

DISTORTED DEVELOPMENT

CHINESE DISCOURSE ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN TIBET

February 2021

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Distorted Development: Chinese Discourse on the Right to Development and its Implementation in Tibet



Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is a registered non-governmental human rights organisation established in January 1996 in Dharamsala (India) with the mission to protect the human rights of the Tibetan people in Tibet and promote the principles of democracy in the exile Tibetan community.

The centre is entirely run and staffed by Tibetans in exile. TCHRD's work entails monitoring, research, translation, documentation of human rights violations in Tibet. The centre conducts regular, systematic investigations of human rights abuses in Tibet and publishes an annual report, thematic reports, translated testimony of victims of human rights violations, electronic newsletters, and briefings on human rights issues that confront Tibetans inside Tibet.

The centre generates awareness of a wide range of issues relating to human rights and democracy through both grassroots and diplomatic means, using regional and international human rights mechanisms as well as community-based awareness campaigns.

The TCHRD logo features the image of a white dove rising out of the flames. The dove and olive branch are universal emblems of peace. The flames, drawn in traditional Tibetan style, represent the suffering of the Tibetan people, as well as the devastating and purifying force of truth.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The extension of state power, deeply penetrating into every aspect of Tibetan society and life in the name of development, has become the template for China's model of statist, top-down development that it now seeks to promote and see proliferated worldwide. Thus, the Tibetan experience of development can offer lessons for the world. China has promoted a distorted definition of development, manipulating its meaning and steering the resources and processes assigned to it far away from any outcome that can conceivably be called development. This should be of concern to the development community globally, and the consequences clearly understood.

China is deeply committed to being both developed and developing, a power that projects its spheres of influence across Eurasia, belting and roading worldwide. An exemplary leader, who can offer nations not only its development model - the supposed key to its own success - but also the funds and resources to back it up. China already vigorously exports its development model, most intensively through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) established in 2013. Having created its International Development Cooperation Agency in 2018, Chinese investment in global infrastructure and development projects has steadily risen to encompass a great number of activities in dozens of countries in the developing world, with the financial commitment to such projects being enormous. In 2018, Beijing made a pledge at the China-Africa Forum for Cooperation of US\$ 60 billion for investment in African development (Tubai). In 2019, Chinese contractors were involved in as many as 59 different large-scale infrastructure projects in Latin America, worth up to US\$ 86 billion (Brown). China is now a key and influential donor to the developing world (Neuweg).

Indeed, China's growing influence over the developing world means it now represents a serious alternative to the Western bloc typically associated with development. China's leadership in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) see great value in the utility and exportability of its development model as "a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence" (qtd. In Economy, *Yes, Virginia*).

As diplomatic and economic relations between the Global South and the United States have become increasingly strained in recent years and governments in the West are faced with cutting development budgets to deal with the cost of the COVID-19 pandemic (Wintour), China's influence over the developing world will continue to grow. If China is going to lead, the development community needs to properly and rigorously understand what it is offering.

China's development model is a promise of a fast track to development bypassing the slow and complex work of building on comparative advantage, the conventional foundation of development strategies. Chinese development instead focuses on selective, intensive investment in (typically urban) enclaves that enriches a few while excluding others. The prospect is a short cut to wealth accumulation, at least for those in control of the enclave land and resources.

China's preference is for uncomplicated megaprojects, built speedily, with not only Chinese finance but also a Chinese construction workforce.

Governments worldwide are understandably attracted to the prospect of a short cut to development and modernity, via Chinese "leap-over" development (qtd. in Global Times) financed by transfer payments. However, developing countries worldwide, including the G-77, should know what they are signing on to.

Over many decades, China has imposed its model of development on Tibet, informed by its redefinition of the right to development. Scrutiny of China's development discourse and learning from its application in Tibet provide stark warnings against the proliferation of China's development model. China's conception and implementation of the right to development highlighted by the Tibetan experience expose that the adverse consequences of the Chinese development approach are significant for two core reasons for the integrity of international human rights, and the meaningful development of peoples.

Firstly, China seeks not only to offer an alternative model of development globally, but also a Chinese interpretation of development as the most important human right. This conceptualisation of the right to development threatens to undermine other fundamental political, civil and cultural rights by making them subservient to economic rights. In addition, China's state centric approach to development, and definition of development as equating economic growth is a perverse contradiction to the right to development as defined by the UN. Indeed, China's actions within the framework of the UN in recent years have already shown its desire to change norms and regimes pertaining to the right to development to undermine broader human rights in favour of its own contradictory human rights discourse.

Secondly, the Chinese model for development, when practically implemented through a statist, top-down model, is inconsiderate of, and as a result damaging to, the collective rights of marginalised and minority groups. China's model, formulated in Beijing, is driven by state interests and political agendas that seek, in the case of Tibet, to assimilate the region and its people into the framework of the People's Republic of China (PRC) rather than to meaningfully improve the lives of Tibetans. Tibet and development have become synonymous for China, with almost every action of the state defined and justified as progress for development. China has sought to use Tibet to vaunt the supposedly exemplary Chinese development model and the region has become somewhat of a laboratory for Chinese development projects and approaches, as well as a showroom for developing countries delegations to see what Chinese development can achieve.

In this context, highlighting the multitude of failures and consequences of the Chinese development model in Tibet has far-reaching implications for exposing the risks of, and undermining China's development approach more widely. While official Chinese publications offer attractive macroeconomic growth figures and other statistical data to extol the PRC model's success, greater examination of the model's implementation in Tibet, and its economic,

cultural and political consequences on the Tibetan people, reveal clearly damaging and negative implications.

Around the world developing countries have looked deeply into the unforeseen consequences and perverse outcomes of this reductionist, over-simplified model. Growth inevitably benefits those already endowed with the factors conducive to growth, such as location in a central hub rather than a remote rural district; and to those educated in one of the languages of global commerce, rather than a regional language. Thus growth, decade after decade, has benefited the urban elites with formal education, and widening inequality. This narrow definition of development is thoroughly outmoded and perpetuates ongoing failure to deliver to rural communities the many human rights embedded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Tibetan experience of Chinese development offers important lessons of the model's limitations, as well as greater understanding and thus caution within the developing world of embracing the Chinese model. In addition, by highlighting the failings of Chinese development on Tibetan peoples, awareness can be raised of Tibet's plight and China can be encouraged to take a new approach to development in Tibet.

There is a concerning lack of attention on the right to development within the international human rights community. Understanding the Tibetan experience of development can raise the alarm among human rights organisations who have largely failed to engage with development rights discourse up until now: development can no longer be simply a third generational addition to human rights frameworks and advocacy that focus on political and civil wrongdoing as prime. China's current pattern of rights infringements in Tibet, outlined in detail here, stem from China's interpretation, implementation and desired outcomes of development.

China is not simply breaching political and civil rights and justifying it with development but increasingly breaking political and civil rights in the name of development as it forms the basis for China's Tibet strategy. The assimilation of Tibet into the Chinese state is derived from its development policy and as such, human rights organisations and advocates must too ensure that development does not merely remain on the fringes of human rights advocacy but instead, build a robust framework of monitoring, scrutiny and accountability of China's development policy much the same as exists for political and civil rights.

II. RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

As part of exporting its model of development to the developing world, China has also sought to reshape the institutions and regimes of the international system pertaining to human rights to better fit its own definitions. China has seen increasing success in promoting and exporting its own version of human rights both in terms of norms, but also within the framework of international rights regimes. Indeed, the right to development in particular is a discourse area where China has focused attention to assert and emphasise its own interpretation of the right to development. China's efforts to reshape human rights norms and institutions relating to the right to development are as consequential as the actual spread of China's model of development for

the impact the proliferation of Chinese official discourse would have on redefining and undermining the concept of universal human rights.

II.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Development is an important yet often ignored or dismissed human right, that has historically been the source of considerable scholarly and policy contestation (Ibhawoh). The adoption by the UN Declaration on the Right to Development (DRD) in 1986 did little to abate debate as to whether development can even exist as a right, though it is notable that the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) now takes this debate as resolved, following consensus for the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in 1993 and subsequent reaffirmations (Sengupta, *Conceptualizing the right to development for the twenty-first century*).

Development is, as far as international law is concerned, a human right. But what does this actually mean? Fundamentally, why is the right to development significant, despite garnering substantial controversy? Understanding the importance of the right to development is key to understanding why Chinese efforts to reshape it are indeed so significant, and so consequential to human rights.

Civil and political rights, referred to as ‘first generation’ rights, have often been seen as the focus of Western understandings of human rights. Literature and policy in the West often seek to emphasise the rights and liberties of individuals usually through the limiting of government intervention in people’s lives. In contrast, tackling socioeconomic rights often require the intervention of states. However, this focus on political and civil rights has led to a dismissal of socioeconomics, such as poverty and inequality, as a human rights priority in the West (Moyn).

The lack of Western literature on socio-economic rights fails to do justice to how important these rights are. One of the clearest ways to see this is through how a lack of access to these rights has an everyday impact on such a large number of people around the world. In 2017, half of the world’s population (c. 3.8 billion people) were too poor to receive essential health care, while according to the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 30 percent of world population is near, or already living in poverty (qtd in. *UDHR at 70*). These statistics alone make it clear how relevant the protection and fulfilment of these rights, such as UDHR Article 25 (the Right to Adequate Standard of Living) are in real terms to such a significant proportion of the planet.

In addition, socio-economic rights are vital for ensuring the fulfilment of other rights. The OHCHR states that poverty for example “places many other rights listed in the UDHR out of reach” (qtd in. *UDHR at 70*). Socio-economic rights are about fulfilling basic human needs, required for human dignity. For example, without the right to basic food and medical care, provided under UDHR Article 25, there can be little expectation of the full enjoyment of an individual’s civil and political rights. Therein lies the intrinsic underpinning of the human rights framework: that no right is more significant, important, or indeed expendable than any other and hence, why socioeconomic rights are just as important as civil and political rights.

The right to development is specifically accompanied by a great deal of controversy over whether development can exist as a right. Beyond the Western scepticism of socioeconomic rights highlighted above, critics of development's legitimacy as a right cite a lack of mechanics of enforceability, accountability, compliance, or measurement of progress (Ibhawoh). The right to development is also challenged as to whether development, as a claim, can be feasibly realised at all. Despite these criticisms, it is important not to disregard it as insignificant to the international community. These dismissals and critiques are ultimately based upon a lack of 'tangible' outcomes. However, to dismiss the right to development on this basis is to ignore the significant impact that conceptualisations and discourses of the right to development have for informing and shaping opinion and creating consensus on issues. Indeed, Bonny Ibhawoh states the right to development is useful "in institutionalising a normative global regime for national and international responsibility in addressing fundamental needs for a decent existence" (p.88). Arjun Sengupta, the former UN Independent Expert on the Right to Development corroborates this, that even without tangible outcomes, by understanding development as a human right, it sets "universal standards of achievement and norms of behaviour for all States", imposing "inviolable obligations on all of them to make those rights achievable" (Sengupta, *On the Theory and Practice of the Right to Development* p.845).

Whether or not the right to development has tangible outcomes, it remains important for informing and institutionalising norms, creating opinion and informing global regimes of national and international responsibility relating to development. Decades of contention, rather than making the right to development irrelevant, has resulted in a redefinition of development emphasising the full spectrum of human needs, codesign of projects by communities and donors, and a long list of development outcomes embodied in the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. However, if China is able to successfully reshape international interpretations of the right to development to better fit its own discourse, this will result in a shifting of international norms and priorities pertaining not just to economic rights, but also other human rights in a way that will undermine the protections of other rights, and in doing so, damage the integrity of international human rights institutions as a whole.

II.2 CONTRADICTIONS OF CHINESE DISCOURSE

The United Nations General Assembly passed the Declaration on the Right to Development (hereinafter DRD) in 1986 establishing development as an inalienable right to all peoples. Development itself is defined in the DRD's preamble as a "comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom". The right to development is unique to other human rights in that it defines a particular process of development which improves well-being and expands freedoms, as the right. As such, the right can be articulated as a process of peoples "having their living standards raised and capacity to improve their position strengthened, leading to the improvement of the well-being of the entire population" (Sengupta, *On the Theory and Practice of the Right to Development* p.848).

The right to development and DRD are both expansive and while all nuances cannot be discussed here, Bonny Ibhawoh identifies four significant aspects of the right to development's conceptualisation within the DRD by the UN Independent Expert and the Working Group on the Right to Development that are relevant to this report: firstly, that the DRD conceptualises development as a process that facilitates the realisation of human rights. Secondly, that the DRD recognises the significance of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights. Thirdly, that the right is both an individual and collective one. Finally, that the duty bearers for the right are not just states but also the international community (*The Right to Development: The Politics and Polemics of Power and Resistance* pp.83-84).

Two further aspects of the DRD relevant to this report are as follows; firstly, the DRD states in Article 1.1 that "all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised". This clearly lays out the principle that equal attention must be given to all rights which is later expanded upon as "all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent." A second relevant aspect of the DRD can be found in Article 1.2 that the right to development "implies the full realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination, which includes, subject to the relevant provisions of both International Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources".

The Independent Expert on the Right to Development Arjun Sengupta, in conceptualising development for the 21st century, articulated the work of the noted economist Amartya Sen and the Working Group on the Right to Development in introducing the 'human development approach' to the right to development. Sen proposes that 'well-being' in the context of the right to development means expanding freedoms that allow for the expansion of capabilities of people to allow them to lead the type of life they value (*Development as Freedom*). Sengupta understands this to mean "capabilities are also instrumental to the further expansion of other capabilities: being educated and healthy permits them, for example, to enjoy their freedoms. The free agency of people who enjoy civil and political rights is essential for the process" (*On the Theory and Practice of the Right to Development* p.851). Once again showing the intrinsic link of all human rights, and the mutual requirement of all rights that for one to be achieved, all must be fulfilled. Processes of development should promote freedom and participatory capabilities for peoples, and hence go beyond basic economic understandings of well-being based around rising incomes, GNP growth and urbanisation for example. Or what Sen refers to as a narrower view of development.

In view of the contents of the DRD as well as its conceptualisation by the Independent Expert Arjun Sengupta, and the Working Group on the Right to Development, there are a number of contradictions apparent in Chinese discourse on development that show the limitations of this interpretation of the right, which threaten to undermine other rights if it proliferates.

Chinese discourse on development is almost entirely focused on fulfilling the right to development in economic consumption terms. Chinese assessments of development are

through measures such as GDP growth, rising incomes and urbanisation. The belief that development is therefore an economic goal achieved through economic means, is clear from numerous official Chinese publications. A 2016 white paper by the State Council Information Office on China's Progress in Poverty Reduction and Human Rights states that the China is "committed to a development concept that puts people's rights to subsistence and to development first" (*China's Progress in Poverty Reduction and Human Rights*). Chinese state publications draw a great deal of attention to what it refers to as right to 'subsistence and development' in which poverty is interpreted as the main obstacle to people achieving development. Another Chinese white paper from 2016 on China's 'contribution' to the right to development explicitly states that "Poverty is the biggest obstacle to human rights" (SCIO, *The Right to Development: China's Philosophy, Practice and Contribution*). Whilst acknowledging that poverty is clearly a major issue for people all over the world, the significance placed on its alleviation in Chinese discourses on human rights shows clearly a conceptualisation that development is achieved through purely economic terms; China perceives its success in alleviating poverty as akin to having achieved development. And perceives achieving development, as akin to fulfilling human rights. This however is a limited and flawed interpretation of how the right to development is reached.

Meaningful development process allows people learn to make meaningful choices, and are resourced to exercise agency, and then attain a wide range of material and nonmaterial goals (Ibhawoh; Sen; Sengupta). Thus, development is multi-dimensional. Globally, development is defined way beyond narrow metrics of macroeconomic growth and disposable income, which remain China's focus. The UN Human Development Reports, the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the 54 indicators of the Social Progress Index show how far China has fallen behind, with its fixation on economics. However, it cannot be understated how significant this flawed paradigm is to Chinese understandings of development.

The 2016 white paper referenced above states "Poverty reduction is the most telling evidence of China's progress in human rights". And also, "China's poverty reduction actions, both solid and effective, have made a great contribution to the cause of international poverty reduction, and achieved remarkable results in world human rights development" (SCIO, *China's Progress in Poverty Reduction and Human Rights*). The Chinese understanding that human rights are achieved through almost entirely economic means, most notably eliminating poverty, underpins both China's discourse on the right to development, and also its practical implementation through its development model. China believes that it "follows a sustainable and resilient socio-economic development path", having "established a new model of development- oriented poverty alleviation with Chinese characteristics" (SCIO, *China's Progress in Poverty Reduction and Human Rights*). However, this is a limited interpretation of human rights, and the process and means through which development is achieved, not least because it firmly prioritises economic rights above others while simultaneously claiming that other human rights, whether political, civil or cultural, are contingent upon economic goals, namely poverty alleviation. The issues with this are twofold:

Firstly, the claim economic development is more important than other rights is in clear contradiction to the DRD and the founding principles of the right to development. The DRD makes clear that “The pursuit of economic growth is not an end in itself” (OHCHR, *Development is a human right*) and that processes of development must give equal attention to fulfilling, promoting and protecting all human rights. The DRD’s preamble states that “the promotion of, respect for and enjoyment of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot justify the denial of other human rights and fundamental freedom” and Article 6 of the DRD stresses that “all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and inter-dependent”. Indeed, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has raised issue with China’s inflation of economic development, stating in 2009 “economic growth in minority regions, *ipso facto*, is not tantamount to the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights” (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*). China’s development discourse therefore contradicts the DRD, and its proliferation would undermine the very foundations that the right to development is built upon. Widespread acceptance of an interpretation of the right to development that ignores one of the most fundamental aspects of the right would simply work to make the DRD, and the accompanying human rights regime of development, effectively meaningless.

