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THE INDIGENIZATION OF TOURISM-LED MODERNIZATION

The Dong of Zhaoxing, Southeast Guizhou, China (1990-2010)

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**Résumé**

Le Guizhou, situé dans le sud-ouest de la République Populaire de Chine (RPC), est une province reculée, difficile d'accès, avec une topographie accidentée aux sommets variant entre 1000 et 1500 mètres d'altitude. Dans le but d’uniformiser la modernisation du pays et de pallier à l’écart grandissant de développement économique entre les régions côtières et les régions intérieures, le gouvernement chinois y encourage de plus en plus le développement du tourisme. Zhaoxing, un village de la nationalité minoritaire Dong du sud-est de la province, est devenu, dans les dix dernières années un site incontournable du tourisme dit ‘ethnique’; une forme de tourisme dont l’attrait principal est la culture traditionnelle des communautés minoritaires. Les habitants de Zhaoxing vivent de plus en plus une modernisation dictée par l’industrie touristique face à laquelle ils ont très peu de pouvoir. Néanmoins, ils sont loin d’être des victimes passives du développement; une étude locale approfondie laisse entrevoir une variété de formes d’indigénisation de la modernité en fonction des différentes formes de stratégies de subsistance des villageois. Les réponses locales comprennent de la résistance (ouverte ou subtile), de l’accommodement et de la coopération. Ainsi, la situation des villageois de Zhaoxing révèle certaines des dynamiques impliquées dans le changement social que la modernité, via le développement du tourisme, amène dans les régions rurales, reculées et ethniques de la RPC.

Mots clés : Nationalités minoritaires chinoises, Dong, tourisme, indigénisation, modernité
Abstract

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) announced in mid-1999 the campaign to “Open Up the West” (xibu da kaifa) with the goals of reducing socio-economic disparities, encouraging economic growth, and ensuring social and political stability in the non-Han areas. For the village of Zhaoxing, located in the remote province of Guizhou and inhabited by the Dong minority nationality, the Chinese state ideal of modernization has been channelled in large part through the development of ethnic tourism. As a result, what an authentic Dong village should look like as well as the outward expressions of being Dong are increasingly fixed by delocalized agents of change driven by tourism profits. Far from being passive, villagers of Zhaoxing constantly negotiate to maintain or improve their livelihoods on their own terms. They selectively resist and indigenize elements of modernity according to the opportunities and constraints stemming from their unique and troubled place within the Chinese Nation. Based on extensive fieldwork in the village of Zhaoxing this thesis presents a diversity of local responses that vary according to local livelihood strategies. It demonstrates the local ingenuity of Zhaoxing villagers in negotiating and asserting their own modern subjectivity.

Keywords: Chinese minority nationalities, Dong, tourist development, indigenization, modernity.
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Candice Cornet
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1 Introduction

Only later did I realize the symbolic enactment I was watching through this basketball game. It was a game between the local government and the tourism company newly established in the village. The government team was obviously at a disadvantage against the company's team of young athletic players. Government officials fought courageously, running after every ball yet never scoring a point. This friendly game, taking place at the primary school playground, enacted the position of power the company had taken in the village. Their presence here had been imposed on them by higher-level government officials. Elected by villagers, local officials had protested against the control the tourist contract was allocating to the company over the village, its inhabitants and its future. Through this basketball game, one could clearly see the local government was losing the battle; a battle in which much more was at stake than the final score.¹

This game took place in Zhaoxing (肇兴), a small village tucked away on the southeastern border of Guizhou, neighbouring Guangxi province, some 60 kilometers south of the county town of Liping (see map 1). Situated in the Duliu basin of the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture (黔东南苗族侗族自治州), the village is sitting in the bottom of a valley surrounded on three sides by mountains rising to almost one thousand meters. This gives it a sense of remoteness and Zhaoxing has: "an enclosed and hidden quality" (Oakes 1997: 62). Accordingly, it can be best described in Chinese as 洞天盆地 (dong tian pen di meaning literally: hole sky basin land): "...when one looks up, one can see only the mountainsides and the sky, as though the mountains formed the sides of a land basin" (Geary et al. 2003: 44). The mountains are sculpted by cultivated terraces and forests, where China firs are predominant among bamboos and fruit trees. A river runs through the village (Zhaoxing River) from east to west.

¹ Fieldnotes, August 2006.
Until recently, the village was relatively difficult to access requiring an escapade of a minimum of two days by bus from the main cities of Guiyang (in Guizhou) or Guilin (in Guangxi). In addition, roads were regularly closed due to landslides, a common sight in this highly deforested area. In fact, the whole province of Guizhou has historically been considered to lie at the periphery of the country. Its rugged terrain, marked by peaks ranging from 1000 meters to more than 1500 meters, its non-navigable rivers and its 'barbarous' population have contributed to keeping this region of China at the fringes of state or imperial power.

This remoteness and relative inaccessibility is however changing rapidly as the province develops economically, joining the rest of the country on the road to modernity. In the
Qiandongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, an airport, a highway and a railroad are diminishing and demolishing distances, increasing access to its most isolated areas. As a result, the village of Zhaoxing is now a drive away from the city center of Guiyang, physically, yet also symbolically: integrating its villagers into the 'Grand Chinese Nation'.

With a population of almost 4000 inhabiting some 800 households, Zhaoxing represents the largest Dong village in China. The Dong national minority was categorized through the *minzu shibie* project launched in the 1950s by the newly appointed Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It is one of the 55 official national minorities that obtained minority status and it now has a population of almost 3 million, spread mostly across the three provinces of Guizhou (55 percent), Hunan (28 percent) and Guangxi (10 percent).

Since the end of the 1990s, the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing have been developing tourism following incentives by the state and provincial governments to use this industry to modernize and develop minority regions. The village has, in the past 10 years, become an important tourist site for both international and domestic tourists. The area and its Dong inhabitants are promoted on the tourist market mainly for their nasal singing and their wooden architecture including drum towers and wind and rain bridges. In 2003, a tourism company from Guiyang obtained a 50 years contract from the provincial and county governments, putting its managers officially in charge of tourist development in the village.

These recent changes have brought the villagers of Zhaoxing increasingly within the sights of the Chinese state, for better or worse (Michaud 2009). The village has now become a tourist site but, according to Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2001: 23) “…tourist sites are likely to be contested spaces because, like urban spaces, they lie at the intersection of diverse and competing social, economic, and political influences”. How these new conditions are perceived and acted upon by different villagers reveal that the Dong of Zhaoxing are not in a simple process of being assimilated nor are they all resisting exogenous elements. Instead, they "...seed a diverse cultural field with fresh influences; they selectively appropriate its elements, reworking or embellishing them; they imagine

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2 The exact number is 2 960 293 according to the 2000 population census, volume 1, p. 9.
coherent versions of it against which to pose self-consciously, inventing themselves as different" (Mueggler 2001: 19).

Zhaoxing is at the junction of a number of factors, each being present in different regions of China as well as in the rest of Southeast Asia (cf. Caouette & Turner eds. 2009). As socialist Asian economies increasingly shift to market oriented developments, rural and ethnic populations have revealed innovative forms of appropriation and/or resistance. In this thesis, I aim to first reveal the structuring elements of Zhaoxing villagers' actions before presenting their relative and often unequal agency and active participation in the changes their village is facing. In other words, this research is driven by two questions: what is happening in Zhaoxing socio-economically and politically, and what can Zhaoxing villagers do? By answering these two questions, I hope to show that this village is not an isolated case and that an analysis of this case study may help understand the changing situation of other villagers in southwest China as well as across national boundaries to other minority populations of southeast Asia (the Zomian population: Scott 2009).

In the following section I overview some of the main concepts intercrossing the analysis of my case study. First, the concept of modernity as an, albeit ambiguous, driving motto to development schemes in southwest China; second, the classification and perception of remote populations considered in need of this development, in other words, minority nationalities and the charged concept of minzu/ethnicity; and third, tourist development as modernity's catalyst in rural regions of Guizhou Province, particularly ethnic tourism. Finally, in light of these structural elements which have come to predominantly shape the livelihood of Zhaoxing's villagers, I consider the notions of agency and resistance, both overt and covert, as well as the concept of indigenization.

1.1 Modernity

1.1.1 Modernity briefly defined and situated

Modernity belongs to that small family of theories that both declares and desires universal applicability for itself. What is new about modernity (or about the idea that its newness is a new kind of newness) follows from this duality. Whatever else the project of the Enlightenment may have created, it aspired to
create persons who would, after the fact, have wished to have become modern (Appadurai, 1996: 1).

According to Sztompka (1993: 69), there are two ways to define modernity: historically and analytically. The former attempts to date modernity’s emergence as a force of change and defines it in terms of an 'exemplum' rather than enumerating its multiple characteristics. Accordingly Giddens (1990: 1) defines modernity as: "...modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence". This historical stance shows modernity to be closely linked to revolutions: the French and American revolutions which provided the basis for political modernity and the British industrial revolution which led to economic modernity (Sztompka 1993: 69-70). It furthermore associates modernity with Western nations, defining it as a movement born in Europe and henceforth expanding across the globe.

For Baudrillard (2008), historically, modernity is born out of the fundamental transformations of economic and social organizations underwent by western society through the 16th and 17th centuries. It was a period marked by the emergence of individualist and rationalist thinking, the transition from feudal systems of administration to a monarchic centralized State system and the secularization of the arts and the sciences. Rationality permitted the development of science which in turn led to technological advances applied to the production of goods. The industrial revolution that followed brought tremendous changes in peoples' livelihoods by redefining work, leisure, private and public life. The fundamental disruption of social and economic organizations also brought a profound change of mentality. The word 'modernity' itself (modernité – used by Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier) emerged around 1850 as society started to use the term to define itself and acknowledged the impact of changes taking place. According to Baudrillard (2008): "...it is the moment when modern society begins to think of itself in terms of modernity" (my translation).
The second approach, characterized by a more analytical stance, provides for its part a listing of the features of modernity. This listing may be wide in scope, trying to engulf worldwide trends or may be empirically detailed. Features may include: individualism, labor differentiation, rationality, economism and expansion (cf. Sztompka 1993: 71-73). It may also include notions highly linked to globalization (not necessarily equated with cultural homogenization) such as the media, migration and imagination (Appadurai 1996). These approaches to modernity may furthermore involve defining the extremes of a continuum (with polar models) whereas one end represents traditional societies and the other, modern societies (cf. Parsons, Weber and others cited in Sztompka 1993: 71-74). The analytical stance to modernity has two consequences: first, when enounced as an evolutionary model, it contributes to the notion of modernity as a goal to be reached (Oakes 1998: 7); second, the negative and positive definitions of modernity it provides are based on comparisons with an often constructed vision of traditional societies.

