese development policies in Tibet, it becomes of crucial importance to first look at the broader context of the historic evolvments of development theory and practise in general terms. I will therefore start out with a very brief outline of aspects in the history of ‘development’ that I consider of particular relevance to my empiric field of research. I seek to utilize some of these historic aspects and findings to further advance aspects in the understanding of the development situation in Tibet.

In the early stages of the history of ‘development’ the mainstream views tended to apply an understanding of the term as synonymous with economic growth – measured in GDP alone (Nussbaum 2011). However, such traditional ‘development economics’ was later heavily criticized for instance by scholars like Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000) among other things for ignoring the complexity, multidimensionality and social aspects of the concept. In 1990 the UN thus launched its Human Development Reports, attempting to broaden up the definition to also include human aspects such as life expectancy, health and literacy rates (UNDP 1990).

With the HDRs, one could argue that human-centred concepts like self-help, sustainability and empowerment gained grater resonance in the mainstream approaches among the dominant development agents. Therefore, one could go as far as to suggest that such apparent change of direction towards a more human-centred development view, could be seen as a radical, and even ideologically bold, *paradigm shift* in what had previously been an entirely economy-centred development agenda. However, although acknowledging that no given causality exist between growth in GDP and human well-being in itself, the 1996 UNDP Human Development Report, still stated that “human development is the end—economic growth a means” (UNDP 1996). This, I argue, indicates a continued emphasis in the role of

market forces for human development, despite the UNDP's apparent attempt of broadening up the development definition, in resonance with its most eager critics. Therefore, I argue, one could perhaps question the profundity of the radicalism in what appeared to be a paradigm shift in 1990, and argue that it also can be seen as becoming little but a different way of wrapping in an very similar development approach. Furthermore, the logic that economic growth would be a mean to human development could even be seen as discursively aligned with a political ideology of economic liberalism, and the political ideology of economic liberalism, has been heavily criticized by grassroots organizations, rights groups and social movements in the Global South for not leading to increased well-being of the poor and marginalized, but rather to improve the wealth of the already rich (Smith 2008).

The most radical changes in the 1990-development-shift were perhaps the acknowledgement that policy-measures and political guidelines directed specifically at furthering human development, was a prerequisite for a causal connection between growth and overall increase in human well-being. Although the initial phases of the human development approach as manifested in the HDRs in the 1990's in that way appears not to have represented a fundamental turn in the economy-centered approach to development, the new findings did nevertheless gain significant influence in the broader development discourse in the international development arena. The discursive importance of explicitly acknowledging that 'human beings' was to be understood as the 'real wealth of nations' as stated in the HDR of 1990 should therefore not be overseen. On the contrary, its importance cannot be ignored, nor should it be diminished.

This widening up of the development term later rose new and intriguing question as to the degree to which human rights should be considered in the definition. The Human-Rights Based Approach to Development (HRBA) thus seems to have become increasingly influential in the global development arena, as it was attempted mainstreamed into the United Nation's political system already in 2003 (UN 2003, Web).

Despite the important contribution to the mainstream understandings of development, development economics remain highly influential 'scholarly wave' among development agencies, governments and professionals today. This is a central argument in Martha Nussbaum writings as late as 2011, when she criticized 'the mainstream approach to development' for in practice still applying that same, old fashioned, economy-centered understanding of development where economic growth, measured in GDP plays a major role (Nussbaum 2011).

However, I do not want to suggest that radical, more ideologically bold, and highly critical alternative currencies of thought do not exist in development theory. I have chosen to apply a highly critical and multifaceted theoretical approach, which radically differs from the ‘development as economic growth-approach’ dominating international agencies like the UN, the WB and the IMF. My theoretical framework, which will be presented below, combines power theory and post-development theory. I believe an interconnection of these theoretical perspectives would be the best suitable theoretical framework to adequately answer my research questions. Amongst other things, I will use this framework to discuss some of the ways in which ‘development’ could be seen as related to different ideas of ‘power’, drawing mainly on the work by scholars such as Steven Lukes, Robert Dahl, Bacharach and Baratz, and Michel Foucault.

I have in this thesis chosen to apply a highly critical and multifaceted theoretical approach to my study, which radically differs from the ‘development as economic growth-approach’. My theoretical framework, which will be presented in this chapter, combines power theory and post-development theory. I believe a mix of these theoretical trends would be the best suitable theoretical framework to adequately answer my research questions. Amongst other things, I will use this framework to discuss some of the ways in which ‘development’ could be seen as related to different ideas of ‘power’, drawing mainly on the work by scholars such as Steven Lukes, Robert Dahl, Bacharach and Baratz, and Michel Foucault.

My next section will discuss the importance of not applying a too narrow understanding of ‘development’.

2.1 Ethic and Pragmatic Problems of a too Narrow Development Definition

Theorizing development, I argue, is not only important because its definitions and theoretic approaches could become of crucial pragmatic importance at a later stage, but also because it might entail implications of ethical importance for individuals and affected communities. The ways in which ‘development’ is understood are likely to affect the outcomes of practical development projects on the ground, hence it also becomes an *ethical* matter as it might affect the lives of marginalized people in direct and immediate ways.

Furthermore, while additionally being a highly normative term, commonly seen as *efforts to improve* the economic and human *well-being* of disadvantaged individual people,

marginalized communities, poor households and even entire poverty-struck nations, matters of *power* and *ideology* furthermore becomes relevant.

If applying a too shallow, too narrow or a too fluid definition of ‘development’, the result might not only be highly ineffective and unsuccessful projects which fail in improving the well-being of the people they seeks to address, it could also *worsen* the living conditions of local people and communities. Therefore, theorizing development could be seen both as a *political* undertaking, as well as a highly normative one (See Nussbaum 2011 for further elaboration on the normative aspects of development).

For further elaborating on my point of the potential problems of applying a too narrow understanding of ‘development’, let us take the case where the rather old-fashioned view of ‘development’ as synonymous with economic growth measured in GDP alone, is applied, leading to private businesses and governments uniquely emphasising on DGP in their work to improve local development. When the ways in which such growth is distributed in society is not at all taken into account in the development term, we run the risk of not actually improving the material conditions or economic well-being of the very poor and marginalized people (that perhaps would be the ones in the most urgent need), or even the average population. That would for instance be the case if the reason behind the rise in the GDP was that, let us say, the 5% riches people in the country in question had increased their economic wealth by 1000% within that year, while the rest of the populations which would not be a part of the economic elite, would not have experienced any economic improvements at all. This definition would therefore be too narrow, because it fails to consider inequality as a part of its understanding. American philosopher and political theorist Martha Nussbaum (2011), is one of the main critiques of the approach to development as economic growth.

Another less obvious example is the case of a country that experiences a high level of overall economic growth, combined with a relatively fair distribution of wealth. Materially speaking, the country becomes more equal due to the increased growth, which in turn also make the GDP rises. We can also add that this country has a 100% employment rate as well as nearly 100% enrolment rates in primary and secondary education, as well as offering health care to all residents of the country regardless of income, completely free of charge. However, let us think that in this same country the human rights conditions are decreasing in the same pace as economic development is rising, reaching the point when the human rights conditions are so extremely poor that there are no freedom of speech or expression, no freedom of assembly or organization, people cannot practises their religion believes or values in any way, and all media sources and channels of un-censored information are blocked. Imagine that

arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, torture and imprisonments are common practise, or that popular participation in politics and decision making is non-existent, while at the same time people are not permitted to travel freely, but need special travel permits to visit their own family members on different parts of the country, and that all their private communication systematically surveyed or monitored by the country's police, military or ruling party. Could we then talk about improved well-being and actual human development?

The answer to that question is, I argue, a matter of subjective judgement, values and even potentially ideological preferences. An advocate from a strict, neo-liberal school of thought, where the free market and economic growth is seen as entailing the highest forms of freedom and potentially even leading to increased levels of democracy almost by its own virtue: would perhaps answer yes to that question. From that ideological logic, one could argue that if the average purchase-power and affluence of common people have actually increased, and continues to increase, their freedoms are naturally improved in terms of *material choices*, which is crucial to human well-being. In this view one could argue that extreme levels of poverty does also diminish human freedoms and agency, in the sense of for instance choosing what to buy, what to eat, what to wear, and where to go.

Due to the pragmatic and political implications it might entail, theorizing development, I therefore argue, could be seen as a highly political task. Therefore, issues of power' should be addressed in our understanding of empirical development processes.

2.2 'Development' and the One-Dimensional View on Power

Leading power theoretician Steven Lukes, suggest in his influential and ground breaking edition "Power: A Radical View", that the concept 'power', just like 'development' should be seen as a multifaceted and complex term, distinguishing amongst other things, three different dimensions of power (2005[1974]). The first dimension, which gained resonance in the academic sociological debates and within the field of international relations, Robert Dahl, could be seen as an "(...) intuitive idea of power", defined simply as: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Lukes 2005/1974:16 referring to Dahl). Power, then, is according to this view looked upon as a zero sum game that assumes that where A gets more, B gets less.

As a normative term 'development' says something about what "A" and "B", *should* have, *should* be able to do, and *should* be able to be. One hardly disputable 'should' within the development field could for instance be that people *should* be able not to die from easily

curable diseases. That is a valuation and a presumption which perhaps could be seen as related to the emphasis on life-expectancy in the development debate.

So how could this developmental ‘should’ that normatively would seek to help people from dying prematurely be seen as connected with the one-dimensional view on power as presented above? Let us take one hypothetical, but yet realistic, scenario. Preventing people not to die from easily curable diseases in the 21st century would perhaps require certain restrictions on market monopolies on the production of certain medicines so that also poor people would be able to afford them.

In that case, the needs of “poor people”, “A”, would lead to a limitation of the economic profits by the rich medical company in question, “B”, who otherwise would have enjoyed higher economic gains through market monopoly, which in itself would have restricted the ‘power’ of “A” to continue to live without dying from her/his curable disease. In that case it is clear that there would have existed a *conflict of interests* between “A” and “B”. Due to the ‘developmental should’ of maximizing life-expectancy as suggested above, one could from a normative point of view in line with general development discourse argue that it appears more important that, “A”, will not lose his/her life, if it so that it technically could be prevented, in this case, through reducing medicine prices by banning the system that enables market monopoly, than it appears for ‘B’, a rich medical company, to keep its ‘power’ over the lives of “A”. When using this theory of “power over”, I argue, it becomes clear how a development policy aiming at abolishing market monopoly on certain medicine in order to assure the accessibility of medicine for poor people, would both 1) be a matter of normative evaluation of the importance of something (the ability to live) over something else (the ability for a rich company to get richer), and 2) a clear conflict of interests over resources which implies that where “A” gains more, “B” would gain less, and the other way around. Both parties cannot win. Either the medical company manages to keep its ‘power over’, namely the monopoly on the medicine leading to higher prices on medicines, which disable the poor people to buy it, reducing their ‘power over’ their own lives. Or, the poor people manages to overthrow the system which enables market monopoly of powerful medical companies, reducing the ‘power over’ that these companies otherwise would inhibit, and by doing that, regaining the ‘power over’ their own lives. It is a zero-sum game.

This leads us to our next power-theoretic scrutiny of how defining ‘development’ could entail matters of ‘power’.

2.3 'Development' and the Second-Dimensional View on Power

Defining 'Development', certain questions regarding the nature of decision-making and development agenda arises. I argue that the way in which we understand development could point at certain indications as to *who* are seen as the appropriate agents to decide *how* what is perceived as the well-being of *which* people could and *should* be improved. Should it be development experts with university degrees, but which at the same time perhaps are rather disconnected from the local realities on the ground? Or should it be local grassroots organizations, indigenous community leaders and civil society groups with much indigenous knowledge, but perhaps with limited theoretical insights in development scholarship? Or should it perhaps be directives and guidelines from centralized organizations like the UN, the WB and national governments? Or would the ideal situation perhaps include a mix of all? Furthermore, this also arise questions as to which type of individuals should be entitled to distinguish and point out the most urgent and acute societal and economic needs to be addressed in practical development work? Or in other words, *who* should decide which issues to be put on the political development agenda?

These questions lead us to what Lukes terms the "two-dimensional power", developed by Bacharach and Baratz (Lukes 1974/2005). Bacharach and Baratz criticized the one-dimensional view of power by Dahl, as they argued it ignored central aspects of the concept. Unlike the one-dimensional approach, they argued that 'power' has not only one – but two – distinct 'faces', or characteristic features (Lukes 22-23). That is amongst other things because 'power' also "involves examining both *decision-making* and *nondecision-making*" (Lukes 22-23). Unlike the view developed by Dahl, they thus argued that it is not so that power uniquely should be seen as present during overt, observable conflicts of resources at the political decision-making table, but also conflicts of interests which do not reach the decision making table at all. In that sense, the two-dimensional power of Bacharach and Baratz sheds new lights on how to understand 'conflict' as it relates to 'power'. Whereas in Dahl's view, 'conflict' is restricted to the observable, visible, overt spheres of openly discussed conflicts, the view developed by Bacharach and Baratz points out that 'conflicts' not necessarily reach the point where they are confronted in political arenas. In many cases marginalized people does not get a saying in the political process of making decisions on issues that might affect them in one way or the other, and that their interest, thus would not necessarily be promoted, nor discussed at all. The withdrawal of certain voices in decision making, Bacharach and Baratz argue, could for instance be due to

“predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures (‘rules of the game’) that operates systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests” (Bacharach and Baratz in Lukes 1974/2005:21).

The second face of power, is thus “redefining the boundaries of what is to count as a political issue” (Lukes 1974/2005:22-23). According to this view, in sum, power is, in addition to Dahl’s intuitive power as discussed above, present when “(...) decisions are prevented from being taken on political issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests (...)” (Lukes 1974/2005:25 referring to Bacharach and Baratz).

And how could this second dimension of power aid us in our understanding in the ways in which defining ‘development’ and practical development work could be seen as exercising different dimensions of ‘power’? I argue that the critical debate about ‘indigenous knowledge’ within fields like the Anthropology of Development could shed valuable light with this regards.

Within the field of anthropology there is a sub-field called ‘anthropology of development’, closely aligned with the post-development approaches to development (Grillo and Stirrat 1997). This tradition emphasises how development work in many cases is directed from outside forces, and therefore in many cases could be seen as insensitive or even indifferent to local culture, traditions and knowledge (Grillo and Stirrat 1997). Emma Creve, for instance, suggests that local and indigenous systems of knowledge often are marginalized in development processes. She furthermore explains this tendency by suggesting how local knowledge in many cases are considered ‘backwards’, and even are reduced to ‘exotic beliefs’ or ‘perceptions’ in the view of the development agencies and professionals. She argues, that indigenous knowledge in many cases are perceived as of low value compared to the so-called ‘scientific findings’ of the modern and technological societies (Creve in Grillo and Stirrat 2007).

Esteva and Suri Prakash (1998) would perhaps have termed this tendency ‘anti-democratic’ as they in their radical work criticizes what they call “the Global Project”, namely the project of universal ‘development’ and ‘modernization’ as synonymous with a mix of a western style political democracy, combined with economic liberalism and free market economy. Such a one-size-fits-all type of modernizing, they argue, is “subordinating local autonomy to the design of the centralist modern democratic state. The “Global Project” is

attempting to further dissolve and destroy what still remains of the (...)democratic commons” (Esteva and Suri Prakash 1998:153).

I argue that, when combining the lessons learned from the new insights on what ‘power’ might entail as developed by Bacharach and Baratz, with the critical insights drawn from the debates on ‘indigenous knowledge’ within the field of critical development, and anthropology, we might reach new insights into our understanding of the development concept. When indigenous knowledge and local opinions are denied access to the decision making table when developing development policies and undertaking practical development processes, I argue that the second dimension of ‘power’ should be seen as being present.