The second major limitation of Chinese conceptualisations of development in wholly economic terms is that, to reduce development to a purely economic process, and then to subsequently claim “The rights to subsistence and development are the primary, basic human rights” (qtd. in *Beijing Declaration*), is to make way for the undermining of other essential political and civil human rights. There can be no doubt that in Chinese discourse, other human rights are clearly of much less worth to people than economic rights. Therefore, their protection and fulfilment are of less importance and they can be justifiably sacrificed in favour of economic rights. This runs the risk of allowing states to “deflect attention from domestic, social and political obligations while resisting pressures for reform” (Ibhawoh p.95) through using progress in economic development as a justification. The proliferation of China’s discourse on the right to development would greatly impact on the ability to hold states accountable for political and civil human rights violations as the Chinese understanding allows for these to be dismissed through the vaunting of economic progress. Indeed, China frequently detracts from criticism of its governance and human rights record in Tibet through rhetoric associated with economic development.

Chinese discourse on development is also limited by its conception that development processes are best served through state-centric, top-down policy implementation (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). Rather than encouraging individuals and communities to actively participate in formulating and overseeing development processes, the preference of Chinese discourse is to “collapse ‘community’ into the state and the state into the (current) regime” (Ibhawoh p.94). Tibet illustrates the flaws of this development strategy well; the aims and methods of development projects to be implemented in Tibet are drawn up and actioned by the central government often with little consultation with local officials, or indeed the local Tibetan populace. As a result, little attention is paid for example, to the particularities of the local economy or culture (Lixiong). While the consequences of this top-down approach will be

highlighted in greater detail later in this report, it is important to note that such a conceptualisation of development contradicts the DRD. Article 1.2 of the DRD states that the right to development “implies the full realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination and the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources.” Even in the narrowest interpretation of ‘self-determination’, Article 1.2 of the DRD provides peoples with the right to participate, facilitate and benefit from the design and practical implementation of development policies that affect them. This, however, as numerous sources have noted, is lacking from China’s own interpretation of the right to development (Ibhawoh; Lixiong; T. Nyima; Tsering).

II.3 REDEFINITION OF RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

The consequences that China’s development discourse holds for undermining international human rights regimes are widespread. However, China has already made considerable progress in reshaping institutions to fit its interpretation of development.

China’s interpretation of the right to development is a clear sign of how it reshapes and promotes its own version of human rights (Kinzelbach). In the face of Western criticism of its human rights record, China now looks to deploy a counter-narrative that emphasises economic development over civil and political freedoms to dismiss scrutiny, while undermining the legitimacy of these other rights (AFP).

While this is certainly not a new strategy and China is not the only state to try and use economic development to dismiss human rights violations, of particular risk to the legitimacy and integrity of modern human rights regimes is the increasing success and momentum that China now sees in having its interpretation accepted in international forums, and even integrated into the framework of human rights institutionally. This threatens to undermine these institutions and bring international human rights laws into disrepute, which in turn would lead to further, more widespread risks and violations to the political and civil rights of people throughout the world.

For example, despite the numerous flaws of China’s interpretation of the right to development, in 2017 a Chinese proposed resolution on the right to development was passed at the UN. The resolution to the Human Rights Council entitled ‘The Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of All Human Rights’ defined development as both the most important human right, but also the pre-condition for the enjoyment of all other human rights (*Human Rights Council Adopts China-Proposed Resolution*). Despite the contradictions of this with both the UDHR and the DRD, and the risks prioritising economic rights above political and civil rights holds for undermining the latter, the resolution received co-sponsorship from more than 70 states and is now official UN policy.

Further evidence of efforts to redefine and weaken human rights institutions came in 2019 when China proposed a resolution on the right to development entitled ‘Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights’. The resolution sought to emphasise China’s state-centric strategy of development by calling inter-governmental dialogue the only option for

multilateral engagement on development, and hence privileging the state over individuals and local communities in the development process (Kothari). Again, China saw its redefinition endorsed by the Human Rights Council and accepted into the framework of international human rights (Mingmei).

The former UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and Social Policy and former Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing with the Human Rights Council Miloon Kothari, stated that resolutions to the Human Rights Council “must rely primarily on the available precise language and detailed interpretation of human rights standards” (*China’s Trojan Horse*). However, as is evident from these resolutions, China has no reservations in reinterpreting the language and norms of international human rights in such a way that risks neutering the capabilities of human rights regimes to actually protect people (Piccone).

In addition, another implication of the meaning China attaches to the right to development means that not only does China now define itself as a country that does development work globally and invests in development projects throughout the developing world, but that this gives China “development interests”, which constitute part of its national interests and thus are included in China’s military ambit.

The 2020 draft amendment to China’s National Defence Law has four new words added to key provisions- those four characters are “发展利益, development interests”. “When the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, security and *development interests* of the People's Republic of China are threatened, the State, in accordance with the Constitution and laws, will carry out a general or partial mobilisation” (qtd. in Eryi). Exactly what “development interests” are, and how they might be defined could be interpreted broadly.

China’s Defence Minister Wei Fenghe commented, “With the development and changes in the world and national conditions, the Party and military conditions, the current national defence law can no longer fully adapt to the new tasks and requirements of national defence and military construction in the new era, and is in urgent need of revision and improvement”. Wei added, “China is in an important period of *strategic opportunity for development*...there is an urgent need to make corresponding adjustments to the defence policy system to provide a legal basis for building a strong and consolidated modern national defence and effectively safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests” (qtd. in Eryi).

China’s power projection, backed by the reach of its upgraded military, is now extended by recourse to development as a key marker of the national interest. The concept of development, despite the rhetoric of benevolence, is clearly done by China, for China, part of an expanding sphere of influence.

III. DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET

Few places have seen Chinese conceptualisations of development have such a vast, all-encompassing impact on them as Tibet. Scrutinising what Chinese development strategy in Tibet looks like in theory, rhetoric and practice offers important insights as to the realities of the development model China now seeks to export globally. By Tibet, this report refers to ‘ethnographic Tibet’ consisting of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) with a population of around 3.4 million Tibetans, as well as the Tibetan regions of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan which collectively home around another 3.4 million ethnic Tibetans.

III.1 GOVERNMENT RHETORIC

Central to Chinese development policy in Tibet is of course economic development. Numerous official White Papers reveal how, for the Chinese government, Tibet and economic development are rhetorically synonymous with the former rarely mentioned without self-praise for the perceived achievements and benefits of the latter (SCIO, *Tibet’s Path to Development*; SCIO qtd in Yamei). This is evidence of a popular trend in official, Chinese development discourse around Tibet that seeks to assert an impression of Chinese benevolence, patronage and philanthropy towards Tibet.

Indeed, to look at the GDP growth of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), it is easy to see why observers may vaunt the success of China’s development policy and accept the charitable, benevolent image China seeks to define itself with. Official sources note the TAR’s GDP grew by 9 percent in 2019 and rural per capita disposable income by 13 percent (Huaxia). The TAR, official sources say, has also managed per annum GDP growth of around 10 percent for over 25 years (Li). State news outlets emphasise and propagate this narrative. Chinese state media in August 2019 stated that due to the assertion of Chinese authority over Tibet, the “living condition has since improved dramatically” and that “reform unlocked the region’s potential for development” (Hu and Zhao).

China’s assertions of success in development through fixation on economic growth in the TAR is misleading, however. Not only do they contradict development as understood by the OHCHR (*Development is a human right*) and ignore that half of all Tibetans do not actually live in the TAR. Instead in the dismembered regions of Tibet located in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan (Samphel, Tsering and Desal), they also fail to reflect the reality of how China’s development strategy has impacted the lives of Tibetans who have not felt the benefits of GDP growth and continue to lag behind the rest of China in a number of economic welfare measures. Tibetans continue to have the lowest human development index (HDI) rating of China’s 31 provinces (Global Data Lab), as well as a life expectancy almost 10 years shorter than the Chinese average, estimated in 2018 to be 68.2 years (Liangyu) compared to a national average of 76.7 (Lin). Rural per capita income in the TAR (which is particularly significant as Tibetans make up around 92 percent of the TAR’s rural population) in 2018 was 11,450 yuan (Hu and Zhao), equivalent to around 1,700 US dollars. China’s per capita meanwhile exceeded US\$ 10,000 in 2019 (PTI).

Hence, assessing development through purely economic means can quite easily lead to contradictory outcomes.

Despite this, rhetoric emphasising growth-centric measures of development are vitally important to the Chinese government in aiding their position in Tibet. By having Tibet viewed domestically and internationally as a development success story, Beijing hopes to resolve the problems that Tibet poses: for instance, numerous sources note that by framing its authority in Tibet through economic developmental terms, Beijing is able to use economic growth as an expression of Chinese legitimacy, helping it to create social stability domestically and build support internationally for Chinese sovereignty over Tibet (Ibhawoh; T. Nyima; Samphel, Tsering and Desal).

Ostensibly, the primary goal of the Chinese government's development policy in Tibet is to improve people's lives (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdai). Referred to recently by a senior CCP official visiting Tibet as a "people-centred development vision" through raising living standards and incomes (qtd. in Huaxia, *Top Political Advisor Stresses Consolidation*). This is of course, in line with the wider rhetoric of China's model of development in emphasising socio-economic rights and poverty elimination. The methods China uses to achieve these goals remain consistent: industrialisation, urbanisation, large-scale infrastructure projects and subsidisation are all key tactics by which it pursues development in Tibet and the majority of activities labelled as development can fall comfortably into one of these categories. However, it is questionable as to whether Beijing's development strategy has benefitted Tibetan peoples even marginally, or whether instead, it has exacerbated their problems in favour of state political agendas (Lafitte, Schneider and Felice) and the privileging of Han Chinese (Fischer), as is often the criticism levelled at Chinese development policy.

A core factor as to why development has largely failed to improve welfare and the lives of Tibetans in Tibet is because it was forced upon them from above, with little meaningful engagement and participation of the local people (Lixiong). China's development policy is fundamentally guided by the political and economic interests of the Chinese state (Tsering); the welfare of Tibetans is at best improved as a by-product of, and at worst, significantly damaged by the formulation of policy in Beijing that sees development as a means to achieve the outcomes of political stability, state security and cultural and ethnic assimilation of Tibet into the framework of the People's Republic of China (Barnett). Manufacturing a 'wild' Tibet for tourism and accessing Tibet's vast natural resource deposits also play a key role in guiding Chinese development spending (Qin and Zheng; Wang).

Thus, the failure of Chinese development policy to meaningfully engage Tibetans in development processes and to improve the quality of life in Tibet is because these outcomes were never the objective nor the priorities of China's development strategy for Tibet. Fundamentally, there is a stark contradiction between the 'people-centred vision' of development China ostensibly endorses, and the approach through which China actually formulates Tibetan development policy.

III.2 POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Policy for Tibet is devised at Work Forums attended by top central party leadership. The most recent, the Seventh Tibet Work Forum (TWF), was held in Beijing on 28 and 29 August 2020. First held in 1980, the TWF's are highly significant in devising and formulating China's development policy for Tibet and are attended by top party, government and military officials including President Xi Jinping. The high-level conference deals not only with the TAR, but since the Fifth Forum, also with the Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan (Tseten).

The nature of the Tibet Work Forum highlights the 'top-down' (also referred to as 'statist' or 'one-way') development approach of the Chinese government that (partly due to the authoritarian nature of the Chinese regime) oversees almost every step in the formulation of development policy from design, to implementation, to goals, crafted and coordinated by the central government in Beijing (Lafitte, *Seventh Tibet Work Forum*). Tibetans, and indeed other officially designated "ethnic minority groups" in PRC more widely, have development policy applied to them with little understanding or appreciation for their cultural or societal nuances and thus, contradicting any claim to be development centred around the people, fails to meet their needs (Lixiong). Highlighting the minor role Tibetan's play in their own development policies, the Seventh TWF was reported to have only one Tibetan, Pema Thinley, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress, in attendance (Tseten).

Hence, Beijing's understanding of development as a purely economic right articulates Tibet's development needs in purely economic terms. As such, Tibet's development goals generally focus on issues such as poverty alleviation, and GDP and income growth (Lafitte, *Seventh Tibet Work Forum*). In addition, the formulation of development policy at the national level means that development policy is heavily guided by the political goals, security agenda and economic interests of the state, that ultimately take precedent in creating development policy away from outcomes based upon meeting people's needs and improving welfare (Pan). Senior Chinese officials have repeatedly made clear how they view development policy as fundamental to furthering other political goals. Shan Wei, an analyst at the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore states that while in the past, Beijing has, when dealing with Tibet (and Xinjiang), sought to address its policies of security and development mutually in a strategy of "development for stability" it has now moved to a policy of "stability first" which further relegates the meaningful development of Tibetans as a desired objective, and emphasises security policy as the true guide of Chinese development strategy in Tibet (qtd. in Ho). In addition, a growing amount of development investment in Tibet is for fulfilling Han Chinese tourism demand (Wang) and resource extraction (Qin and Zheng), in correlation with growing Chinese investment in prospecting and developing access to Tibet's natural resources. Development infrastructure for these purposes offer little benefit or meaningful development to Tibetans.

Policies enacted by the Chinese government and labelled as development such as infrastructure construction, subsidisation, urbanisation and industrialisation follow a consistent pattern in how they are formulated and implemented by the Chinese state on Tibet. Railway construction is

currently at the forefront of development infrastructure in Tibet and provides a useful case study for understanding how development projects are consistently formulated and executed in Tibet more widely (T. Nyima, *Chinese Development in Tibet*). In 2019, China began work on the Sichuan-Tibet Railway to connect Chengdu to Lhasa. Expected to open in 2021, the project has been vaunted by the Chinese state as development (CGTN, *Xi Jinping stresses building high-quality Sichuan-Tibet Railway*), however, it is questionable whether the welfare and development of Tibetans is the railway's actual objective and whether the Tibetan people will get the benefits of the project. At a cost of US\$ 39.5 billion, the railway is a vast and ambitious undertaking with the ecological difficulties and challenges for construction posed by the terrain numerous and well documented (Ramachandran). The question as to why the Chinese government has deemed such a large investment on a single infrastructure project not only necessary, but also more essential than other development investments to raise the Human Development Index in Tibet (such as on health or education,) is an important one. The construction is justified in Chinese state media for the 'opening up' effect it will have in bridging Tibet to China's inland provinces and allowing the faster flow of goods and people between the two (Huaxia, *Xi Focus*). While China has espoused the supposed benefits the project will yield for Tibet's economy and people, the real motivation for and beneficiary behind the Sichuan-Tibet Railway will be China Proper, the political agenda and the economic interests of Beijing (Arpi; Dorje; Imonti; Tiku).

As such, Beijing was motivated to build the Sichuan-Tibet Railway by political and economic interests, rather than a genuine desire to improve the welfare of Tibetans (Dorje; Imonti). Construction comes as border tensions between China and India have increased and provides the backdrop for renewed investment in Tibetan infrastructure (Arpi; Tiku). Indeed, state media has reported "The railway is also of great significance in safeguarding national unity and consolidating border stability...as the railway runs near China's southwest border areas, it will largely improve the efficiency and convenience of military personnel and material transportation and logistical supplies" (Xu). In the current context of deteriorating relations with India the Chinese government is motivated by security concerns and the military value of the railway, rather than any regional welfare benefits it may provide. The predecessor to the current railway project, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway that opened in 2006 "became a conduit for the Chinese military to marshal personnel and assets into Tibet" (Reuters, *China planning building spree in Tibet*). And there is no reason to believe that this precedent will not continue with the new project. Analysts have commented that it is expected to be much the same as its predecessor, in serving much more as an asset to Beijing's military and regional security agenda than being of meaningful value to Tibetans (Arpi; Reuters; Tiku).

Economic interests in seeing Tibet more easily linked to China Proper are also key to construction, but wholly to China's advantage: recent years have seen not only a proliferation of Chinese resource extraction in Tibet, taking advantage of Tibet's vast yet largely untapped natural resources (Wernick), but also a rapidly growing desire among Han Chinese for Tibet's offerings as a tourist destination (Denyer; Xu; Qin and Zheng). As China shifts to a post-industrial, services-led, consumption-based economy, Tibet's role in this new economy increasingly appears to be to satisfy Chinese domestic tourism demand. China has sought to improve the efficiency

and reduce the logistical costs of not only resource extraction, but also the increasingly significant factor of passenger travel to Tibet through infrastructure investment. Thus, Tibet's infrastructure development investment serves much more to bring Han Chinese to Tibet, and take raw materials away, east, than to offer advantageous access to Tibetans to China Proper. The new railway will cut travel between Lhasa and Chengdu from 36 to 9 hours, bringing mass tourism and allowing resources to be transported away from Tibet to China Proper far faster than previously seen. China's claim that the railway will allow Tibetans access to the rest of China is little more than rhetoric, exposed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2018 that "Tibetans are subjected to significant restrictions on movement within and beyond Tibet Autonomous Region" (*Concluding observations, combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports*). It is clear that Tibetans are of little consideration to the Sichuan-Tibet Railway's goals or motivation in a pattern similar to other infrastructure developments in Tibet. As such, the failure of development projects to improve the lives of Tibetans is simply because this goal was never in alignment with the motivation; any benefit that is felt by Tibetans is a by-product of other desired political or economic outcomes for Beijing.

At the recent Seventh Tibet Work Forum, President Xi called for the acceleration of "high quality development" in Tibet (qtd. in CGTN, *China sets policy directions for building a modern socialist Tibet*). China is currently planning an infrastructure investment of more than 1 trillion yuan (US\$146 billion) to accelerate development processes in Tibet including through new large-scale projects such as a planned railway link between Tibet and Nepal, and the construction of a dry port within the TAR (Reuters).

China's current trend of formulating Tibetan development policy through so-called 'megaprojects' has also been reaffirmed by debate in Beijing over China's 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP). The Five-Year Plans are the most significant guiding document for the direction of future economic and social development policy nationally (Wong). The 19th Central Committee of the CCP held its Fifth Plenary Sessions in Beijing between 26 and 29 October to set the outline for the upcoming 14th FYP (2021-2025). Beijing's formulation of national policy at the 14th FYP has already had consequences for the direction of Tibetan development, with the approval of large-scale dam infrastructure projects such as one in Nyingtri, 200 kms down the Yarlung Tsangpo from a number of other dams built in recent years (Lafitte, *A Dam for Me, A Dam for You*).