One of the many changes associated with modernity is the conception of time. Time became something to be perceived as linear. Societies were seen to move from a 'traditional past' to a 'modern future'. As such modernity became a goal, an ideal to pursue. And indeed, the advent of reason characterizing modernity was seen as a way to liberate people from the cyclic repetitions imposed by nature. It provided a sense of control over the world. The concept would slowly take on the characteristics of an ideology, a model and a myth closely linked to the notion of progress. Accordingly, "rooted in the contrast between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies, modernization theory posited the existence of a common and essential pattern of 'development', defined by progress in technology, military and bureaucratic institutions, and the political and social structure" (Gilman 2003: 3).

Additionally, according to Giddens (1990) the definition of modernity is dependent on its opposite: the non-modern or the traditional. The antithesis of modernity is located in the past and/or in faraway places. To Giddens (1990: 4), "...the modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion". The link with the past, the perceived continuity with generations before, is broken. The pace of change has not permitted tradition to integrate "...the
reflexive monitoring of actions with the time-space organization of the community" (Ibid. 1990: 37). Traditional society is seen as based on interpersonal relationships, where the family is the social structure while "... in modern settings, society is established through cultural representations of reality at a level above that of interpersonal relations" (Ibid. 1990: 91-92).

In other words, modernity brings what Baudrillard (2008) calls the abstraction of the state, whereas the political sphere is no longer defined as an integrated hierarchy of personal relations. The abstraction of 'power' over a people has furthermore led, according to Debord (1967), to a 'society of the spectacle', based on representations. Interaction is no longer face to face but increasingly mediated by images, especially (and more so) with the advent of mass media. As Tang notes (quoting Heidegger - 1996: 226): "...the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as a picture".

Furthermore, according to Taylor (1999) there are two ways of analyzing changes brought by modernity resulting in acultural and cultural theories of modernity. Acultural theories consider modernity to be an inevitable set of transformations that any society will necessarily go through; modernity is in this case seen as a culture-neutral operation. The conceptions of modernity as the growth of reason, as the secularization of society or the increase movement of populations are examples of this kind of theory (1999: 154). Cultural theories, instead of seeing all societies as converging toward similar ends, consider the role of traditions as resources to "take on new practices" introduced by modernity (Ibid.: 162). It allows a people to avoid engulfment and to be creative in their adaptations, making modernity their own (Ibid.: 163). Accordingly states Taylor (Ibid.: 162), we should not speak of modernity but rather of 'alternative modernities'.
Hence, although ideologically modernity can be and is easily considered a 'rupture' from traditions, it reveals itself as much more complex. Modernity does not simply replace traditions and this is important, notes Baudrillard (2008):

Anthropological fieldwork demonstrates, more clearly than European history, that the truth about modernity is that it never is radical changes or revolutions. Instead modernity is always in relation with tradition, in a subtle cultural game; in a debate in which both are intimately connected; in a process of amalgam and adaptation. The rupture dialectic largely gives way to an amalgam dialectic (my translation, emphasis original).

Modernity hence engages in a dialectic process with traditions. In other words, as Shih (2002: 199) remarked, traditions become traditional or backward only when the concept of modernity becomes part of a people's discourses. In short, he states, "...modernity arrives before tradition". Similarly, Yang, Wall and Smith (2008) conceive the relation between tradition and modernity as the former being manipulated to serve the needs of the latter. "The manipulation of traditions to support modernization..." (2008: 757) does indeed engender traditions that are created by modernity.

The feeling of rupture emerges from the use of traditions to instil a sense of humiliation necessary for legitimizing modernization schemes (Sahlins 1992). Simultaneously however, traditions are also used as building blocks to indigenizing the western model of modernity. Modernization thus involves a double-edge phenomenon whereas a developing society, such as China, feels humiliation due to its low position on the worldwide modernity evolutionary scale meanwhile realizing its uniqueness and strength in reinventing modernity. As noted by Sahlins (1992: 24), "...this punitive experience of

3 Note the former is singular as it conveys a homogeneous, universal and transposable acultural ideology whereas the latter is plural denoting symbolic and geographic diversity.

4 Le terrain de l'anthropologie montre, plus clairement que l'histoire européenne, la vérité de la modernité, à savoir qu'elle n'est jamais changement radical ou révolution, mais qu'elle entre toujours en implication avec la tradition dans un jeu culturel subtil, dans un débat où les deux ont partie liée, dans un processus d'amalgame et d'adaptation. La dialectique de la rupture y cède largement à une dialectique de l'amalgame.
'modernization' risks provoking a self-consciousness of the indigenous culture, as possessed of values better than and distinct from Westernization.

This double-edge indigenization of modernity is, moreover, multi-scale. Indeed, it begins at the level of the state, in its infiltration into the political agenda and ideology of the country that serve to formulate public policies. As these are applied to populations with the aim to 'modernize the country', another indigenization occurs. This thesis concerns itself with essentially investigating aspects of this indigenization locally, in the village of Zhaoxing. Yet it first begins with modernity as a Chinese state project with its double-edge characteristics, which I explore next.

1.1.2 Chinese modernity

The belief that modernity comes from a single universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounters of non-western cultures with the exigencies of science, technologies, and industrialization (Taylor, 1992: 214).

There exists in China and elsewhere what Oakes (1998) calls 'false modernity': modernity promoted as a goal to be reached, a rupture to be made from traditions, letting in the technological advance and the scientific rationality of which the West is the model. Yang (1996: 102) notes that for China, this has meant a double rupture, one between traditions and modernity and one between China and the West. In other words, if China is to be modern, it must repudiate its past (similarly to the West) and also repudiate what it means to be Chinese.

At the end of the 19th Century, as Chinese territories became increasingly coveted by foreign powers, it became necessary to shift the self-centered political philosophy of imperial powers to a modern vision of a bounded territorial nation-state. This also

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5 The emergence of the discourse of modernity in China is complex and far from unilateral. It brought extensive intellectual debates and political games. For interesting overviews see: Daruvala 2000; Yeh 2000; Tsin 1999; Duara 1995 among others.
involved a shift from considering governance to be the reproduction and maintenance of the traditional way of life and society to one seeking improvements and change over previous eras (cf. Cheng, Lestz and Spence 1999). As noted by Yang (1996: 103): "...a culture that had looked to the ancients for inspiration and cultivated the memories of ancestors was suddenly confronted with a world which rejected the past and valorized the future". Time became conceived as linear.

Accordingly, the discourse of modernity in China has brought a certain cultural shame towards traditions; leading Chinese intellectuals to internalize the idea of being backward and in need of 'development'. Using Oakes' terms (1998), in the false modernity, tradition is seen as an obstacle to modernization. As noted by Sahlins (1992: 24):

Humiliation is an important stage of economic development, a necessary condition of economic "takeoff". The role of disgrace is critical, for in order to desire the benefits of "progress", its material wonders and comforts, all indigenous senses of worth, both the people's self-worth and the value of their objects have to be depreciated.

By repudiating the past and traditions, through this instilment of humiliation, a certain vacuum was created that the modern nation-state attempted to fill, taking the driver's seat in defining modernity with Chinese characteristics.

Modernity promoted by the Chinese government is thus closely linked to nationalism and the assertion of the PRC as a modern nation-state: "the official narratives of a national imagined community (Anderson 1991) inextricably link modernization and modernist aspirations to the strengthening of the motherland and the territorial space of the nation-state [...] Modernity, and capitalism, are bounded to national interests and the political integrity of the state" (Ong 1996: 65-66). Components of Chinese modernity include market reforms, regulation of the population, increased labor productivity and household income as well as consumer power.
The indigenization of modernity at the level of state discourses is epitomized, according to Ong (1996: 67), by the popular saying: "Chinese learning for the fundamental principles, western learning for practical application (zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong)". Hence China's modernity emerges out of resisting, borrowing from, and internalizing the Western notion (cf. Tang 1996). Yang (1996: 105) similarly revokes the idea of modernity as imposed and extrinsic showing that:

The discourse of modernity and evolutionism of the imperialist West was soon taken over by Chinese reformers and revolutionists who saw themselves not only as national liberators of China from the West, but also as liberators of China from its oppressive tradition. We therefore need to examine a situation where, in the process of resisting colonialism, the colonized comes to internalize aspects of the very colonialism they wanted to resist in China.

Recently, according to Ong (1996: 64), "...post-1970s China has begun the latest phase of its modernization project, but this time she [China] claims an increasing degree of independence from western categories, and insists upon the distinctive racial, cultural and economic roots of Chinese modernity". With the economic reforms launched in 1978 known as the 'Four Modernizations' (agriculture, industry, technology and defense), class struggle was no longer the central theme as it had been under Mao. The discourse of modernity thus needed to be redefined according to the political agenda and ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In order to maintain the CCP governing legitimacy and to assure historical continuity with the 1950s, modernization was in part integrated and defined according to Marxist schemes. Cao Fangjun (2009: 11), a research fellow at the Confucius Academy in Qufu in Shandong province notes:

China has to modernize itself because modernization is crucial to set a solid foundation for a strong socialist China. At the same time, China has to strengthen the socialist system and uphold Marxist ideology since they are the fundamental guarantee that modernization in China will proceed smoothly.

Moreover, recently in a speech by Hu Jintao (February 2005), the notion of 'harmonious society' (hexie shehui 和谐社会 - cf. Boutonnet 2009) was presented. Based on a reconstruction of Confucian principles, the government discourse promotes modernization
(xiandaihua 现代化) as economic development yet also as increasing the moral quality of the population (the notion of suzhi - Anagnost 2004).

Using Marxist ideology of transitional capitalism and Confucian notions of morality, Chinese scholars reflecting on modernization theory, continue to challenge the universality of the Western model and its hegemony, and to promote the idea of multiple modernities (or multiple paths to modernity - Wang 2009: 3-5). We are thus seeing in intellectual debates and political speeches the amalgam dialectic, or the cultural game, engendered by modernization ideals and the process by which traditions are instrumentalized or built upon in the aim to indigenize a worldwide trend.

Pragmatically, the challenge of modernization in China is that the country attempts to achieve a fast-paced modernity that simultaneously includes industrialization and the construction of a knowledge-based society (through science and technology). Hence modernization in China involves reforms for both material changes and ideological and social changes. In aiming for such a wide scale modernization project across a large terrain and among an immense population, it is not surprising that the project of modernity is, in China, organized and centrally planned. Modernity hence increases state incursion in all spheres of life, in all parts of the country; distance is physically and symbolically reduced between an increasingly paternalistic state and local populations.