2.4 ‘Development’ and the Third-Dimensional View on ‘Power’

Although the idea of power was radically broadened up from the one-dimensional view on power to the second dimensional view of power, Steven Lukes still argued that the understanding thus far was too narrow and limited to give a comprehensive understanding of the term. One of the main challenges, he suggested, was that the one and two-dimensional views of power only included known and consient conflicts of interests, solely including decision-making processes and nodecision-making processes alone. Furthermore, Lukes argues that ‘power’ could certainly be exercised outside the arena of making decisions too. Additionally, in the empirical world, oppressed and marginalized groups might have interests in social, economic or political change without being aware of it, for instance due to restricted access to information and knowledge on alternatives to the existing situation. He suggests that

“The second reason why the insistence on actual and observable conflict will not do is simply that it is highly unsatisfactory to suppose that power is only exercised in situations of such conflict. To put the matter sharply, A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants” (Lukes 1974/2005:27).

He suggests that “the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have – that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?” (Lukes 1974/2005:27). Criticizing both the work of Dahl and Bacharach and Baratz, for only addressing actual conflict when defining and discussing the faces of ‘power’, Lukes argues therefore that power has not only two, but three, dimensions. The most effective forms of power, he argues, is present when potential conflicts of interests are

prevented from arising at the first place. In that sense, Lukes third dimensional power is present when individuals accept their situation without question or feelings of grievances or discontent, so that 'conflict' in that way never occurs. The Marxist idea of false consciousness may in that way be seen as crucial to the three dimensional power. That, I argue, is problematic in itself because it opens up for the possibility that someone else but the oppressed and marginalized can claim to know what is in the real interest of the people in question. Lukes 'radical view' on power thus addresses "(...)the many ways in which *potential issues* are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individual's decisions. This, moreover, can occur in the absence of actual, observable conflict", where there nevertheless exist a "(...) *latent conflict*, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the *real interests* of those they exclude" (Lukes 1974/2005:28).

2.5 Michel Foucault and Discursive Power: The 'Development Consensus'

However, French philosopher Michel Foucault goes one step further in his attempt of opening up the understanding of power, emphasizing the sophisticated relations between power and what he sees as *knowledge*, or commonly accepted *truths*, in society. In his view, this form of power is thus intrinsically connected to 'discourses of truth', as he calls it, pointing out a power that is hidden, invisible and omnipresent. This kind of 'disciplinary power' or 'discursive power' nevertheless directs the behavior, sayings, choices and reactions of individuals in almost absolute and inescapable ways (Foucault 1986:229).

Foucault thus defines the *what* of power according to *how* it works. He suggests for instance that power "(...)produces "subjects", forging their character and "normalizing them", rendering them capable of and willing to adhere to norms of sanity, health, sexuality and other forms of propriety" (Lukes 2005[1974]:91 referring to Foucault). In that way, Foucault distinguishes a form of power which is discursive, meaning, how a general, overall way of perceiving, understanding, thinking, experiencing and talking about certain aspects of society: represent a covert form of power. Such discursive power shapes; controls and restricts: human behavior.

This can be seen as a form of domination which operates when people unreflectively subordinates themselves to the 'regimes of truths', or discourses. These can for instance be understood as the normative or hegemonic perceptions of acceptable behavior created for example by the fear of punishment. Punishment can here be understood both in terms of

social as well as physical sanctions (Foucault 1980/1976 in Lukes 2005/1974). Now, how can Michel Foucault's teachings on disciplinary power or discursive power aid us in our critical scrutiny of development?

Cavalcanti, argues that

“Despite all the criticism that has been levelled against it, the term 'development' is still used almost as though it were entirely unproblematic. Development insists on staying in our vocabulary, and many people seem to believe that a world without the 'modernisation' concept of development simply cannot exist” (2007:85).

This kind of development consensus can be seen as the same as what Escobar terms the “unquestioned desirability” of development (Escobar 1993:vii).

At the same time, several critical scholars have highlighted cases of development which have worsened the well-being of the local population instead of improving it. For instance, while analysing an empirical case of a development project from rural Brazil, Cavalcanti (2007) goes as far as to pose human well-being and ‘development’ up against each other as two opposites. In the empirical case she addresses ‘development’ fails among other things because the local culture; knowledge; needs and wishes: were ignored, or even discredited from the side of the development agencies. Few goes as far in their critique as Cavalcanti, who, in the choice of title of her work, clearly illustrates the boldness of her arguments: “Development versus Enjoyment of Life” (Cavalcanti 2007).

Could what appears to be a taken-for-granted normative consensus assuming modernization’ and so-called ‘development’ to be a good necessity that thus should be implemented in the so-called ‘developing countries’ be seen as a Foucaultian ‘discourse of truth’, and thus be rendered a matter of discursive power?

2.6 Post-Development: Development Alternatives versus Alternatives to Development?

“(...)the idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes, have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work.

(Sachs 2010:XV).

So based on the discussion above, I argue that it becomes adequate to apply an approach to the mere concept of development which is sufficiently sensitive to ‘power’. This becomes important in order not to run the risk of reinforcing destructive, and potentially oppressive, power structures and political ideologies in society.

Within the emancipatory tradition of critical theory and the Frankfurt school, post-development theory evolved out from post-structuralism, and is heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (Escobar in Ziai 2007, Nederveen Pieterse 2000). In his comprehensive work “Exploring Post-Development”, Aram Ziai presents a collection of articles providing a nuanced discussion of the scholarly developments of this radical school of thought, as well as its main critiques (2007). Three major academic works are pointed out as the most influential in shaping and establishing post-development theory as a critical sub-field within Development Studies. These are the “Development Dictionary” by Wolfgang Sachs (1992), “Encountering Development” by Arturo Escobar (1995), and “The Post-Development Reader” by Rahnema and Bawtree (1997).

The work by Sachs (1992) became highly influential in the development debates during the 1990’s, and posed development based on modernization and industrialization as a contradiction to ecological sustainability, going as far as to announcing the end of the development era. The development project, he furthermore stated, had proven to be an empirical failure, amongst other things because the gaps between rich and poor in the world had only become wider and wider since the “development era”, as he called, began in the late 1940’s (Sachs 1992[1992]). Therefore, the term “development” should be seen as a misconceived concept, which in addition to leading to increased inequality and injustice, also had been leading to an elimination of cultural diversity, a process directed by universalizing western institutions, powerful governments and western development agencies. And as the most basic promises of the development project had failed, he called for an abolishment of the mere concept itself: “time is ripe to write its obituary” (Sachs 2010[1992]:XV). Sachs’

critique, I argue, was thus bold, radical – and merciless. Scholar Nederveen Pieterse (2000:175) thus argues that post-development could be seen as a “radical reaction to the dilemmas of development” and that its interest lies in scrutinizing the “underlying premises and motives of development”.

Another influential post-development scholar is the American-Colombian social anthropologist Arturo Escobar, who, in his work from 1995, turns the development discourse up-side-down, by, even more explicitly than what Sachs had previously done, dismissing the concept of development altogether (Escobar 1995). He suggests that unquestioned and underlying political and ideological presumptions of western cultural superiority generally tend to dominate the mainstream development discourse, and analyses this in relation to colonialism. That is because the development discourse is seen to have emerged right after the Second World War at a time where nations who had recently been colonized by western powers for the first time proclaimed self-determination: instead of seeking profound emancipation for the newly independent former colonies, the new hegemonic paradigm shifted from that of colonialism to that of ‘international development’. The development discourse is in that way understood to have taken over where colonialism ended, disguising the desires of the western powers to expand and sustain its hegemony under the noble, normative discourse of poverty-reduction, industrialization, and modernization: ‘development’.

In line with a Foucaultian theoretical tradition, this work interprets the mere concept of ‘development’ as a powerful knowledge-producing discourse that often results in the exercise of power over what is seen as the socially constructed ‘Third World’. Escobar furthermore argues that even the more critical development approaches tend to shape their critiques within that accepted discourse. In his work, Escobar established that the post-development school operates outside of the established development discourse and its discursive power, and does thus not deal with searching for new and better development alternatives, but rather: alternatives to development.

Development could thus be seen as the furthering of a racist, derogative and colonial discourse, presented under a new, and more socially accepted ‘wrapping’. To build up such a controversial claim, he looks at the evolution of development in a historical perspective, by among other things pointing out that the international development project began at the same time as colonisation was abolished and former colonies for the first time had gained their apparent independence. While revealing the political and discursive similarities between the new development agenda and the colonial practises towards the former colonies of the

western powers: Escobar highlights the need to look far beyond this new dominant discourse of development that indirectly keeps justifying the subordination of ‘developing countries’ to their previous colonizers, and look for radical alternatives to the existing. A clear post-colonial approach to development had thus been established as an explicit component in the post-development school of thought.

“The Post-Development Reader” By Rahnema and Bawtree (1997) argued that the traditional understanding of development in many cases can be seen as a threat to people’s autonomy, and as an ideology born in the North with the underlying motivation of expanding the economic and geographic influence:

“The hidden – yet clear – message that every development project has carried out to the people at the grassroots has been that their traditional modes of living, thinking and doing have doomed them to a subhuman condition (...) Rahnema 1997 in Ziai 2007:16).

They furthermore argue that post-development today should be seen as a new rationale for social change, and cannot be mistaken for an approach dismissing new possibilities of change.

Although there seems to be a lack of solid, comprehensive and clear-cut definitions of what post-development is, on the basis of the above mentioned discussion, my understanding of the term can be summarized as the following: post-development approaches are highly critical views of development, which radically differs from the mainstream approaches to the term, political development practices, as well as its mainstream critiques. It understands development in historic connection to colonialism, and aims at revealing underlying discourses of political, economic, cultural and social forms of oppression, inequalities and structural injustices of the development project. Influenced by postcolonialism and post-structuralism, post-development largely emphasizes the importance of indigenous traditions and local knowledge systems applied on grassroots levels in the South. This opens up for the possibility that the western-style modernization, industrialization and so-called ‘development’ might cause more harm than good, especially when imposed from outside forces. These could be international development agencies, powerful governments and other westernized institutions. Post-development tends to be rooted in southern scholarship, and sees human well-being as intrinsically connected to human dignity, free will, choices and human agency. Any kind of the *forceful* imposing of values, projects, or political change is seen as contradictory to human well-being and social justice. Post-development sees traditional development as a contradiction to social justice, and as a destructive discourse of political,

social and economic *control*, developed and imposed by the powerful few (strong powerful governments, former colonial powers, often western powers) upon the powerless many (the Global South, former colonies, marginalized indigenous peoples).

Merciless as it appears in its critique, the eager opponents of the post-development school of thought have, naturally some might suggest, also been numerous, merciless and bold in their counter critiques (Ziai 2007). One of the most eager of these critics can be found in the work by Jan Nederveen Pieterse's from 2000. At the same time he is acknowledging the usefulness of the post-development school of thought as a philosophical tool enabling reflexive and critical thinking and articulation of a philosophy of social change. However, he also argues that post-development is based on "flawed premises", as it fails in offering any real alternative to development, despite its claims of doing precisely that. Thus, he argues, it falls into a "rhetorical gridlock" of unconstructive anti-ism (Nederveen Pieterse 2000:188, 187). He furthermore criticizes the post-development school of thought for applying a too faithful reliance to post-structuralism, the idea of discourse and the work by Foucault, which in his view "invites to political impasse and quietism" (Nederveen Pieterse 2000:187). Last but not least, he argues that post-development represents little but a "neo-traditionalist reaction to modernity" which romanticize the traditional, pre-modern, and takes its normative superiority for granted (Nederveen Pieterse 2000:187). He furthermore states that "Post-development's source of strength is a hermeneutics of suspicion, an anti-authoritarian sensibility", but fails to convert this sensibility into political construction (Nederveen Pieterse 2000:187).

Despite the critiques by Nederveen Pieterse and others, I still argue that many of the thoughts and ideas represented in the post-development school of thought could be utilized to deepen our understanding on empirical realities like the development processes in Tibet under the PRC.

I am well aware that it might be perceived a bold choice grounding my master thesis research on such radical and, in many ways contested, theoretical approach. However, despite of its many enemies, the post-development school has also had a serious impact on the academic discussions on international development issues that arose during the 1990's (Ziai 2007). While I here humbly suggest that there seems to be little doubt that some of the counter-critique posed by Nederveen Pieterse above appears to be valid to a certain extent and solidly grounded, I still argue that a post-development theoretical approach might prove to be a particularly useful tool in order to understand the development processes in Tibet under the PRC. While Sachs perhaps went too far in his critique by arguing that "(...) development has

become outdated” and that “It is time to dismantle this mental structure”, he also suggested that “The authors of this book consciously bid farewell to the defunct idea in order to clear our minds for fresh discoveries” (Sachs 2010[1992]:XV). It is within the framework of these “fresh discoveries” I have chosen to ground this research project.

3. Literature Review and a Short Historical Background

In this chapter I will present a short literature review of previous research in the field of development in Tibet, followed by an historic outline of the main evolvments of the development processes in the region.

As the skilful, well-researched and nuanced analysis by John Powers (2004) clearly argues, the existing research on the historical developments of the Sino-Tibetan relation is characterized by highly disputed interpretations, views and arguments. Much of the research tend to be based on politically biased, emotionally charged and poorly referenced claims, statements and assumptions (Powers 2004). Others again, show how it in many cases can be challenging to do research on matters related to Tibet, among other things because the use of official Chinese statistics related to Tibet, tends to be problematic, incomplete and even misleading (Dreyer in Sautman and Dreyer 2006, Fisher 2005).

At the same time, much of the research coming from Tibetan Dharamsala-based organizations or the Tibetan exile government also tends to be rather uniform in their understandings and analyses, to the extent that we can talk about a ‘Dharamsala consensus’. Sautman and Dreyer go as far as stating that “[v]irtually every aspect of state-society interaction in Tibet has been contested by the principal parties – the Tibetan exiles led by the Dalai Lama and the PRC government led by the Chinese Communist Party, CCP” (in Sautman and Dreyer 2006:3). Due to the severe restrictions of civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression and assembly, Tibetans inside of Tibet, on the other hand, have little or no political ‘voice’ of their own.

However, the two sides differ in radical ways for whereas the PRC operates within an authoritarian communist dictatorship, which, as is confirmed by various independent human rights groups, does not legally permit dissenting or independent opinions, or published material on political or historical matters: the same cannot be said about the Tibetan community in exile.

The CCP sees itself as to have saved the Tibetans from a barbaric and medieval society lead by the Dalai Lama together with a small, privileged monastic aristocracy, Tibetans themselves sees the Chinese entrance into their land as a brutal, military invasion (CCP 2011, CTA 2012, Web). Independent researchers, on the other hand, struggle to avoid what can be seen as politicized language in their descriptions of the evolvments in the Sino-Tibetan history, in many cases by using attempted neutral expression like ‘the entrance of Chinese troops’.

This chapter does not seek to give a comprehensive presentation of the extremely complex and problematic scholarly debate on the historic evolvments of the Sino-Tibetan relation; conflict; or claims over territory. On the contrary, my hope is to reach a broader understanding of how the historic development processes in Tibet under the CCP rule.

This chapter will be divided in two distinct sub-chapters. The first component will present a short literature review on the existing trends in the literature, directly related to the development processes in Tibet in particular. Doing that, my aim is not to provide an absolute and comprehensive presentation of all relevant literature on the topic. That would clearly be a far too pretentious task for such a small research project like this. I will then present a short historic background, outlining the main evolvments in the Tibetan development processes under the PRC.