As such, China is on the verge of intensifying its development strategy in Tibet. Contextualised by increasing border tensions with India, the acceleration of development can be understood to be an acceleration of the 'stability first' development practised by Beijing that will not develop Tibet, or meaningfully improve the lives of Tibetans. The top-down development approach outlined above is frequently criticised as exploitation; its formulation far away from Tibet and implementation without meaningful Tibetan participation bares little benefit for the people, and instead almost exclusively favours the Han Chinese (T. Nyima, *The Development of Tibet*). The creation of infrastructure such as the Sichuan-Tibet Railway, motivated by a desire to facilitate Tibet as a Chinese holiday destination and improve resource extraction, with little benefit to Tibetans, corroborates this stance.

Indeed, observers have shown how China has never attempted to adopt a development policy that would truly place Tibetans at the centre but instead, have always sought to place its own needs and priorities before those of Tibet (Dreyer; Pan). Comparative advantage is the identification of the existing strengths and specialisations of an area, based on the unique circumstances. It is, in the developing world, the standard approach to development. China has dismissed any semblance of a comparative advantage approach to development in Tibet, seeking instead to pursue its own goals and extend the reach of the state, rather than meaningfully building the local Tibetan economy, intensifying comparative advantage, or improving the quality of life for the majority of rural Tibetans. The marginalising and detrimental effects such an approach to development has had on Tibetans are great and the physical unrest it causes clear to see; the failed 2008 uprising in Tibet was in protest at Tibetans discovering the Chinese state now controls, administers, and defines every aspect of Tibet (Makley p.24). The shock Tibetans feel at the state of affairs is exemplified by the profound disempowerment of Tibetans, undertaken in the name of development, poverty alleviation and modernisation.

IV. SOCIOECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

The socioeconomic consequences of development policy in Tibet are arguably the most complicated and controversial to assess, as it is the area in which China has most asserted that its development has been a success. Much hinges on what is understood by development. Is it simply material consumption, irrespective of who and how it was generated? Perhaps a few decades ago, that narrow definition may have sufficed, for some development agencies. But development is now convincingly defined as a multi-dimensional process, in which the poor and marginalised learn to make meaningful choices and have the capacity and resources to strengthen their position and then attain a range of material and nonmaterial goals (Ibhawoh; Sen; Sengupta). Development is now defined way beyond monetary growth and disposable income, which remain China's metric.

Nevertheless, official state narratives emphasise the GDP growth and rising per capita income in the TAR as proof of the positive economic impact of development policy (SCIO, *The Right to Development*). However, even taken at face value – official statistics are frequently inaccurate (Dreyer) – these statistics alone offer little insight into what development has actually meant for Tibetans. Indeed, a persistent recommendation in the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's concluding observations in its periodic reviews of China has been that "[China] include, in its next periodic report, updated and detailed statistical data on the socio-economic situation of the population, disaggregated by ethnic groups and nationalities" (CERD, *Concluding observations: tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*). This remains an important, yet largely ignored, point of concern of the CERD.

The average Tibetan now has more food, and wider choices than in the past (Dreyer). International brands and beverages that were previously rarities in Tibet, are also now available in cities such as Lhasa. Consumer goods are also more readily available than before as the gap between Tibet and China is bridged, bringing technologies such as mobile phones and other electrical devices (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). Much like aggregate macro-

economic growth however, these considerations don't fully signify meaningful progress in development, as the Social Progress Imperative reveals. While China may rank high for certain provisions such as number 1 in the world for access to electricity, contraception and mobile phones, these in isolation do not equate to development. China's overall place on this comprehensive ranking of development is 100th out of 183 countries (*2020 Social Progress Index*). Likewise, the UN Human Development Reports, the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the 54 indicators of the Social progress Index show how far China has fallen behind, with its narrow focus on macro-economics. Thus, the economic ramifications of Chinese development policy in Tibet also go much deeper than these often-cited macroeconomic factors.

IV.1 TIBET'S 'DUAL' ECONOMY

One of the most notable economic consequences of China's development policy in Tibet is a 'dual economy' that leaves Tibetans alienated and isolated from meaningful development and modernisation (Tsering). Development policy overwhelmingly focuses on investment in cities in Tibet such as Lhasa and Shigatse, and on the construction of transport infrastructure to connect these cities to China. The result has been to concentrate economic development in urban areas while the vast majority of Tibetans who live in small, rural communities are left isolated from development and the modernisation of the economy accompanying it (Dreyer). This leaves Tibet's economy and society polarised in the process along ethnic lines. While Tibetans make up an estimated 88 percent of the rural population of the TAR, Han Chinese form the majority of the urban population in major cities such as Lhasa, Xining and Shigatse. Around three quarters of Tibetans live agricultural, pastoralist, and nomadic lifestyles in areas of low population density, with limited mechanisation or technology and sustaining a local economy that "skilfully makes use of the few hands available, to maintain a high level of productivity, with sustainable use of the local resources" (Tsering p.45).

The development policy of China through industrialisation, urbanisation and large-scale infrastructure concentrates emphatically on cities and towns providing the benefits of investment to the Han Chinese and leaves majority of Tibetans ignored, disadvantaged and disempowered. Investment in, and growth of Tibet's economy is focused in the tertiary (trade and services) and secondary (industry, construction, mining) sectors of the economy dominated by non-Tibetans. The primary sector where most Tibetans are active in agriculture stagnates year on year (Fischer, *Poverty by Design*). What is missing is linkages between these economies.

China's policy documents champion a hub-and-spokes model, a throwback to the developmental models of the 1950s, in which city hubs naturally concentrate wealth and all the factors of production, are inevitably the most efficient and intensive attracters of investment capital, to which rural peoples must migrate if they are to raise their cash incomes. This is presented as an objective, universal, consensually agreed 'law of economic development' (Lafitte, *Rukor-Discussing the Fate of the Nomads*).

The impact of this hub-and-spokes model has been to create a stark dichotomy between the two economies of Tibet: one Tibetan, rural with little infrastructure or technology and a low income

per capita (11,450 Yuan in 2018), and another one Han, urban, modern and with income significantly higher (33,797 Yuan in 2018) with very little to link them together. Indeed, The CERD has noted “that the western provinces and regions that are inhabited by the most numerous minorities continue to be economically underdeveloped” (*Concluding Observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*). Chinese development policy has directly created this economic dichotomy and contributed to the huge inequality and urban-rural income gap that it continues to exacerbate.

As Andrew Fischer points out, the norm worldwide is that in poor countries or poor districts, the primary sector - agriculture - predominates; whilst in rich countries the tertiary sector - services - dominates, and indeed in Beijing and Shanghai it is the service sector that pays the highest wages, grows fastest, and dominates the economy, as expected. In TAR, the service sector is dominant (*The Great Transformation of Tibet*). How is this possible? In Beijing and Shanghai, the service sector means banking, retail, entertainment, health services, education and servants for the rich. That is not the pattern in Lhasa, where service sector employment is dominated by securitisation, surveillance and grid management (Fischer, *The Great Transformation of Tibet*). Intense subsidisation and investment at a fiscal deficit by the government, in these areas employing overwhelmingly Han Chinese is what, in macro-economic growth terms, brings economic growth and makes the TAR ‘developed’ by China’s own definition of development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the artificial nature of the TAR’s growth, and the reliance of its economy on the central government. In the first three quarters of 2020, the TAR saw its economy up 6.3 percent year-on-year, placing its growth above all other regions and provinces in China (Nyima and Da). How the TAR managed impressive growth, while much of China was forced to lockdown in early 2020, with the economy shrinking by 6.8 percent in the first three months of the year (Brant), is a pertinent question. How the TAR bucked the trend is evidence of the artificial nature of economic growth in the TAR, heavily reliant on subsidies and government-initiated projects that continued to be received regardless of the pandemic. The impressive economic growth of the TAR, vaunted by the state as proof of development, is therefore a fallacy with the TAR’s growth artificially fuelled by subsidies and investment, injected into the regional economy at a loss to Beijing. This can hardly be regarded as anything close to meaningful development of the Tibetan people.

Instead China has ignored a development approach based on comparative advantage to reduce urban-rural inequality, which would target development to specifically utilise and boost the rural, traditional economy of Tibet and thus, the majority of Tibetan’s current lifestyles through rural road construction to improve access between producer and consumer (herders/farmers and markets) as a means to raise the rural income level, or indeed improving access to health or education to raise rural Human Development Index (*Lafitte, Development: A Human Right?*). China’s view of traditional Tibet as backward, and a desire for Sinicization of Tibetans means the Chinese government sees its only recourse is to effectively remove the urban-rural dichotomy through removing the rural element. China views urbanism “as the site of progress and modernity, the imaginative horizon of the future, and a synonym for development itself” (Yeh and Makley p.2). Traditional rural, agrarian Tibet is therefore the complete contradiction of this

image of modernity, human quality and civilisation. As such, the Chinese government sees the shift of Tibetans from their rural way of life into the urban, modernised economy as the obvious and essential solution to alleviate poverty and develop Tibet.

IV.2 URBANISATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Urbanisation has greatly intensified in Tibet in recent years (Bo). Along with infrastructure investment, it is a flagship policy of Chinese development. A nationwide strategy to increase urban migration was launched in 2014 to increase China's urban population to 60 percent by 2020. Tibetans, as a majority rural people (only 33 percent of Tibetans in TAR lived in urban areas in 2010) have seen a large economic impact to their way of life as a result. In 2015, plans were announced to accelerate urbanisation to over 30 percent of the overall TAR population by 2020. By 2017, the urban population had already peaked 1 million from 740,000 in 2013. The impact of urbanisation goes beyond just Tibetans in TAR (Yeh and Makley). Many rural counties in the Tibetan regions of Yunnan, Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces have transformed into county level city status as urban migration has continued. Qinghai, for example, by area over 90 per cent Tibetan and home to over 1.2 million Tibetans, has established seven new cities between 2017 and 2020 (Roche, Hillman and Leibold). In 2020, around 200,000 Tibetans were estimated to live in Sichuan's capital Chengdu and over 120,000 in Qinghai's capital Xining. China believes urbanisation is key to modernity and development. Urbanisation is portrayed in official decrees as the first step in a long civilising mission, which requires training the newly urbanised to abandon all livestock production, not spit anywhere, wash hands, learn to speak Chinese and adopt habits deemed to be markers of higher human quality. The pedagogy of civilising the backward and remote communities is the first step in urbanisation. The Tibetan experience of urbanisation has however not been one of improved quality of life, nor does it provide the economic benefits that state officials promise migration will bring.

The adverse economic consequences that urbanisation has on Tibetans are widespread and not limited to the ends, but also the means through which the Chinese government has facilitated, encouraged and coerced Tibetans into urban migration at an increasingly intensified rate in recent years. The Chinese government has sought to encourage Tibetans to migrate through a wide range of policies with far reaching consequences on the Tibetan way of life. Before even examining the impact of specific policies however, the macro policy of urbanisation does itself carry negative economic implications. The negative consequences identified by Fachun Du indicate that urbanisation as a policy fundamentally hurts Tibetans and impacts their socioeconomic structures regardless of the strategies through which they are implemented on the ground (*Ecological Resettlement of Tibetan Herders; Consequences of Ecological Migration in the Sanjiangyuan*). Du highlights that urbanisation reduces the independence and self-sufficiency and overall living standard of those migrating significantly; makes migrants dependent on markets for necessities such as meat, milk and fuel following the loss of livestock; deprives migrants of an identity and creates conflict between migrant villages and original local communities over issues of infrastructure, land management, education and social security. Finally, migration means Tibetan herders' nomadic practices and their traditional knowledge of

grassland ecological systems they inhabited are lost. This amounts to undermining the inheritance and protection of the traditional culture of Tibetan nomads.

China does not wish to move Tibetans to towns and cities solely because of its determined belief that urbanisation is key to development. To be sure, it places a great deal of significance in the belief that urbanisation brings modernity and upgrades human quality (Yeh and Makley). However, equally important in the formulation of urban migration as a development policy is that it satisfies China's economic interests, often understood to be the appropriation of Tibetan land for other uses such as creating 'wilderness' for tourism, intensive farming, mineral and resource extraction and hydroelectrical projects that are currently denied by the presence of Tibetan nomads who need vast open grasslands for their socioeconomic survival (Lafitte, *When Warriors Do Development*; Ptackova). China's intense programme of urbanisation combined with construction of infrastructure such as highways and railways, more fencing, and increased regulations have undermined the functioning of this subsistence economy and hence, dispossessed Tibetans from their land, clearing the way for the Chinese state to use the land as it sees fit (Tsering).

In the past, resource extraction has indeed dominated understandings of China's economic interests in Tibet. In recent years, however, China has shifted its priorities. China is rapidly transforming to a post-industrial, services-led, consumption-based economy. Tibet's role in the past may have been first and foremost, to fuel Chinese industry with its abundance of resources but as China's economic model changes, so too does Tibet's role within the system. In such a service-led, consumption economy, Tibet's role is increasingly to be a pristine wilderness destination for mass Chinese domestic tourism (Yeh and Coggins). Landscapes cleared of their customary guardians are increasingly classified as pristine wilderness, specifically for tourist consumption. Overwhelmingly, tourism to Tibet is not by international arrivals, but by domestic Han tourists, as many as 25 million arriving in Lhasa annually, a figure that will continue to rise with the completion of the Sichuan-Tibet railway. Only a depopulated landscape can be rebranded as pristine wilderness and thus, the pattern of coerced urban migration continues, albeit with a different motivation to the resource extraction agenda of the past (Lafitte).

The methods through which China encourages urban migration are broad. Some appear cooperative, while others are more clearly forms of expropriation including cancellation of hitherto guaranteed land tenure security to ancestral pastures (Roche, Hillman and Leibold). All seek to undermine and disrupt the traditional Tibetan way of life with little regard for the harmful impact this has. Nor have the provisions been put in place to support Tibetans through the process.

There is debate as to whether Tibetans themselves are generally for or against the concept of urbanisation at least. Some Western sources have suggested that younger Tibetans are encouraged to want to move by the excitement and greater amenities of urban living (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdui; Roche, Hillman and Leibold), while others note, particularly among elder Tibetans, the idea of giving up their traditional way of life and moving to apartments is highly distressing (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*).

The nature of Chinese suppression in Tibet means it is difficult to gauge support for the concept of urbanisation among Tibetans. While an important consideration, of arguably greater significance is that in formulating and implementing urbanisation, the Chinese government has itself given very little consideration to this question (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*). Resettlement schemes have as a result, been pushed from above onto Tibetans with little meaningful local consultation or consideration of cultural and societal nuances.

Resettlement and relocation programmes typically offer subsidies for modern homes to rural Tibetans who accept a sedentary lifestyle in towns (Goldstein, Childs and Wangdai). This appears at face value cooperative; the Comfortable Housing Programme (CHP), for example, running from 2006 to 2012, offered housing subsidies constituting between 15 and 20 percent of the cost of a new modern home. TAR officials stated that by 2010, grants to villagers would allow 80 per cent of rural Tibetan households to upgrade their homes to modern, town-based living and by the programme's end in 2012, more than two-thirds of the TAR's rural Tibetans had moved to new homes. Chinese resettlements are however fundamentally coercive and forceful processes (Hook; T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*; Roche, Hillman, Leibold).

Observers of the CHP noted that rural Tibetans were unable to refuse to participate (Human Rights Watch, *China: End Involuntary Rehousing*). Officials were reported to give ultimatums to villagers to accept urbanisation or see their homes destroyed anyway, all in the name of their own development. Officials also used other less forceful, but equally coercive methods such as promises of better quality and larger housing, generous financial compensation and farmland, facilities such as schools and shops, that were never kept (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*). Reports show that many Tibetans moved under resettlement schemes felt taken advantage of, complaining of new homes that were smaller than those they had previously been promised, and having to bear the majority of the cost of building the new homes themselves and becoming cripplingly indebted in the process (Human Rights Watch, *China: End Involuntary Rehousing*). Even when the resettled pay only a portion of construction costs, leading to borrowing and debt that is hard to repay.

China's coercive methods for urbanisation place considerable economic burden on Tibetans (Hook). However, an equally important aspect of urbanisation is how Tibetans are further economically marginalised once they have moved. A crucial failure of urbanisation in further exacerbating Tibetans economically is the government's inability to address their livelihoods post-resettlement (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*). For the Chinese government, the goal is the urbanisation itself, to get Tibetans off land it can use for other purposes.

Having fundamentally changed the socioeconomic foundations of rural Tibetans from agrarian subsistence, the Chinese government expects Tibetans to simply assimilate into the modern economy and society of town-based living with almost no assistance. As participants of an agrarian subsistence economy prior to urbanisation, Tibetans were largely self-sufficient with access to markets (Tsering). After resettlement, they become dependent on the little

compensation money the government provides as transfer payments (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*). One-day training seminars are in some cases all that are provided by the state to integrate Tibetans into the modern economy and job market. High unemployment among urban migrants has led the state to increasingly utilise strict, military style vocational training to deal with unemployment among former nomads and farmers, referred to as “rural surplus labourers” (Zenz). Such training is mandated upon an “order-oriented” or “need-driven” process where Tibetans are matched with future jobs prior to the training (Tibet Daily). However, there are clear elements of coercion during the recruitment, training and job matching (Zenz) and military vocational training carries a number of political implications, discussed later in this report.

Having lost their traditional sources of wealth such as land and livestock - which they are usually forced to sell upon migration (Dorjee), and unable to conform to and find employment in the urban environment, or coerced into vocational training, formerly rural Tibetans find themselves both poorer and with a lower quality of life. The CERD has voiced concern “about the high rate of unemployment among members of ethnic minorities” and particularly among former nomads and farmers (*Concluding observations: Combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China*). In a poignant assessment of urbanisation, one Tibetan in Simaqiao, Kangding County said to Tibetan researcher Tashi Nyima, “We had work to do before they developed us. After the development, we were turned into jobless beggars” (*Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*, p.86).

Social change is not inherently unnatural, or undesirable for Tibetans. However, the top-down coercive way in which the Chinese government is forcing intense change upon Tibetan society is consequentially damaging to social cohesion, cultural continuity, mother tongue proficiency and thus access to the vast accumulation of Tibetan learnings. China’s economic argument for rapidly urbanising Tibet is that firstly, it alleviates poverty and secondly, that social services can better be provided for in urban environments. These two concepts are core tenets of the Chinese development discourse and thus, provide the economic justification to the Chinese government to push for urbanisation. Urbanisation has however meant poverty exacerbation rather than alleviation for Tibetans who lose their traditional income sources, are burdened with the debt of building their new homes, do not receive in full the promised benefits and privileges of resettlement, and are not properly prepared to integrate into the modern urban economy. Nevertheless, urbanisation has succeeded in the Chinese government’s goal to expropriate pastures and farmland from Tibetans to allow for it to be used for their own state interests, whether these be for constructing new towns, creating national parks to boost tourism, natural resource extraction or infrastructure projects. Fundamentally Tibetans’ land rights hinder the government’s desire to use Tibetan land for tourism, or to feed China Proper’s desire for energy and resources (Ptackova p.164). Urbanisation is thus a solution to the government’s wider nation building challenges rather than any sort of meaningful attempt to develop Tibet appropriately or alleviate poverty.