Since the introduction of 'The Four Modernizations', according to Cao (2009: 14), "...there is an imbalance in development with economic pursuit getting the top priority. Political, cultural and social developments have been overlooked, resulting in China's current 'crippled' development". Indeed, in the country's rural areas, economic development has become a state priority and has led to a number of reform policies that directly affect peasants' livelihoods. As is also the case for the Southeast Asian region, China witnessed numerous changes since the 1960s many of which are related to the agricultural sector and are linked to "...the increasing reach of the market and the relentless commoditization of the commons, production and social relations" (Caouette and Turner 2009: 1). These changes mark the beginning of a form of agrarian transition.
1.2 China's agrarian transition

The agrarian transition can be defined as a process by which a society essentially based on rural communities relying on agriculture and organized around rural structures becomes increasingly based on urban populations relying on industry and subjected to market economy. Rousseau and Durand (2007: 17) argue that the transition involves six interrelated processes, whose shape differs according to country or region. These are: agricultural intensification and territorial expansion; market integration; urbanization and industrialization; demographic changes; intensification of state regulations and finally, environmental changes.

Deng Xiaoping, with the introduction of his program epitomized in the slogan 'The Four Modernizations', reversed many of Mao's policies by, for example, promoting private entrepreneurship and abandoning collective farming (Schirokauer 1991: 370). For rural households this meant the redistribution of millions of hectares of land and the right to sell agricultural surplus on the market. Following these new policies, agricultural output increased tremendously (Aubert 2005: 492). Although agricultural outputs have reached new heights, Chinese agriculture remains to this day, for the most part, based on household exploitations rather than on large agro-businesses, especially in the southwest where my case study is located.

Furthermore, the market integration of agricultural goods has allowed farmers to sell surpluses on the market. Yet, it has also brought about the capitalization of agriculture, the issuing of land property rights, monetization of land and labor markets as well as the commoditization of consumption practices and lifestyles. What is more, in the 1980s, as changes in policies allowed markets to flourish, the pre-revolution regional economic organization was somewhat revived with the return of "standard marketing community, which was the fundamental unit of traditional Chinese rural society" (Plattner 1989: 197).

By the early 1990s, as revenues increased, so did consumption leading to what some scholars have called a 'consumer revolution' (Latham 2002; Davis 2000; Wu 1999; Li 1998). Statistics such as the annual average urban household income per head springing
from 343 RMB (55 CAN$) in 1978 to 13,786 RMB (2230 CAN$) in 2007 clearly reveal economic growth. When one turns to statistics about the rural population, the same applies from 134 RMB (22 CAN$) in 1978 to 4,140 RMB (670 CAN$ - Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009), although at a much slower pace.

Looking at yet other statistics we can see that the PRC is industrializing as well as urbanizing. Accordingly, the agricultural sector was employing, in 1978, close to 70 percent of the population, and in 2005 this proportion had dropped to around 40 percent (cf. Aubert 2005; Guldin 2001). Although statistics are often unreliable and skewed to meet various ends in China (Guldin 2001: 10 - cf. Heimer and Thøgersen 2006) they nevertheless reveal that rural populations are diversifying their revenue sources (Aubert 2005). There is also an increased mobility for rural dwellers, many of whom move to market towns and cities; meanwhile others find nonagricultural work in their hometown, reducing the proportion of farmers in the country (Guldin 2001: 75). In 2000, it was estimated that there were 106 million rural-urban migrants in China (National Statistics Bureau of China 2001, cited in Xiăng Biao 2007: 180). Concretely, a minimum of one member per rural households leaves the countryside to work in urban settings (cf. Xiăng 2007). All these changes directly highlight an agrarian transition underway.

As for the intensification of state regulations, it is rather the way the state has gotten involved in controlling people's livelihoods that has changed. During the communist period, the state entered every rural household of the country through radical political and social reforms. These included intense collectivization, such as the Great Leap Forward initiated in 1958 which reorganized agricultural labor into rural communes and the Cultural

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6 World Bank figures and Chinese official statistic reveal a reduction of poverty. Accordingly, Gao (1999) has shown that for the rural village he studied revenues have risen. However so have expenses (such as costs of production, amount of taxes and expenses linked to education and health). As a result, argues Gao, the rural peasant’s situation in 1992 is quite similar to his situation back in 1972 (Heimer 2006: 71).

7 Source: www.eiu.com (country profile, China 2009).
Revolution (1966 - 1976) that sought to abolish class and group differences\(^8\). More recent intensifications of state regulations involve the state’s increasing hold on economic development and agricultural activities through selling high yielding crops and fertilizers to farmers as well as controlling the attribution of land (cf. Zhang and Donaldson 2010).

Finally, the environment changes linked to modernization and the agrarian transition in China were tremendous. In Guizhou, it led to widespread deforestation (which was abruptly ended in 1998 following forest protection laws) responsible for frequent landslides as mentioned earlier. Nowadays, the country also faces major air and water pollution problems directly linked, in the countryside, to the massive use of chemical fertilizers.

Although the agrarian transition model may help us to understand some of the changes the Chinese countryside is experiencing, scholars such as Latham (2002) and Feuchtwang (2002) have showed that, on the path to modernity, the PRC reveals particularities that do not comply with the communist to capitalist transition experienced by Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As such, it has been questioned whether China is or is not post-socialist (cf. Latham 2002; Feuchtwang 2002) and whether it is transiting to a Western-style market capitalism. In order to acknowledge the specificity of the PRC terms such as 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics' or 'socialist market economy' or 'market socialism' are recurrently used.

One of the main particularities analyzed by Chinese and foreign researchers is the central role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in leading economic reforms and controlling the market, through in part controlling the value of its currency. The question has been raised as to how a one-party government can legitimize its power when pursuing economic reforms without political reforms. And indeed, ever since the 'Four Modernizations' of Deng Xiaoping, there exists, among academics and part of the population, an ideal fifth

\(^8\) These events and their impacts on rural communities are discussed in greater details in section 3.3.1.5 (Chapter Three).
modernization: democracy. It has often been assumed that "...liberalized economic activity (most notably new forms of consumption) necessarily entails specific forms of politics" (Latham 2002: 220).

The debate among Chinese and foreign scholars has therefore centered on the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to lead the country and how this legitimacy has shifted from being ideological to materialistic. However, as rightly argued by Latham (2002: 231), legitimacy is gained through the ideal of a transition toward a better tomorrow:

Transition works to maintain a hegemony [...] whereby any discontent with the present is downplayed in order not to endanger the imagined future [...] consumers may feel confused in the era of post-Mao uncertainties and they may feel unhappy about the anachronistic continuation of one party rule or the evident corruption that has accompanied reform, but they accept all of these even if grudgingly, in the faith that the future holds something better. It is not so much consumption that works as a social palliative but the notion of transition itself.

In other words, the notion of transition depicts the present as a temporary state of affairs and as part of an ongoing process which will ultimately lead to better living conditions for all. It allows the state to legitimize its reforms and its involvement in structuring how people make a living. Hence the notion of transition works as social palliative yet also depends on an ideal outcome, which is, according to Oakes (1998) a 'false modernity'.

In this thesis, I investigate the local socio-economic changes brought by a form of agrarian transition since the 1990s in the village of Zhaoxing. I analyze the ways by which such changes are legitimised, perceived and controlled by local and non-local residents, including varying levels of government and tourism promoters.

1.3 Peripheral peoples of China and their classification

As changes are sweeping over the country and particularly in regions inhabited by minority nationalities, an important condition influences the direction of change as well as the shape of resistance (if any). Indeed, it has been argued by Harrell (1995) that recent economic
reforms affecting minority nationalities' livelihoods are essentially Han-driven. As such these changes contribute to reinforcing the distinction Han/non-Han (easily linked to modern/traditional; civilized/barbarous). The classification of the inhabitants of the southwest and more particularly that of the province of Guizhou into 'official' categories is linked to the creation of a Chinese (Han) Nation State (Schein 2000: 68-69). Throughout Chinese history peripheral populations of China were referred to as barbarians (of the south, north, east and west: Man, Yi, Jung and Ti). Relations between dominant empires and the populations of these regions were mainly strategic; aiming to control natural resources and to gain the loyalty of elites so to keep these regions as buffer zones with neighboring empires (Dreyer 1976; Herman 2007). However, with the fall of the last Dynasty (the Qing Dynasty: 1643-1911) came the task of bringing together the country's heterogeneous population in order to define the clear contours of the Chinese Nation State. How to integrate and deal with peripheral groups, whose relative independence had increased due to the weakening Dynasty, as well as how to construct an inclusive state, became a debated topic among the intellectual elite of the country (cf. Zhao 2004; Tang 1996; Frangville 2007; Unger 1996 and others).

Sun Yatsen,⁹ who established the first Republic of China in Nanjing in 1912, defended the idea that differences must die out and that the five nationalities must unite into one single cultural and political whole: forming a single republic (Dreyer 1976: 16). Yuan Shikai, who replaced Sun Yatsen as President of the new republic in March of the same year, declared the presence of five nationalities: Han, Mongol, Manchu, Muslim (Hui) and Tibetan (Mackerras 2003: 19). In the 1930s, the leader of Guomintang Nationalist Party Chiang Kaishek, faced with the Japanese invasion of the country, furthered the attempts to unify China by integrating nationalities. He considered religion and environmental conditions rather than race were accountable for distinctions among the Chinese population (Chiang 1947: 40). Indeed, the Nationalists believed China's population to be one race, one nationality and downplayed the multiethnicity of their republic (Michaud 2009: 28; Oakes

⁹ For biographies of Sun Yatsen, see Chesneaux, 1982 and Bergère, 1994.
1998: 102). This is epitomized in Sun Yat-sen's famous slogan: 'one nationality builds one nation state' (*yi ge minzu zhaocheng yi ge guojia*).10

A change of attitude toward nationalities only came with the Communists and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Enthused by the Soviet model of minorities' policy and seeking to differentiate their approach from that of the nationalist movement, the Communists promoted differences, launching a countrywide classification project called *minzu shibie* (Dreyer 1976: 91). Chinese scholars were employed (including famous anthropologist Fei Hsiao-tung cf. 1981), to grant minority status based on criteria derived from Stalin's ideology. Stalin (1913), inspired by the work of Frederick Engels (1884 - himself inspired by Lewis Henry Morgan 1878; cf. Guklin 1994), elaborated an evolutionary scheme based on a theory of stages. Societies were believed to evolve from a primitive stage to one of slavery then to a feudal stage, to a capitalist stage before reaching a socialist stage of development.

Accordingly, groups throughout the country had to be categorized on the basis of four criteria established by Stalin (1913): common language, territory, economy and psychological make-up (Harrell 1995: 33), before being placed on the above mentioned evolutionary continuum. The Han, the majority group,12 represented the most advanced stage of development and other groups were classified according to their cultural distance from them (Oakes 1998: 104).