3.1 Literature Review:

With few exceptions, the majority of the country's ethnic minorities lives in the underdeveloped western regions. The wealthier eastern states near the coast, on the other hand, are predominantly inhabited by the ethnic majority groups, Han-Chinese and the Hui-Muslims. Despite this empiric reality, limited research has addressed the Chinese development policies out from an ethnic minority perspective in particular. One reason for this limitation, I argue, could be due to the deficits characterizing the available statistics on the Chinese development and economic status, currently failing to include provincial differences within the larger geographical regions within the PRC. As a means of measuring levels of development, such statistics fails to divide each researched unit according to ethnic lines. Therefore, potential inter-regional ethnic patterns of racial favoring, tendencies or even discrimination, remain unrevealed. This deficit is peculiar considering the notorious reputation that the PRC has when it comes precisely to the treatment of its many minority groups, known for being discriminatory in a variety of areas (Amnesty International 2012). This critique has been made particularly explicit when it comes to the Uighurs, the Mongols and the Tibetans (Amnesty International 2012).

Where academic research fails to analyze the Chinese development inequities out from an explicit minority perspective, independent human rights reports might naturally fill in the gap. An independent report commissioned by the two international human rights NGOs, the Minority Rights Group International and the Human Rights in China, addresses precisely the overall situation for the country's minority population, making explicit references to the Chinese development policies (MRG and HRIC 2007). The report suggests that the policies

are leading to “[i]nequitable and discriminatory development” (MRG and HRIC 2007:2). Furthermore, the report also argues that

“China’s rapid economic transformation has not improved the lives of ethnic minorities overall. Instead, there continue to be sharp inequalities in basic social services, such as education and health, while income and unemployment comparisons show that persons belonging to ethnic groups fall behind national averages and those for Han Chinese. The costs of inequitable development are high for those living in rural areas, and political exclusion from the process means that solutions are not necessarily made in the best interest of local ethnic minorities. The Western Development Strategy (WDS), targeting the western provinces and autonomous regions, is intended to ‘modernize’ these areas and narrow the development gap between the interior and the wealthier coastal provinces. Given the potential for discontent in such inequitable situations, however, the WDS is widely seen as a political tool for strengthening national unity through ‘common prosperity’. Its official development goals are undermined by three unspoken but overarching objectives—resource extraction from the borderlands to benefit the coast, assimilation of local ethnic minority groups through Han Chinese population transfers to the autonomous areas, and the alternate purpose of infrastructure development for military use. These policies and the failure of the government to address the resulting inequalities and discrimination contribute to the violations of human rights for ethnic minorities” (MRG and HRIC 2007:2).

However, Cao (2009) and his edition “Ethnic Minorities and Regional Development in Asia”, seems to be the only more substantial academic exemption with the attempt of analysing development efforts in a particular minority perspective, however with an emphasis on Asia at large. His work offers a useful collection of high-quality scholarly articles of which the majority are addressing the development processes in some of China’s Western minority regions, amongst others, Tibet. However, the work does not offer a comprehensive ethnic analysis of the overall development status and process imposed by the CCP at large, and is for the most based on single case studies. Unlike most other literature on the effects of the Open Up the West Campaign, he applies primarily social and ethnic approaches to the Chinese development of the western regions and goes far in criticising the empirical outcome of these policies on the ground. His critique indicates a failure in the Chinese development policies of reaching a more equal society. A similarly critical suggestion is confirmed by the most recent UNDP China report, arguing that the Chinese

“[...] policy efforts have not narrowed the gap between the eastern and the western provinces. Poor communities left untouched by economic growth are now widely dispersed across China, particularly in the western regions of the country” (UNDP 2010:2).

As a means to cope with the growing disparities in the levels of development between the eastern regions and the western, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched the Open Up the West Campaign in the year of 1999. This campaign affected the TAR and other Tibetan inhabited areas, as well as other western provinces within the PRC.

An increasing amount of academic literature has emerged on the Open Up the West Campaign. Goodman's *China's Campaign to "Open Up the West"* consist of a number of high-quality academic articles that addresses different aspects of China's Western development, largely from local perspectives, and grounded on solid empirical fieldworks (Goodman 2004). Lu and Neilson's *China's West Region Development: Domestic Strategies and Global Implications* provides a series of articles presented at a Canadian conference in 2003 written by the World's most leading scholars, development practitioners and governmental officials working on the topic in and outside of China (Lu and Neilson 2004). The work *Developing China's West: Critical Path to Balanced National Development* by Yeung and Shen (2004), published on the Chinese University Press, on the other hand, provides perhaps a less nuanced or diverse collection of articles on the topic, but may nevertheless serve as a useful account reflecting the more mainstream, official Chinese understandings of the development processes in the Western regions.

The current development status of the TAR and other Tibetan areas must be seen in relation to the overall Open Up the West Campaign in China. However, few comprehensive studies have been done on the overall development processes in Tibet and Tibetan areas in particular. One attempt have been the edition *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region* edited by Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer (2004), which covers aspects of the economic transitions in the region, as well as other related issues, both in Tibet and in the Tibetan exile community in Dharamsala. However, this volume fails to include narratives of Tibetans who have experienced the Chinese development processes themselves, and largely applies a macro-political perspective in their analyses.

Among researchers dealing particularly with the economic aspects of development in Tibet and how it relates to the Chinese economic development processes at large, economist Andrew Fischer is perhaps the most well-known and influential scholar (Fischer 2012, Fischer 2008, Fischer 2009, Fischer 2010, Fischer 2002). For instance in his work, *Poverty by*

Design: The Economics of Discrimination in Tibet”, he presents a useful critique of how he sees the economic programs in China to have led to increased marginalization of Tibetans, despite its promises of the opposite (Fischer 2002). Furthermore, he argues that the PRC are using their promises of development in Tibet as a means to justify their human rights violations, rather than to improve the well-being of Tibetans (ibid.).

A more recent work on development in Tibet is “*Development Transitions: Land, Labor and Social Policy in Tibet*”, edited by the leading Tibet scholars Kenneth Bauer, Andrew Fisher, Geoff Childs and Sienna Craig (2012), a collection of some of the most up-to-date research related to development in Tibet, including for instance how the socioeconomic changes over time affects the Tibetan nomadic practices.

Despite the usefulness and high quality of most of the above mentioned contributions to the existing literature, there has not been done any study on the overall Chinese development processes in Tibet out from an elaborate and multidimensional power, or post-development perspective. Although Norwegian-Tibetan scholar Tashi Nyima (2010, 2010, 2, 2009) clearly applies a strong emphasis on *discourse* when analysing the development processes in Tibet, his research fails to apply a broader and more comprehensive post-development theoretical critique in his works. Furthermore, Goodman’s article “*The Politics of the West: Equality, Nation-Building and Colonisation*”, appears to be the only existing work that resembles the critical tradition of the post-development school of thought to the extent that he uses the word ‘colonisation’ when describing the development in the minority areas in the West, Tibet included (Goodman 2003, Goodman 2004).

3.2 Development in Tibet under the PRC: A Historical Background

“Tibetans have walked out of an old life which was dark, backward, uncivilized, poor and closed, into a new life which is bright, modern, civilized, economically prosperous and open, resulting in earthshaking progress”.

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CCP, Web)

The first stage of development in Tibet under the PRC is commonly seen to have begun with the entrance of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) forces into Tibet in 1950, with what the CCP terms ‘the peaceful liberation of Tibet’ (Dreyer 2004). The desire to push forth development appears to have played a central role in the rhetoric’s the PLA applied for legitimizing their entering to the region. Thus, the CCP, in their anniversary report, describes

this historic event as ”(...)an epoch-making turning point in the social development history of Tibet, and a milestone marking the commencement of Tibet's progress from a dark and backward society to a bright and advanced future” (CCP 2011). However, this approach to social change was not unique for Tibet. Mao Zedong applied a strategy which embraced modernity and dismissed tradition in his overall political work within the borders of the PRC.

As the introductory quote above indicates, the Chinese official interpretation of its involvement in Tibet tend to be grounded on an attitude that sees the ethnic Tibetans as socially and culturally backwards, simple and uncivilized. What appears to be an assumed inferiority of Tibetans and the traditional pre-Chinese Tibet is commonly contrasted with an image that praises what is seen as ethnically Chinese: the ‘modern’, the ‘scientific’ and the ‘developed’. Furthermore, the promise of developing Tibet as a reason for invading it appears, when looking at the Chinese Communist Party’s official reports: to have been accomplished with outstanding results. A recent report celebrating the Chinese presence in Tibet since the signing of the historic 17-point agreement in 1952 after the invasion of the PLA troops, states that the CCP involvements in Tibet from then until today has:

“(...)promoted economic, social and cultural development, created a new social atmosphere of modern civilization and progress, produced a far-reaching influence among people of all walks of life in Tibet, ended the long-term isolation and stagnation of Tibetan society, paved the way for Tibet's march toward a modern society, opened up wide prospects for Tibet's further development and provided necessary conditions for the common progress of Tibet and the nation as a whole.” (CCP 2011:14)

Regardless of how the CCP’s involvements in Tibet since 1950 should and could be evaluated from normative, positivist or post-development approaches, little doubt remains as to whether or not there appear to be a direct connection between a Chinese promise of ‘development’ in Tibet and the Sino-Tibetan conflict over territory. The initial phase of Tibetan development under the PRC was characterized not only by militarization, but also of a massive investment of road and infrastructure construction (Dreyer 2004).

The second stage of development in Tibet can be seen as to have begun with the defeat of the Tibetan army in 1959, when roughly 80 000 Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, fled to India. The PLA’s successive policies of the “democratic reforms” were introduced, and led amongst other things to a massive increase in the production “of virtually all goods” (Dreyer in Sautman and Dreyer 2004:131). Despite this, the Tibetan economy continued to rest upon

animal husbandry and agriculture, as it had done before the PLA entered Tibet ten years earlier.

The “communes” was introduced in China as early as in 1959, but in Tibet they are estimated to have been introduced as late as in 1965. As elsewhere in China, the communes led to massive redistribution of private property from rich individuals, monasteries and institutions to poor workers. Types of property which was redistributed was for instance land, livestock, animals, and personal items like wristwatches, jewelry and cooking pots (Dreyer 2004). By 1975, official Chinese figures estimate that the communes existed in as much as 93% of the Tibetan townships. However, the communes in Tibetan areas differed greatly from the ones introduced in China in 1950, amongst other things because the Tibetans were nomadic tent-dwellers scattered over huge geographical areas, thus each commune became smaller. Shortly after the communes had been introduced in large parts of Tibet, crop diversification was enforced. Chinese scientists visited the Tibetan plateau to see which crops and animals would survive the high altitude. Thus, hog raising was enforced in Tibetan communes in contrast to sheep and yak which had been the Tibetan traditional animal raising for decades. Winter wheat was replaced by the traditional Tibetan barley wheat. And a variety of fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers, apples, peach and pears were introduced, though in small-scale production. In this period livestock and wheat production massively increased, which by 1979 had led to an ecological and economic disaster, leading to widespread hunger in the Tibetan Plateau, to the extent to which Han-Chinese officials considered nonessential were evacuated from the region by helicopters to mainland China (Dreyer 2004:132). Finally, the commune system in Tibet as in the rest of the PRC was rendered a failure, and was abandoned. With a leader shift in the Communist Party, a major conference held in Lhasa addressing the urgent crisis in Tibet, resulting from the previous failed policies, Ying promised a total eradication of poverty in Tibet by two-three years and a massive effort of improving the development. The state began to subsidize agriculture and animal husbandry. By 1984, despite the reforms, the economic indicators in Tibet had dropped. Thus, the practice of agricultural, pastoral, and industrial tax exemption was extended, animals were returned to private husbandry and wheat production was returned to barley, and there were no more experiments with Hogs. Tourism was encouraged, and people were granted larger freedoms as to how and what they wanted to cultivate.

In 1986, the Chinese military in the region had to grow their own vegetables, and heavy state subsidies were poured into Tibet, exceeding the total agricultural and industrial

output in the region. For years there was a negative multiplier effect on investment in Tibet, which amongst other things was due to the fact that large parts of the subsidies were spent on covering the costs of the excessive administrative superstructure, as well as massive subsidies to Han-workers willing to come to work in Tibet. “A vicious cycle had developed in which Tibet was becoming more, not less, dependent on central government outlays, rather than using them to develop internal productive forces” (Dreyer 2004:135). The promotion of tourism, in combination with the tax-exemptions operations in TAR, lead to a large influx of Han-Chinese immigrants wanting to set up businesses in TAR, finally outnumbering Tibetans in Lhasa and other large, urban cities, and enraging the local Tibetan population.

In 1987, for the first time since the historic uprising in 1959, Tibetans in Lhasa burst out in wide-spread, large-scale popular rebellion against the Chinese rule (Goldstein, Child and Wangdui 2010). In 1989 the uprisings intensified, leading to a declaration of martial law. This severely reduced tourism in the region. However, it was out of the question for the Chinese Communist Party to give in for the demands of the Tibetan protesters. Chocked by the overt political discontent and anger against the Chinese rule among Tibetans, and fearing further rebellion in the region, the Chinese Communist Party was thus forced to rethink their current political strategy in Tibet (Goldstein, Child and Wangdui 2010).

The eastern coastal regions of the country, mainly inhabited by the Chinese ethnic majority groups Han and Hui, had for decades been favored in terms of economic investments, development projects and governmental subsidizes. Thus, at times of the uprisings in Lhasa of 1987, the western regions, including TAR and the other Tibetan inhabited areas, had for long suffered from extreme poverty, economic and social marginalization. Most of the Chinese eastern provinces, on the other hand, were benefitting from growth, opportunities and relative prosperity. As an attempt to defuse the “(...)political tensions among the ethnic minority inhabitants of the nation’s western regions”, the next Five-Year Plans of the CCP therefore aimed at smoothening up the economic inequalities in China through large-scale investments in development projects, first and foremost on China’s western provinces (Goldstein, Child and Wangdui 2010:58).

However, the trickle-down-effect was largely taken for granted, assuming that where the overall Chinese development would improve, rural Tibetans in TAR and Tibetan inhabited areas in Kham and Amdo would gradually benefit. However, few direct steps were taken with that regards. In the 9th Five-Year Plan (1996-2000) and the 10th Five-year Plan (2001-2005), the central government therefore initiated wide spread political efforts to get the west on track

economically by what came to be known as *the Open Up the West Campaign*, officially launched with the 10th Five-Year Plan. However, both Plans had a great emphasis on infrastructure construction and GDP growth. For instance, in the latter Plan, the CCP invested as much as 31,2 billion yuan in 117 development projects aiming to enhance development and infrastructure in the TAR.

The 11th Five-Year Plan (2005-2011) launched the People's First approach, aiming at improving the living conditions of rural Tibetans on more individual levels. The Plan promised an economic development spending on Tibet exceeding 100 billion yuan, more than the double of what was spent in the previous Plan. This included 180 development projects of which 33 were listed as People's First projects aiming directly at enhancing the living conditions of poor Tibetan farmers and herders. 21, 9 billion yuan was ear marked for these projects, which, according to Fischer (2012) equals 10 200 yuan per rural Tibetan and 55 000 yuan per rural household. In the center of the new approach was the Comfortable Housing Program (CHP), discussed and presented in detail later in this thesis.

The 12th Five-Year Plan launched in 2011 promised large efforts to strengthen the economies and furthering development of the underdeveloped Western Regions, Tibet and Tibetan inhabited areas included (Gu 2012). The CCPs plan, covering Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Chongqing, Shaanxi, Guizhu and Yunnan, has a major emphasis on strengthening the economic growth in the region, infrastructure construction including highways and railroads, improving the public services, develop and strengthen the local industries, improve people's living standards, reforming and liberalize the region and improve the ecological environment.

Chinese officials continue to praise the CCP for its achievements in the region regarding modernization processes, human development and economic growth, frequently underpinned by official development statistics, numbers and figures. For instance, as quoted in People's Daily, a party-run online newspaper in English, the former China Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Jiang Yu, expressed already in 2008 that the development in the Tibetan Autonomous Regions was "better than ever", and went as far as to say that the government was "mobilizing the whole nation to help the development of Tibet" (People's Daily 2008, 2).