Equally, the Chinese government’s claim that social services are better provided in urban settings is inadequate, as it has been shown in detail by Foggin and Torrance-Foggin “that social services

such as community health and education services can in fact be offered to pastoral communities, even in remote grassland area, both cost-effectively and without need for major socio-cultural shifts or significant changes in the herders' livelihoods" (*How can social and environmental services be provided for mobile Tibetan herders?* P.3). It therefore becomes clear that urbanisation follows the same pattern of top down implementation by the state that fundamentally prioritises the state's agenda over meaningful development of Tibetans and as a consequence, has done more than simply fail to improve the lives of Tibetans, but also economically exacerbated their woes.

IV.3 CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGICAL MIGRATION

The Chinese government has also sought to accelerate urbanisation and resettlement of Tibetan nomads through ostensibly seeking to preserve the ecological environment and promote conservation (Du, *Ecological Resettlement of Tibetan Herders*). In recent years, Tibet has seen the proliferation of protection zoning designations, such as of national parks, as well as a number of programmes implemented to retire and restore degraded land, which have both led to "ecological migration" of Tibetans to urban areas (E. Wong). Essentially, China is depopulating rural Tibetan pastures, cancelling land rights, erasing sustainable subsistence lifestyles and displacing rural Tibetans to urban areas in the name of environmental protection.

The creation of conservation areas such as national parks in Tibet is used to further the interests of the Chinese government, while coercing Tibetans into accepting urbanisation. Emily Yeh and Chris Coggins have highlighted how, by designating land for conservation, classification systems of the state dictate "which people have access to which resources in which times and places, and these regulations often have little to do with sociocultural patterns that have long-standing value for local and regional identities and livelihoods" (*Mapping Shangrila*, p.101). This process of "internal territorialisation" designates land in Tibet as functionally serving the purpose of conservation and thus, justifies the resettlement of Tibetan pastoralists within these areas, as well as new regulations and measures such as bans on cattle grazing, and the construction of fencing that further inhibits and challenges pastoralists' abilities to operate in these areas. Traditional nomadic practices and knowledge of grassland ecology are labelled as the cause of degradation in the process.

National parks have offered a new model of land management to the Chinese government. In 2019, it was announced that the Chinese government plans to construct five new national parks in the TAR alone (CGTN, *New national parks in Tibet*). However, rather than meaningfully protecting the environment, national park designation in China rarely seeks to build active conservation management or upgrade ecological protections. The designation is simply used to promote mass tourism (Yeh and Coggins, p.105) and emphasise such areas as tour destinations through the use of a well-known and high-profile classification. Furthermore, the creation of national parks and other conservation areas is done with a clear disregard for local expertise, experience or culture in land management and environmental sustainability. As a result, such protection processes lack any local consultation or cooperation, and thus come into conflict with local Tibetans through policies of resettlement, and the proliferation of restrictions that

accompany protection classifications. This amounts to a challenge of the socioeconomic structure of nomadic and pastoralist way of life to further push the Chinese government's goal of urbanisation. Simultaneously, diluted policy implementation, mass tourism with little restrictions, and resource exploitation (Nianyong and Zhuge; Yeh and Coggins) mean meaningful conservation can even be impeded by Chinese protection classifications.

As well as protection designations, China also actively uses ecology to pursue urbanisation through a number of programmes intended to reverse land degradation. Green policies, such as the Grain for Green Programme, was introduced in 1999 and the Tuimu Huancao policy, which literally translates as 'close pastures to grow more grass' enforced in 2003 banned almost all human activity from land set aside for regrowth and rewilding, including the land of Tibetan pastoralists who have owned and worked on it for generations (E. Wong). As the land is taken, many pastoralists and nomads are induced to make the move to urban life with the expectation that the change is temporary; a result of how the process does not seek, nor care for the consent of Tibetans who have not had the situation properly explained to them by officials.

The stated aims of green programmes are to help degraded land to recover and, by virtue of urbanisation, improve the living standards of Tibetans. While the assertions of the latter goal have already been shown to be heavily flawed as urbanisation has a negative socioeconomic impact (Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*), green programmes that move nomads and pastoralists off their land also have questionable records as to their success. Fachun Du has highlighted a number of reasons why restoration programmes are ineffective at achieving even their basic goal. One of the most pertinent is that degradation cannot be attributed to just overgrazing and population growth. Thus, the idea of restoring grassland by simply implementing resettlement projects and banning grazing is implausible; "climate change, mining, and problems of grassland management contribute to grassland degradation as well" (*Consequences of Ecological Migration*, p.130). Indeed, China's impressive economic growth over the last few decades is founded upon environmental degradation (Yeh and Coggins) and thus to scrutinise nomadic pastoralists as the root cause of the problem and thus, their resettlement key to the solution, is flawed.

For the Chinese government however, protection designations and restoration programmes such as Grain for Green and Tuimu Huancao are viewed as successes. Not only have they received positive international appraisals for their perceived environmental protections (Dayne; Z. Li), they have also successfully pushed the more pressing goal of urbanisation (Roche, Hillman and Leibold). In a consistent pattern of marking Tibetan land as degraded without adequate evidence that pastoralists are to blame, China justifies intervention in the name of ecology and erases the Tibetan traditional rural way of life it finds contradictory to its own socioeconomic conception of development. In its most basic form, Tibetans are moved without consent, their sustainable and productive lifestyles destroyed, and China is praised for having promoted ecological sustainability.

IV.4 MIGRATION AND COMPETITION

The Chinese government has in recent years encouraged mass Chinese migration to Tibet, professedly to help develop and economically grow the region (ANI; BBC). However, the economic impact of Chinese migration has largely had an adverse effect on Tibetans themselves, even if it has contributed to the macroeconomic growth of the TAR in recent years (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). Chinese migration to Tibet can be viewed as both a means and an end to development, in that the Chinese government has actively encouraged it, while also facilitating migration through constructing infrastructure such as direct railway links to China. The negative economic impact it has had on Tibetans, whilst also leading to macroeconomic growth is another telling sign of the flawed Chinese interpretation of development that equates macro-economic growth with development.

The Chinese government denies that Chinese migrants are flooding into Tibet or changing the demographic makeup of the region. Official census statistics suggest that over 90 percent of the TAR's population is Tibetan, while the large numbers of Chinese migrants who come for economic development purposes are not expected to stay permanently (Fischer, *"Population Invasion" versus Urban Exclusion*). Nevertheless, Chinese make up the majority of the population in urban areas including Lhasa and Shigatse (AsiaNews). In the context of urbanisation that has coerced Tibetans to rapidly move from rural areas to urban centres that are significant or even majority Chinese, and in light of the lack of preparation and assistance rural Tibetans receive in moving to cities and integrating with the modern economy and job market, the question of how increasing competition from Chinese migrants has further exacerbated the economic problems of Tibetans is pertinent.

Chinese development policy has increased Chinese migration to Tibetan urban centres: the Qinghai-Tibet Railway accelerated it (Mishra); and the completion of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway will no doubt increase this further. The result has been, and will continue to be, that Chinese are overwhelmingly privileged in urban economic opportunities as a result of development policy which provides the benefits and opportunities derived from development investment exclusively to cities and towns that are increasingly populated by migrants (Fischer, *"Population Invasion" versus Urban Exclusion*). Chinese, for example, outnumber Tibetans in Lhasa by some estimates as much as three to one, dominating even low-skilled work such as taxi driving (Lafitte, *Rukor-Discussing the Fate of the Nomads*). As the residents of cities, migrants have felt the economic benefits of development to Tibet more than the Tibetans. Large private companies in Tibet, benefitting from development investment such as subsidies to construct new factories (R. Li), or from the construction of new highways that allow reduced export costs are located overwhelmingly in urban areas and run almost exclusively by non-Tibetans (Grammaticas). As a result, their profits flow out of the region, making Tibet a remittance economy. As well as receiving the benefits of development investment, migrants have also increased competition to Tibetans and have gradually driven them out of their own native enterprises (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). Even the selling of Tibetan religious goods to tourists on the Barkor pilgrimage circuit in Lhasa is dominated by Chinese dressed as Tibetans.

Tibetans in urban areas are largely restricted to small businesses, offering traditional goods and services. While it has been suggested that this means there is limited competition between Tibetan and Chinese businesses as they concentrate in different sectors (Hu and Miguel), this both fails to challenge why Tibetans have been limited to small business opportunities or acknowledge that even in the small traditional enterprise sector they are concentrated in, they are increasingly facing tougher competition from migrants (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). A significant proportion of small businesses in Lhasa are run by migrants, estimated in 2006 to be a Tibetan to migrant ratio of three to seven. The government makes the problem worse for Tibetans by favouring investment to Chinese businesses over Tibetans – construction, for example, has seen project tenders, both large and small scale, almost always go to non-Tibetan companies (Grammaticas). As a result, most workers on large or even small projects are migrants even though Tibetans could be used. Literacy in written and spoken standard Chinese has, in the name of occupational safety, been made a compulsory requirement in construction employment (Lafitte, Rukor- Discussing the Fate of the Nomads). Tibetans are meanwhile confined to the lowest skilled jobs and as a result, Tibetan capabilities are not built upon nor Tibetan enterprises utilised. Instead, investment in Chinese companies ensures for the government that profits and subsidies will flow back to China Proper (Grammaticas).

In the past, this has contributed to the dual economy of Tibet; development investment focused on urban areas saw Tibetans excluded from economic opportunities and contributed to growing inequality between Tibetans and migrants. In the future, as China accelerates and intensifies efforts to move Tibetans to urban centres, this will mean a continued pattern of marginalisation and alienation from economic opportunities that are already dominated by migrants. Tibetans insufficiently prepared for the socioeconomic shift from rural living to the modern job market will continue to be relegated in job opportunities in favour of migrants, and directly marginalised by policy implemented in the name of development.

IV.5 DEVELOPMENTALISM AS A NATION BUILDING STRATEGY

What are the economic costs of the Chinese regime's fixation on quelling dissent in the name of political order or “stability”? China has reshaped its major social assistance program, Dibao, around this preoccupation, turning an effort to alleviate poverty, both urban and rural into a tool of surveillance and repression (*Welfare for Autocrats*).

From the viewpoint of central leaders, western PRC remains an incomplete project, an empire that is not yet fully transformed into a unitary nation-state. This is a multi-generational project, but central leaders have lost patience with the slow pace of transformation and have turned to urbanisation as a key means of accelerating change.

Across China, patronage networks ensure dominant clans get privileged access to the redistributive capabilities of an allocative state. This often brings the benefits of development to rural areas, but only when local leaders are of the same ethnicity, and clan memberships, as the populace they govern. In Tibet, local government cadres are either Chinese loyal to the party-

state that promotes or disciplines them, or Tibetans surveilled by the party that suspects them of lacking total loyalty (Lafitte, Rukor- Discussing the Fate of the Nomads).

Some political scientists classify local governments in rural China and Tibet as either predatory – rent seeking, or developmentalist – delivering modernity (Hillman and Tuttle; Looney). In Tibet, this is a false dichotomy. Flows of transfer funding from the centre are great, as Andrew Fischer documents at length (*The Political Economy of Boomerang Aid in China's Tibet*), which motivates predatory rent seekers to maximise corrupt skimming of payments meant for Tibetans displaced and demobilised, now subsisting on transfer payments on urban fringes (T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*). Those payments do deliver development, narrowly defined as top-down payments of subsistence rations and housing, conditional on compliance with official directives, confirmed by surveillance technologies, and no attempt to continue with livestock production.

Developmentalism is a state building ideology and should not be confused with development as normally understood (Johnson) as grassroots, experimental process of mutual learnings that build on comparative advantage. China's developmentalism, as well as its endemic corruption, lacks all aspects of bottom-up development.

IV.6 ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

China's development policy and its economic consequences have exacerbated the declining economic situation of a vast number of Tibetans coerced into urban migration, forced to give up the traditional socioeconomic foundation of their society. The Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has repeatedly raised issue with China's refusal to provide disaggregated statistical data based on ethnicity stating that "Official statistics suggested that the current situation of many Tibetans and Uighurs had deteriorated in relative terms, particularly concerning per capita income, literacy levels and educational levels" (CERD, *Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*).

The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) also noted the lack of adequate information during the second periodic review of China in 2014, stating that this information was needed to "allow for an accurate assessment of the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights in the State party," and the Committee further urged the State party "to develop systematic data collection and the production and use of statistics for human rights indicators, including for economic, social and cultural rights based upon such data". The Committee's recommendations in 2014 reiterated two thirds of the recommendations that were made in 2005, this along with the fact that China was four years late in submitting its second report to the Committee demonstrates how unresponsive China is in complying with, and implementing the obligations under the covenant.

Effectively, China is taking away any meaningful semblance of Tibetans' right to development. Instead they have been coerced and forced down a path labelled as development, formulated from the top-down to advance the state's interests. As a result, there has been very little

consideration for the socioeconomic nuances of rural Tibet, nor interest in actually improving Tibetan welfare or building Tibetan strengths and capabilities. China has not adopted a strategy of comparative advantage to boost the rural Tibetan economy because it is incompatible with its notions of modernity and hence, begins erasing it. China continues to favour non-Tibetan migrants in jobs and business opportunities, or treats people as a commodity, training them through strict military-style vocational courses for a job predetermined by the state, whether or not they want it. CERD raised these issues in 2018, stating “that large numbers of farmers and nomadic herders, including from ethnic autonomous areas, have lost their traditional lands and livelihoods owing to poverty alleviation and ecological restoration resettlement measures that could be seen as aggressive development models” (*Concluding observations: Review of the fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China*). China has not simply dismissed these concerns but on the contrary, has intensified the processes that led to them.

Because Chinese development policy has succeeded in urbanising rural Tibetans and erasing their land rights, it has succeeded in creating pristine wilderness through depopulation, sinicizing economic centres in towns and cities ensuring investment and profits flow back to China Proper, building infrastructure to pull Tibet, and its resources closer to China, extracting natural minerals and resources, and building hydroelectric power to fulfil distant coastal China’s thirst for energy.

For China’s top-down, state formulated development policy, the economic consequences of development in Tibet have been overwhelmingly positive for achieving Beijing’s goals. In the conflict of interests that will inevitably arise between local and state interests with regards to development, in China’s flawed development approach, the state always wins no matter what impact such an outcome has on local people. For Tibetans, the economic outcomes have meant exploitation of resources, expropriation of land, economic disempowerment, loss of livelihoods and poverty exacerbation.

V. CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES

China uses its development policy in Tibet to chip away at the foundation of Tibetan cultural identity, to better facilitate Tibetan assimilation into the notion of a single, Chinese race. A fundamental ideology of the Chinese government is the conception that China is a racially unitary nation known as ‘*minzu*’ 民族 (Ma). Until a decade ago, *minzu* acknowledged diversity of ethnicities, even if all were somehow subsumed into the one Chinese identity (Bloxham and Moses). However, in the past decade a second generation of ethnic policy has taken over, and the meaning of *minzu* has narrowed, in two ways. Firstly, anyone identifying as not of the Han supermajority is deemed to have made a purely personal choice, which has no consequences or value in the public sphere, nor any legal status (Lafitte). Second, China now talks of there being, or becoming, only a single *minzu*, the *zhonghua minzu*, which means the Chinese race (Ma).

This, however, is far from the realities of PRC’s ethnically and socially diverse landmass; the government itself recognises 56 ethnic groups, including Han, as making up PRC, of which “ethnic minorities” are around 8.4 percent of the overall population, according to the 2010 census. That might sound like a small minority: actually, it is 110 million people (IWGIA).

Meaningful recognition of these groups, and attempts to accommodate their status as “ethnic minorities”, is perceived as contradictory to the second-generation assimilationist concept of *minzu* and Beijing’s building of a single unitary state. This can be seen in how the Chinese government refuses to recognise any of China’s ethnic groups as ‘indigenous peoples’, nor accord them the rights and privileges that such status brings, enshrined within the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that China itself ratified in 2007. Beijing explicitly states that China has no indigenous peoples as it is a state made up of one, single Chinese *zhonghua* race. Thus, to recognise groups as indigenous or meaningfully empower and develop minority rights, for the Chinese government, is a contradiction to *minzu*.

Development policy is perceived by Beijing as the bridge between the goal of *minzu* and the realities of PRC. The existence of a unitary, politically stable, socially harmonious China populated by a single *zhonghua* race is a fallacy. However, the Chinese government’s attempts to make this ideal a functioning reality has led to development policy that actively seeks to destroy the linguistic, cultural, and social practices and identities of ethnic groups, to better facilitate assimilation and ethnic dilution for the creation of the *zhonghua* race, dominated by societal and identity norms of the Han Chinese. Thus, ethnic identity is being subdued by development policies that promote a form of Han Chinese nation-state building, that Beijing believes will lead to a more socially harmonious and politically stable nation. China’s assimilation of Tibetans and erasure of unique cultural and ethnic identities in pursuit of its vision of a unitary state is driven by the machinations of development policy.

China has weaponised development against Tibetan culture: infrastructure, such as new highways and railways are intended to pull Tibet closer to China Proper and closer to the influence of Han culture and way of life and facilitate easier migration to Tibet. Urbanisation eliminates the traditional socioeconomic foundations of Tibetan pastoralist and nomadic society, and places urban migrants in cities and towns dominated by Han society (Roche, Hillman and Leibold).

In 1984, in a more liberal era, China legislated to accord legal autonomy to Tibet, as well as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region explicitly for the Uyghurs, and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for the Mongols. Along with legal autonomy went legislated rights to maintain culture, language, school syllabi in mother tongue, and other rights (Karmel). China has been in retreat from that 1984 legislation ever since, especially after persuading itself that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was caused by ethnic nationalism. While China has not formally repealed the 1984 legislation, in practice it does all it can to nullify the rights awarded under it (SCMP).