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10 As we will see, the translation of this slogan poses problem as it contains charged concepts such as *minzu* (which we will briefly survey below) and *guojia* which can be translated as country, state, or nation.
11 Literally *shibie* can be translated as: to distinguish, discern and *minzu* can be translated as nationalities, however the later is purposely ambiguous, as we will see.
12 Increasingly, the Han category is also considered as constructed (by both western and Chinese anthropologists, cf. Gladney 1994; Iredale, R., Bilik N. and Guo Fei (eds.) 2003) and indeed, it could be argued that the Han category is composed of those not categorized through the *minzu shibie*: the remnants of the process lumped together in an artificial overarching category (Frangville 2007). As such the Han category is essentially a modern product directly linked to the modern nation-state (Gladney 2003).
Yet, as Mullaney (2011) has recently shown, categorizing groups according to Stalin’s criteria proved difficult, if not impossible. Faced with groups who did not fulfill all of Stalin’s four criteria, groups were defined by research teams according to their potentiality to become a nationality in the future based on their capacity to acquire Stalin’s four required attributes - Ibid.: 82, 90). In other words, researchers relied on "the concept of ethnic potential [...] defining groups in terms of what they could become rather than what they were at present" (emphasis original, Ibid.: 83). This implied that the project of ethnic classification was not strictly concerned with the accurate labeling of existing groups but was primarily an ongoing political project requiring continuous interventions by the state for groups to become nationalities and fit into the henceforth created ethnotaxonomy (Mullaney 2011).

The categorizing process lasted more than thirty years (1950-1981) and included periods of extreme measures of homogenization. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are historical periods which embarked the whole of Chinese population in a homogenizing experience of suffering. The Great Leap Forward, initiated in 1958, with its policies of rural communes, resulted in famines killing millions of people (Schirokauer 1991: 362). This was followed by the Cultural Revolution which, from its beginning in 1966, suppressed group differences and aborted research on peripheral people for a decade.13 It was a period which condemned deviations from Han culture and accelerated pre-minzuxue processes of assimilation (Tapp 2002: 73). Following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, which marked the end of the Cultural Revolution, university departments dedicated to minzuxue (民族学 - national minority studies) re-opened and others were created allowing for the classification to continue. In brief, by 1953, the government had categorized 41 groups, by

13 In Chapter Two (on methodology), I briefly present the evolution of the discipline of anthropology in China and the impact this history has on present day ethnographic fieldworks. In Chapter Three, details on the national integration of peripheral populations these events triggered are further discussed (section 3.3.1.5).
1959 the number increased to 51 then to 53 in 1963 and it is only in 1981 that it finally reached 55\textsuperscript{14} (Shaw 1989: 55; cf. Michaud 2009: 30; Cable 2006: 12 and Oakes 1998: 105).

The way national minorities were classified historically within the Chinese nation helps us to understand the troubled position they occupy today. It shows the double process by which boundaries were drawn around groups,\textsuperscript{15} differentiating them from the majority while at the same time, integrating them to the 'imagined community' of the Chinese nation. The concept of \textit{minzu}, which I explore next, rests at the center of this process.

1.3.1 \textit{Minzu} = ethnicity?

\textit{Minzu} is an ambiguous concept that serves national interests by both dividing and unifying the Chinese population (Thoroval 1999; Frangville 2007). The history of the term \textit{minzu} is complex and still highly debated, and since its introduction in China it has never been attributed a fixed meaning. It was borrowed from the Japanese term \textit{minzoku} -translated in English as people or race, yet also as nation in some cases (revealing a comparable ambiguity to the Chinese use). In China, as we will see, its usage purposely reveals ambiguity, variability and vagueness.

Closely linked to the notion of 'nation' in China, the word has been extensively used with varying definitions ranging from race to nation, nationality and ethnic group. \textit{Minzu} can indeed denote the Chinese Nation (\textit{Zhonghua minzu}) composed of 56 nationalities (\textit{minzu}) including 55 national minorities (ethnic minorities, minority nationalities – \textit{shaoshu minzu}). As such it can designate the Chinese nation as well as its constitutive nations (or nationalities, including the majority: the Han (\textit{Han minzu})). As Frangville remarks (2007: 106-107), \textit{minzu} can thus sometimes be translated as 'nation', 'national' or 'nationality' as, for example: \textit{minzu zhuyi} (nationalism), \textit{minzuyu} (national language), \textit{minzu shehui}.

\textsuperscript{14} The exact dates and number of classified groups vary: Frangville (2007: 88) states all groups were classified by 1979, Oakes (1998: 105) remarks 22 groups were still not classified in 1980 in accordance with Michaud (2009: 30) stating the number of minority groups stabilized to 55 in 1981.\textsuperscript{15} Accordingly, the classification project has been called “boundary-producing project” by Bulag (2002: 10).
(national society) or minzu tuanjie (national unity). In addition, it can also be translated as 'ethnic' where, for example, minzu tuanjie (mentioned above) can also be translated and used to mean ethnic cohesion. Other examples include minzu tese (ethnic particularity), minzu chuantong (ethnic tradition), minzu wenhua (ethnic culture) minzu diqu (ethnic regions), etc. Furthermore, when minzu is translated as ethnic, it can on the one hand be used to denote both Han and non-Han as in minzu tuanjie (ethnic cohesion), minzu guanxi (interethnic relations), minzu zhengce (ethnic policies), etc. Yet on the other hand, it can be referring specifically to non-Han populations only as in minzu ganbu (CCP ethnic official; whereas a Han official is only ganbu), minzu diqu (ethnic regions), minzu chuantong (ethnic traditions) or minzu tese (ethnic character), etc.

As Thoroval (1999: 46) notes: "...the ambiguity surrounding the concept of minzu is not the result of linguistics, nor is it linked to a millennium cultural history. Instead, it is most of all a thoughtful decision that considered political efficiency rather than scientific accuracy" (my translation). In other words, since the territorial unity of the PRC depends on the harmonious integration of its populations the ambiguity surrounding the term minzu serves the interests of the Chinese State\(^{16}\) (Thoroval 1999; Frangville 2007). Indeed, minzu is used to denote the whole nation as well as both the Han and the non-Han. When coupled with shaoshu (translated as minority) the term can be associated with notions of us and them (minority versus majority in this case). Minzu is thus used as a unifying concept (as nationality) as well as a dividing one (as minority ethnic groups) allowing for minorities to be symbolically placed in a hierarchical relation to the Han (based on a ladder-like evolutionary theory; Friedman 1995) as well as in an egalitarian relation (in accordance with socialist ideology).

\(^{16}\) In his recent book, Mullaney (2011: 81-84) describes how, during the minzu shibie project, Chinese social scientists faced the difficult task of finding equivalences between Stalin’s evolutionary notions of clans, tribes, tribal federations and nationalities and the Chinese terms of shizu, buluo, buz, minzu jitu an and minzu.
Anthropologists working in China and more particularly in its southwest provinces have been faced with the particularity of the Chinese language to designate and deal with its peripheral populations. The concepts of *minzu* and of *shaoshu minzu* have become, since the 1950s, the central and inescapable vocabulary of difference in the PRC. What is more, the re-opening of the PRC to foreign researchers rimed with worldwide academic interest in notions of ethnicity and ethnic groups. As a result, anthropologists and other researchers interested in peripheral populations of China have debated over the applicability of notions of ethnicity to the Chinese situation and of the implications of translating *minzu* and particularly *shaoshu minzu* into ethnic minorities, national minorities or minority nationalities. Due to its ambiguity, a few scholars have preferred not to translate the concept of *minzu* in their work (Frangville 2007; Bovingdon 2004; and Bulag 2002).

In this dissertation, I have opted for the use of the term 'minority nationality'. As noted by Cable (2006) and Michaud (2009), caution must be used in apposing the term 'minority' to these groups as their sheer size is suffice to question this labeling. Although called minorities in a probable political effort to minimize their presence and power (Michaud 2009: 37) they represent 8 percent of the total Chinese population, the equivalent of some 104 million individuals, making their population larger than that of France, Germany, the United Kingdom or Thailand (Blum 2002: 1298). Although these individuals are numerous and the term minority may downplay their importance, they are nevertheless in a majority/minority relation with the Han category and are considered and treated as 'minorities' by the Chinese State (with all the advantages and disadvantages such a position entails). Much more problematic is the translation of *minzu*. I have decided upon 'nationality' because contrary to 'ethnic', the term nationality can imply an 'equalitarian' status for all peoples of China (Han and non-Han). Comparatively, ethnicity, coming from the adjective 'ethnic' has roots in the Greek term *ethnos*. It was used to refer to the non-Christian and non-Jewish; to groups of people sharing common characteristics that are different (and refused membership) from one's own group. At the basis of the concept of ethnos (*ethnie* in French and ethnic/ethnicity in English) is the dichotomy between us and them (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 4). Meanwhile the use of minority reflects this
distinction, the concept of nationality attempts to minimize the us/them (Han/non-Han) dichotomy, whereas policies and official discourse put forth the equality of all minzu.

Hence using the two terms, minority and nationality, reveals the ambiguous situation of these groups. The minority nationalities can be represented as standing, figuratively, at the center of two crossing axes: a vertical (cultural) axis that opposes the Han with the non-Han whereas the former is civilized and modern in comparison with the latter seen as barbarous and traditional (primitive, backward). The second axis is horizontal and is reflected in the political attempt to promote the integration of minorities as equal members into the Chinese Nation-State. This second axis is used by minority nationalities to claim equality yet it also serves the discourse of nationalism.

1.3.2 The concepts of ethnicity and ethnic groups applied to the Chinese case

Since the end of the cold war and as the PRC was increasingly embarking on the road to modernity, affiliation based on shared cultural traits (including religion, real or imagined common ancestor and language) gained in popularity as opposed to affiliation based on state ideology (capitalism, socialism and communism). Whether it is the result of independence movements in Africa, the new geopolitics of the postcolonial states, the decline of socialism and the rise of global capitalism or the ethnic conflicts of eastern Europe, the notions of ethnicity and of ethnic groups have been under extensive scholarships' inquiry since the 1960s (Bendix and Roodenburg 2000: ix; Cable 2006: 15-16; Blum 2002: 1299). Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the ethnic conflicts of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, tremendous attention has been given in the 1980s and 90s to issues of ethnic groups within nation-states by both scholars and politicians worldwide (Mackerras 1995: 1).

In the PRC, Chinese scholars and politicians had, following the death of Mao Zedong (1976) and a period of national turmoil, shifted their focus from class struggles to the

\[17\] This metaphor was introduced by Thoroval (1999: 52) in his study of the Li of Hainan.
challenge of unifying various ethnic groups in a nation (re)building effort (Cable 2006: 15). As mentioned above, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reopened the country to foreign social scientists in the 1980s, it coincided with worldwide interest in issues pertaining to ethnicity and ethnic groups. Since anthropologists have historically an interest toward the 'other', the 'native' and peripheral groups, it is no wonder that most studies solely focus on minority nationalities. As a result there has been an over-emphasis on the classification project which definitely represented a fertile field for anthropological research.