4. Analysis of Empirical Findings and Discussion:

Entanglements of Power, Indigenous Skepticism, and Limited Popular Support of the Chinese Development Policies in Tibet

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from my qualitative interviews with recent Tibetan arrivals in Dharamsala. To repeat, aim is to answer the following research questions: 1) to which extent, and in which ways, could the practical undertaking of Chinese development policies in Tibet be seen as entailing exercises of different kinds of ‘power’, and 2) to which extent have the Chinese development processes in Tibet succeeded in gaining popular support amongst local Tibetans?

Due to the practical purpose of clarity, I have chosen to divide my findings in to different sub-topics that evolved through my interviews. These are 1) the Comfortable Housing Program, 2) access to education and its connections to assimilation, 3) road infrastructure construction, and 4) political repression.

4.1 The Comfortable Housing Program (CHP)

One of the most common topics that naturally evolved during my interviews with the Tibetan arrivals was the CCP's project of providing safe, modern housing to Tibetans in Tibet as an expressed measure to increase people's living standards through the program known as the 'Comfortable Housing Program' (CHP).

The CHP was launched by the CCP in 2006 in the 11th Five-Year Plan, with an initial goal of providing safe, modern houses for 1,2 million farmers and herdsmen in Tibet (People's Daily 2008, 1). This equals about 230 000 Tibetan families, or roughly 80% of TARs total demographic area of poor housing facilities (People's Daily 2008, 1). However, as this goal was achieved one year ahead of schedule, the project was later expanded upon and furthered in the 12th Five-Year Plan (Xinhuanet 2010). Generally, the current plan has a strong focus on what is termed "a scientific outlook on development" (CCP 2011, chapter 2). This includes amongst other things a strong emphasizing on modernization processes, efforts aimed at balancing the urban and the rural development, economic growth and improvements of the industrial sector (CCP 2011, chapter 2). The plan states that "[t]he inevitable way to promote scientific development is to maintain the cardinal line of speeding up the transformation of economic development (...)" (CCP 2011, chapter 2).

Except from two young women ("Tsendue", Interview 17, and "Norbu", Interview 18) from extremely rural and isolated villages in Kham and Amdo, all of my interviewees were well aware of the practice of house construction as a form of development project. This was the case to the extent that the majority either had direct experiences with such projects themselves, or was familiar with the program through relatives, neighbors or friends who themselves had such direct experiences.

4.1.2 Case 1) The CHP as a Political Strategy of Gaining Outside Recognition

In many interviews the CHP came up when discussing the Chinese development processes in Tibet at large. Interestingly, the vast majority of the informants stated that they viewed the Chinese development efforts in Tibet as a political strategy for the CCP to improve its reputation to the outside world; to tourists and other visitors: rather than to benefit Tibetans. In various interviews, my informants exemplified and explained this perception by telling stories of their practical experiences with how the housing policies were implemented. The term "show off", or equivalent expressions, were frequent characteristics utilized when expressing their feelings about the program, and about the development policies launched by the CCP at large. Therefore, I will start out this chapter with discussing the various

dimensions and aspects of the perception of the CHP as a strategy of gaining outside recognition for the CCP.

The first informant I will introduce here is “Tenzin”. He is an uneducated, nomadic man of 23 years old, from a small village in eastern Tibet, Kham, who had only spent a few days in India when we did the interview. The first quote is his answer when I asked him how he felt about China having made Tibet more modern and developed, for instance through the construction of modern housing. I argue that his answers could be seen as a clear and eloquent illustration of what appears to be a common attitude towards the project among my overall group of informants:

“In my view, the Chinese have made such policies that on the outside of the road, people are required to build the house in a way that makes them look very posh and very nice. Even if you cannot afford to build the whole house: the part that is visible to the road must be very beautiful and posh. And on the backside, which is not equally visible from the outside, it does not matter if it is made so that it is functional at all. In my experience, the Chinese used to pay some money to the rich Tibetans who could afford building very nice and beautiful houses, so that they would be willing to build their houses at the corner of the big roads. That is because the corner houses are more visible from the roads outside with the cars and the traffic. On the other hand, the people who are very poor, for instance in the rural areas, the government do very little to help them”. (“Tenzin”, Interview 5).

A similar point was explicitly made by “Tsewang”, a 35 year old woman who originally comes from Kandze, Eastern Tibet, but who lived the last 16 years in Lhasa, TAR:

“In Lhasa, on the outside, the Chinese are trying to make everything look nice and good, you know. But the thing is... below the surface the situation is very bad, and the Chinese are not doing good things. [...]They renew old and ugly houses on the outside, making them appear... modern... but inside of the houses, nothing is done! They care very much about letting the streets looking clean for the outside public. As a matter of fact, beggars were thrown out of the city center in Lhasa when the government opened up for tourists! I guess they didn't wanna make people think the

beggars existed. Yes, on the outside they want things to look normal and nice. But the real situation is actually rather different.” (“Tsewang”, Interview Nr.1).

It is not clear from the quotes above in which ways they believe it would be in the interests of the CCP to present a more beautiful material façade in Tibet when “the real situation is actually rather different” (“Tsewang”, Interview Nr. 1). Neither do we know anything about the scope and frequency behind such practices of implementation. However, a report launched by the Human Rights Watch in 2006, which is dealing particularly with the resettling strategies imposed by the CCP aimed at moving Tibetan nomads into modern housing as a part of the CHP: to some extent confirms the existence of what appears to be a tendency among the CCP to put a great emphasis on outer recognition for their work:

“(T)he actual beneficiaries have not been poor families but the moderately well-off, whose moves into such housing have been extensively filmed and shown on television, apparently to give an impression of government largesse and new regional prosperity. In several reported cases, land vacated by relocated villagers is now being used for mining or other infrastructure projects” (HRW 2006, Web).

What seems to be more clear is that to build houses with limited functionality, or to aid already rich middle-class families in their pursuit of a new house, regardless of its scope and frequency appear paradoxical, assuming that the actual motivation for implementation of the policy is to improve the well-being of Tibetan households defined as poor and in need. If improving the well-being of such households would be the aim, we can assume that the actual *functionality* of these houses would be given priority instead of their *visual appearance*. Furthermore, if aiding poor Tibetan families to get safer shelters to live in, it does not seem like the logic choice of recipient group would be the rich Tibetans, living near high roads, and with enough cash to build a beautiful house to begin with.

One could of course also argue that it might be nothing but a peculiar coincidence that two of my twenty informants, independently of each other, and from different geographical regions in Tibet, pointed at a similar practice of building good-looking houses which are dysfunctional on the inside. However, another informant, “Lobsang”, a nomadic man with personal experiences of the CHP from a rural village in Kham, stated:

“They [the Chinese officials] promised that the houses would be very good and that there would be electricity all year around. However, when the houses were done, they

[the Chinese] only put on the electricity when a Chinese official would come for a visit, and the houses were not at all good. There's a lack of electricity, you see. [...] The Chinese are reporting out to the World about their huge developments in Tibet, but that's words, words, words, too many words!" ("Lobsang" Interview Nr.14)

However, if we put these empirical findings in connection to previous literature: I argue that the experiences of “Tenzin”, “Tsewang” and “Lobsang” above might lead us to new dimensions of insights into the research topic of this thesis.

In their article, Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui (2010) present what appears to be a convincing scholarly piece of academic research, which at the same time indicates the great success of the CHP project in Tibet in particular, and the People-First development strategy in general. Although their study did not deal with nomadic Tibetan communities, but with farmers, I argue that useful insights could be drawn from an analysis which includes their work. Through a prolonged fieldwork over an extended period of time, they investigate into the implementation of the CHP and another People-First development project in three different Tibetan villages. In their methodological section, they state that:

“There were no restrictions on our access to the villagers. We were free to meet with them without needing permission, and the villagers could also come freely to visit us. In addition to interviews, the project conducted demographic and socio-economic surveys of all households in the three villages” (Goldstein, Childs, Wangdui 2010: 62).

In the concluding remarks of their work, they state that their “(...) findings indicate that that the rhetoric of senior Chinese and Tibetan officials regarding the social development of rural Tibet has been actively pursued” (Goldstein, Childs, Wangdui 2010:72). According to their research, limited problematic aspects were seen as involved in the implementation process of the program in the villages subjected to their study. Rather, the project appeared to have had a remarkable beneficial effect on the Tibetan community, who according to the researchers, was eager to take use of the new financial opportunities of direct subsidies earmarked for house construction that the new program implied.

The only exception seems to be that they point out the existence of a local resentment to the Chinese requirements of building their new houses near the high roads. According to their research the Tibetans saw this requirement as practically inconvenient and incomprehensible. Out from a post-development perspective as discussed in Chapter 2, one could of course criticize such a practice amongst other things for apparently not taking local

interests sufficiently into account, by not giving the recipients a choice as to whether or not to leave their land and move into houses near the high roads. Since we here are talking about a nomadic people, with strong connection to the land and to the nature, I argue that it appears highly understandable that the recipients demonstrated various degrees of skepticism in moving further away from a rural periphery to a high way. However, as the article by Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui did not aim at applying a particular post-development approach to their empirical study, unlike my research project, one could argue that their work could hardly be criticized for not sufficiently problematizing that aspect.

However, what arguably could be criticized, regardless of chosen theoretical perspective applied, is that the researchers uncritically assume that the requirements of building the houses near the high ways were imposed by the CCP in order “[...]to improve communication and facilitate the implementation of social programs”. (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui 2010:66). In that way, the requirement is, despite its local resentment, assumed to be driven by a well-intended aim of facilitating social programs from the side of the CCP. This suggestion could of course hold some empirical validity. However, in light of the perception revealed through my interviews with informants like “Tashi”, “Lobsang” and “Tsewang” quoted above, the underlying reasons for imposing this requirement upon the Tibetan recipient could, might as well, be seen as a strategy to increase the visibility of the work by the CCP to outsiders. That possibility is ignored in their research.

As this discussion will highlight, there also appears to exist many good political reasons for China to present an outside image of growth and prosperity in Tibet, regardless of its actual effects and functionality on the ground. I argue therefore that Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui fail to critically discuss aspects which appear to be of high relevance for their analysis, arguably indicating a deficit in their otherwise well-researched empirical and theoretical work. I will explain.

Interestingly, they do for instance at the same time argue that the CHP and the People-First development approach could be seen as an “(...) economic strategy (which) also allows China to respond to international criticism by showing that living conditions in Tibet are good and improving” (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui (2010:57). Out from this line of argumentation it appears clear that the researchers here assume, without any form of problematization, that the PRC’s ‘economic strategy’ as they call it, is undertaken in a way which actually is in the intended interest of local Tibetans. I am of course not indicating here that the optimistic finding of the CHP of their research necessarily must be invalid or based on an ideological bias in favor of the CCP general insolvents in Tibet, economically speaking

or in general terms. However, what I find interesting here is that the authors, which by the Chinese authorities were granted a completely undisturbed and unlimited access to gather information at all levels of the organizational structure of three Tibetan villagers, on a politically charged issue like the internationally criticized development policies – ends up with a research result with strongly contradicts the findings of reports launched for instance by international human rights organizations. I argue that from a critical point of departure, is therefore becomes of relevance to take into consideration what a particularly optimistic study on the CHP in Tibet could entail for the reputation of the PRC, and analyze that in relations to their apparently completely limitation-less access to the research site. The Human Rights Watch argues:

“Chinese security forces maintain a heavy presence and the authorities continue to tightly restrict access and travel to Tibetan areas, particularly for journalists and foreign visitors. Tibetans suspected of being critical of political, religious, cultural, or economic state policies are targeted on charges of “separatism.” (HRW 2012, Web).

If Tibetans risk to be charged with accusations of “separatism” for doing something as apparently harmless as criticizing “economic state policies” as the above quote by the HRW indicates, why was this practical possibility not critically addressed, or even mentioned, in Goldstein, Childs and Wangdai’s article? In the lights of the human rights criticism of what appears to be extreme limitations in the freedom of speech and expression, what is the guarantee that their informants have not been influenced in their answers by a fear of political repression? However, one could perhaps counter this critique for instance by saying that if we as researchers must be that careful when taking use of the empirical findings driven from our qualitative fieldworks from within Tibet itself, one could argue that such empirical research in general would be of limited scientific value. And what kind of pragmatic utility would such a dismissal of all empiric research based on grassroots level fieldwork entail? I argue that doing qualitative fieldworks inside of Tibet – a disputed territory to begin with, and subjected to widespread international criticism – on topics that additionally could be perceived as politically charged themselves: necessarily would be methodologically challenging and problematic if a sufficiently critical attitude is not applied. This is not to say that I think we should reject all empiric or theoretical validity of their work altogether. Their direct observation of house providing, for instance, is a clear methodological strength of their work. That does not, however, diminish or erase the potential validity of my above criticism.

At the same time Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui admits, as the quote above suggest, that an ‘economic strategy’ that benefits Tibetans could be used as a strategy by the PRC to ‘respond to’ international “criticism”. What kind of ‘criticism’ they here are referring to remains unclear. They also admits that if it was so that the PRC’s ‘economic strategy’ and the CHP did not really benefit Tibetans, but rather, had a worsening effect on the living conditions for local people as they show the HRW (2006) amongst other things argues, the

“CHP is likely to be intensifying anti-government sentiment. The consequences of China’s 11th Five-Year Plan on rural Tibet are important, therefore, not just for an understanding of how economic change and modernization are proceeding in rural Tibet, but also for the broader Sino–Tibetan political issue” (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui 2010:61)

In that way, they do not seem to be unfamiliar with the thought that the Chinese development processes in Tibet and the CHP could be seen as a politicized issue to begin with and thus also relevant for the Sino-Tibetan conflict over territory in a more general way. It should also be mentioned that Goldstein and Childs both speaks fluent Tibetan, and has spent substantial amounts of time in Tibetan areas. Furthermore, as Powers (2004) suggested in the introductory section of chapter three, there appears to be little ambiguity as to whether or not the Sino-Tibetan conflict should be seen as a highly sensitive, controversial and disputed political issue. Despite this awareness, the researchers fail to critically consider the possibility that there might not have been a coincidence that no restrictions by the Chinese authorities was imposed on them while doing research in a particular research site, which happened to end up with a highly optimistic analysis of the PRC’s development efforts in Tibet, to an extent that it almost could have been utilized as a commercial of success for their policies.

While putting Michel Foucault’s ideas on discursive power in relation to the post-development logic, this thesis clearly demonstrated how the western idea of modernization, industrialization, economic growth – the traditional, mainstream view of ‘development’ – could be seen as a ‘developmental discourse of truth’. The ‘unquestioned desirability’ of ‘development’ would according to this view be seen as taken for granted. As a result, independent criticism of projects and processes of political change that would go under the branch of ‘development’ becomes severely restricted, as the discursive power operates in a way of blurring our view as it affects our mere way of thinking and seeing the world, its functions and its peoples. Furthermore, as the discussion in Chapter 2 suggest, ‘development’ could be seen as a highly political and normative matter, which I argue, appears to be perhaps

even clearer in the context of Tibet – a disputed territory full of valuable natural resources, and imbedded with minority-related rights-issues, and radically differing historical interpretations (Powers 2004).

Furthermore, while Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui (2010) as mentioned does not indicate precisely which kind of ‘criticism’ they refer to, Fischer (2001) takes on a far bolder position, arguing that the CCP “expects the international community to tolerate human rights abuses as an expedient element of their beneficial economic strategies” (Fischer 2002:6). In the light of Fischer’s boldness, the apparently value-neutral choice of the word ‘allows’ combined with their vague and inexplicit use of the general word ‘criticism’, makes the statement by Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui above to appear more like a convenient euphemism.