In the name of development, China has significantly impacted education in Tibet undermining the teaching and proliferation of the Tibetan language through ‘bilingual’ education that de-emphasises the mother tongue and explicitly privileges Chinese. In addition to a language policy hostile to the Tibetan language, and the loss of native tongue schooling, China’s centralisation of schools in urban centres forces Tibetan parents to either urbanise themselves to be with their children, or send them off to boarding school and break the family bond, or stay in the countryside illiterate with no prospect of employment (TCHRD). These development policies,

whether infrastructure construction, urbanisation, or education, are part of a wider agenda of nation building a single ethnic identity with a single language and identification with the nation-state. Development is once again simply a means to achieve the goals and interests of the Chinese state with little or no consideration for the welfare of Tibetans, intentionally undermining Tibetan identity and cultural transmission, to be replaced by a new pedagogy of belonging to the one *zhonghua* Chinese race. Development therefore lies at the heart of efforts to remould Tibet as Chinese.

V.1 RHETORIC AND 'INFERIORISATION'

The belief that China's authority over Tibet has, through its development policies, brought a universally positive transformation to the region is fundamental to China arguing its supposed claim to legitimacy in Tibet (Bloomberg News). In crafting this narrative, Chinese officials seek to extoll an image of overwhelming, far-reaching success in development (The Economist), and to this end, have for decades pursued a narrative that emphasises that the benefits China has brought to Tibet go far beyond economics, and that indeed, Tibet's culture and identity are among the greatest beneficiaries of China's development.

As such, the rhetoric of Chinese development policy has become heavily intertwined with Han Chinese ethnocentrism - pursuing the line that China has and continues to develop Tibet not only economically, but also culturally, has led to a distinct cultural bias in development rhetoric and policy poised upon the logic of Tibetan people belonging to a culture that is inferior, backward, and requires help from the supposedly superior culture of Han China (Dreyer).

Chinese officials have thus asserted a development narrative of an "image of a barbaric Tibet in need of Han help" (Karmel p.497). Development rhetoric is heavily tinged with references to Han civility and a historical Tibetan barbarity, and to the perceived backward nature of traditional Tibetan society in need of salvaging by Han principles. Development policy thus carries clear racist connotations that perceive Tibetan identity, culture and norms as inferior to that of Han China.

Indeed, Ma Rong, a Chinese academic, influential in the introduction of second generation assimilationism, highlights the existence of "Han Chinese chauvinism", and states that some Chinese "view the traditional cultures and economic activities of minority groups in a condescending way employing the unilinear evolutionism to appraise them as being "advanced" or "backward"" (*Reconstructing "nation" (minzu) discourses in China* p.11). Ma suggests this prejudice to be a by-product of the fact that Han Chinese have "a more developed economy and greater access to technology than other [ethnic] groups and being powerful in all social aspects"(p.11) that has created a sense of superiority among some Han, leading to prejudice. However, what Ma fails to recognise is how official narratives and government statements frequently make use of and therefore encourage, discriminatory and racist language against minority groups as a way to justify the value and benefits of assimilationist development policies. While many sources state that ethnic/racial discrimination by Han Chinese against minorities such as Tibetans exists (Ma; Roche; Yeh and Makley), less addressed is the fact that prejudice is

at least in part a consequence of the rhetoric of official development policy, and that the Chinese government is intentionally pursuing a policy “inferiorisation” of ethnic minorities as a step towards assimilation (Law).

Official rhetoric repeatedly portrays old Tibet as darkness, and the modernity of Chinese development as light. Tibet, both land and people, are repeatedly depicted as inevitably, chronically and irretrievably poor, destitute, remote, peripheral and in landscapes of contiguous destitution due to absence of factor endowments (Dreyer). Official accounts portraying Tibetan culture in negative terms, or highlighting the ‘civilising’ role of Han culture have long been the status quo; pronouncements on ceremonial occasions in Tibet typically extends gratitude to the CCP and China for not only bringing economic prosperity but also emphasise China civilising an otherwise “barbaric” people (Dreyer p.411). Government campaigns in Tibet are also laced with rhetoric exhorting Tibetans “to learn a civilised and healthy lifestyle” (BBC Monitoring). And recent development policies such as urbanisation have also been described with language that stresses that fundamental to the development process is a change in way of life (Zizhou).

Clearly, China seeks to rhetorically link the concept of developing Tibet with ‘civilising’ Tibet. The idea of ‘civilising’ Tibet however, is simply a veil with which to cover up assimilating Tibet. By referring to Tibetan culture as backward and uncivilised, and in need of help, China can therefore claim assimilationist development policy as being in the interests of the people and improving lives, rather than simply serving the Chinese government’s desire for sinicization in pursuit of its vision of *minzu*.

Among the impact for Tibetans of the racist language with which the government refers to their culture, norms and way of life, everyday prejudice, discrimination and abuse towards Tibetans is an occurrence noted by a number of observers in Han dominated urban areas (Dreyer; Grant; Yeh and Makley) with much abuse originating from the same prejudiced language as official narratives, by suggesting Tibetans are “uncivilised”, “backwards”, “dirty” (Grant, *Belonging and Ethnicity*, p.156), or blaming Tibetans for their own poverty (Dreyer; Zenz). Furthermore, few Han Chinese migrants in Tibet make an effort to engage with the local culture and customs or learn the language on the assumption that it is beneath them (Ma).

Tibetans also suffer economic costs due to discrimination. Traditional products and foodstuffs rarely sell in China Proper, due to a belief that if they are Tibetan, they must be unclean (Dreyer; Lafitte), and Tibetans also experience discrimination in employment opportunities (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*).

The CERD has noted on a number of occasions a lack of concern from the Chinese government to combat racial discrimination towards Tibetans and other minorities. In 2009, CERD “[reiterated] its concern (A/56/18, para. 241) that the domestic legislation of the State party does not contain a definition of racial discrimination in full conformity with the definition set out in article 1 of the Convention, as it does not include a prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of descent and national origin”. Further, the Committee noted “the lack of information on complaints of racial discrimination and the absence of court cases regarding racial

discrimination (arts. 6 and 4)” (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*).

Nine years later in 2018, comments by CERD reveal how China dismissed the concerns raised in 2009. “The Committee again reiterates its concern that the domestic legislation of the State party does not contain a definition of racial discrimination in full conformity with article 1 of the Convention. It also reiterates its concern that the State party has not adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.” Once again, “The Committee is concerned by the lack of comprehensive statistics, surveys, administrative records and registers provided by the State party on acts of racial discrimination and related administrative and civil complaints, investigations, procedures and sanctions” (*Concluding observations: Review of the fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China*).

Another major consequence of development rhetoric’s portrayal of Tibetans as culturally inferior to Han Chinese is that it justifies assimilation. It is important to note this is the consequence for Tibetans. For the Chinese government meanwhile, this is the desired outcome of inferiorisation. The Chinese government has adopted language intentionally meant to degrade the value of Tibetan culture to allow the government to disrupt and modify the traditional way of life, under the pretence of the Han elder brother benevolently uplifting a backwards society (Fischer, “*Population Invasion*” versus *Urban Exclusion*). Tibetan culture is not, as China says, simply being civilised but instead being degraded, to facilitate its replacement with the homogeneity of Han Chinese culture that the government hopes will better allow for the realisation of *zhonghua minzu*, and thus lead to a more socially and ethnically harmonious nation, that in turn leads to greater political stability for the Chinese party-state. For Tibetans however, this translates to a rhetoric of discrimination and racism, that intentionally challenges the survival of their cultural identity.

V.2 URBANISATION

Urban centres are crucial arenas for undermining “ethnic minority” identity and degrading cultural difference on a number of accounts. Firstly, unlike rural areas where Tibetans make up the majority population, urbanised areas are dominated by Han (and to a lesser extent, Chinese Muslims) and within major cities and towns in Tibet, Han Chinese can be plausibly argued to be outnumbering Tibetans (Fischer, “*Population Invasion*” versus *Urban exclusion*). Many urban-centric observations of Tibet have come to the conclusion of intentional ‘population swamping’ to dilute the Tibetan population (AsiaNews; Borger) and indeed, in 2009 the CERD “[noted] with concern reports according to which the system of incentives granted to work and settle in the autonomous minority regions may result in substantive changes in the demographic composition that impact negatively on local traditions and cultures in these regions” (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*).

Cities and towns have become centres of social change. Urbanisation is the accelerator of modernity, division of labour and the ethnic mingling explicitly encouraged by official policy. It is important to stress that at face value, social change is by no means a negative or inherently

catastrophic to cultural survival. It is an inevitable process anywhere. However, the intentional inferiorisation of Tibetan culture, to be portrayed as something that should be replaced and modified, means urbanisation in turn has been weaponised by the Chinese government to intentionally replace culture and assimilate Tibetans into a Han identity (Dorjee). Urban cultural transformation is thus a wholly one-way process of asserting Han values and norms onto Tibetans to dilute the ethnic difference between the groups. Tibetans, far from being empowered by social change, have it forced upon them by the hegemonic state.

Urban spaces are dominated by Han imagery, promoting cultural transformation and interethnic mingling (Grant, *Belonging and Ethnicity*). As mentioned in the previous section, businesses in cities such as Lhasa are largely run by migrants (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). As such, shop signs are now mostly in Chinese rather than Tibetan. By 2005 in Lhasa, understanding Chinese, rather than Tibetan, was essential to get around the city. A letter envelope addressed only in Tibetan is unlikely to be delivered (Lafitte).

In the name of modernisation, China has also bulldozed huge swathes of traditional Tibetan buildings in cities and towns (Choephel). While China claims that in planning new urban spaces, it considers and respects Tibetan cultural and architectural styles, observers of China's new construction projects in cities note that new buildings and streets are often indistinguishable from those of Chinese towns (T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet* p.261). The straight lines of urban modernity, affording deep penetration by surveillance cameras, replace laneways and pilgrimage paths.

As for residential areas, government campaigns and urban resettlement programmes promise grants (albeit as shown in section 4, that are overstated, and inadequate for the overall costs) for new homes on the condition Tibetans hoist the national flag of the PRC (Briggs; T. Nyima, *The Chinese Development of Tibet*). Authorities claim to be building traditional Tibetan houses, in reality because of what Chinese engineers deem to be a too challenging environment, the majority of new urban homes are concrete prefabs embellished in 'Tibetan style' (Po). Furthermore, residents of urban spaces are instructed to follow 'civilised' behaviour based upon the norms of Han society such as not spitting, washing hands, learning to speak Chinese and adopting habits of a higher, human quality that traditional Tibetan society is perceived to lack (Grant, *Belonging and Ethnicity*; Lafitte). Urbanisation is at its core a civilising mission.

In cities and towns dominated by Han society and life, the ethnic discrimination experienced by Tibetans partly due to the state's intentional inferiorisation campaign is logically exacerbated, adding another dimension to an already difficult Tibetan struggle for urban cultural survival. Meanwhile, as urbanisation facilitates assimilation through asserting Han identities onto the urban Tibetan way of life, Tibetan culture is further attacked not only by what is asserted upon it in cities, but also by what is taken away by processes of urbanisation. When China removes the traditional socioeconomic foundations of pastoralists and nomadic life, they are disrupting the entire culture and identity rural Tibetan society is built around (Lafitte; T. Nyima, *Development Discourses on the Tibetan Plateau*; Tsering). Loss of land and land tenure security is loss of food security and family capacity to generate income. Spaciousness, solitude and self-sustainability

are just a few aspects key to the fabric and iconography of Tibetan identity and culture. All are lost completely by urbanisation. Thus, Tibetans are not only losing their culture but their living heritage, to be replaced by Han Chinese culture that attaches very little value to the preservation of such an identity, viewing it as backward and undeveloped (Bum). As traditional culture is undermined firstly by the process of urbanisation, and then by the experience of urbanity, a new Han culture is asserted in urban spaces under the pretence of 'civility' and 'development'. In reality, it is veiled assimilationism.

The assimilationist logic of urbanisation underscores the Chinese government's municipalisation strategy, of upgrading rural administrative areas to 'municipal' status if they meet certain criteria relating to urban population and economic infrastructure. Once a region becomes a municipality, it loses its ethnic autonomous status, thus diminishing Tibetans' already limited claims to special cultural rights enshrined in the Chinese constitution and enacted through the Law on Regional Autonomy (Bulag).

The Chinese government's fixation on urbanity as a means of assimilation has made daily life a struggle for cultural survival, as Tibetans grapple to maintain their identity in urban areas that are ethnically diluted and culturally Han. Urbanisation in its current form, implemented in the name of developing Tibetans but for the interests of the Chinese government, thus poses a serious challenge to Tibetan identity itself.

V.3 EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Vital to any culture's survival is the transmission of the ideas, heritage and language that make up the fabric of that identity. As such, education is a vital, generational linkage for the transmission of culture. China's development policy however seeks to disrupt the transmission of Tibetan culture through transforming education to minimise ethnic difference and help realise the concept of *minzu*.

China has significantly transformed education in Tibet as authorities claim to have succeeded in modernising the Tibetan education system by highlighting its supposedly 'backwards' foundations as well as efforts to make education more widely and readily available (Xinhua, *Across China: Dreams kept alive in Tibetan school*). Indeed, China has implemented in Tibet an organised educational system, which previously did not exist. It is also true, as proponents of China highlight, that the study of 'modern' subjects, like maths, physics and chemistry, were virtually non-existent in Tibet's traditional method of monastic education (Shi and Zhibin). Education is now more widespread too, with official sources in 2017 stating there were 2,200 schools in TAR across different education levels, with around 663000 students.

At best, China has created the impression of modernity and progress through opening new schools and implementing the national curriculum while its educational reforms have undermined actual, meaningful development. Meaningful development, as understood by the UN DRD, would require China's education policy to empower Tibetan youth. Far from it, China has manipulated the Tibetan education system into a tool of indoctrination and assimilation, where the goals of the state once again come before the interests of the people (Halder).

Detailed fieldwork by Adrian Zenz in Tibetan areas shows that employment opportunities for Tibetans educated in Tibetan language are extremely limited, except as employees of the security surveillance system (*Xinjiang's System of Militarized Vocational Training Comes to Tibet*).

The education curriculum adopted by the Chinese government in Tibet is a blatant attempt at sinicization meant to degrade traditional Tibetan identity. 'Patriotic education' in Tibet began officially in 1996 – unofficially patriotic education has been present in Tibet much longer – as part of the national "Strike Hard" campaign (TCHRD). Patriotic education, now called 'national security education' or 'legal education', enforces teaching a narrative of the CCP's legitimacy, and a version of Tibetan history that inextricably links it to China. Students are required to memorise and repeat key official slogans in performative declamation, on demand. The CCP's ideology and law are revered and China's benevolence towards Tibet replaces religious learning at monasteries, based upon studying Buddhist scriptures (Upendran). In the past, education in Tibet was primarily taught by monks and nuns in Buddhist monasteries. Tibetan Buddhism is closely linked to Tibetan culture and society. Indeed, Dawa Norbu states that Buddhism has been the most significant obstacle to Han Chinese assimilation of Tibet (*China's Tibet Policy*). Thus, by undermining Tibetan Buddhism's role in education, China is undermining a fundamental element of Tibetan culture that it hopes will better allow for assimilation.

Patriotic education notably entails a five-point pledge for Tibet: agree to the historical unity of China and Tibet; recognise the Chinese appointed Panchen Lama; deny Tibet would ever be independent; denounce the Dalai Lama as a traitor and a splittist; declare opposition to splittism (Lama). Tibetans who revere the Dalai Lama find being forced to denounce him deeply offensive, a breaking of the most solemn of vows connecting religious teacher and student. China's supposedly 'modern curriculum' for Tibet, and patriotic education "and its crippling of Tibetan Buddhism is a blatant violation of various human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Upendran). The Chinese curriculum for Tibet intentionally undermines and limits religious, cultural and political freedoms under the guise of modernity and development. However, it is by no means the only element of how China's education policy has been designed to facilitate sinicization and undermine Tibet's identity.

The Chinese government also uses education to relegate the Tibetan language and assert standard Chinese, to further negate ethnic difference. Mandarin Chinese has been the medium of instruction in nearly all middle and high schools in the TAR for decades, however in recent years a 'bilingual education' policy means more primary schools and kindergartens are now using standard Chinese as the teaching language for Tibetan students (Human Rights Watch, *China's "Bilingual Education" Policy in Tibet*). Indeed, a visit by the BBC to a primary school in the TAR found the only subject taught in the Tibetan language to pupils was Tibetan, but also that half the teachers were Han Chinese (Grammaticas). To further estrange Tibetans from their own language, bans and decrees have been passed by Chinese authorities such as the December 2018 Nangchen Ban in Qinghai. In the name of development and modernising education, officials in Qinghai banned study classes in monasteries (TCHRD, *Annual Report 2019*). Tibetan is the most common subject taught in monasteries during school holidays and thus, the ban not

only restricts Tibetan children's participation in religious activities, but also access to learn their native language.

Chinese authorities have thus effectively denied access of Tibetan children to their native language. In schools, Tibetan language has been relegated and undermined by the assertion of Chinese in the curriculum and the integration of Han teachers in schools, meanwhile extra-curricular monastic classes have been banned. The right to practice one's own language and to have the freedom of religious belief are basic rights and fundamental freedoms protected in numerous treaties and agreements that China is party to and bound by. China has ratified international conventions guaranteeing its citizens' right to freedom of religious belief and likewise, the ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) requires China to observe the responsibility to protect the right to education and recognise education's role in preserving cultural identity and language. Indeed, protections of citizens' right to an education in their native tongue, as well as the right to freedom of religious belief are both specifically enshrined and guaranteed within China's own constitution. All of these commitments, provisions and safeguards are contravened by policy formulated and implemented under the pretence of fulfilling development and thus, China's campaign of assimilation is illegal under international law.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has repeatedly and consistently raised concerns regarding Tibet's education policy and provided recommendations that China has casually dismissed. In the concluding observations of the 10th to 13th periodic reports on China in 2009, "The Committee [reiterated] its concern about remaining disparities for ethnic minority children in accessing education, which is often linked to the availability of teaching in Mandarin only." A CERD committee member enquired further, as to "the provision of education to ethnic minorities in their own language. It seemed that current practice went beyond the legislative provisions in force; if so, consideration should be given to amending the relevant legislation accordingly" (qtd. in CERD, *Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*).