Susan Blum (2002) in her review of a decade of publishing on China's Ethnic Minorities demonstrates that since the 1990s ethnicity and ethnic groups have been central issues in a majority of publications by western anthropologists. And more precisely, what has been of particular interest to researchers is the official national categorization of minorities (*minzu shibie*) that was initiated in the 1950s. The project not only provided a reference frame serving political (and nationalist) interests, it also became an intrinsic part of almost all research pertaining to the peripheral populations of the PRC.

Looking into the process by which categories were formed and Stalin's fourfold criteria were applied, most researchers have denounced the *minzu shibie* as a state imposed endeavor to control and integrate peripheral populations into the Chinese nation state (cf. Berlie 1988, 1998, 2001; Harrell 1995; Mackerras 1995; Schein 2000; Litzinger 2000; Kaup 2000; Shih 2002; Bossen 2002 among others). Harrell (1995) presents the *minzu shibie* as a civilizing project, comparable to the Confucian and the missionary civilizing projects to which peripheral groups of China have been subjected. In the process, according to Harrell, these groups were feminized, infantilized and depicted as ancient placing them in opposition to the 'civilized, male and modern Han' (Ibid. cf. Gladney 1994; Schein 2000).

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18 It is indeed interesting to see the preponderance of ethnographies and researches on minorities to the neglect of the Han majority as only few anthropologists include an analysis of the Han (cf. Yang 1994; Brown 1996; Gladney 1999, 2004; Blum 2001).
The resulting hierarchical dichotomy between majority and minority, Han and non-Han populations of the PRC (cf. Gladney 1994), has been linked to Said's concept of Orientalism. The process by which the 'other' is defined as backward permitted the 'self' to be defined as 'modern' or 'civilized'. Accordingly, the minzu shibie has been compared to colonialism; as part of the Chinese historical process of 'internal colonialism' toward its frontier regions (Hechter, 1975; Goodman 1983; Oakes 1998; Schein 2000). This process of 'civilizing' barbarous populations has been analyzed by Jean A. Berlie (1998) as a process of sinicisation whereby minority nationalities are progressively being assimilated by the Han majority. Similarly, Geary et al. (2003) also consider minority cultures (in this case the Dong) to be in decline.

However, researchers have also pondered over the arbitrariness with which the classification was done. They have shown that Stalin's ideology proved difficult to follow and categories were, according to Harrell (1995; cf. also Herberer 1989), often based on preconceived ideas held by researchers involved in the minzu shibie. The process, for the most part, legitimized and confirmed distinctions found in "Chinese folk categories and in the work of scholars who wrote before Liberation" (1995: 66). Gladney (1994: 265) furthermore states: "the ethnonyms of many of these groups existed before their recognition by the state, but the attachment of the term minzu by the state legitimates, objectifies, and in some cases invents these identities". Mullaney (2011: 40) also considers:

The price of recognition was categorization, for it was only through categorization that a multitude of people could be recast as a singular, corporate person, and only through category that a variety of conceptions of minzu could be brought into congress with one another both literally and figuratively. Inseparable from any mature understanding of self-determination is the determination of selves.

Hence some scholars have pointed to the categorization and the following 'civilizing' projects directed toward minorities (to move them up the evolutionary scheme) and how they have contributed to both minorities' consciousness of being part of a group as well as the sense of not belonging and of being different from other groups (cf. Helly and Leblanc 1981; Gladney 1994; Harrell 1995). As Fredrik Barth noted (1969), the consciousness of
forming an ethnic group is determinant in the establishment of ethnic group boundaries. In the case of China, ethnic consciousness appeared, was reshaped or was greatly reinforced, after the *minzu shibie*. Indeed, notes Mullaney (2011: 40), the classification was "constitutive of the minzu [it] ended up categorizing" partly through a standardized definition of *minzu* by the Chinese state. In other words, it is through the *minzu shibie* project that the state came to define ethnicity categorically (Ibid.: 41).

Hence, in some cases, the classification project has 'created' minority nationalities engendering (or inventing) group consciousness.¹⁹ The example of the Bai minzu (depicted by Francis Hsu in 1948 as exemplars of Chineseness) is an often cited case of a 'constructed' category. In the 1940s, Unger (1997: 75-76) notes, the Bai "...did not perceive themselves as particularly distinct from the rest of the Chinese. Today they do". Another example is the Zhuang who were in fact 'created' through the classification project and who did not consider themselves as Zhuang before the 1950s (Unger 1997; Kaup 2000).

As a result, researchers have pointed to the gap between the lived experience of ethnicity and the representations based on official state sanctioned categories which has led some groups to demand a re-categorization while others have internalized these categories and worked to make them their own (cf. Diamond 1995; Schein 2000). In an attempt to recognize the agency of minority nationalities in a state led top-down classification project, Litzinger (2000) and Schein (2000) have revealed the intricate implication of minority elites in defining and reinforcing group boundaries as defined by the state. Unger (1997: 70) remarks that minority elites feel responsible to safeguard minority culture in the face of progress which slowly assimilates minority ways to Han ways.

However, notes Tapp (2002: 73), what may be considered 'assimilation' may in fact be a reversal of processes of acculturation by its propensity to draw clear boundaries around once fluid, porous group boundaries. Indeed, the state, by imposing a strict categorization

¹⁹ Revealing what we may term a constructivist approach to ethnicity (Nagel 1994).
of its population, reinforced the opposition between Han and non-Han. Prior to the minzu
shibie, one could be more or less Han, as to be Han was equated with being civilized,
cultured (having wenhua – Thoroval 1999: 52). "We can, therefore, accept that a general
process of immobilization of historical processes of both assimilation and acculturation has
followed from the ethnographic classification project of the 1950s” (Tapp 2002:74). Now
one is officially either Han or non-Han. Yet Tapp urges us to have a more nuanced view of
ethnicity based on how 'culture is experienced at the local level'.

As we have seen, the restrictive frameworks of the classification of national minorities and
the overall academic interest toward ethnic issues have greatly influenced anthropological
studies of China. Indeed, numerous studies of southwest minority nationalities are based on
multi-sites fieldwork explainable by their subject of inquiry yet – and most probably – also
by the constraints of undertaking long-term fieldwork in China. For example, Schein
(2000) introduces the idea of doing 'itinerant ethnography' to understand the extra-local
forces of changes ethnic groups are undergoing and shows the Miao (one of the largest
ethnic group of China) as actively involved in representations of themselves. Similarly,
Litzinger's (2000) research is a 'multi-sited' ethnography focusing mainly on Yao
intellectuals as they work to shape images of the Yao. According to Tapp (2002: 70), there
has been an excessive focus on ethnic categories (their creation, the reactions they triggered
or their arbitrariness), revealing much about minority relations with the state yet neglecting
the viewpoint of the locals (the non-elite locals).

By moving away from the classification project and the dialogue of ethnicity between
minority elites and the state we can start to discern the bystanders. Long ignored both by
history and by many anthropologists, attention should be given to those whose main dream
is of bettering their condition and that of their children. A localized study may help us
conceive how such dreams are construed in light of their categorized positionality in the
Chinese Nation State. As a rural minority, the Dong population is undergoing tremendous
agrarian changes; they are adhering to an ideal of modernity and are manipulating,
reshaping, resisting or rejecting elements of these changes according to the perception they
have of themselves, of their situation and of their relative agency. One of the main driving
forces of change in minority regions of southwest China (as well as Southeast Asia) is the development of tourism which we consider next.

1.4 Ethnic tourism defined

Tourism as a phenomenon can take multiple forms. According to Valene Smith (1989) there are five different types of tourism: 1) recreational tourism (sand, sun and sex); 2) environmental tourism (natural scenery and humanly-created landscapes); 3) historical tourism (relics of past cultures); 4) cultural tourism (vestige of a vanishing lifestyle, picturesque or local color) and 5) ethnic tourism (quaint customs of indigenous and often exotic people). According to Wood (1984) the definitions of the last two types of tourism given by Smith are problematic. Smith (1989: 4) defines cultural tourism as closely linked to the idea of tradition and targets mainly rural areas that are representative of a past age: "...a vestige of a vanishing lifestyle that lies within human memory with its old style houses, homespun fabrics, horse or ox-drawn carts and plows...peasant culture..."

Comparatively, Smith (1989) states, ethnic tourism contains an inherent 'exotic' quality, as it is marked by the desire to see authentic indigenous traditions including rituals, dances, visits to villages, and the acquisition of handicrafts. Ethnic tourism is the kind of tourism in which the tourist's interest lies in being a spectator or a participant to a different cultural order. Ethnic tourism has similarly later been defined as: "... tourism wherein the prime attraction is the cultural exoticism of the local population and its artifacts (clothing, architecture, theatre, music, dance, plastic arts)..." (Van den Berghe & Keyes 1984: 344). For Wood (1984), the mistake in these definitions is that they are based on the nature of the cultures involved and should instead be based on tourists' approach to these cultures. To him (1984: 361), "ethnic tourism should be defined by its direct focus on people living out a cultural identity whose uniqueness is being marketed for tourists (...) Cultural tourism, on the other hand, may be defined in terms of situations where the role of culture is contextual, where its role is to shape the tourist's experience of a specific cultural identity". In line with moving away from an essentialist vision of culture and ethnicity, Cohen (2001) defines
ethnic tourism in a way that allows a consideration of the power relations and dynamics involved in such tourism development.

I suggest that ethnic tourism is (1) a variety of "site-seeing" tourism that (2) targets groups that do not fully belong, culturally, socially, or politically to the majority (national) population of the state within whose boundaries they live and that are (3) touristically "marked", owing to their alleged ecological boundedness (Wood 1997: 6) or cultural distinctiveness, uniqueness, or "otherness" (Cohen 2001: 28).

In other words, I adhere to this definition because the attractiveness of these groups to tourists does not entirely rest upon an essentialist vision of cultural difference but stems instead from the process of marginalization undergone by these groups; a historical process that has inadvertently placed them in a category easily marketable for ethnic tourism.

1.5 Tourism in southwest China: the case of Guizhou province

As we have seen, since the end of the 1970s, the death of Mao Zedong and the modernizing policies of Deng Xiaoping, China is facing tremendous changes linked to the opening of its geographical and economic frontiers. These recent transformations, having favored coastal economies, have increased the gap between the developed, modern eastern regions and the remote, backward western interior. This has led the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to announce the campaign to "Open Up the West" (xibu da kaifa) in mid-1999 with the goals of reducing socio-economic disparities, encourage economic growth, and ensure social and political stability in the non-Han areas of the country (Goodman 2004: 317).