I do of course not suggest here that I think it appears likely that Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui coincidentally are trying to manipulate the reader to obtain a more optimistic image of the PRC’s work than what is actually the case. Such a suggestion would be absurd and ungrounded considering the well-referenced, nuanced and otherwise methodologically thorough quality that characterizes their work. And furthermore, what would be in their interest to portray the CCP in a better light than what the empirical reality would suggest? What I do argue, is that their research appears to apply an approach which does not appear to be sufficiently conflict-sensitive and self-critical. Furthermore, by not taking into account the human rights situation in Tibet, with leading international human rights organizations standing firm in their suggestion year after year that freedom of speech in Tibet is extremely restricted and that Tibetans thus face the possibility of being charged with “separatism” if revealing themselves as generally critical even to matters related to economic policies: they demonstrate what appears to be a limited interest in the potential effects of human rights violations on development processes on the ground. This is interesting, considering that the UN as early as in 2003 attempted to mainstream the Human Rights Based Approach to development practices (UN 2003). Out from my general research of previous literature on development processes in Tibet, my overall impression is that this appears to be a general tendency in much scholarship on development in Tibet under the PRC. The human rights situation in the region is simply not taken into account to any substantial extent as an aspect of the overall analyses, thus presuming that ‘development’ adequately could be seen in an almost complete isolation to the general human rights violations in the region. My findings in this research indicate that this becomes an insufficient and inadequate port of departure.

Unlike Fischer (2002) who sees the development efforts in Tibet as a mean to justify human rights abuses, possibly explaining the apparent paradox in implementing what appears to be a highly ineffective development practice, Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui furthermore argue that the CCP's emphasis of enhancing the material conditions in Tibet could be seen as a means to decrease the Tibetan political discontent towards the PRC's unwillingness to grant a greater autonomy to Tibet (2010). But whereas Fischer sees the practice as an attempt to seduce the outside world so that they to a larger extent could see through the fingers of China's human rights violations, Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui thereby sees the practice as an attempt to seduce the Tibetans to refrain from potential political dissent. They see:

“[...]modernization and economic development in Tibet as a means of linking Tibet inextricably with the rest of China, while also inculcating loyalty by showing Tibetans that being part of the PRC is in their short- and long-term material interests. (2010:57)

American researcher Barry Sautman, with a base in Hong Kong, and which in some of his works consequently refer to the Tibetan exiles as a “Tibetan émigré”, argues that “(...)PRC officials contended that the exile cause will recede when the Dalai Lama passes on and development transforms Tibetan society (Sautman 2004 is Sautman and Dreyer 2004:4, Sautman in Sautman and Dreyer 2004:230).

Interestingly, the PRC itself appears to pull a direct connection between improved material conditions and improvements in their human rights accords. The recent White Paper on human rights launched by the PRC deals for instance with “China's progress in protecting human rights through improving people's livelihood” and argues that “Development is the key to solving all existing problems and facilitating progress of human rights in China” (People's Daily 2013). The PRC thus seems to assume a direct connection between improvements in what it sees as ‘development’ and what it sees as ‘human rights’. I argue that this logic might be discursively connected to the ongoing debate within the field of human rights on ‘the right to development’. My informant, “Tenzin”, on the other hand, appears to apply a fundamentally different understanding and definition of ‘human rights’ and what it would mean in practice:

“It seems like to me that the Chinese give the aid to Tibetans because Tibetans and others then should praise them. But I think that human rights are very important. For instance, I think it is much better to have the freedom to participate in the monastic

institutions, for those who want that, and also the opportunities to take modern education and go to school being thought in the Tibetan language.” (“Tenzin”, Interview 5)

Whereas the above discussion still does not necessarily fulfill the complete purpose of explaining the paradox of what appears to be a superficial and inefficient practice of implementing the CHP project in practice according to the experience of “Tenzin” and “Tsewang”, it nevertheless appears to confirm the validity of the position held by Bauer, Childs, Craig and Fischer (2010) suggesting that “(...) development in Tibetan areas is inherently political”, and that “(...) development in Tibetan areas is fraught with a host of unintended or unanticipated consequences (2010:7).

The Human Rights Watch (2006, Web) strongly criticize the practice of how the CHP with regards to Tibetan nomads in particular. That is because the program according to their research sometimes is implemented by Chinese officials who tend to use force, rendering the Tibetan nomadic recipients no choice but to accept to move into the new housing facilities in the first place, even if it goes against their will. According to the HRW, the houses are furthermore often smaller than the original houses, and based on strict regulations, which amongst other things disable the recipients to build courtyards. This, in turn, forces herders and farmers to sell off their animal stocks. Such an implementation practice, the report argues, thereby render many Tibetan nomadic recipients in a worse economic condition than before, as an important part of their livelihood thus is taken away from them. Although the practical implementation of the CHP might have changed to some extent since the HRW report was written (2006), in the light of the findings of my empirical interviews, I still believe its insights appear to be of empiric validity. It should furthermore be pointed out that the situation as a nomad makes the potential issues of the CHP different than for what would be the case for ordinary Tibetan farmers. That is amongst other things because the farmers are settled in fixed houses to begin with, whereas the nomads are not. Thus, potential issues of assimilation, tradition and cultural identity would not necessarily be valid to the same extent in the case of the Tibetan farmers. Regardless of this crucial distinction, this is a part of a narrative of “Lobsang” and his experiences with the CHP:

“I am myself a nomad, my family too is nomadic. [...] However, in my district we were offered money from the government if we accepted to move from our land where the animals had been grazing, and into new houses they would give us near the highway.

They said we should move because of environmental reasons. They said it was not good for the nature that the animals were grazing at the fields because of the carbon emissions, or something like that. [...] Then, we were given construction work, we would build the houses ourselves, and we were promised salary from the Chinese for the work. Many nomads sold their animals when they had to move to the highway because of the houses the Chinese wanted us to build. Our family too, we sold most of them. However, when we had finished constructing the houses, we were left without animals, and without construction work. All for the worse! So we could no longer work as nomads. The only thing we could do in those houses was to eat and to sleep! What's the use of that? I feel I had no future there anymore. That bragging about the housings is something they do for propaganda to the outside world. I got desperate! I had no work! We lost our job because of those houses near the highway.” (“Lobsang”, Interview 14).

The experience of “Lobsang” and his family as posed in the quote above, could be put in connection to what appears to be a broader strategy by the CCP. Human Rights Watch (2013, Web) argues that:

“(...)the government continues to implement large development programs mandating rehousing or relocating up to 80 percent of the rural population. The relocation policies have been carried out—contrary to Chinese government claims—with no effective choice and without genuine consultation of those affected, while compensation mechanisms are opaque and inadequate. Pastoralists deprived of their traditional livelihood face declining living standards and increased dependency on government subsidies. (HRW 2013, Web)

My informant “Dondup”, a 19 year old man from a village in western Tibet, TAR, went even further in his criticism:

“They [the Chinese officials] are fooling the people [the Tibetans]! Sometimes they are building houses, and then, the Tibetans have to pay rent and pay for water. Yes, they force people to sell their animals, and then they send them to the butcher! We [the Tibetans] always try to do minimum harm to the animals when we have to kill them, but they [the Chinese] are so brutal to them. Sometimes they suffocate them⁵. As compensation for having been forced to sell their animals to the Chinese, they are

⁵ The practice of suffocating the animals is also a practice applied by Tibetan herders in certain areas of Tibet.

given some construction work to do for a living. Yes, they [the Tibetans] get to build houses, and after they are finished building them, they have to pay rent and for water to the Chinese. They are fooling us with their buildings! When the houses are built, they have no more animals and no more construction work!” (“Dondup”, Interview 10).

Out from a post-development port of departure, one could clearly criticize this practice for not taking into account indigenous Tibetan knowledge systems, assuming that modern concrete houses would be valued higher than a livestock of animals. But it could also be criticized for forcing Tibetans to abandoning their culture as traditional herders and nomads by moving into houses, for the recipients who until then had been living in traditional tents.

If improved material conditions in Tibet are understood to enhance the international reputation of the CCP, I argue that there might be a grate likelihood that my informant’s experiences and observations actually might represent a broader and more substantial empiric validity than what perhaps immediately would have been assumed. In other words, researchers from the right to the left, from the PRC to Andrew Fischer, appear to agree that it would be in the CCP’s interest to either 1) present an image, real or constructed, of improving the material living conditions of rural Tibetans as a means to smoothen out the human rights criticism or other criticisms they face in the international community, or 2) by improving the economic and material conditions in Tibet contribute in solving the political dispute in the Sino-Tibetan conflict over territory, by integrating the Tibetans more into the China and making them feel that it is in their material benefit being a part of the PRC.

If we are to believe the suggestions posed above, it might appear more understandable why the CCP eventually could have gone so far as to bribing rich Tibetan families to build their houses on the corner roads, in their pursuit of a beautiful economic outside image.

4.1.3. Advancing Discursive Power through the CHP?

Drawing on the recent work by Martha Nussbaum (2011), we have previously in this thesis seen how the term ‘development’ and its definitions in many cases appear to be imbedded with normative valuations, and at times, even ideological preferences. Thus, *the ways in which* we choose to define ‘development’ could be understood as political endeavors, and is likely to entail pragmatic implications for individual human beings on the ground. In that way, our understanding of this complex term is of ethical importance.

By drawing on the theories on ‘discursive power’ developed by Michel Foucault as discussed in Chapter 2, this thesis has argued how what has been called a ‘development consensus’, could be seen as an uncritical and unquestioned embracement of the traditional westernized development concept grounded on modernization, industrialization and economic growth. The ‘developmental discourse of truth’, could therefore entail what he sees as ‘discursive power’. Precisely because such a developmental ‘discourse of truth’ presents ‘development’ as inhibiting a taken-for-granted desirability, it exercises discursive power in the sense that it is likely to shape and frame the ‘will’ of individuals in a way which disable them to see beyond the consensus of ‘development’ as something normatively good. This is interesting, because, as the above discussion argues, it is clear that the concept of ‘development’ could entail and signify many highly different things depending on the ones that frames, defines and applies its contents.

Now, it appears rather clear that the empirical findings discussed in this section indicates that the Chinese development policies in Tibet have not succeeded in gaining high levels of popular support among local Tibetans. However, based on the theoretical insights summarized above, what could such a case teach on the extent to which ‘power’ in general and ‘discursive power’ in particular can be seen as present in the practical undertaking of the Chinese development policies in Tibet?

I argue that by constructing houses to poor Tibetans which looks “posh” to outsiders, but simultaneously without an appropriate *functionality*: the CCP might be seen as improving its chances of benefitting from a ‘developmental discourse of truth’ which uncritically assumes that almost any project that could go under the branch of ‘development’ necessarily would entail something desirable and beneficial to its recipients. As independent travelers, researchers, tourists or visitors to Tibet, we, as outsiders, might be struck by what on the outside looks like a highly successfully implemented development project, seemingly undertaken by a generous and benign CCP. What we see on the outside is that they have granted what we assume must be highly wanted and needed modern housing to poor individuals of the otherwise marginalized Tibetan ethnicity.

The requirement of making Tibetan recipients building their houses near the high ways could indeed be grounded in a genuine desire from the CCP’s side to facilitate the ‘implementation of social programs’, as Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui argues. However, it could also be grounded in a non-existing desire from the CCP’s side of facilitating the

implementation of such social programs, or improving the living standards of needy Tibetan individuals and households for that sake. But rather, to use it as a political strategy to increase its poor international reputation in its treatment of minority peoples in general, and the Tibetans in particular. The ‘developmental discourse of truth’, with its ‘unquestioned desirability’ might aid outsiders like Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui in a taken-for-granted optimistic analysis of the CHP and its effect on the ground, ignoring underlying power structures and the importance of indigenous discontent.

If the 12th Five-Year Plan, with the CHP project in its core, fails to succeed in its attempt of winning high degrees of Tibetan popular support, the result might be that the anti-government sentiment among Tibetans might increase (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui 2010). The result could be that the anti-government riots among Tibetans will expand in frequency and scope (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui 2010). This result appears to be in direct contradiction of the CCP’s expressed aim of using ‘development’ as a tool to reduce the support of the Tibetan exile cause for greater autonomy and larger freedoms, which in turn is intrinsically connected to the anti-government sentiment.

According to the findings in this research, one reason behind what appears to be a very limited popular support among my Tibetan informants towards the Chinese development policies in general, and towards the CHP in particular, is that it is seen by many as a superficial ‘show-off’ in the benefit of the CCP. It is seen as a convenient tool utilized to gain increased international recognition and praise, and not first and foremost to benefit Tibetan recipients on the ground. I argue thus that the CCP appears to be biting its own tale by neglecting the importance of local support in favor of the potential beneficial aspects of obtaining a beautiful façade. This facade seems furthermore to be reinforcing and benefitting from the ‘unquestioned desirability of development’ and its successive ‘discourse of truth’.

4.1.4 Case 2) The CHP and Conditional Development: “It Works Like... Bribery”

In the next section on my findings regarding the housing policies, I will present an interesting account regarding the way in which my informant “Sonam” suggested that the houses and financial grants were distributed by the CCP officials. I will later show how this practice can be seen as related to the first and third dimension of ‘power’, and how it relates to human rights. On my question regarding what he thought of the CHP and the Chinese efforts of improving the lives of Tibetans through increased development, my informant “Sonam”, a political refugee in his late twenties from Chamdo, Eastern Tibet, TAR, suggested:

“Well, how should I put it? It works like... bribery. If you accept their claims [the Chinese officials] that the Dalai Lama is bad, they’ll give you a house. If not, they will give you no house. If you accept to support the Chinese Communist Party, they’ll give you a house. If not, you will get no house. You see the picture? It’s like... aid on conditions”. (“Sonam”, Interview Nr.11)

When I then suggested that the Chinese government also seems to have improved the living standard of Tibetans in certain ways, for instance through their programs of financial aid to poor families, the tone in “Sonam’s” answer became even sharper:

“You know, that’s more like false propaganda in a way. They [the PRC] want to appear like they provide good facilities and are threatening the people [the Tibetans] good, building huge, good roads, etcetera, you know, like a “show off”. Yes, they would make China look good to the public” (...). Well, if you sign agreements with the Chinese government, stating that you don’t really support the Dalai Lama, for instance, they might give you the aid! And of course, many people, they do sing! If you are poor and needy, if you really struggle to support your family, of course many Tibetans they sign! And then, the grants are provided. However, for those who refuse to accept the things the Chinese authorities want them to accept, they’ll receive nothing! Nothing!”(“Sonam”, Interview Nr.11).

What “Sonam” here refers to as “bribery” and “false propaganda”, might perhaps at first glance be perceived as slightly politically tendentious due to the seemingly politicized language. At the same time, it is not difficult to understand that “Sonam” gets upset if he has to denounce his religious values and indirectly be forced to praise the CCP if he does not really feel that corresponds to his personal political considerations and values.

When taking in to account the grave levels of poverty and the low levels of material standards in Tibet as revealed in Chapter 3, out from a westernized point of view one could perhaps argue that it does not seem fair to so mercilessly dismissing the value of these practices all together, simply as “false propaganda” and nothing more. Would not the human suffering of denouncing the Dalai Lama be less pressing and grave than the human suffering of not having a proper house to live in? However, when drawing on the ideas developed through the post-development school of thought, I would here suggest that such a perception seem to be grounded on a culturally westernized, urban and secular assumption which puts a very high value in material comforts and economic well-being, and not necessarily taking

local traditions, values and knowledge systems sufficiently seriously. Therefore, in order to fully understand the implications and underlying reasons behind “Sonam’s” experience, I argue that useful insights could be drawn if taking into account the findings on the first, second and third face of ‘power’, as well as post-development theory, as presented in Chapter 2.

Being ‘bribed’ as “Sonam” posed it, into stating or writing something that he otherwise would not have stated, and which opposes his actual will, in this case, that he does not support the Dalai Lama, but rather supports the work of the Chinese Communist Party: might at first glance be understood as an exercise of the ‘intuitive’, first-dimensional form of ‘power’, as developed by Robert Dahl. I will explain.