Nine years later in 2018, the CERD's concluding observations on the combined 14th to 17th periodic reports of China reveal how little progress China has made. "Tibetan language teaching in schools in the [TAR] has not been placed on an equal footing in law, policy and practice with Chinese, and that it has been significantly restricted; that Tibetan language advocacy has been punished; and that Tibetans do not have access to Tibetan language translations during court proceedings, which are held in Mandarin". The CERD recommended that China "preserve the Tibetan language in the [TAR] by, inter alia, encouraging and promoting its use in the fields of education, the judicial system and the media" (CERD, *Concluding observations: Review of the fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China*). China has made no efforts in this regard, and instead chooses to continue an aggressive policy of degrading the Tibetan language.

Despite considerable obstacles, Tibetans have taken opportunities to oppose the degradation of their culture by utilising the internet and social media (Grant, *'Don't discriminate against minority nationalities': practicing Tibetan ethnicity on social media*) and through projects such as

the Lhakar Campaign (*White Wednesday: "The Lhakar Pledge"*). Such acts of resistance make clear that Tibetans are not the grateful beneficiaries of Chinese development and that they do not consent to Beijing's fallacious goal of *zhonghua minzu*. But the pressure exerted by intensified assimilation, including from mandatory 'vocational education' for those classified as surplus rural labourers (Zenz), now means Tibetan culture is under ever increasing stigmatisation as a path to nowhere, at best marginal; while mastery of Chinese is the perceived door to success.

VI. POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

Tibet is one of the most politically restricted and repressed territories in the world. According to a rigorous annual survey measuring the degree of civil liberties and political rights worldwide, Tibet's civil liberties scored 3 out of 60 (the same rating as North Korea), and down 8 from China's score of 11. For political rights scored out of 40, China received a score of minus 1. Tibet meanwhile is given minus 4. Overall, on the Global Freedom Score, China received 10 out of 100; Tibet scored 1 out of 100. Out of all the territories and countries covered by Freedom House, only two are given a lower score for freedom than Tibet: Syria (0) and South Sudan (minus 2). Freedom House noted that in Tibet, decision making is wholly made by Chinese officials and fundamental rights are routinely denied to both Chinese and Tibetans, the crucial difference being that a more rigorous standard is applied to suppressing any signs of dissent among Tibetans" (*Freedom in the World 2020- Tibet*).

China's political repression and human rights abuses in Tibet are well documented. Less scrutinised is how development policy has a number of significant consequences for the political rights and individual freedoms of Tibetans, as well as playing a major role in state penetration and control of Tibetan society. Clarity in understanding development's role in creating these consequences posits upon first understanding development's significance to the concept of 'stability maintenance'.

VI.1: POLITICAL CONTROL

China's entire relationship with Tibet, both rhetoric and practice, is grounded upon two long-standing policies of the state: 'stability maintenance' and 'development' (Xinhua). Almost every action by state apparatus in Tibet is defined as serving one of these the two concepts (*Lafitte, When Warriors Do Development*). Human rights organisations concerned with the situation in Tibet overwhelmingly scrutinise and attend to stability maintenance as, not surprisingly, China's enforcement of its political order through a highly repressive surveillance and security arm carries significant and clear breaches of political and civil rights that are most attention grabbing in the public eye. Development, meanwhile from a human rights advocacy and monitoring perspective, has been ignored.

Commentaries in the past have emphasised an exclusivity between these two concepts. Development, while scrutinised as being misconceived in formulation and exploitative in implementation, was deemed somewhat separate from the political oppression of the Chinese

state security apparatus. Infringing on political and civil rights including domination of Tibetan society and deprivation of freedoms were components of a different, separate governmental and policy sphere of 'stability maintenance'.

The link between China's development and political control of Tibet, defined internally as 'stability', has entered a new paradigm of development as a mechanism for the 'stability first' policy (Wei qtd. in Ho). Stability maintenance and development have now become two highly inter-connected and interdependent concepts. If these two core goals were ever contradictory, they are no longer.

In China's perverse conception of development, fulfilling the political interests and goals of the state has always come before the needs and welfare of local communities (Pan). Now though, development is being actively used as a tool to facilitate deeper state penetration of society and restriction of individual rights to unprecedented levels. The absolute political control sought by Beijing is increasingly implemented to clear the way for development policy.

Observers note that the Chinese government has long seen development as playing a role in ensuring stability (Dreyer; Makley), though not as the tool of political domination it is today. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Chinese authorities perceived that economic development and modernisation of Tibet would sufficiently win the hearts of Tibetans, and thus help ease separatist sentiments in what has been termed 'development for stability'. Key to this strategy's implementation was the 2000 *xibu da kaifa* ('Opening up the West') campaign (He). However, what China failed to comprehend was that the top-down, state centric development policies formulated and adopted by Beijing, and applied with little local consultation to Tibet, were an embodiment of the crippling disempowerment that Tibetan society has experienced under China. Realisation of this disempowerment, in turn, led to the 2008 uprising in Tibet (Makley). Indeed, in 2009, commenting on the events of 2008, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) "[recommended] that the State party carefully consider the root causes of such events, including inter-ethnic violence, and the reasons why the situation escalated" (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*). Advice that China wholly ignored in its response to the popular protests.

The 2008 protests fundamentally altered the relationship between development and stability maintenance in Tibet that led to the security state taking precedence in the former, to serve as a tool for the latter (He). In 2009, CERD was "concerned at reports alleging the disproportionate use of force against ethnic Tibetans" (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*) in the wake of the protests, as China sought to tighten its grip. Political stability was no longer the desired by-product of development policies meant to win over Tibetans, instead coercive development became the main mechanism for stability, degrading and fragmenting Tibetan society into submission. China's lesson after the 2008 Tibet uprising was that development to win the hearts of Tibetans had failed to secure stability, albeit this was itself because of the central government's inability to see the resentment top-down development created through disempowerment. China has therefore moved from 'development for stability' to 'stability first', where 'development' now simply serves to weaken and demobilise

Tibetan society and deter resistance, while asserting the state's political domination to ensure stability, even though this is a stark perversion and manipulation of the meaning and goals of what development is understood universally.

In looking at China's approach to enforcing political order, Jennifer Pan has highlighted the phenomenon of 'seepage' where the outcomes of one policy impacts the resources and goals of unrelated areas of government (*Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for its Rulers*). Unforeseen consequences abound. Following 2008, development in Tibet is a prime example of 'seepage'. Fighting separatism, enforcing CCP domination, and asserting China's order in Tibet fundamentally skewed development, an unrelated policy to quelling dissent, in its entirety. Development policy is now driven, more than ever before, by outcomes of control rather than improving lives and welfare. Resources allocated to 'development' never meaningfully help Tibetans. Instead, due to 'seepage' they are squandered and fed into a strategy conceived for the disruption and control of society, perversely labelled as development.

Indeed, the mutuality between stability maintenance and development is now one of even greater consequence than simply defining development as a mechanism of control. Development itself now influences *how* China seeks to control and assert its authority in Tibet. The Chinese government now believes stability in Tibet can be best pursued by coercive development, rather than more easily identifiable techniques of a security state's control and domination, that receive far more international media scrutiny and condemnation. For instance, China's forceful assimilation policies in Xinjiang against the Uyghurs are far more internationally well-known and condemned than the culturally degrading development policies implemented in Tibet and outlined in the previous section. Development policies in Tibet, while subject to intense academic debate and occasional albeit infrequent Western media scrutiny, receive comparably less backlash in the public eye than the traditional methods of the security state's assertion of control through mass incarceration.

Development's significance for stability and serving Beijing's political goals in Tibet can be taken even further. Development, or at least the impression of success in achieving development through macro-economic growth, is used as both a justification for China's political legitimacy in Tibet and a distraction from scrutiny of China's infringement on political and civil rights and freedoms; frequently when accused of undermining the rights of Tibetans, China digresses attention to success in growth (T. Nyima, Chinese Development in Tibet). Furthermore, fulfilling development is also used as the explanation for why China needs to further control society and assert the security state apparatus, as China claims political dissent brings instability that prevents development, and therefore more political control is required (News18), supposedly for the good of the people, to develop them.

The relationship between development and stability maintenance is thus a complicated web of contradictions and irony, that fundamentally serve the purpose of politically subjugating Tibet through policies that either assert the state's tangible presence in society or degrade society itself. Development, rather than being a sideshow or afterthought, is at the core of China's means of control in Tibet, now interdependent and conflated with stability maintenance. This

means that without acknowledging the unprecedented significance development holds to China's mechanisms of political control, holding China to account for infringing on political and civil rights becomes markedly harder.

VI.2: OMNISCIENT STATE

A number of development policies serve the Chinese state to penetrate Tibetan society, to give the state more reach to punish and limit any dissent or political opposition to government authority. In 2018, the CERD raised concerns that "Tibetans, Uighurs and other ethnic minorities, peaceful political protestors and human rights defenders have been tortured or otherwise subjected to ill-treatment" (*Concluding observations: Review of the fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China*). That development policy is facilitating such activities is a grave concern.

In August 2018, six UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups prompted by the arrests of Tibetans protesting harmful development projects such as mining, water diversion and land expropriation, noted with concern in an official communication sent to the Chinese authorities, that "violations of the civil and political rights of Tibetans tend to be inter-related with overarching violations of their economic, social and cultural rights" (OL CHN 15/2018).

Urbanisation creates such an environment, ideally suited to assert the state while restricting the political and civil rights of Tibetans (Yeh and Makley). Urban municipalities are ethnically unmarked and thus do not have autonomous status, nor the associated (albeit limited) political and cultural rights that come with it. Indeed, Uradyn Bulag has identified China's upgrading of rural areas to urban municipal status as a means to bypass ethnic autonomy (*From Yeku-juu to Ordos Municipality*). China intentionally undermines its own autonomous regions because, as suggested by Baogang He, the unitary system of China has created a political centre in Beijing wholly unwilling to share power with its periphery (*Beyond Socialist Autonomy in Tibet*). The result is that the CCP is using development policy to disempower its ethnic autonomous regions from their own decision making. Indeed, the CERD has questioned in the past "to what extent the system of regional ethnic autonomy functioned in practice to ensure the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities" (*Concluding observations: Review of the tenth to thirteenth periodic reports of China*).

Urbanisation also facilitates the security state to better repress society and quell any opposition to its rule. Urban spaces allow for more convenient and efficient deployment of intrusive monitoring and high-tech surveillance methods by state security apparatus (Roche, Hillman and Leibold). Chinese media, for example, reports "virtually every street" in Lhasa is under "constant CCTV surveillance" (qtd. in Asia Times), and that facial and gait recognition technology is also regularly deployed. In modernising and rebuilding Tibetan cities and towns and bulldozing traditional Tibetan paths and spaces, officials have replaced them with long, straight streets intentionally designed for surveillance and CCTV penetration (Mahalingam). Furthermore, mobile phone use, one of China's most vaunted measures of modernity, requires users to identify themselves by name and download apps that facilitate tracking and monitoring of activities

(Reuters). Development is not so much bringing welfare to Tibetans, as it is bringing a police state to Tibet.

Urbanisation has also conveniently allowed officials in Tibet to introduce the so-called 'Grid management', "a highly intrusive social control mechanism" (Zenz), in which urban clusters and communities are divided into smaller units of surveillance and control, with dedicated surveillance apparatus and security staff. The scheme also turns locals into 'volunteers' to further assert the state's influence into people's lives (Hornby). Grid management fragments social solidarity, weakens bonds, and makes social gatherings dangerous.

Similarly, in urban spaces in the TAR, the 'double-linked household' system has been introduced, which "corrals regular citizens into the state's extensive surveillance apparatus" (Zenz). The system, which reportedly covers the TAR's entire civilian population of more than three million, divides households into groups of 10, to watch over and report on each other on matters of security and poverty alleviation (Albawaba).

Equally, infrastructure is constructed to tighten the grip of the Chinese state on Tibet. State media have waxed lyrical about the unity and stability that the Sichuan-Tibet railway will supposedly bring to Tibet, as well as the practical improvements in efficiency and mobility for military personnel, material and supplies (Xu). Much Chinese media analyses have emphasised the railway consolidating stability in a context of heightened border tensions with India. However, ensuring internal political stability maintenance in Tibet is an obvious pre-requisite to securing the border and thus, the railway will serve just as much as a means to move Chinese troops against Tibetans to quell internal unrest and political opposition, as it will to serve as a bulwark against India.

VI.3 POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

China's development policy has led to a number of state initiatives that amount to clear political indoctrination. A journalist from *The Economist* in September 2020 makes a number of revealing observations to this fact on a heavily controlled trip to a new urbanisation project in Sichuan Province for the Yi ethnic group, traditional neighbours of the Tibetans. State officials were noted in actively seeking the pedagogy of this mission to be a "vision of [CCP] members as self-sacrificing, secular missionaries, leading the masses towards more productive lives" to the local people and Xi Jinping was touted as "an austere but benevolent monarch". *The Economist's* reporter comes to the conclusion that "putting money in people's pockets is one measure of success. The greater prize is putting ideas into people's heads" (*China's anti-poverty drive is not disinterested charity*). Evidence pertaining to this conclusion is clear: urbanisation programmes requires new homes to be decorated with iconography and paraphernalia of the CCP such as flags of the PRC or portraits of Chinese leaders (Briggs). In the TAR, possession of the Dalai Lama's portrait has been illegal since 1996.

Officials actively try to convince ethnic minorities to be grateful to the state for the development and progress supposedly brought to them. In *The Economist's* case, the reporter noted banners

covering new housing estates, with slogans such as “Relocation warms our hearts and we are forever grateful to the party” and “Welcoming a new life with a smiling face”. The new town was itself reportedly named “Gratitude Community” (*China’s anti-poverty drive is not disinterested charity*). Thus, state officials go to great lengths to assert the official narrative of benevolence and charity. This also amounts to a repression of choice or free thought in promoting a distinct narrative to people that the benefits of development and modernity are gifts of the state, and can be withdrawn at any time, from individuals who fail to comply with state policy.

In 2019 and 2020, under the banner of poverty alleviation, Chinese authorities in TAR introduced a system of ‘militarised vocational courses’ to promote the large-scale training and transfer of “rural surplus labourers” to other parts of the TAR and other provinces of China (Zenz). State sources propose the strict, military style training, which has farmers and pastoralists dress in military fatigues and supervised by People’s Armed Police drill sergeants, as necessary to alleviate poverty as it “strengthens [the Tibetans’] weak work discipline” and reforms their “backward thinking” (Poverty Alleviation Office, qtd in Zenz). In the first seven months of 2020, 543,000 surplus laborers in the TAR were ‘trained’ through the scheme. Adrian Zenz notes that the programme is an “order-oriented, batch-style matching and training mechanism [that] trains labourers based on company needs. Training, matching and delivery of workers to their work destination takes place in a centralised fashion” (*Xinjiang’s System of Militarized Vocational Training Comes to Tibet*).

Downgrading the human capabilities of pastoralists and farmers displaced from their lands and reclassifying them as “rural surplus labourers” not only ignores their skills, it makes them a new proletariat, raw material for transformation into civilised, higher quality individuals willing to do factory work. As an unskilled proletariat of low quality, they must accept the necessity of moving to wherever there is paid work.

Zenz has noted how the vocational training scheme in Tibet “is tightly linked to social control mechanisms and key aspects of the security apparatus”. Militarised vocational training has clear objectives for political indoctrination of Tibetans. Among a number of vaunted achievements that state narratives glorify (e.g. “[shifting] the attention of the masses of farmers and herdsmen...to thinking about prosperity, seeking development”) is to have “improved the party’s image among the masses, consolidated the ideological and mass foundation for development and stability” (Poverty Alleviation Office). Indeed, Zenz, quoting official sources, highlights how the state’s own narrative suggests that military style training causes the “masses to comply with discipline,” “continuously strengthens their patriotic awareness,” and reforms their “backward thinking”.

Poverty alleviation is one of the most fundamental benchmarks of China’s ‘progress’ towards development. Military vocational training is thus key to achieving development in China’s eyes. However, state-mandated, top down initiatives are equally significant for extending state control into Tibetan society through “a militarised training process that involves thought transformation, patriotic and legal education, and Chinese language teaching” (*Xinjiang’s System of Militarized Vocational Training Comes to Tibet*).

Recruitment relies on an “intrusive social control mechanism” (Zenz) of community-based work teams, devised in the TAR earlier by the TAR party secretary Chen Quanguo “and later used in Xinjiang to identify Uyghurs who should be sent to internment camps”. Indeed, “this draconian scheme shows a disturbing number of close similarities to the system of coercive vocational training and labour transfer established in Xinjiang”, also devised by Chen Quanguo. And, while the degree of suggested coercion and forced participation may be less than that applied to Xinjiang, “there are clear elements of coercion during recruitment, training and job matching, as well as a centralised and strongly state-administered and supervised transfer process. While some documents assert that the scheme is predicated on voluntary participation, the overall evidence indicates the systemic presence of numerous coercive elements” (Zenz).

The weaponization of development policy against political and civil rights plays a key role in facilitating China’s infringement of these rights, and repression of Tibetan society and freedoms. China’s repressive security state in Tibet ultimately works for the goal of maintaining stability. Development has now been manipulated to serve this goal and plays an increasingly significant role in facilitating and enforcing the security state apparatus. Development cannot be treated as an afterthought to stability maintenance by those looking to scrutinise Chinese machinations in Tibet, as it lies close to the centre of China’s control strategy.

VII. DEVELOPMENT WITH TIBETAN CHARACTERISTICS

This report has engaged extensively with the question of what ‘development’ (with Chinese characteristics) means *for* Tibetans. What, however, does development actually mean *to* Tibetans? The Chinese state asserts that Tibetans failed to develop Tibet, and thus development means nothing to Tibetans. As such, authorities frequently employ a rhetoric that portrays Tibetans as either too backward to understand the concept, or too disinterested, or passive, to engage with it. Tibetans are routinely depicted as lazy, and unmotivated to develop, due to being content with lives of modest consumption (Wang and Bai). Such a narrative visibly forms the foundation of the current ‘militarised vocational training’ of Tibetans discussed in section VI.3, playing an important role in justifying the need for “strict military style management” and a heavy-handed approach to development, as the necessary way to deal with a perceived lack of agency among Tibetans to develop themselves (Zenz).