As noted by Michaud (2009: 38-39), one of the Chinese state's tourism strategies is to attract middle-class urbanites to visit remote regions by presenting locales as ancient and authentic: "...in the Han psyche the south-west highlands have become the recipients of pockets of preserved Chinese antiquity, standing in sharp contrast with, and protected from, the furious modernization of lowland and coastal China". According to Tan (2001: 16), in remote regions inhabited by non-Han populations, tourism can be a major, if not the only,
mean to bring modernization and development (cf. Tak-chuen 2005; Yang, Wall and Smith 2008).

Such is the case for much of southwest China (see Figure 2:) and particularly for the province of Guizhou. Lacking proper infrastructure to attract industrial investments, Guizhou is the poorest province in China (Tan et al. 2001: 16). In a speech in 2000, in line with the above mentioned campaign, Yang Shengming, the Director of Guizhou Provincial Tourism Administration, stated the slogan "promoting an opening up, the elimination of poverty and the increase of prosperity by tourism development". Tourism was to become one of the pillar industries of Guizhou province alongside already existing coal mining, hydroelectricity, mineral processing, the defense industry and agriculture (Oakes 2000: 680; 1998: 125).

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20 The GDP per capita in 2001 for Guizhou was of 2,895 RMB (470 CANS) as compared to the national GDP per capita of 7,543 (1220 CANS - *China Statistical Yearbook*, 2002 – Beijing: *Zhongguo tongji chubanshe*, 2002; table 3-9).

Yang Shengming furthermore noted that tourism is the solution to many of the province's problems: "It can improve the ecological environment, help the poor mountainous areas shake off poverty and become better off, improve the poor people's living quality and intellectual level. In a word, it has become the key to solving the problems relating to
agriculture, the countryside, and the farmers." Tourism in China is seen by provincial governors as a way for 'backward' populations to modernize.

Accordingly, villages throughout Guizhou have been selected as 'scenic spots' (cf. Nyiri 2006). As a result:

Qualifying for funds to maintain the traditional character of minzu villages obliged locals to abide by a code of preventing new 'modern' buildings from being built, or traditional buildings from being altered or modified. In such cases, state cultural preservation sought to fossilize certain aspects of minzu cultural tradition, drawing distinct boundaries around local customs, fixing them in time and space and insuring that they remain encased as exhibits for the modern metropolitan world to observe and appreciate (Oakes 1998: 178-179).

At the heart of ethnic tourism development is the interdependent relationship between traditions and modernity, whereas one allows the other, each constantly redefining and 'creating' the other. The paradox on which ethnic tourism rests clearly illustrates the amalgam dialectic referred to by Baudrillard (2008). Indeed, modernity does not replace traditions but instead engages itself intimately with traditions. These interplay at the local level and may be perceived differently by various actors involved at different degrees in tourism development. It furthermore involves a constant exchange between a state defined image of ethnicity (according to minzu shibie) and a local's perspective of one's own sense of ethnicity.

What is more, the development of ethnic tourism in minority nationality regions of southwest China, where populations are mostly agricultural, does contribute greatly to the agrarian transition mentioned earlier (section 1.2). Locally, tourism may involve such changes as a shift from subsistence based economy to the development of a service industry centered on catering to tourists. It can also bring about the integration of agricultural and handicraft production to the market economy. It can furthermore lead to the decreasing importance of agriculture as a mean of revenue and of livelihood with the neglect of agricultural production for more profitable market related production – hotels, handicrafts, restaurants and bars. In turn, these result in a reduction of the proportion of farmers locally,
the inflation of prices of everyday goods due to an increased demand by visitors and a growing control and implication in village affairs by outside entrepreneurs and by governments at different levels. Tourism also results in the increased mobility of villagers as infrastructure develops and access to the village is facilitated. It may bring the monetization of human relations within the village and the arrival of new residents in the village for economic reasons (often from different nationalities, including Han). And as Yang, Wall and Smith (2008: 753) state: "development brings change, but not all changes are desirable"

Analyzing the development of ethnic tourism thus provides a gateway to observing the fluid local expressions of modernity, ethnicity and economic development. Moreover, a closer look may reveal struggles "on a terrain in which power is distributed extremely unevenly" (Oakes 1998: 83). Power, in this research, is seen as pervasive (not as a monopoly of the state (Burawoy 1999: 306). It can be gained through economic performance (in large part possible through ethnic tourism development) yet also in "selective appropriation, evasive improvisation, explicit resistance, and the emergence of new terrains of struggles" (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 15).

1.6 From macro processes to Zhaoxing

Moving beyond macro-processes of country scale ethnic classification, economic change, tourism development policies and agrarian transition, this research zooms in on micro-processes as expressed locally. In other words, I aim to reveal micro responses to macro policies looking at "the ways people and their communities absorb, manipulate, or reject the new market parameters of action" (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 15). This involves not only looking at the changes as they are experienced locally but also looking at how they are perceived, explained and legitimized by local populations, in this case, a minority population of southeast Guizhou.

Oakes (1998: 70) states that we may see "...place-based identity as the product of an ongoing struggle between extra-local forces of change and the local need to maintain subjectivity over these forces". In this research, I analyze how the Dong peoples of
Zhaoxing locally make sense of their changing world all the while contributing to reshaping it. Through notions of agency and indigenization, I investigate villagers’ relative power in facing changes and the ways by which they attempt to seize opportunities through change.

1.7 Agency, resistance and indigenization: making sense of social change

Resistance is broadly defined as the act or power of resisting, opposing, or withstanding;\(^2\) it is, according to Scott (1990: 17) not only visible acts of defiance or rebellions but also all the "often fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups". According to Trân (2009: 159), the absence or presence and shape of resistance depend largely on the perception actors have of their situation. Who they blame for their difficulties will determine the form of resistance, if any, and the target(s) of this resistance as well as the mean(s) by which agents feel their resistance will be fruitful. In her article on peasant resistance in Vietnam, Trân (2009) shows resistance to be varying across time and space according to the causes, forms and targets of peasant resistance. Building on her conceptual framework – context-specific interactions between structure and agency - I look at structure for my case study in order to contextualize agent’s perceptions and actions (or non-actions).

I am aware that the term 'structure' is highly problematic for an anthropological endeavor and I use it here to mean: a combination of conditions and processes specific to a given locality in terms of its history, its geography, its population, its contemporary political situation within or on the periphery of a specific nation-state, etc. All these conditions and processes are seen as interconnected and working together in the shaping of local realities and perceptions which in turn affect local responses and manipulations. Hence, I define structure as multi-scale historical processes that situate a particular group of people within a nation-state and within a particular set of conditions. These processes may thus be historically grounded, they may be new dynamics having emerged in the locality under

study or may be stemming from larger scale events. In addition, although macro-processes such as state policies or agricultural commoditization are widespread, their expressions are essentially local; and it is from their local expressions that agents conceive of their impacts, usefulness or legitimacy. Briefly put, structure is conceived as the situation villagers are in according to their particular history, their positionality as a minority nationality, and the policies and developments they are subjected to. In other words, I define structure as the answer to the questions: what is happening, when and to whom; some of which I have presented above.

As I have mentioned, this thesis also aims to answer the question: what can the villagers of Zhaoxing do. In other words it aims to present agency as how actors "...adjust their forms and methods of collective action according to the context of political opportunities and their understanding of what might be effective resistance" (Trân 2009: 174). To which I may add, they do so according to their relative position; as benefiting or not, or as being disadvantaged from a given situation. Similarly to Forsyth (2009: 275), I view resistance as "a diverse process where peasants engage in long-standing and evolving negotiation and opportunism".

What is happening and how villagers are involved in changes that affect their livelihoods as well as how villager's involvement affect what is happening reveal a dialectical process between structure and agency in which villagers are not only 'reacting' but are also intensely implicated in the shaping of their conditions. As Ortner (2006: 7) mentions, "social reproduction is never total, always imperfect, and vulnerable to the pressures and instabilities inherent in any situation of unequal power". What this thesis sets out to do is to "conceptualize the articulations between the practices of social actors 'on the ground' and the big 'structures' and 'systems' that both constrain those practices and yet are ultimately susceptible to being transformed by them" (italics original, Ibid.: 2).

The interaction between structure and agency continuously shapes peasant perceptions (Trân 2009: 161). While the term 'interaction' presupposes two distinct entities that are delimitable and analytically separable, Sahlins (1981 cited in Ortner, 2006: 10) rightly
coined their relationship in his statement "the practice of the structure and the structure of the practice". Accordingly notes Moore (1996: 9), "the bounded is being replaced, at least in academic discourse if nowhere else, by the relational. We are now no longer looking for ontological categories, but for interwoven patterns; what was once systematic is now mobile". The definition of structure and agency is dedicated to the notion of process. It considers the relationship between structure and agency as dialectical rather than oppositional. Structure is thus process, merging reproduction with transformation through actions which makes structure: "the medium and the outcome of action" (Karp 1986: 133).

Recognizing the role of agency in the production, reproduction and transformation of structure allows identifying both constraints and opportunities peasant encounter in their everyday lives while considering their active involvement in the shaping of their world. Structure is constitutive of subjective consciousness (by providing vocabulary to think oneself) and agency (or indigenisation of structure) in turn constitutes structure in the everyday practices that reproduce (while adapting and changing) structure. Agency however, as Scott has shown, is greatly shaped by power, both in the form of domination – institutional power; and in the form of power in actual social relations – or in other words, the capacity to decide for oneself and one's community, by "real on-the-ground actors" (Ortner 2006: 5).

Hence, in line with practice theory (Ortner 2006), I aim to analyze the interactions between various practices on the ground and larger structures as a dialectical process. For my case study this translates as the interplay between domination modernity scheme by the Chinese state and the local structure of power that determines how this scheme is locally formulated and interpreted and by whom (who can be involved in local decision processes). The introduction of tourism as a catalyst to modernity in Zhaoxing serves as the triggering element whereas the interaction between structure and agency becomes maximally distinguishable, although the process is by no means restricted only to this situation (Sahlins 1981: 68).
1.8 Research question and conceptual framework

How do the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing, Guizhou province, China, perceive and indigenize tourism-led modernization since the 1990s?

My research thus aims to answer two main questions:

1) What is happening in Zhaoxing?
2) What can the villagers of Zhaoxing do?

Conceptual Framework

To summarize, I consider there are structural elements which have come to predominantly shape the livelihood of Zhaoxing’s villagers. These are:

a. The concept of modernity as an, albeit ambiguous, driving motto to development schemes in southwest China;
b. The classification and perception of remote populations considered in need of this development, in other words, minority nationalities and the charged concept of minzu/ethnicity both today and historically whereas these groups tend to stand toward the bottom of the national social hierarchy;

c. Tourist development as one of modernity's catalyst in rural regions of Guizhou Province, particularly ethnic tourism and its paradoxical particularity to rely on the display of so called ‘traditions’ as a mean to develop.