If ‘power’ is understood to be present where ‘A’ makes ‘B’ do something that ‘B’ otherwise would not do, and which goes against the interests of ‘B’: it appears that A (the Chinese development officials) in this case exercised ‘power’ over B (“Sonam”, the Tibetan recipient), by making him state in a written document that he does not support the Dalai Lama and that he is happy about the work of the CCP, although in reality there are reasons to assume, judging from the anger and emotionality in “Sonam’s” interview, that he indeed does support the Dalai Lama and even might be directly unhappy with the work of the CCP. However, as the suggested empirical scenario presented here in reality was slightly more complex, I argue that the third dimensional view of power in this case actually becomes inapplicable. This, I will argue, if taking the insights from the second and third face of power, can be seen as an indication of its empirical deficits.

Although B, if drawing on “Sonam’s” suggestion in the above quotes, was poor and thus in desperate and acute need of both housing and financial grants: it would not be seen as an exercise of power as both parties in the conflict reached what appears to be an overt and voluntary agreement (a compromise), resulting in a contract signed by both parties.

As A offers to grant B a house and/or financial grants on the condition that B would sign a contract, the signing of this contract would according to this view be seen as the practical possibility, or freedom, enjoyed by B to *reject* the offer presented by A. The conflict would thus be seen as resolved: B voluntarily complied with the will of A, and therefore he gave him his signature. As manipulation, coerce and the idea of ‘real interests’ are not included in the understanding of the first face of power, we could therefore conclude that *power* in our case have not been exercised. Furthermore, B could also be seen as to have

increased his interests (a house, development grants), whereas A also appears to increase what is in his benefit (a written recognition that the poor peasant Tibetan, B, denounce the Dalai Lama in favor of his ‘support’ to the CCP). Thus there has been no zero-sum game involved, which is one of the criteria for distinguishing the exercise of ‘power over’: the one-dimensional power.

As we have seen, *power* could also be seen as far more complex than what Dahl suggests. Thus, when analyzing that same situation more in depth, according to the second and third face of power, I argue that new and interesting insights can be drawn with regards to our case in question. By utilizing negative terms like “false propaganda” and “bribery”, I argue that it appears reasonable to assume that “Sonam” did not really see the act of B complying with A’s proposal of signing such a document as a completely voluntary act. That is amongst other things because he pointed out how poor and desperate B was, in relation to his compliance with the proposal made by A. “Sonam” thus indicates that it was B’s challenging financial condition which indirectly left him with no real choice but compliance, and not because it was in his *real interest* denouncing the Dalai Lama or praise the CCP.

Either he would 1) sign a contract with demands which to B would be consider unreasonable and perhaps even hurting, but gaining a house/financial grants as a result, or 2) he would not sign the contract at all, and thus neither receive the support that he desperately needs, nor getting hurt by the demand of denouncing the Dalai Lama or praising the CCP against his real will. This, I argue, leads us particularly to Lukes third-dimensional view of power.

As discussed in earlier chapters, this view of power includes among other things the shaping and the framing of people’s will, wishes and desires to the advantage of the part who holds, and exercises, *power*. Lukes third face of power would not, unlike the theory developed by Dahl, take for granted that B was, just because he signed a contract, acting according to his own interests or his ‘real will’. That is because he was never granted the opportunity to shape his own *alternative* to the two limited possibilities he was offered. A possibility of 3) being able to receive housing and/or financial support from the CCP if he wanted to, but without denouncing the Dalai Lama or promise a support to the CCP, was never a part of the deal. One could of course argue that since he nevertheless accepted one of the two possibilities he was offered by the Chinese official(s), it seems that it was more important to him to receive the financial aid by the government, than not to reject the Dalai Lama or praise the CCP.

However, by limiting his ‘choices’ to two rather poor alternatives, I argue that the Chinese official in our case is narrowing down the ‘will’ of B to choose from alternatives which are not in compliance with B’s ‘real interests’. That is not, of course, because it is unlikely that B would have had the intellectual ability or internal capacity to *imagine* other and better alternatives. If that was the case, it would perhaps be more appropriate to discuss this case as a matter of ‘discursive power’, using Michel Foucault’s term. However, it is because B experienced that there existed *no other alternatives* than two poor ones mentioned above, which in turn *disables him* to act in a way that would actually be in his real interest: option 3.

We could therefore conclude that it appears that the third-dimension of power was exercised in this case. And that, I argue, to some extent might explain the anger and high degree of emotional involvement in “Sonam’s” rejection of these policies as “false propaganda” and “bribery” altogether. I argue therefore that his mercilessness in his evaluation of the Chinese housing and aid programs seems to be connected to how the need for financial aid and housing, according to his previous statements, appears to be utilized by the Chinese authorities in question, as a mean to make him either reject the Dalai Lama, or promise faithfulness to the CCP.

Michel Foucault wrote in 1978 that “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault 1978:95, part four). I argue therefore, that in the light of what my empirical research demonstrates is a limited degree of popular support towards the Chinese development policies among my Tibetan informants: could be seen as an empiric validation of Foucault’s theoretic idea of a connection between the exercise of ‘power’ and the exposure of ‘resistance’.

4.2 Infrastructure Projects and its Limited Value: the Effects of Checkpoints

When the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) entered Tibet with its troops in the late 1940’s, it began a massive process of building road infrastructure. Dreyer argues that this was done in order “(...) to ease the integration of Tibetan areas with Han China”, and thus facilitating the influx necessary for trading such as caravans and construction materials, but also the influx of Chinese soldiers, army equipment and Chinese immigrants (Dreyer 2004: 130). Since then, road and railway infrastructure has played a crucial role in PRC’s development policies in the region, including in the current 12th Five-Year Plan of the CCP (CCP 2011). The plan states that “(...) infrastructure development is the undisputed key to the success of the region” (Gu,

China-briefing 2012). Furthermore, the grate emphasis on infrastructure construction and the building of railroads could be linked to the CCP's grater plan of facilitating urbanization of rural areas: a goal in the current Plan is that by the year 2015, 45% of the population within the PRC would be living in urban areas (CCP 2011).

While the comfortable housing projects was something nearly all of my interviewees, without my interference, pointed out as 'a development project', this was not the case with the infrastructure construction projects. Many informants did not seem to see the connection between road and railway construction and 'development' at all. This could for instance be illustrated by my informant "Tsundue", a woman in her late teens for a rural area in eastern Kham, stating:

"High roads? Who cares! Railways? I don't understand what you mean by this development... There has been no development in my village, that's for sure. And I really don't care about it either" ("Tsundue", Interview Nr.17).

However, the following quote by "Tenzin" might at first glance not seam directly relevant to the infrastructure projects and the CCP's development policies. However, when later putting his narrative in a broader context of the overall restrictions of the freedom of movement in Tibet, I argue that useful insights could be drawn for his example. When I asked "Tenzin" about how in his experience the situation in Tibet affects the people's abilities to live happy lives, his answer was as follows:

"Happy? Hmm. Well... it is rather difficult for Tibetans to go to places freely. If we want to go somewhere, we have to show our identity cards as well as the travel documents at the checkpoints, and then we run the risk of being rejected. Such restrictions exist because of the presence of the military and the police, so many Tibetans actually feel tense... yes, even unhappy. The authorities check individuals randomly, and if we do not have the required travel permits and documents, we cannot go anywhere. So people feel that life is very difficult because of the lack of freedoms for individuals. For instance, if I was in the Kham region, and I wanted to visit my own parents in Lhasa, I would need a permit from the Chinese officials, and they would have to accept providing me with the required documents. Without their consent, it would be impossible to go there, even if the purpose for my travel was to visit my own parents. There are different levels of travel permits depending on the geographical regions, you see. First, you have to obtain the first level permit. And then

you need all the other permits too in order to reach Lhasa. You don't have to pay very much to get them, but it does cost you a little bit" ("Tenzin", Interview Nr. 5).

The rules for travel permits for Tibetans from Eastern Tibet to go to Lhasa, a holy city according to Tibetan Buddhist believers, were also pointed out by "Tsewang", the woman who spent 16 years in Lhasa after growing up in Kandze, Eastern Tibet;

"And did you know, the people from Kham and Amdo, if they want to go to Lhasa, they have to get a special permit from the Chinese government, a paper that they are forced to sign, stating that they promise not to participate in demonstration, not talk about the Dalai Lama, and not about rights. And if they don't sign? They cannot go." ("Tsewang", Interview 1)

When I asked "Tenzin" about whether or not he had the impression that these restrictions were diminishing, he answered:

"Well, there have always been checkpoints, but before, we didn't use to need these travel permits at all. That's actually something new. Yes, nowadays we even need a special permit even to go to the nearby areas. That was something that started with last year. I think it is because many Tibetans are protesting in many different regions of Tibet. The self-immolations, you know. I think that's why they imposed these additional travel restrictions" ("Tenzin", Interview Nr. 5).

As the introduction to this section indicates, it is clear that the Chinese Communist Party has built a large amount of road and railroad infrastructure in Tibet since the entrance of the PLA. However, when listening to personal narratives of single individual Tibetans and their experiences with travelling in Tibet, questions arise as to whether the Chinese investments in infrastructure projects in Tibet actually increase single individual's possibilities for human development, agency and happiness. Out from the narratives above, it could seem like the CCP control and suppression of the freedom of movement in Tibet would render the new road infrastructure construction of limited utility to the Tibetan population.

That is not, of course, to claim that lack of infrastructure should not be viewed as an adequate indicator of underdevelopment in the traditional meaning of the term. On the contrary, in line with Nussbaum's understanding, I would argue that a general lack of infrastructure in a country limits human agency to some extent. That is because it disables people to choose freely where to go and when to go, thus restricting people's freedoms and

choices. However, when a region is characterized by heavy control implying general travel restrictions, military checkpoints and requirement of travel permits to the extent that it even restricts individual's abilities to visit their own parents in Lhasa, as "Tenzin's" example indicated: much of the increased human agency that otherwise would derive from good road and railroad infrastructure, simply disappear. Furthermore, highway and railroads in an otherwise rather remote area like rural Tibet, might also look like a spectacular evidence of 'progress' to an uncritical outsider. When the Chinese government provides figures, statistics and numbers as to how much money they spend on infrastructure, these statistics does not say much about the effects of these projects in the practical reality for single individual Tibetans. Just as with the CHP project, the road and railway construction might also serve to create an inadequately optimistic image of a 'progress'. This progress appears, when digging into Tibetan individual's own evaluation of happiness and well-being, hollow, superficial at worst, and limited and misleading at best.

'Development', as a normative term ought to say something about how a community, a region or a country has improved the quality of life of its citizens. If not taking the human rights situation in Tibet into account when evaluating the effects of 'development', I argue that we run the risk of obtaining an inadequate picture of the empirical reality on the ground.

It could furthermore be argued that the practice of demanding special permits for people to travel freely within the borders of their own country of residency could be linked to Dahl's first dimensional view of 'power'. In the case posed by "Tenzin", where he would need a special permit from the police to visit his parents in Lhasa, the first dimensional power would have been exercised where A (the Chinese police authority) would deny B ("Tenzin", the Tibetan) the opportunity to visit his parents in Lhasa, in a situation where it would be in his interest to do so, for instance by not granting B the required travel permit. However, the first dimension of 'power' could also be seen as present in the reality which requires "Tenzin" to obtain the permits in the first place, regardless of its outcome. That is because, I argue, A (the Chinese authorities) makes B ("Tenzin") to do something that he otherwise not have done out from his own free will, that is, approaching the Chinese authorities in order to obtain a permit. It would be in his interest to freely and without restrictions go to Lhasa or any other place within his own country, but because the first dimension of power seems to be exercised, he cannot do that, thus, the permits are required.

4.3 Interconnections of Education and Assimilation

In this section of the analysis, I seek to present the findings regarding the next topic of my empirical findings. This topic addresses the perceptions of limitations in the access to education, combined with experiences of cultural assimilation. Although education perhaps has not played a major role in the overall Chinese development processes in Tibet, the topic was frequently discussed during the qualitative interviews used in this research project.

As mentioned in the theoretical discussion of this thesis, education measured in literacy has become a conventional component of the mainstream development understanding after its importance was pointed out in the Human Development Report by the UN in the early 1990's. Since then, literacy rates and enrollment in education have become an important component of how human development is measured, for instance, through the Human Development Index (HDI). Therefore, the findings regarding education should be understood as directly related to development, also in Tibet under the PRC. Many of my informants pointed out that they felt excluded from the existing educational opportunities in Tibet, although some acknowledged that improvements in education were a positive thing that had come with the Chinese involvement in the region. As my informant "Tsewang" stated:

"Yes, it is actually true that the Chinese have improved the overall educational system in Tibet" ("Tsewang", Interview Nr. 1)

The vast majority of my informants stated that educational opportunities were one of several reasons why they had chosen to come to India. The majority of my informants pointed out that the Chinese language, and not the Tibetan, was utilized as the language of instruction in primary, secondary or tertiary educational institutions in their respective villages and towns. In some areas it appeared that the language of instruction at all levels of education in Tibet was Chinese, while in other areas, this was only the case up until a certain grade. For others again, the first cycles of schooling was thought in Tibetan, or a mix between Tibetan and Chinese. Many reflected about the practice of teaching in the Chinese language as a means to assimilate Tibetan culture into the Chinese. This reflection in line with practices described in conventional research on Indigenous People's, where cultural assimilation in many historical contexts have been pursued through imposing bans on, or restricting the use of, the indigenous languages, for instance in educational contexts (Keels 2006, Dahre 2005). The following is a quote by the former political prisoner "Sonam", who on my suggestion that the Chinese had improved the lives of Tibetans, stated:

“It is correct, yes, that the government is providing infrastructure and schools, but you know, it’s not like the schools they build teach in the Tibetan language, it’s all Chinese, thus largely excluding us Tibetans from benefitting from them. The schools are primarily built for the Chinese immigrants that have come to Tibet in recent times, you know, not for the sake of the Tibetans as it might appear to you, foreigners. So on the one side, on the surface, I agree it can look like the Chinese government are doing good to the Tibetans. However, in my opinion, it seems more like the aim of the good facilities and development that comes with the Chinese, is actually to make the Tibetan culture, or I mean, our ways of life, our traditions, you know, to disappear into the Chinese. Yes, I think the real reason behind for instance the housing policies, is to change the Tibetan... well, the Tibetan mind set so that it will become like the Chinese... That’s their first priority. Destroy the Tibetan customs. The new buildings and schools that they build is not for the Tibetans, but for Chinese immigrants. The education serves to assimilate Tibetans into Chinese, just look at how they try to teach us history and politics too, it’s like political propaganda! They are not teaching about the real world out there, or base their curriculum on independent, internationally acknowledged facts, you know, it’s more like the re-educations programs...It’s not like they give us the real information about the outside world! And then, in Chinese too, so what’s the use?!” (“Sonam” Interview 11).

“Sonam’s” quote above is interesting for in several ways for the research topic addressed in this thesis. He points out that 1) he experiences the newly built schools and buildings as something which are not aimed at the use of the local Tibetans, but rather for the Chinese immigrants, and 2) that he sees not only the school system and the house policies, but also what he generally terms ‘the good facilities’ which come with development, as a means to assimilate the Tibetan ‘mindset’, lifestyle and language into the Chinese. In that way, he seems to experience the Chinese overall development policies in Tibet nearly as a strategy of assimilation in itself.

This is particularly interesting when taking a look at the history of the world’s indigenous peoples (Dahre 2005, Keal 2003, Coates 2004). Coates argues that after the Second World War, a new “era of government intervention” began which affected how nation-states treated their respective indigenous peoples (2004). This new tendency was “(...)built around the belief that social and economic policies could speed indigenous

assimilation into national norms (Coates 2004:222). This led to many indigenous peoples being subjected to new forms of force and suppression. However,

“The tools were now government housing projects and economic development schemes rather than military construction activities and armed invasions. Armed aggression had been replaced by the gentler, but equally pernicious intrusions of the ideologies of assimilation and cultural suppression. New armies – of teachers, social service workers, medical professionals, economic development officers – made their way into the tribal territories, offering assured routes into the prosperity and security of life and property enjoyed by other members of the national society. These missionaries of the new order (...) sought to “improve” the indigenous condition, even if it meant undermining traditional lifeways (Coates 2004).