Indeed, a number of the goals for militarised vocational training, identified by Zenz, deal directly with the issue of a perceived, Tibetan apathy towards development: “mobilizing a “reticent” minority group to change their traditional livelihood mode”, “Tibetans are to be transformed from ‘[being] unwilling to move’ to becoming willing to participate”, and in doing so, reform their “backwardness” (qtd. in Zenz).

Proliferating such a narrative carries clear benefits to the Chinese government, underpinning the need for top-down development in Tibet, justifying state intervention into lives, and corroborating the frequently deployed narrative of Chinese benevolence and charity in

developing a “backwards” people, “reticent”, and “unwilling to move” on their own. This makes China the author of modern Tibet, successor to the historic Tibetan failure to develop.

Understanding what development actually means to Tibetans becomes, in the context outlined above, a necessity for reframing the falsehoods upon which China’s official development discourse is founded. The reality of how Tibetans engage with development processes is that collectively, they are neither passive nor disinterested, but rather a great many Tibetans are deeply concerned by, aware of and engaged with development to extents far exceeding the narrow participation that the repressive, authoritarian status quo in Tibet allows for.

The assertion of Tibetan engagement with development discourses is clearly observable in two contemporary contexts: firstly, the Tibetan response and resistance to Chinese development policies within Tibet is evidence of an undeniable concern, agency and recognition among Tibetans of the issues of development. And secondly, the lively debate among Tibetans over development, expressing a full range of stances pertaining to the discourse shows neither an alleged disinterest nor passivity, but a genuine engagement with issues surrounding development.

VII.1: RESISTANCE TO CHINESE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The coercion and victimisation of Tibetans under China’s development policy is endemic. However, this does not mean Tibetans are passive or voiceless victims. On the contrary, Tibetans express through a wide range of mediums considerable awareness of and opposition to the status quo of statist development projects imposed from above. Even in the context of Tibet’s highly restricted political and civil rights, and the rigorous suppression of any signs of dissent and despite the absence of any space for physical, peaceful protest and lawful dissent without the risk of state repercussions, Tibetans have shown remarkable courage and assertiveness in resisting a number of destructive development projects: “Development projects in Tibetan areas have led to frequent standoffs with Tibetans who accuse Chinese firms and local officials of pilfering money, improperly seizing land, and disrupting the lives of local people” (Ngodup).

In the past decade, state mining operations have been the targets of a number of Tibetan protests, as these extractive industries have polluted the environment and destroyed the sacred natural sites to exploit local resources (Tenzin). In May 2010, local residents of Markham County, Chamdo Prefecture, TAR protested against a Chinese mine operation on sacred mountains (Dolma). In August 2010, security forces fired upon Tibetans protesting mining operations in Palyul County in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province for picketing local government offices, killing four Tibetans (Bartolucci). Tibetans believe that local gods residing in the mountains and waters are angered by extraction, and can cause much trouble, such as landslides or crop failure.

In 2013, a large-scale act of local opposition occurred at Naglha Dzambha mountain in Driru County, Nagchu Prefecture, TAR, when a reported 5,000 local Tibetans gathered to protest Chinese mining operations at a site considered sacred. Among a normally scattered population,

5,000 is a huge crowd. Demanding an end to the mining that had reportedly begun under “the pretext of putting up cable towers and power lines and building hydroelectric projects”, the Tibetans delivered a petition to the Chinese company responsible for the work not to harm the local environment. Local officials later “gave in to the popular outcry and made an announcement to that effect” despite fears among locals of a possible crackdown by security forces (Topgyal).

In October 2010, Driru County saw similar protests as locals petitioned authorities against plans to build a dam at Naglha Dzambha mountain. The 2010 protests reportedly saw protesters “threatened with detention, life in jail, or death if they persisted in their protests” yet dissent continued, with a number of detentions and arrests made by authorities (Dolma).

In 2014, Tibetans protested in Lathok (Ch: Lāduō) Township in Kharro (Ch: Karuo) County, Chamdo Prefecture, TAR protested the construction of a mine by petitioning the TAR authorities, officials of Chamdo prefecture, and the central government in Beijing to stop the project. Some 30 Tibetans were detained in Lathok, including those responsible for sending the petitions, and “subjected them to extreme hardships”. (K. Tenzin and L. Tashi).

In June 2014, Tibetan women protesting a copper mine on a sacred site were beaten and detained in Dechen (Ch: Deqin County, Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province). When men from the village joined the protest, many of them were also detained (K. Dorjee).

An enduring stand-off between local Tibetans and Chinese authorities occurred in Lhagang (Ch: Tagong) Township, Dartsedo (Ch: Kangding) City, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province when pollution from a lithium mine started in 2005 led to the death of aquatic life in the local Lichu River in 2011 prompting protests. Mining was postponed in 2013 while the deaths were investigated by officials. But lithium extraction resumed in 2016 despite a 2014 petition by three Tibetans to central authorities in Beijing to ban mining in the area. After another mass die-off of fish, protests resumed in May 2016 when local Tibetans gathered to protest were met by Chinese police in riot gear. Following this, authorities temporarily halted mining again (Bartolucci, *Protests against mining of lithium*).

Local dissent and resistance is more expansive than simply a determined opposition to mining. Indeed, as noted in section III.2, Tibet’s role in China’s economy is transitioning from fulfilling a demand for natural resources, to satisfying a rapidly growing desire among Han Chinese for Tibet’s landscapes repurposed as a tourist destination. This means the Chinese government is increasingly using development policy to “rewild” Tibet into a ‘pristine wilderness’ and facilitating the exploitation of this wilderness through constructing transport infrastructure such as roads, to meet and satisfy Chinese domestic tourist demands. (Denyer; Xu; Qin and Zheng).

Tibetan dissent has visibly engaged with this shift in government priorities that has also proved to be detrimental to Tibetan livelihoods in recent years. In early 2014, reports described nearly 100 Tibetans protesting the construction of a tunnel and road project in Derge County, Kardze

Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. Locals gathered to voice dissent that the construction project was “having serious repercussions on their community by causing serious damage to buildings, in addition to environmental concerns about the surrounding ecosystem”. Some 20 protesters were taken into custody. (Vivaldi).

In 2015, the development of an eco-tourism project in Tsolung valley in Serdeu in Khyungchu (Ch: Hongyuan) County, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, led to widespread land seizures by local authorities. Dugkar had protested the seizure of his land under the project by threatening to kill himself rather than leave his land, and forced the authorities leave his property untouched (TCHRD, *China: Stop the witchhunt*). Dugkar’s successful resistance against the state’s attempts to relocate him resulted in his arrest in 2019 as part of a national ‘anti-crime’ campaign against ‘criminal gangs’. Dugkar’s arrest, along with the imprisonment of a number of other Tibetans corroborates concerns that the Chinese government suppresses peaceful dissent through targeted “anti-crime” campaigns (TCHRD, *China: Stop the Witchhunt*).

In 2017, a group of Tibetan nomads from Darlag (Ch: Dari) County, Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Mangra (Ch: Guinan) County, Tsolho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, appealed to Chinese authorities after their pastoral lands were confiscated without explanation. Calling the action illegal, the petition stated that, “Taking away citizens’ rights to pastureland is against the constitution, against national and local laws, and a major cause of damage to peoples’ livelihood and way of life” (International Campaign for Tibet hereinafter ICT, *ICT Inside Tibet*). The petition was described as a “new instance of the sophisticated ways in which Tibetans are challenging counter-productive orders and policies” (*ICT Inside Tibet*). And as such, is a clear indication of the steps Tibetans have been willing to go to have their voices heard and offer resistance to nomad resettlement policies and coerced urbanisation by the state. In 2019, Tibetan nomads resettled 500km away from their hometown in Tanggula mountain range entered into dispute over grassland use rights with the Hoh Xil preservation station, part of the Hoh Xil National Nature Reserve in Qinghai province, with local Chinese officials admitting, “A small group of [resettled nomads] have been trying to move back to the grassland” (TCHRD, *China’s Poverty Alleviation Programs*).

Among a number of notable individual acts of opposition to China’s perversion of the right to development are the following: Tashi Wangchuk from Yushu in Qinghai campaigned to preserve the Tibetan language from the recent assimilationist trends of Chinese development policy. In 2015, he travelled to Beijing to bring a lawsuit against officials in Yushu, to improve Tibetan language education. Wangchuk was sentenced to five years in prison in May 2018, after interviews that he gave to The New York Times were used as evidence against him on the charge of “inciting separatism” (Buckley). A-Nya Sendgra, a nomad community leader in Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, who had campaigned against corruption and embezzlement of poverty alleviation funds (TCHRD, *China: Release Tibetan Anti-corruption Activist*) was sentenced to seven years in prison in December 2019 which was met with criticism by the OHCHR, and five UN experts called for China to drop the charges against him and “the criminalisation of [his] legitimate work (Narváez)”. Tsering Tso, a social worker from Xining advocated for the rights of local Tibetans to apply for passports in accordance with law in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous

Prefecture. Indeed, restrictions to movement was a concern raised by the CERD in 2018. Tso was detained in December 2020 over “illegal” WeChat posts (TCHRD).

In addition, many Tibetans resist and oppose the damaging nature of Chinese development policy through newer forms of protest, such as using literature, arts and songs to express discontent. These mediums of expression have provided crucial spaces for protest and dissent “to give voice” to Tibetans (Dhomba p.18). The writer and poet Tsering Woesser, for instance, has frequently criticised the Chinese state policy, while Theurang, a writer and teashop owner from Ngaba, has written a number of poems that explicitly oppose and critique China’s development policy (see ‘Raise the Warrior’s Sword, my Fellow Tibetans’, and ‘Lhasa-Gormo Railway’) in addition to Kyabchen Dedrol from Machu District (see ‘Moment of Death’), or Nyen from Kyungchu (see ‘In Memory of Wild Yaks’). Another writer using his work to express dissent is Tsering Döndrup, a prolific Tibetan writer of Mongolian ethnicity from Malho in Qinghai. Döndrup often uses his work to deal with the language crisis brought on by the assimilationist language policies applied to contemporary Tibet. For instance, Döndrup’s piece, *Baba Baoma* (published in November 2020), expressly deals with the problems facing Tibetan culture rooted in the absence of mother tongue education and cultural belonging.

Between 2008 and 2017, over 40 Tibetan academics, writers and artists were arrested for their work (Sonam). Gendun Lhundrup, a Tibetan writer and poet from Rebkong County in Malho (Ch: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, sought to promote and preserve Tibetan national identity and culture through his literature that was published online. Aware of the severe limitations upon his freedom of expression within Tibet, Lhundrup nevertheless continued to make his voice heard. Authorities arrested Lhundrup in December 2020 with his location currently unknown (Gelek).

Tibetan singer Lhundrub Drakpa from Driru County was also notable for using his songs to express dissent and to critique the Chinese regime. His song ‘Black Hat’, opposing the state repression led to his arrest and sentencing to six years in prison in October 2020 (TCHRD, *China: Release Tibetan singer Lhundrub*).

Roche, Hillman and Leibold have highlighted how urban Tibetans are harnessing “the potential for new forms of Tibetan politics that resist and co-opt the state’s push for assimilation. Universities, teahouses, and bars are all urban venues where Tibetan intellectuals exchange ideas and organise to pursue collective goals” (*Why Are So Many Tibetans Moving to Chinese Cities?*). Moreover, the Lhakar Campaign, or “White Wednesday” has been a movement of dissent within Tibet for over a decade now. Wednesdays, considered an auspicious day because it is the Dalai Lama’s soul day, are expressed through the campaign to assert Tibetan identity and oppose assimilation. This includes dressing in traditional Tibetan robes and speaking unadulterated Tibetan (*White Wednesday: “The Lhakar Pledge”*).

Additionally, in researching an important aspect of an increasingly digitised world, Andrew Grant has documented in detail how urban Tibetans have utilised social media platforms, such as WeChat, to create communities of resistance through which to oppose unjust treatment by the

state and Han individuals, as well as facilitating political discussions that deepen a sense of belonging to a Tibetan identity through shared experience of common concerns and discrimination in urban settings (*'Don't discriminate against minority nationalities'*).

Grant highlights how social media, despite China's strict online censorship, has been utilised by urban Tibetans in Xining as a platform to communicate and oppose the increased surveillance and discrimination of "ethnic minorities", experienced following nation-wide terror attacks in 2014 and thus created a community from which to challenge the penetration of the state into society that urbanisation has facilitated. Social media has also offered spaces to scrutinise the injustices and discrimination that accompany transitions to cities and towns "allowing for Tibetan representational politics to find new voices and [contribute] to a more politicised sense of Tibetan ethnic identity that is experienced and discussed in contrast with Han people and the Han-dominated state" (p.382).

Grant notes how social media was utilised as a forum in which Tibetans challenged the concept of *minzu*. Following acts of terror in 2014, Grant reports how the language of *minzu* and a single national identity was employed by officials in Xining, "Tibetans then interpreted harassment through the language of *minzu*" (p.382) that was discussed and scrutinised online. "With great speed... viral posts used criticism, irony, and insults to challenge Tibetans' harassment and mistreatment" (p.382).

Social media has therefore offered an important platform for empowerment, resistance and cultural preservation to urbanised Tibetans, through which they can assert their identity, share experiences and concerns, allow Tibetan voices to be heard, and identify and challenge the injustices and discrimination facing the collective identity and goals of Tibetans in the context of urbanisation.

The proposal that Tibetans are reticent and apathetic to development concepts is clearly a perversion of reality. Tibetans, far from being reserved, have on numerous occasions struggled with authorities to make their voices heard with regards to development policy. The non-violent forms of protest that Tibetans overwhelmingly use are fully reasonable attempts to engage with the state and participate in their own development, and to be consulted on the issues that impact their lives. China's response to this inalienable right to freedom of expression has been an aggressive and unnecessary criminalisation of that right, and the right to development. For many Tibetans, attempts to meaningfully access their right to development, to freely exchange their views, to reasonably critique the state policies that negatively impact their lives, and to participate and engage in the processes that define their futures have been violently and relentlessly denied by the Chinese state. And yet, in the face of threats of violence, imprisonment, and even death as part of sustained and determined attempts to force Tibetans into passivity, Tibetans have continued to pursue non-violent resistance and participation in development. In such a context, Tibetans can be seen to be far from passive, uninterested and voiceless victims, but rather, demonstrate considerable tenacity and determination in not only resisting the destructive and perverse machinations of the state labelled as development, but

also in empowering Tibetan voice and asserting the Tibetan right to development that China attempts to deny.

VII.2: TIBETAN PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT

What development means to Tibetans, and how they grapple and engage with the discourse can be better understood by observers through the multitude of stances, perspectives and opinions that Tibetans occupy, and which form an active and lively debate on development within Tibet. There is, of course, no single Tibetan perspective on development, or a single understanding as to what development should mean. Instead, there is a spectrum of voices, sometimes conflicted, over the meaning of development. Responses vary greatly, from wholehearted embrace of urban modernity and individualism to complete refusal, even if it means children lack access to schooling. However, these are extreme responses. Most Tibetans wrestle with the attractions and costs of leading the life of a disciplined, developed, hygienic, civilised citizen with Chinese characteristics.

The following is not intended as an exhaustive list of Tibetan views on development, but a sample of stances, concerns and opinions that display an engaged Tibetan perspective on what the right to development means.

In Tibet, due to China's persistence with massive capital expenditure inflows into urban enclaves, despite diminishing returns on investment, development is no longer simply just the coercive 'push' of a developmentalist state cancelling land rights and forcing urbanisation. It is also the 'pull' of urban modernity and individualism.

Indeed, there are many aspects of China's leap to modernisation, development understood as urban modernity, that Tibetans find attractive, in the undeniable benefits that urban life can offer: greater variety of food and beverages, heated shopping malls, better access to schools and hospitals, Wi-Fi and entertainment being just a few.

China has deliberately concentrated many of the attractions of development in urban centres, including essentials such as access to literacy, electricity and almost all health services beyond basic rural clinics. These concentrations of services and comforts make the pull of development all the more attractive to many.

Naturally, many Tibetans have fully embraced the undeniable benefits urban, consumerist development brings. Anne Kukuczka has documented how, in Lhasa, Tibetan women of "various educational, professional and personal backgrounds" (*Smartphones, Weixin and Beautiful Bodies* p.182) have willingly welcomed smartphones and "body work" (p.182) (work on one's body through the commercial beauty sector) into their lives. Kukuczka's narrative reveals not only a widespread popularity and adoption of smartphones among Tibetans in Lhasa, but also the wider appeal of consumerism to many. The allure of beauty as the key to success surrounds urban Tibetan women, in glossy Chinese magazines aimed at women and on TV and social media, as in almost any city worldwide.

Kukuczka documents how the individuals with whom she interacted frequented and explored commercial spaces where the gendered body is beautified as part of “a highly professional and differentiated beauty industry” (p.186) that has grown up in Lhasa, such as beauty parlours, gyms, cosmetic shops and nail salons since the early 2000s. This is accompanied by an expansion in other hallmarks of modern, urban spaces such as shopping malls, department stores, banks, and casinos. In these ways, one becomes ‘modern’, which means becoming an individual, with fewer or even no customary obligations to family or natal community.

In this context, Kukuczka highlights that another aspect of the full embrace of urban modernity that some Tibetans have adopted, is a growing impatience with religion and the traditional hallmarks of Tibetan society. Kukuczka notes the experience one Tibetan woman with whom she knew, Lhamo, who “Due to her busy job...seldom finds time to go on pilgrimage or worship to the Barkor”, instead choosing to decorate her smartphone with “a symbol identified by fellow Tibetans as Buddhist” (p.189). Acceleration is the hallmark of modernity, and it has come to Tibet.