Furthermore, I consider Zhaoxing villagers’ perspectives and actions are linked to:

d. The notion of agency: the power people have at their disposal, their ability to act on their own behalf, influence other people and events, and maintain some kind of control in their own lives.

e. The expression of this agency through resistance, whether overt or covert as well as through different forms of strategic compliance.

f. The notion of indigenization or the local appropriation of modernization schemes. In other words, the perspective villagers of Zhaoxing have of their situation according to their positionality within the modern Chinese state, a positionality that has been shaped historically and from which they selectively appropriate elements of change, reworking or embellishing them.

1.9 Organization of the thesis

The data collected in order to present the situation of Zhaoxing was obtained through extensive fieldwork between 2006 and 2007 and was supplemented by regular visits to the village between 2000 and 2009. As a country only recently open to foreign social science researchers, obtaining permission to do extensive fieldwork in the PRC is characterised by a long trek through the hierarchic maze of Chinese administration. Meanwhile working with local research assistants may both assist and confine the research. What is more, once in the field, statistical data is frequently inaccessible or unreliable (Curran and Cook 1993:
access to the voices of villagers and especially women is restricted, and the researcher must carefully protect informants who disclose dissident information. The next chapter (chapter two) hence presents research methodology. It includes description of the winding route followed to access the field site through a mix of helpful initial contacts and fortuitous meetings. It furthermore details the data collected and considers the issue of my positionality as a limit to knowledge production.

Then, chapter three presents the dynamic construction of my field site both historically and geographically. The southwest province of Guizhou has, in China, a negative aura that contributes to the legitimacy of state-led development projects. I explain the present-day situation of the province through its geographical position, its demographics and its troubled history. I present the official history of the province, focusing particularly on the region where Zhaoxing is located and I analyse how local Zhaoxing villagers construct their own version of history in order to reproduce their ethnic specificity as 'not quite Han' (Unger 1997).

Chapter four focuses on state-led modernization schemes that attempt to integrate the province and its population politically, physically and culturally. Focusing particularly on the local expressions of these schemes, it presents the infrastructure developments the village of Zhaoxing has faced and the different and changing sources of revenue for villagers (agriculture, tourism, manufacture work and some commercial activities). It furthermore considers the increasing urbanization rural areas of China are undergoing as communication and transportation infrastructure develop as well as the rapid market integration of the village's economy. I show the physical and cultural integration such changes have entailed and I investigate villagers' points of view of these changes as well as their active participation in the shaping of their everyday life through acceptance, adaptation or resistance.

Chapter five then considers the development of tourism in the village, looking at such aspects as the shape it has taken, the representation of Dong culture it has involved, the way it has redefined village organization as well as the economic changes it has brought. It
analyses the controversial arrival of a non-local tourism company in the village, looking at different villagers' perspective of tourism as well as their varying involvement in, or their resistance to, the way tourism is developed by the company. It furthermore presents a series of spatial changes observed in the village. Indeed, Zhaoxing has become a contested space and struggles over space in the village reveal unequal power relations and forms of resistance. As an expression of change, space reveals the unfolding of structural elements in the village as well as villagers' relative agency.

Chapter six then brings together the structural elements as described in the previous chapters looking at history, modernity and tourism. A synthesis of local villagers' points of view is then presented and discussed through notions of domination, resistance, agency and indigenization. This chapter is dedicated to scrutinizing what agency villagers of Zhaoxing have, what agency they consider having and what agency they actually use in shaping the future of their village; this according to their varying positionality within Zhaoxing's society and involvement in tourist development.

To conclude, this thesis will expose the need for more detailed case studies such as this one to reveal the complexities found in the field. Only more fluid, more dynamic and more dialectic approaches can reveal the structural conditions of change as well as the agency of actors involved; intermingling as they are in the creation of alternative tomorrows.
2 Who am I to do this?: The intricacies of fieldwork

2.1 Introduction

Every time the bus entered a village, children would quickly notice my blond hair and big nose behind one of the windows. Their reaction would always be spontaneous: they'd start running after the bus, pointing their fingers at me screaming "Lao Wai! Lao Wai!". Back in 2000, traveling as a foreigner in minority regions was certainly not a discrete endeavour. It was my first escapade to the 'barbarian' province of Guizhou; an area, according to the Lonely Planet, beyond normal touristic routes where travel was uncomfortable yet rewarding: filled with minority villages to be discovered and picturesque scenery to be photographed. Perfect for a novice anthropologist seeking a field site, I thought! Yet between this initial period of prospection and the actual beginning of 'official PhD fieldwork', the road was long and filled with obstacles.

Social science fieldwork is shaped by opportunities, constraints and chance. Clearly, as noted by De Neve and Unnithan-Kumar (2006: 5), "anthropological fieldwork has never been completely determined by the researcher". Relationships in the field are established according to one's positionality; including one's gender, age, ethnicity, social status, education, sexual orientation, language ability and social networks; all these in turn determine accessibility to different informants and data sources (cf. Sultana 2007). In other words, researchers are part of their fieldwork. Because "the practice of fieldwork and the production of knowledge are mutually constitutive in any given fieldwork context" (Reid-Henry 2003: 185), it is important to situate the researcher within his or her process of fieldwork. Reflecting upon the constitutive aspects of fieldwork both elucidates the

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24 Foreigners are often considered to have big noses and are sometimes called Da Bize.

25 Old Foreigner! Old Foreigner!
organisation of the society one is examining and reveals the limits of one's fieldwork according to varying degrees of integration in the field.

There are important particularities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that impact on fieldwork and knowledge production. As a country only recently open to foreign social science researchers, obtaining permission to do extensive fieldwork in the PRC is characterised by a long trek through the hierarchic maze of Chinese administration which immerses the novice into the complexity of Chinese society. This 'trek' reveals structures of power; it brings forth traditions attached to establishing contacts and building relations; it defines sensitive issues linked to national minorities and local histories; and it informs the researcher of state expectations regarding the social sciences. Meanwhile, the researcher hires local research assistants who may both assist and confine the research. What is more, once in the field, statistical data is frequently inaccessible or unreliable (Curran and Cook 1993: 71), access to the voices of villagers and especially women is restricted, and the researcher must carefully protect informants who disclose dissident information.

This chapter aims to present and define fieldwork as more than the moment when interviews are made or when participant observation is achieved. Rather, fieldwork is presented here as the process from beginning to end that has led me to Zhaoxing; the winding route filled with obstacles, challenges, fortuitous meetings and memorable moments that have contributed to constructing my knowledge of the village, its history, its population and its present-day situation. On the one hand, this chapter exposes the methodology used to gather the data that supports this thesis while, on the other hand, it also considers my positionality in gathering such data, and the implications both have on what this thesis aims to present.

Accordingly, I begin this chapter with a brief overview of the local norms of undertaking ethnology, explaining how these influenced both the procedures I needed to follow to reach the field and the actual fieldwork I was able to undertake. Then I discuss the establishment of relationships and the administrative hurdles to be overcome to obtain official fieldwork permission. The suspicions arising from the state's perception of foreign social scientists
and the awkward intermediary position occupied by research assistants are discussed. Finally, I explore the challenges and obstacles faced when one actually reaches the field; negotiating with local authorities, establishing rapport with villagers, and protecting dissident informants. I also present the sample of villagers I formally interviewed, the life histories I gathered, the participant observations I undertook and the numerous informal situations and conversations that have contributed to shaping my understanding of Zhaoxing's reality.

2.2 Procedures to reach the field

2.2.1 Establishing relationships: finding a research centre and a host university

My first encounter with villagers of Zhaoxing was in spring 2000. I had completed my B.A. in cultural anthropology and following an elective course on Chinese history, I had developed a keen interest toward China. This interest brought me to take intensive Mandarin courses and to dedicate my honour's thesis to the cosmological outlook of Daoism. It also brought me to travel to China in order to put my growing passion to the test of reality before pursuing to graduate studies. I thus travelled during three months throughout the country, testing my mandarin skills and attempting to find my future field site. When I reached the village of Zhaoxing after some strenuous travels and encountered China's 'hidden' diversity in its early phase of tourist development, I knew I had found a place, a people and a situation that could sustain my interest throughout a Master's degree and a PhD. Upon my return to Canada, I completed a Master's degree in anthropology at McGill University, reviewing the concept of ethnicity in light of ethnic tourism in

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26 It is furthermore important to note here, on a more personal level, my initial interest in the issues villagers of Zhaoxing were facing. During my first visit to the village in 2000, I was interested in the fact that the Dong were 'not quite Han' (cf. Unger 1997). This mixture of 'being Chinese' yet not quite as Chinese as Han Chinese rang familiar to my own experience. Briefly, I am Belgian and my family and I migrated to Canada when I was 6 years old. When I was 13, we moved to Australia for two years, then back to Belgium for another two years. This was followed by another two years in the US before I left on my own to return to Canada to undertake a university degree. In every location, I would make an effort to pass for a local, quickly acquiring the accent and mimicking speech, expressions and gestures so not to be tagged as 'outsider'. I was thus momentarily, Canadian, Australian, Belgian and Californian, always acting 'just like them' yet not quite...
southwest China. As I began my doctoral studies, I returned to Guizhou province, this time to set the scene for official PhD fieldwork.

A critical part of this initial research process is building and maintaining social networks and chains of contact. In summer 2004 I undertook a three month pre-fieldwork visit to Guizhou province with the goals of finding a research centre with which to be affiliated and establishing contacts with local scholars who shared an interest in my topic. This chain of contact started at Université de Montréal (Canada) with my Chinese language professor and his connections with the linguistics department at Nankai University in Tianjin (南开大学). In Tianjin, I met with two professors who redirected me to Guizhou University. I remember walking around the campus there asking everyone I could, where I could find 'the Dong specialist Professor Shilin'. Eventually, I was pointed in the direction of the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute (贵州大学西南少数民族语言文化研究所). There, I met Western, Han Chinese, and national minority scholars whose research concerned national minorities in Guizhou, many of whom were focusing specifically on the Dong. Albeit, though I met and conversed with many Dong specialists, it was only towards the end of my fieldwork that I finally met Professor Shilin. As with other foreign researchers working in China (and elsewhere, cf. Reid-Henry 2003), establishing contacts followed a winding route which often entailed a mix of helpful initial contacts and fortuitous meetings.