When I suggested to “Tenzin”, the same question posed to “Sonam” above, that the CCP had improved the living conditions to Tibetans through financial support, he answered:

“According to my own experiences in Tibet, yes, it is true that the Chinese were giving some money to Tibetans for their livelihood, but ultimately our rich heritage and culture and tradition, what they are trying to do is to make it weaker and weaker year by year. Therefore, for instance in my own village, they gave some money so that the rural people themselves could for instance work as Chinese police and wear the uniform, so in that way they (the Chinese) could give some wages. But in the real sense our own heritage and culture is something they try to weaken in our daily lives”. For instance, in the monasteries they have made certain rules and regulations which did not exist before. Before, everyone could join the monastic institutions as a monk or a nun, but after that they made these new rules and regulation, only a limited number of people are permitted to enter the monasteries and nunneries each year. So, in that sense there are restrictions of the population in the monasteries. That was one example. Another example is for instance that for children, there are not good opportunities to learn their own language properly, and to learn modern education in Tibetan. So in that sense, we do not have freedom in the monastic institutions, and when it comes to schooling. That is how I feel about it.” (“Tenzin”, Interview 5).

Later in the interview, after having discussed much about different aspects of culture and assimilation, I asked him how he thought the conditions in Tibet could be improved for the better. He answered:

“(…)I mean, in Tibet, the culture is very important, you see, not like other places. So I hope that the conditions in Tibet could change so that we could all practice all aspects of Tibetan culture, religion and language freely. In Tibet I had no opportunities to go to school, but here in India, I am in a free country, so such opportunities exist here. That is why I hope to go to school when I am here in this free country” (“Tenzin”, Interview 5).

Interestingly, thus, “Tenzin” appears to pull a direct link between political freedom and access to education.

4.4 Political Repression and the Process of Fleeing to Exile

Public participation in politics has come to play an increasingly important role within Development Studies during recent years, for instance related to the debates on concepts like ‘ownership’ and ‘good governance’. Green and Chambers, for instance, in their work entitled “The Politics of Participation in Sustainable Development Governance”, argue that “(…) a crucial distinction exists between participation and influence; the former is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the latter” (2006:). In the case of Tibet, I argue that both aspects appears to be absent for the average local individual. Few political ‘spaces’ exists where ordinary Tibetans could raise their voice against the Chinese government or the policies of the CCP. And as the above quote suggests, where there is no possibilities for political participation on decision making levels or grass roots organization, political influence is necessarily halted. One could therefore argue that a politically repressive and authoritarian society, with heavy restrictions on civil and political rights, as well as with severe limitations in freedom of speech and assembly, is likely to restrict this aspect of human development. Therefore, although political repression at first glance might not appear to be of direct relevance for our understanding of the Chinese development processes in Tibet, I still argue that our analyses would be inadequate and misleading if this crucial aspect of the Tibetan society was ignored in a critical study like this.

However, in order to elaborate on this point of view, I argue that it here also becomes important to take into account theories of *popular resistance* and *political dissent*. That, I argue, is because popular resistance and political dissent potentially can widen our understanding about the levels and signals of local discontent towards the PRC in general and towards the CCP development policies in general. This in turn, I argue, is not only relevant

for both the fact that Tibetans flee to a state of exile, but also for the reasons behind single individual's reasons for fleeing. I will in this section show how the phenomenon of Tibetans fleeing to India or Nepal could be seen as a form of political resistance.

American social anthropologist and resistance researcher, James C. Scott shows in his work on peasant communities in Asia how *resistance* in severely repressive political contexts often is covert and hidden due to for instance fears of punishment, violence and further political repression (Scott 1990). Such forms of resistance, Scott argues, could therefore easily be overlooked, or even completely ignored, which potentially could deceive the power holders and the outside world to believe that the people are content and satisfied with their situations where in reality they are not (Scott 1990). It is therefore become crucial not to ignore the many, multifaceted shapes and faces of such forms of resistance, when analyzing something as politically charged and life-affecting as development processes in Tibet under the PRC. The wave of Tibetan self-immolations can clearly be seen as a very overt, visible and direct sign of resistance and discontent. In a way, the self-immolations could be seen as a strategy of creating a political 'space' that does not currently exist in Tibet. By taking the drastic step of engulfing their bodies in flames, after having handed out leaflets and flyers or shouted slogans of political contents, the self-immolators enable their political dissent to be heard and to be seen and to be experienced by others. Since the burnings also have reached, not only national headlines and debate within the PRC, but also headlines in the international media sphere, the self-immolations could be seen as an extremely painful way to *reclaim* their *political voice* as Tibetans and as an ethnic minority, that otherwise would have been taken away from them due to heavy political repression. So they are creating a political space, and reclaiming their political voice.

Also in my interviews, I came across individuals with close experiences to some of the cases of self-immolations. My informant "Nyingche", for instance, a young former monk and political refugee from Amdo, had shared room with his friend who self-immolated only months earlier:

"I saw him self-immolating in front me, I was shocked! And scared... it made me sad! He hadn't told anyone about his plans... A friend of mine first spotted him doing it, then he called me, and I came running. He shouted slogans saying he wanted human rights in Tibet, and that the Dalai Lama should come back to Tibet. After fifteen minutes, the Chinese police came. But later, perhaps one or two thousand people had

come and gathered at the spot, and so, we managed to prevent the police to take his body. The police are really strict for the people who want to go to the funerals. Some get arrested at later stages” (“Nyingche”, Interview Nr. 4).

When I asked him why he thought that some people chose to self-immolate instead of doing more conventional forms of political protests such as demonstrations, protest vigils and advocacy work, which would include less sacrifices and suffering for the individual protestor, he answered:

“As I see it, to self-immolate would actually not include more human suffering than what it would be to be imprisoned by the Chinese for years, which would be a likely result if we did such political acts you mentioned. Prison includes torture. And being tortured for, let’s say, twenty years, or... even life time... would include more lasting suffering than the burning of one’s own body... It might sound strange, but... in my view, if we compare the self-immolations and the Chinese prison life, to self-immolate would be better. That is because the pain then at least would end quickly, at the same time as the statement would have been made.” (“Nyingche, Interview Nr. 4).

But what about the quiet, small-scale Scottian of *everyday forms resistance*, and what can that potentially tell us about the Chinese development policies in Tibet (Scott 1979, Scott 1985, Scott 1990)? If the material living standards have become so much better in Tibet, and the Tibetans thus “are the happiest people in China” like the CCP suggests, why do hundreds of Tibetans every year risk their lives leaving Tibet illegally into exile? Perhaps improved material living standards do not necessarily mean that local Tibetans feel that their human well-being and contentment is improved, at least if other societal aspects are not improved at the same time? Perhaps there are other aspects of life that are valued higher than improved material conditions among many Tibetans? And what is it that the people who leave Tibet hope to achieve in India, that they do not feel they are able to obtain in Tibet? I argue that the reasons behind Tibetan refugee’s decisions of leaving to India, and their aspirations for their new lives in exile, potentially could shed valuable insights into aspects of the local perceptions and reflections on the Chinese development processes in Tibet, and experiences of increased ‘well-being’.

This section thus deals with the findings related to the personal processes of leaving Tibet; the backgrounds for my informant’s choices of fleeing; their expectations of their journey ahead of leaving Tibet; as well as their practical experiences of escaping. How much

hardship did they experience while fleeing, and what do that tell us about the Tibetan sentiments towards the CCP in general, and the PRC rule in particular? I will in the following case present some of the findings from a double-interview with two young Tibetan males that clearly demonstrate how far the local anger and discontent about ‘the Chinese’ could reach:

4.4.1 Case 1) Expectations and Experiences of Fleeing: “Only The Bad Chinese, I Would Stab”

My informants “Tashi” and “Norbu” were in a different situation than my other informants in several ways. Firstly, they were the only ones coming from a remote rural area in western Tibet, TAR. Secondly, they had not come as far as to Dharamsala when we did the interview, thus, they were in practice still in the process of travelling. It had passed 21 days since they left Tibet, and when I met them, they had just reached a Tibetan refugee camp in a large, Indian city, located some ten hours’ drive from Dharamsala. In order to protect their identities, I will not mention the name of the city in this thesis.

“Tashi” (19) and “Norbu” (20) were childhood friends, both from traditional nomadic families. And their enthusiasm over finally being in a Tibetan camp in India, with Dharamsala close ahead, was evident (“Tashi” & “Norbu”, Interview 9&10). As they knew each other so well, they were constantly interrupting each other, and at times, coming with ironic and humorous comments on each other’s behalf. However, there was also an underlying seriousness about their appearances, they looked exhausted, and were constantly complaining about how much their legs and bodied ached due to the many weeks of walking. When I asked them how their travel from Tibet to India had been thus far, the following quote is a summary of their collective testimony:

“Oh! Too much hardships and suffering! For several days we walked with snow up to here [“Tashi” says, while showing a gesture marking a line up to above the knees]. But look! Not even a scratch! [Says “Norbu”] We went to India to see the Dalai Lama, he is like the Sun of the Universe, the grate protector of everything. Yes, a bit like a sun shining down with his protection for on all the people and the plants from the sky [“Tashi” takes up a small, laminated photography of the Dalai Lama in a thread around his neck]! I got this some years ago, from a relative who had been to Dharamsala. So I slept with it under my pillow each night for protection, and it worked! Because now we are in India! In Freedom! You see, the Chinese are not being good to us back in Tibet. But, now we don’t care. Now it’s all worth it. We didn’t die of hunger. Or from

the cold! We weren't shot dead. Yes, we must have been protected by the Gods! By His Holiness, the fourteenth Dalai Lama! Oh, but it was simply too cold... When we slept, our cloths and the shoes stuck to the ground because it had frozen. We put nail polish on our nails to protect them from the cold, but see! ["Norbu" shows me his deformed finger nails with traces of purple nail polish]. We were afraid the nails would fall off, but luckily they are all still here! [Looks at his friend, who giggle and nods confirmatively]. Yes, it must have been the nail polish. We didn't tell anyone that we left. Not even our parents. Yes, perhaps they now think that we ran away? Or maybe that we died! But it's very important when travelling abroad not to forget ones parents [putting on a song on mobile phones about ama-la and pha-la]. To see the Dalai Lama would be like a dream! Yes, when we go back to Tibet we will bring a lot of these things to our friends in Tibet, photos of the Dalai Lama and his books, and give it to all the people!"

When I then asked if they had to be careful while spreading photos of Dalai Lama, "Norbu" answered, while pointing at his phone:

"This Khampa singer with such a strong and powerful voice, he is very young, but he has been arrested many times! Yes, all the time he spends in prison! If the police found out that I had this song on my phone, they would arrest me of course. Before, it was possible to get a hold of such things like small photos of the Dalai Lama in Tibet, but not anymore. In Tibet, all the people want the Dalai Lama to come back! We love him so much!"

After some time talking to them, I asked what they believed would have happened to them if the police found them while fleeing over the mountains. They answered:

"If they caught us, Hu! What do you think?! They would cut off our hands and legs!" [demonstrating gesture like cutting off the legs]! Or perhaps rip out our eyes! [demonstrating gesture ripping out his left eye]! Yes, perhaps they would hang us up to the wall by the arms and beat us with a stick! [Pull both of his arms out like a crucified Jesus, and then pretend to beat with a stick]. Before we left Tibet, we had bought two big knives. Our plan was to stab any Chinese police we would meet on our way, like this [demonstrating gesture, like stabbing someone with a knife]! What else could we do to protect ourselves?! ["Tashi, nodding to confirm his friend's statement]. We thought... if we met perhaps... let's say a maximum three... or four Chinese police or

army, we would stab them. If they were more, we would be in too big trouble! We slept with the knives under our heads each night in case something bad would happen! We were so afraid. One time I even told him [“Norbu” nodding towards “Tashi”] that I thought we should go back! Yes, I really just wanted to return. The journey was too hard. But he insisted we should continue to walk.”

Rather surprised and chocked of their comments of resorting to violence in the face of the Chinese police, I asked if it perhaps could be so that the Chinese police would have guns. They answered:

“No, come on, they would of course first ask us what we were doing out there in the mountains, right? And then, if we would answer we were going to see the Dalai Lama in India, they would of course shoot us. But if we managed to convince them that we were doing something else, they would only arrest us, you know.”

I then said that I had heard that the Dalai Lama was very much pro nonviolence and against any form of harming Chinese people and all other living beings. They confirmed that position, and got a slightly embarrassed expression:

“Only a bad Chinese we would stab. Any good Chinese we would of course not harm”. Oh, when we reached the Indian border in safety, haha! We were so happy. We shook hands and stabbed our knives in the earth right there at the border line! Then, we left behind all of our warm cloths and went on walking. We followed the river, that’s how we reached our destination. In total, there are twenty-two days since we left the village in Tibet. Here in India, we only took the bus for one day. The rest of the time, we have been walking on foot. Yes, our legs still hurts! Oh, so badly! We have been begging people for food these days, here and elsewhere. People didn’t want our money [Yuan, the Chinese currency]! Every time we saw someone with food, we tried to ask them if we could get some of it, we gave them Yuan but they all refused. They didn’t understand what we were trying to say, or what it was that we gave them! You know... if a body does not get food... it cannot longer walk properly... It starts to tremble and can’t walk in straight lines... We have had hard times... The first time we ate Indian food, we threw it all up, although it was only rice! But when we see the Dalai Lama here in India, it would be like a dream come true, it wouldn’t matter if we died tomorrow!”

“Norbu” and “Tashi’s” testimony and experience illustrated in the quotes above, I argue, indicates the existence of an extreme resistance and discontent towards the PRC in general, and its restrictions of the freedom of religion in particular. They obviously had been through hard times while fleeing, exposing themselves to great inconveniences, discomforts, fear and uncertainties. Their testimony also says something about how important religion and the Dalai Lama appears to be to Tibetans, although that does not necessarily mean that they would follow and live by all the aspects in the Dalai Lama’s religious teachings. Unlike my other informants, it was the desire to see the Dalai Lama alone which motivated them to leaving Tibet, and they also intended to return at some point. How they planned to do that, and whether or not they will/have succeed(ed) remains uncertain. Religious freedom appears, out from the findings in this interview, to be extremely crucial to the experience of human well-being and happiness in the case of “Tashi” and “Norbu”.

4.4.2 Case 2) Experiences of Political Repression: “There Where Pieces of Thorn Monk Robes in a Corner, and Traces of Blood on the Walls”

As several of my informants were political refugees, previously having spent months, and even years, in prison, I got the opportunity to get some details and insights into what kind of political activities which would lead to what kind of punishments by the Chinese police. My informant “Sonam”, for instance, was sentenced 18 months in various prisons in Tibet after having been caught in participating in a demonstration in connection to the 2008 uprisings in his home town:

“They [the Chinese staff in prison] asked me “who started these protests?!” and “who made you participate in these protests?!”. [...]One time they hang me up by the wrists to the roof in the room, I think it was to make me confess. One of my hands was broken, it was painful [he takes up his wrists and shows me his visible scars]. After three months, one or two Chinese came and dislocated my handles. I was so weak and badly treated I couldn’t eat, I had no appetite, and difficulties swallowing, [...]and my mouth was full of bruises and wounds [...]. Several times, when I asked them to take me to a hospital, they refused. They said “you are anti-Chinese, you are not allowed to leave the prison to go to hospital!”. [...]They used to say “you, anti-Chinese! You love the Dalai Lama, perhaps he gave you food to make you protest?!” (“Sonam”, Interview 11).