Through her recent, intimate experiences of life in Ngaba, Barbara Demick portrays a common Tibetan perspective towards development that opts to recall the inner strengths of Tibetan culture as their identity, while still enjoying the comforts of urban consumption. The young Tibetans Demick met were “as obsessed with getting secure jobs as people of their generation anywhere...They want infrastructure, they want technology, they want higher education. But they also want to keep their language and culture and their freedom of religion” (Eat the Buddha, p.281). Demick’s interaction with one group of Tibetans, “in their teens and twenties, outwardly secular, denim-wearing, smartphone-carrying, Chinese-speaking” (p.290) but laden with gifts for the Dalai Lama, again reveals a Tibetan view of development as a merging of consumerism, and a faith in cultural maintenance.

Not all Tibetans accept that modernity and religion can be so easily balanced. Indeed, as Kukuczka shows in the experience of Lhamo, trade-offs and choices are sometimes necessary that put the concepts into conflict. There is genuine concern, scepticism and reluctance by many Tibetans to accept that development can be interpreted through materialism and consumerism, as it is in China and much of the ‘developed’ world. Sedentarism, urbanisation, commercialism, commodification of religious sites, verticalisation of cities, mass transport, densification, globalisation and other hallmarks of ‘development’ are met by legitimate hostility by Tibetans who fear the conflict such ‘advances’ create for traditional society and religion.

Theorists of capitalist economics are quite clear that the driving force behind ‘development’ is consumption (O'Reilly): a desire, for something different or new, something more than what is at hand. Those who desire little are hard to motivate to produce more, work in more disciplined, regularised ways, accept all hardships, eat bitterness, for the promise of future rewards, especially wealth accumulation (Wang and Bai).

Tibetan culture teaches a flexible acceptance of present scarcity, as transient. Tibetans learn from very young to consider not only this life and its endless desires, balanced against lives to come, and that satiating today's desires could rebound in future lives. Tibetans are accustomed to weighing long term consequences, while the individualism of modern development urges us to "just do it." Acceleration of most aspects of life is a major attribute of the Anthropocene era of development, and Tibetans find themselves attracted to it, yet also on reflection, preferring their customary pace, even if it means less wealth accumulation.

Tibetans with longer exposure to the contradictions and costs of urban individuated development are increasingly cautious of the glossy promise of consumerist development. Tashi Tsering for instance has argued on the contradictions between the globalisation which accompanies development and Tibetan society and religion (*A Tibetan Perspective on Development and Globalisation*). In Tsering's view, "Globalisation is driven by an ideology of unlimited production and consumption (hence unlimited growth) that views nature as something to be exploited or conquered by mankind" (p.44). This is "fundamentally counter to Tibetan (Buddhist) thinking which views humans as an integral part of nature or the environment in which they live" (p.44). Tsering continues, the "'Environment," to Tibetans, was not something "out there" to be exploited or saved: people were a part of the environment. These values are now at risk of being lost" (p.45) to globalisation.

Tibetan literature is also telling of the concerns that many have for the perceived incompatibility of tradition, society and religion with the notion of 'modernity'. Poets such as Theurang have pondered upon these worries in verse: "Hearts of the devoted old women on the main road/Being shaken by the comings and goings of the train" (*Burning the Sun's Braids* p.46). While Kyabchen Dedrol's mused that "A sword of modernism /Cuts the tent-ropes into many pieces" (*Burning the Sun's Braids* p.56), shows a genuine anxiety that the Tibetan traditional, nomadic way of life is lost under modernity.

Furthermore, not all Tibetans are passively awaiting the arrival of development from above, as defined by the state. Emilia Sulek's ethnography of districts endowed with a seasonal abundance of caterpillar fungus is a detailed account of a Tibetan economy developing with very little state intervention. Sulek shows that "the state is not the only agent of modernity" (*Trading Caterpillar Fungus in Tibet* p.24) but how "pastoralists can bring to life their own vision of modernity and make their own choices" (p.25). "The money derived from caterpillar fungus is used by pastoralists to develop their region" (p.20). However, Sulek is reluctant to use the term 'development', which she deliberately avoids using to describe the transformation of Golog due to a contestation with many of the meanings attached to the concept. Again, this shows how development, as understood through a pedagogy of modernity and consumption, fails to fit the nuances of the Tibetan experience.

Tibetans are, therefore, conflicted and diverse in their stances to development. Some, like many of the young urban Tibetans encountered by Kukuczka wholeheartedly embrace consumerist development and materialism. Others, attuned to what is so readily lost, are anxious and concerned to abandon tradition or relegate commitments to religion, refusing urban

development altogether. Overwhelmingly, most Tibetans are likely to be located between these two extremes. Like many of those with whom Demick interacted, opting to recall the inner strengths of Tibetan culture as their identity, while still being able to enjoy the comforts of urban consumption. Consciously or unconsciously, balancing their embrace of modernity with their devotion to their faith, as the heart of identity. In reality, it is possible to enjoy such an understanding of 'development' yet remain grounded in traditional culture as the source of identity. Japan, for instance, has seen remarkable success in doing so. China has been much less successful than Japan in maintaining that balance. Now, Tibetans must negotiate balancing consumption and identity too. Tibetans have already begun to engage with what development means to them, evidenced by the wealth of materials documenting how Tibetans occupy a full spectrum of perspectives and stances, all equally valid, on development. What this shows, once again, is that Tibetans are far from apathetic and passive towards development but hold a genuine sense of agency and desire to engage with the issues of their own development.

VIII. CONCLUSION

China's concept of development threatens the future of people's meaningful achievement of the right to development. China's development model privileges the state and its desires to assert governance of even the remotest of landscapes, whether this benefits local communities or not. It also threatens to undermine and weaken other inalienable human rights, and, in implementation, is highly damaging to those on the periphery of decision making like Tibetans.

China's perversion of the right to development should be of considerable concern to the development community globally, and better understood. The extension of state power intruding deeply into the lives and livelihoods of Tibetans, in the name of development, has become the template for China's model of statist, top-down development now promoted worldwide. Tibet's experience of development holds important warnings and lessons that are increasingly significant as China's model proliferates.

China takes every opportunity to assert its new hierarchy of human rights that inverts the usual prioritisation of the inborn rights of each individual to freedom of assembly, speech, religion, as well as freedom from arbitrary arrest and coercion. For China, rights are no longer universal or inborn. All rights are gifts of the state, and can be withdrawn at any time, from individuals who fail to comply with state policy.

China's conception of the right to development is vital to asserting its new hierarchy of human rights. China believes individuals do not have pre-ordained rights. Instead, they have to be worked for and achieved by individuals displaying sufficient human quality. Achievement is through processes of almost entirely economic means, most notably eliminating poverty and becoming 'civilised'. Eliminating poverty is not only an essential precondition to being able to access other human rights but is itself a fulfilment of the right to development. In this Chinese logic, the right to development becomes the pre-eminent human right, an essential pre-requisite

to all others. For China, success in alleviating poverty is achieving development. Achieving this narrow definition of development is the vital step to all other human rights.

Thus, China has created a hierarchy of human rights, with the right to development at the top. This is a perversion of the universally recognised understanding that all rights, whether economic, social, political, cultural or civil are interdependent and that no right is more significant, or expendable than any other. Chinese discourse is also grounded upon a limited interpretation of the right to development. In contradiction to Chinese official thought, accomplishing development goes beyond economic achievement. Meaningful development is a process, in which people learn to make meaningful choices, and are resourced to exercise agency, and then attain a wide range of material and non-material goals. Thus, development is multi-dimensional. Globally, development is defined way beyond the narrow metrics of macro-economic growth and disposable income, which remain China's focus. The UN Human Development Reports, the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the 54 indicators of the Social Progress Index reveal how far China has fallen behind, with its fixation on aggregate economic growth.

Therefore, proliferation of Chinese development discourse threatens to undermine the foundations of both the right to development but also other rights, particularly political and civil, that China views as subservient and insignificant. By asserting the right to development's pre-eminence globally, China hopes to undermine other civil and political rights within international human rights institutions and therefore normalise China's dismissal of the protection of these rights that it views as obstacles to its own repressive machinations for political control.

Furthermore, China's development discourse challenges the principles of the Declaration on the Right to Development and as such, its proliferation would undermine the very foundations that the right to development is built upon. Widespread acceptance of an interpretation of the right to development that ignores one of the most fundamental aspects of the right – that development is a multi-dimensional process – would simply work to make the DRD, and the accompanying human rights regime of development, effectively meaningless.

China's development strategy, when practically implemented, is a process of selective, intensive capital investment in enclaves (typically urban centres) that enriches a few while excluding others. Although comparative advantage is the conventional bedrock of any development strategy and the basis of all subsequent development, China instead promises an instant rising tide of modernity, driven by highly selective, capital-intensive and technology-intensive investment in favoured enclaves. The prospect is a short cut to wealth accumulation, at least for those in control of the enclave land and resources. In Tibet, these enclaves are overwhelmingly socially, culturally and economically dominated by Han.

Tibet's comparative advantage is in its abundant production of wool and dairy products which, a century ago, were exported to the woollen mills of the UK and US. Has China invested in the herder cooperatives, improved breeds, veterinary care, wool sorting and scouring, semi-fine wool marketing channels, or dairy cold chain logistics? According to standard development

theory, these would constitute robust foundations for development. Yet China has, apart from a few small-scale show projects, invested almost nothing in rural Tibet, and there are few linkages between Tibetan pastoralists and the booming Chinese urban consumer demand for dairy and wool. The linkages enabling grass roots development have never been built in Tibet.

China avoided the hard work of adding value to existing Tibetan comparative advantage, promising instead “leap-over” development (Global Times), financed by transfer payments for nation building projects that generate wealth accumulation for migrant sojourners, while Tibetans remain disempowered. These days, China also makes transfer payments to those designated poor, which makes them permanently dependent on official handouts. As of 2020, there is now officially no more poverty in Tibet (Bo), all Tibetan counties have been instructed to take off their poverty “hat” and thus no longer qualify for universal basic income support (Lafitte).

Chinese rhetoric of ‘development’ embeds assumptions that the developed (the Han) are civilised, of higher human quality; while the under-developed (the Tibetans) are uncivilised, living in darkness and ignorance, of low human quality. ‘Development’ with Chinese characteristics is a civilising mission. Throughout the developing world, the civilising mission of the European colonisers has been thoroughly discredited as imperial arrogance, a rationale for exploitation. China’s civilising mission in Tibet is experienced by Tibetans in daily life as arrogant, insulting, derogatory and stigmatising. China sees itself not only as civilised but as the great civilisation reasserting its rightful place as exemplary world leader.

Chinese development discourse is founded upon the belief that development is the responsibility of the state in planning and wholly top-down in implementation. In any case, such a model ignores local society and cultural nuances (Lixiong) but when combined with the authoritarian, unitary political regime of China, the result is ‘seepage’ that sees the centre appropriating the resources and contorting outcomes of Tibetan development in pursuit of the self-serving political interests and economic goals of the decision-making elites in Beijing (Pan). Key to the legitimacy of the CCP is its claim to bring stability to China. Tibet is a considerable source of instability and hence threatens CCP legitimacy. Thus, all resources allocated to Tibet, no matter for what ostensible purposes, end up serving this most ultimate goal, to ensure stability because it protects the legitimacy of the CCP.

Tibet has been ‘developed’ according to the Chinese developmentalist model which privileges the state as sole author, designer, financier and executor of development projects, with no local community input. Remarkably, this model has remained the driver despite China’s pivot in recent years from extraction enclaves to a post-industrial Tibetan economy driven by tourism and carbon capture. What has remained constant is nation-state building, across a vast frontier region which historically was never governed by Beijing, and in many areas was never governed by any central nation-state.

Whatever one makes of the tangle of claim and counterclaim as to the sovereign status of old Tibet, none in China claims there was any evident Chinese governmentality of the innumerable

pastoral landscapes of the Tibetan Plateau. Making the state a tangible, decisive presence in those landscapes is the nation-building task of an empire seeking to become a unitary nation-state, all dressed in the clothing of 'development'.

On closer examination, China's extension of state power throughout a contiguous empire is not so different to the European extension of metropolitan power across their overseas empires. All empires require extraction of raw materials, produce goods at low prices, to be sent to the cities at the heart of empire for elaborate transformation into manufactured products, then sold back to the colonies. Colonies must be made to pay for their colonisation. Thus, all empires prioritise the infrastructure of logistics, enabling transport of raw materials back to the imperial centre for manufacture. In an overseas empire that means railways and ports; in a contiguous empire it means railways, hydro dams, power grids and highways. Not much difference. This has been the Tibetan experience of development.

Transfer pricing of Tibetan minerals is common within extraction enterprises, cutting the prices paid in Tibet for unprocessed producer goods, and maximising profits in the headquarters of the extraction operation, outside Tibet. Similarly, Han sojourning in Tibet has established a remittance economy, transferring their earnings to family back in their home provinces. In this way, despite massive capital expenditure on infrastructure, the monetary beneficiaries of development in Tibet, are located outside Tibet (Lafitte).

For context, the global development community spent decades contesting the mega-project addiction of major donors such as the World Bank and OECD Development Assistance Committee. Over decades of community-led resistance, these institutions gradually accepted the complexity of the real world. For example, development projects by design, from the outset, should assess the impact on women, on the environment, on indigenous communities, not as after-thoughts but from the start. Contestation led the redefinition of development, emphasising the full spectrum of human needs, and a long list of development outcomes embodied in the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

All this progress is swept aside by China exporting its Tibet model to the world. In Tibet, China never had to recognise Tibetan communities as stakeholders, still less as co-designers. It was all top-down, and all for the purpose of extending the reach of the state, both across vast frontier geographies and social boundaries and into the life decisions of families.

And yet, the development community worldwide applauds the Chinese model for lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty, without looking more closely at mass displacement, compulsory resettlement on a scale never seen anywhere else, the fracturing of families torn by centralisation of human services including health and education in urban hubs, the environmental costs of becoming the world's factory, or the penetration of society by repressive security state apparatus.

The Chinese developmentalist state adopts development as an ideology, a self-evident good that raises all boats on the rising tide of modernity and progress. That is the argument used to

contradict those who point to the unfairness, unevenness, inequality and discrimination that results from the developmentalist model, which always favours the most favoured. Tibetans are told the trickle down will come, just be patient. But for six decades of the Chinese model of development, Tibetans remain marginal, dispossessed of ancestral lands, excluded from participation in the modern economy, immiserated and peripheral.

Governments worldwide are understandably attracted to the prospect of a short cut to development and modernity that China supposedly offers. But the experience of Tibet suggests that the gleaming short cuts are illusory, little of the wealth they may generate trickles down, and the only beneficiaries are the urban elite who partner with the Chinese. GDP may grow, while quality of life deteriorates. Abundantly clear from China's development policy is that Tibetans feel disempowered by the 'development' imposed upon them and as the 2008 uprising revealed, disempowerment brings considerable instability (Makley). The military might of China was able to put down such unrest, though such military capabilities, and the willingness to use them against one's own population, do not necessarily translate into other developmental states. Disempowerment is something that China has refused to acknowledge though it is intrinsic to China's development policy.

Tibetans, not unlike the citizens of any developing state, need and want development, done right. Indeed, Tibetans are receptive and welcoming to development, and much like any people actively seeking to improve their welfare and standards of living. Tibetans are not backward or inimical to such concepts, or any less able than any other people to formulate and implement development. Tibetans want meaningful development: development based upon individual and community empowerment and comparative advantage, that meets the Sustainable Development Goals and builds resilience and capabilities. As much as China may try and suggest otherwise, Tibetans, just like any other people on the planet, have an inborn, inalienable right to development that cannot be allowed to be undermined.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations proposed in this report are aimed at ensuring the integrity of the right to development and its institutions, as well as restoring the meaningful development and dignity of the Tibetan people in Tibet.

To ensure the integrity of the right to development and guarantee people's access to meaningful development:

1. Human rights NGOs must engage with the right to development, giving it status of equal importance to any other right.
2. The international community must reject Chinese attempts to give economic rights higher status, within the institutions and framework of the United Nations.

3. The international community must reject Chinese attempts to assert its definition of the right to development, and model of development, within the institutions and framework of international human rights.
4. The developing bloc, the G-77, must approach Chinese development finance with caution.
5. The United States and allies must not step back from commitments to development spending.
6. The United States should maintain a strong presence across all key U.N organisations.

To restore the dignity and collective rights of the Tibetan people, and provide meaningful access to the right to development, the People's Republic of China must:

7. Ensure that, first and foremost, the goal of any development policy in Tibet is the meaningful development of the Tibetan people, building upon their customary livelihoods, strengths and capabilities and empowering them to live the lives they want to.
8. Provide disaggregated data and statistics for Tibet and by ethnicity, including the 2020 Census.
9. Implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in its periodic reviews of China.
10. Stop the forced and coerced resettlement and urbanisation of Tibetans.
11. Use comparative advantage as the bedrock of development policy.
12. Halt exploitation and exportation of Tibet's natural resources, both through mineral extraction and creation of wilderness through depopulation.
13. Formulate practical co-managed development policy at the regional local community level, to allow for understanding and respect of local cultural and socioeconomic beliefs and nuances.
14. Halt the construction of megaprojects in Tibet, without proper consultation or consent of the local population, including adequate compensation, royalty payments to local communities and compulsory funding of extraction site rehabilitation.
15. Adopt measures to ensure local culture and customs are respected and protected in instances of Han migration to Tibet.
16. Cease attempts to stigmatise and inferiorise the Tibetan people and culture.

17. Cease attempts to realise the concept of *zhonghua minzu*, or Chinese race, as the sole permissible identity.
18. Provide benefits of existing infrastructure and development to local Tibetans. E.g. provide freedom of movement, provide bilingual occupational safety training, micro-credit, small business loans at concessional rates.
19. Repeal laws and policies that violate human rights to mother tongue education, language, free speech, religion and belief, fair trial, and peaceful assembly.
20. Implement culturally relevant educational policies or provide a genuinely bilingual education rooted in minority culture by promoting Tibetan as the first language throughout primary and middle schooling.
21. Allow Tibetans to determine and legislate their own educational and cultural affairs as provided for in the PRC's Constitution and its Law on Regional National Autonomy.
22. Allow independent visits by the UN and or other relevant international agencies to assess the quality and availability of mother tongue-based education in schools in Tibet.
23. End all political indoctrination campaigns that promote assimilationist policy, e.g. militarised vocational training.
24. Update domestic legislation to include a definition of racial discrimination conforming to that advised by the CERD.
25. Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that protects minority nationalities.

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