Another example is my informant “Dadul”, a young man in his early twenties from a village in Amdo. He had been caught by the Chinese police when handing out political leaflets in the

main square in his town. The leaflets included slogans for human rights and democracy in Tibet, and for the return of the Dalai Lama. This is a summary of his personal narrative:

“I wanted people to know how important it is with rights and democracy, and because I knew that others were demonstrating because of the Olympic Games, I too wanted to do something to contribute. [...] The police came after a while, they beat me so I fell to the ground and lost the leaflets in the street. I didn’t know what they were going to do to me, you see, it happens quite often that the police take random people in the street and, then, they are lost forever, not even their families get to know what happens to them. I feared something like that would happen to me, you know. They beat me with their metallic sticks in the front of everybody, then they dragged me to the police car and shuffled me inside. They took me to a place I didn’t know, but I was so badly beaten and scared that I couldn’t think clearly. That prison that they took me to, I can’t remember everything in details, however, I ended up in a small cell without window, somehow. I just remember that I woke up there in that cell, so I assume I must have passed out at some point. When I opened my eyes, there were a number of Chinese police officers just walking calmly around me in circles while smoking cigarettes, they didn’t say much, really, and that gave me enough time to see that cell and what it looked like. There was thorn robes of monks and nuns there at the floor, lying in the corner, full of something that looked like blood stains. And blood, yes, there were big traces of blood on the walls too, and on the floor there were a pair of broken handcuffs. I won’t give you the details of what happened there, but I passed out several times due to their beatings and the instruments that they used. One time they put my head in a bucket of water so I thought they were going to drown me. They asked many questions, they said they didn’t believe I had wrote those slogans on those leaflets myself because they said there was no way I would know anything about such things like human rights, they wanted me to say that someone abroad had forced me to do it. (“Dadul”, Interview 13).

4.4.3 Fleeing Tibet as a Small Scale Form of ‘Everyday Resistance’

Most of the informants mentioned a variety of different reasons behind their decisions of leaving Tibet. This is understandable, I argue, considering the many potential problems, dangers and difficulties which also are involved in *leaving* one’s home county to a new and uncertain life as a stateless refugee in India, regardless of the potential dangers of staying.

Most informants felt it emotionally challenging to leave their family, and close friends. And although all expressed relief of having come to India in safety, many also felt anxious and worried about what their new lives in exile would bring.

However, a limited number of informants stated that political repression was the unique reason for coming to India. These were all political refugees who faced direct threats of further repression, arrests, or human rights abuses like torture and other forms of violence, or who were subjected to extreme forms of political monitoring by the Chinese police upon release from prison. However, all of the informants nevertheless considered themselves as refugees, although only the former political prisoners considered themselves as *political* refugees in particular.

None of my informants were unaware of the personal risks and dangers involved in the practical process of leaving Tibet. The majority of them had ahead of leaving Tibet heard of individuals who had been shot, tortured, imprisoned, or deported by Chinese or Nepali police as a result of being caught in the mist of fleeing. All of my informants stated that they knew before they left Tibet that there would be no certainty of whether or not they would actually succeed in crossing the border to Nepal, or getting to India. Only one of my informants had left Tibet legally by flight with official travel documents. This was the 35 year old woman “Tsewang” who told me she was “lucky” to have a distant family member working in the Chinese police force in Lhasa. In that way she was able to, through her contacts and through bribery, obtain an official Chinese passport and other required documents which enabled her and her sister to go to India without exposing themselves to great personal risks (“Tsewang”, Interview 1).

Except two young, male childhood friends from western Tibet who had fled on their own as a spontaneous impulse to fulfill their dream of seeing the Dalai Lama, directly over the mountains from Tibet to India: the rest had all left Tibet for India via Nepal. This was done with a so-called ‘guide’. These are Tibetans who have previously been to India themselves, thus knowing how to get there presumingly without being caught. Due to the dangers involved in the process of fleeing, and the additional dangers of aiding other Tibetans to flee to exile, the fees these guides charge were, according to my informants, very high.

The majority of the interviewees had first traveled to Lhasa in order to find a guide willing to take them through the border. My informants stated that they paid from 10 500 Yuan and up to as much as 28 000 Yuan as payments to these guides. Most of my informants

experienced this as a considerable financial burden, as many of them were nomads with limited financial resources. Many had therefore taken on paid labor in Lhasa, working for several months in order to be able to pay the required fees. Others had to borrow from various family members. Many even stated that they also when having reached the Tibetan Reception Center in Nepal continued to feel unsafe, and feared that the Nepali police would come and arrest them so that they could hand them over to the Chinese authorities.

Many applied sophisticated strategies of how they had been able to fool both Chinese and Nepali police and other authorities, during the fleeing as well as upon arrival to Nepal, in order to succeed with their traveling and avoid problems.

For instance, several of the political refugees that I interviewed had faced severe challenges of surveillance upon release from prison due to something they called “political restrictions”. This implies amongst other things that former political prisoners are required to do weekly reports to the local police stations, scheduling their movements, travelling, work situation, day-to-day activities, and overall actions as a means of monitoring. Furthermore, they were also required to have special SIM-cards which were being closely monitored by the military and the police. This situation obviously poses a severe challenge to the practical matter of fleeing, which must happen in the secret. However, several of the political refugees solved these problems by convincing their local police that they planned to go to the nomadic areas, which normally are highly remote, mountainous regions, thus without police stations, phone, or internet coverage, to work as nomads, while what they really did was to flee into exile. Other informants experienced robberies and thefts by Nepali military when having crossed the border. One informant told me how had heard about this problem before he left his village, and had thus tried to solve this potential issue by rolling the little cash that he had in metal foil and stuffed it in a tube of tooth paste.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has critically discussed and analyzed the Chinese development processes in Tibet out from a power and post-development theoretical framework. The analysis has been grounded on a number of empirical, qualitative, in-depth interviews with Tibetan recent arrived refugees during a four month fieldwork in Dharamsala, northern India. This particular group of informants stands in a unique position as they enjoy from the freedom of speech and expression in India, while at the same time having direct, first-hand experiences from the ongoing situation in Tibet. In line with the critical tradition of a post-development theoretical logic, my attempt has been to scrutinize to which extent, and in which ways, the practical undertaking of Chinese development policies in Tibet could be seen as exercising different forms of ‘power’. This has been a necessary approach in order to adequately understand the other aim of scrutiny of this thesis: to which extent the Chinese development processes in Tibet have been successful in winning popular support by Tibetans, and why.

The empirical findings of this research project have first and foremost addressed four different aspects relevant to the understanding of development in Tibet under the PRC. These have been 1) the Comfortable Housing Program, 2) the limited benefits of highway infrastructure construction, 3) limited access to education, and assimilation, as well as 4) political repression, and the reasons for fleeing from Tibet. We have seen that the Chinese development policies in Tibet have not been successful in winning a high degree of popular support among the Tibetans interviewed in this study.

The Comfortable Housing Program was seen as a mere ‘show off’ for the CCP to gain outside recognition. The large investments in high way and railway infrastructure was seen as disconnected from human well-being and ‘development’, and its potentially positive impacts on the ‘agency’ and individual freedoms for local Tibetans were halted and diminished by the excessive presence of military checkpoints, general travel restrictions for Tibetans and increased demands for special travel permits to do short and long distance travel within the country. While some informants stated that they thought the CCP had improved the school system so a certain extent, the majority felt excluded from taking on basic and higher

education up to certain grades because the language of instruction continued to be in Chinese instead of Tibetan. This could be seen as a strategy of cultural and linguistic assimilation, and many informants felt that the CCP and the PRC did not show sufficient respect, interest or regard of the Tibetan culture, language and traditional values. This could be put in a larger historic context where many indigenous peoples living as ethnic minorities under strong nation-states like the PRC, has been subjected to similar practices of assimilation through language. Political repression should not be seen in isolation to development processes, as political participation has become an important field of scrutiny within Development Studies. In the case of Tibet, severe limitations in basic civil and political rights, leading among other things to what appears to be a complete lack of ‘political spaces’ where local Tibetans legitimately and openly could have expressed their political views and aspirations. In that way political repression could be seen as a severe obstacle to aspects of human development. A large variety of different kinds of power was exercised in the implementation of certain CCP development project. This is a contradiction to their expressed strategy of putting ‘people first’ in their current development campaign in Tibet. Fleeing Tibet could be seen as a form of political resistance, and the ongoing wave of self-immolations could be seen as a way in which Tibetans attempt to regain their ‘political voice’, as well as creating a ‘political space’ which do not appear to be possible in many other ways.

Although other relevant and interesting aspects of the Chinese development policies in Tibet could have been addressed and scrutinized, these topics evolved as the most central empirical findings in this particular research project. In order to obtain a complete and comprehensive picture of the multifaceted and complex meanings and implications of the Chinese development policies in Tibet, I argue that further research is required.

This thesis has argued that power is a multifaceted concept, and has distinguished four different forms of such. The first and less complex form is seen as the first-dimensional power (Dahl), presented as ‘an intuitive understanding’ of the term, or ‘power over’. We have seen how the second-dimensional power view (Bacharach and Baratz) radically broadens up the term by also taking into account the decision making process, and the process of deciding what would be put on the political agenda. The third-dimensional kind of power (Lukes) furthers the power debate beyond the decision making table, arguing that conflicts of interest which do not reach the decision making level also could entail exercises of power, thus elaborating on our understanding of ‘conflict’. The fourth form of power is seen as ‘discursive’ (Foucault): a subtle, sophisticated and almost omnipresent ‘power’ which shapes

our actions, thinking and reflections, amongst other things through ‘discourses of truth’. Such discourses could also be understood as taken-for-granted assumptions, norms and valuations which are not subjected to adequate problematization.

We have also seen how the term ‘development’ is a highly subjective concept, with differing and contested definitions. This thesis has argued that practical and theoretical development work should not be seen as freed from underlying ideological assumptions as well as normative valuations, although ‘development’ sometimes presents itself as a politically and value-neutral pursuit of increased human ‘well-being’. Precisely because of the ‘unquestioned desirability’ of development: it becomes particularly relevant to analyze the concept according to power-theories.

I could have grounded this study on a larger amount of previous empirical research on development in Tibet. However, due to the sensitive nature of my research topic, I found it more appropriate and important to elaborate on the use and application of power and post-development theory, as I see that there has existed a gap in the existing literature with this regards.

The post-development school of thought has highlighted that what is considered to be ‘increased human well-being’ might differ radically from community to community. By relating the development concept to the history of colonialism, the post-development school of thought argues that it often exists a difference between the normative valuation of ‘human well-being’ among powerful nation-states, and the normative valuation of ‘human well-being’ among the respective indigenous populations and ethnic minorities. The empirical findings in this thesis, dealing with the Chinese development processes in Tibet, support this theoretical position. The nation-states normally have the agency, decision-making power and financial resources to hand out practical development projects on the ground. This in turn, might at worst result in a decreased human agency, a violation on human dignity and a diminishing effect on indigenous empowerment. This appears to some extent to be the case in terms of development in Tibet under the CCP.

This research suggests that the Chinese development policies in Tibet have failed in winning high levels of popular support among Tibetans on the ground. This is interesting because it is the Tibetans whom these policies assumingly are meant to benefit. The majority of the Tibetan informants interviewed in this project demonstrated high levels of skepticism, and discontent towards the Chinese development policies. The ‘unquestioned desirability’ of

development, which is seen in this thesis as a Foucaultian ‘discourse of truth’, could be have been utilized by the CCP in winning broadened outside recognition of their housing policies in general and of the overall development processes in Tibet in particular. However, if the CCP sees the economic policies and the CHP in Tibet as a strategy to ease Tibetan discontent towards the PRC government through enhancing the quality of lives for Tibetans, this research indicates that they have failed in that pursuit. If the CCP aims at halting local Tibetan resistance against the PRC and their desire for greater autonomy and political freedoms, it is difficult to see how this could be pursued through the current practice of development policy implementation.

This research indicates that the Tibetan discontent towards the PRC is not limit to failed economic policies and regional inequalities in economic growth and material well-being. Several informants stated that they valued freedom and human rights higher than material comforts and economic improvements. The logic that human rights is promoted through economic growth and ‘development’ was met with incomprehension and suspicion among my informants. On the other side, certain interviewees argued that they say human capacities to be halted through the violations of human rights in general, and through the exclusion from educational opportunities in particular. Lack of freedom was seen as an obstacle to well-being and social improvements in Tibet. As stated in the above discussion, my informant “Tenzin” believed that the reason why he was able to take on education in India was because India, as compared to Tibet, had freedom and democracy. This logic strongly contradicts the CCP’s strategy of promoting ‘human rights’ through ‘development’.

Furthermore, the heavy investments in high roads and railway infrastructure in Tibet has had a limited positive effect on the agency, well-being and happiness of single individual Tibetans. The right to freedom of movement is violated through increased restrictions on free travel; continued presence of military checkpoints; as well as through increased requirements of travel permits. Some informants saw these new and additional requirements as a result (‘punishment’) of the increased Tibetan popular resistance towards the PRC since 2011, exemplified with the wave of self-immolations. Most of my informants did not see how highway and railroad infrastructure construction related to ‘development’ and human well-being at all.

Some informants pointed out how the CCP grants financial aid and provides houses through the CHP through what by some was seen as ‘bribery’. By this, it was referred to the

conditions on which the aid and housing was offered. The conditions that were pointed out was that the recipients were obliged to sign written documents stating that they do not support the Dalai Lama, but that they support the work and policies of the CCP. Although further research is needed in order to find out the frequency and scope of such a practice, this could be seen as a way in which ‘development’ could be actively used to violate basic human rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

Many expressed a deep desire to pursue modern education thought in the Tibetan language, and for many informants the limited educational opportunities was one of several reasons behind their decision of moving to India. As education and literacy are conventional components of the mainstream understandings of human development, this research thus shows that there seems to exist a relation between limited human development and motivation behind Tibetan’s choice for fleeing. However, no informants stated that educational repression and linguistic assimilation was the only reason behind their decision of leaving Tibet. By drawing on the theoretical work of resistance researcher James C. Scott, this thesis thus suggests that the case of Tibetans fleeing to India to pursue modern education thought in the Tibetan language, could be seen as a small-scale form of political ‘everyday resistance’.

Statistically, the PRC and its development work in Tibet might appear to have had a remarkable positive effect for Tibetans. They have invested a massive amount of resources with the aim of enhance the development in Tibetan areas. Costly and prestigious development projects such as the construction of railways and high ways, the building of telephone lines, water systems, postal systems, free housing to Tibetan families and direct financial subsidies. This thesis does not reject that some of these investments and project might have had certain positive effects for the well-being of local Tibetans. What I do argue is that these statistics and figures seem to be misleading because they do not show *the ways* in which some of these policies are implemented and *how* the implementations are experienced by Tibetan recipients.

This study has argued that increased insights into the practical effects of the Chinese development policies in Tibet could be drawn when human rights considerations are taken into account. The empirical findings in this research support the idea that the CCP have not been effective in improving the overall happiness and content of local people in Tibet. The existing realities of the continued waves of Tibetans fleeing to exile, as well as the wave of

Tibetan self-immolations, confirms this position. Freedom and the sense of being treated with respect and human dignity appears to be essential for the Tibetan experience of happiness.

Drawing on Foucault's position, I argue that 'where there is power, there is resistance'. Undignified development without freedom, grounded in a sense of cultural superiority on the side of the major development agency – the CCP – which in addition stripes Tibetans of basic human rights and real 'choices': is arguably likely to 1) increase the Tibetan political resistance towards the PRC government; 2) strengthen the support for the exile cause for greater autonomy among individuals in Tibet and abroad; 3) result in outbursts of political anti-government protests; and even a possibility of 4) leading to more self-immolations.

As a country which is characterized not only by immense economic progress, but also by a very poor human rights accord, it becomes inadequate to analyze development processes in isolation to the political and human repression on the ground. The intersections between development and human rights in the case of Tibet need to be addressed in further research.

This study has demonstrated that human development should be seen as intrinsically connected to a feeling of human dignity and freedom. Further research is needed to broaden up these insights.

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