Among the people I met through the research centre were Dr. Geary and Professors Wang and Long, who considerably increased my historical, cultural, practical and linguistic knowledge about the Dong. Our conversations also shed light on their own positionalities and how these influenced their views on the Dong national minority. Geary, who is Irish and fluent in the Kam language, is a linguist aiming to bring bilingual education to Dong children. In this capacity he is involved in building schools, training teachers and creating textbooks in the Kam language. Furthermore, he collaborated in the publication of the first description of Dong culture in English (Geary et al. 2003). Wang, director of the research centre, is a Han Chinese anthropologist. He helped me to unveil and decipher official state
discourse and also provided useful comparisons from his fieldwork with the Miao in Xijiang, nearby. Long is an 'elite member' (cf. Litzinger 2000) of the Dong national minority working at the Guizhou University for Nationalities who contributes to establishing government policies for the 'development' of his ethnic group. Many of Professor Long's students obtain government positions upon graduation and his contacts greatly facilitated my navigation of the official procedures to do fieldwork. Acting as gatekeepers for my research (cf. Hay 2000; Heller et al. 2011), these three scholars had important connections that played a determining role in smoothing or delaying (as I later discovered) procedures related to my fieldwork. As I later found out, Professor Long and other Dong scholars' depiction of the Dong minority nationality, through their multiple publications, often served as reference in authenticity debates between Dong villagers, government officials and tourism entrepreneurs.

During my pre-fieldwork visit, I accompanied each of these three scholars to their respective field sites. These visits allowed me to witness some of the challenges Dong minorities (and Miao minorities) face as the state attempts to modernise them. Furthermore, exchanges with these scholars illuminated the particularities of my case study as well as the similarities that different minority people in the province shared. These relationships also presented me with the many different perceptions people have of minorities (cf. Blum 2001), in addition to the position scholars hold in Chinese society, which I explore next.

### 2.3 Ethnology in China: making one's research 'applicable'

In order to better understand how social science researchers, be they foreign, Han Chinese or national minority, are perceived and expected to behave, a brief note on ethnology in China is necessary. The social sciences in China are seen as serving one purpose: the formulation of social policies. For this purpose, populations are investigated/researched on a regular basis. Indeed, every ten years, a large scale nationwide census is published including data on education, income, urbanisation, ethnic affiliation, fertility, and so on. The collected data is then used to legitimise the application of politically driven policies. As a result, the researcher faces at least two challenges: first, the authorities who seek the
applicability and usefulness of the research; and second, an over-investigated population which has become suspicious of the claimed benefits of such investigations (cf. Gros 2010).

The social sciences in China are seen as an applied field, and therefore academic researchers are often placed in an awkward situation. Informants tend to quickly associate a fieldworker's activities with those of the government, expecting changes, either material or in the form of new social policies that might affect them. They thus enter the research process with a mixture of reservations and expectations. As Hansen (2006: 82) observes:

Over the years, many Chinese peasants have discovered that investigations into their household have a direct economic consequence for them: loss of illegally cultivated land, children sent to school, birth control, granting of loans, to mention some common examples. Justified or not, due to the state's long established tradition of intruding into the lowest levels of society, the fieldworker (Chinese or foreign) is vested with a special authority and power, and placed in a recognizable role as a researcher or investigator. She is walking in the footsteps of the Communist Party.

Meanwhile, in attempting to obtain permission to undertake research, the researcher sees his or her project assessed by the provincial government according to its possible contribution to the national modernising project. Research permits must be approved by state authorities, which further associates the researcher with high level government goals in the eyes of the population studied. This population includes not only villagers, but also local officials subjected to provincial policies.

I found that working on the topic of tourist development among a national minority group made it easy for higher level officials to see potential and direct links with the modernising project of the nation. However, this also implied – both to those officials and to my research subjects – that I may provide the government with ideas and data from my research on how to develop tourism. I often felt placed in an awkward situation, balancing the expectations of the provincial and the county governments that I contribute to their goals of economic development, while collecting often conflicting perspectives from villagers. For example, when my official fieldwork was complete I was summoned by the
county authorities to participate in a televised interview discussing the recent development of tourism in the region. My challenge was not only to answer in Mandarin Chinese while being filmed, but moreover, to answer diplomatically. In other words, I attempted to voice villagers' concerns regarding top-down, imposed aspects of tourist development without seeming to criticise county and provincial tourist development procedures.

2.4 Obtaining the official research permit from the Chinese authorities

Gaining access to the field, let alone actually interviewing villagers and collecting data was, for me, a long road filled with detours. In China, an official research permit is necessary in order to undertake long term fieldwork and especially to be allowed to conduct tape-recorded interviews with government representatives. In addition to arduous negotiations with Chinese authorities, this requires being affiliated with a university or a research centre (cf. Pieke 2000: 133; Thunø 2006: 249; Heimer and Thøgersen 2006, among others). Due to the difficulties foreign researchers experience in gaining the necessary permissions, long term extensive research in one field site is still relatively uncommon in China (Heimer 2006).

The relationships and social networks I had built in 2004 in Guizhou and had worked to maintain since then, both helped and created obstacles for my negotiations to obtain permission to undertake long term fieldwork in Zhaoxing. Indeed, when I returned in 2006, it took almost three months of arduous negotiations to obtain an official research permit.27 Three obstacles prolonged the process. First, I was the first foreigner to undertake official research in this region. Second, in order to obtain such a permit, I had to be registered at a local university, and hence became the first foreign doctorate student to register at Guizhou University. Finally, the research centre I wanted to be affiliated with – the Guizhou

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27 I must note here that after completing my PhD comprehensive examinations at Université de Montréal, I transferred to Université Laval in the fall 2008 to pursue my doctoral studies and undertake extensive fieldwork under the guidance of both Professor Jean Michaud (Université Laval) and of Professor Bernard Bernier (Université de Montréal).
University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute noted earlier – turned out to be largely funded by a faith-based organisation, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International). This organisation of linguists focuses primarily on studying, documenting and assisting lesser-known languages, yet their link to Wycliffe International\textsuperscript{28} specifically, and to Christianity in general, caused suspicion on the part of Chinese authorities.

The process and required documentation to register as a doctoral student at Guizhou University and to apply for a research permit were not clearly established, and authorities at different levels had to agree on a set of procedures. As a result, once I had submitted the initial required documentation to the Foreign Affairs Office of Guizhou University (in charge of obtaining the research permit for me), other required documents were subsequently added to the list, lengthening the procedure and inevitably delaying my fieldwork. Ultimately, the list of required documents included: proof of a medical examination; a range of photographs of specific sizes; a resident permit; a copy of my diplomas (translated from Latin); a copy of my resume; a detailed research proposal in Mandarin Chinese (see Annex 1); a photocopy of my scholarship papers; proof of registration, a photocopy of the ethics approval from my home institution, and a letter from the director of the Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute which stated clearly their responsibility in supervising my research during the entirety of my fieldwork. Due to the religious character of SIL, the provincial authorities asked me to add a written letter attesting to my non-affiliation with this organisation and with religious movements in general.

Two months after all the documents had been submitted I was told my permit was ready. However, when I visited the Foreign Affairs Office to collect it, the local official still had not received it from the issuing provincial authorities. At that stage I slowly became this Foreign Affairs Office official’s 'worst nightmare' (her own words). I would telephone or

\textsuperscript{28} Wycliffe International is dedicated to translation of the biblical scripture in all languages.
send her text messages three times a day to find out how my application was progressing and if she had any suggestions as to how to speed up the process. I am not sure this actually changed anything, but I am convinced that this official shared my joy when, three weeks later, I finally obtained my researcher's identification card. The deviations and delays I encountered in attempting to obtain permission to do fieldwork forced me to readjust my research schedule. I had certainly learnt to be more flexible, a necessary quality for any fieldworker, while I had also been initiated into the administrative hierarchy of the government research approval bureaucracy (cf. Thunø 2006: 249-250).

2.5 Working with local research assistants and coping with their suspicions

While fieldwork in general requires flexibility and adaptability, this applies also to working with research assistants. The fieldworker is challenged to consider and make the best of his or her assistants' skills and positionalities in order to meet research goals. As is often the case when doing long term fieldwork, it is often necessary to work with multiple assistants. Each assistant has his or her own unique background and each brings different opportunities and constraints to the field. The assistant's gender, ethnicity, social status, economic situation and personality all influence the establishment of the social encounters through which data is collected. How research assistants translate and reflect upon informants' statements, and the assistants' involvement in the research process itself, have direct impacts on the researcher's perspective and contribute to shaping the research (cf. De Neve 2006: 87; Turner 2010). In the PRC, whether it is required by the unit one is affiliated with or for reasons related to language proficiency, working with research assistant(s) is almost inevitable (Hansen 2006; Thøgersen 2006).

Although I had one main research assistant: Chloe, three other young women acted as assistants at different times during my fieldwork. As a woman, I consciously favoured

29 Chloe is my research assistant’s foreign name and she has accepted that I use it in my thesis and in publications.
female assistants. First, it enabled sharing the same room for accommodation, thereby reducing the costs of fieldwork and permitted late night work discussions. Second, I was more comfortable working with a woman in order to avoid any cultural misunderstandings about seduction/attraction and to avoid confusion about the nature of our relationship by informants (cf. Kulick and Willson 1995).

During my pre-fieldwork in the summer 2004, the research centre introduced me to Xiao Lu, a Dong native of Zhaoxing. She accompanied me to her hometown and, as we quickly became friends, she provided me with an incredible opportunity for participant observation and also contributed to my integration in the village. Thanks to Xiao Lu and her family, I experienced fishing in rice paddies, harvesting and planting rice, making sticky rice cakes, visiting friends in the village and in neighbouring communities, and tending her family’s store during market days. In this case, spending time as a friend with Xiao Lu prior to undertaking official fieldwork meant that I was afforded with many informal interactions that contributed to setting the stage for subsequent more formal interviews (cf. Reid-Henry 2003: 192).

Xiao Lu later became an important facilitator of my official fieldwork. When I returned in 2006 she had graduated from university with a degree in minority studies (she had been a student of Professor Long) and had been granted a lower-level position in the Zhaoxing local government. At the beginning of my official fieldwork, she helped me organise interviews with local officials and clarified information I gathered. I would turn to her with questions regarding Dong culture, Kam language, village organisation, or practical information on agriculture, land distribution and the like. However, due to our respective positions in the village and as my work progressed, I involved and informed her less directly in the specifics of my research in order to protect both her and my informants from inquisitive higher officials.

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30 Lu is the family name of 98 percent of Zhaoxing villagers; Xiao (小) means little, hence I would call almost all villagers that were younger than me ‘Xiao Lu’.
During my pre-fieldwork trip in 2004, I had also met Chloe (see Figure 3: ), who became my research assistant during my long term official fieldwork. When I returned to Zhaoxing in 2006, Chloe was a Master's student, studying philosophy. She is a Bai national minority, from a small agricultural village in the mountains of northwest Guizhou. Compared with the Dong, the Bai are considered significantly more sinicised (Blum 2001: 106-173), and Chloe admitted that she could not speak the Bai language, nor could she think of any particular characteristics that differentiated herself and her family from Han Chinese.

Figure 3:  *My research assistant Chloe (Picture by author, May 2009)*

Chloe turned out to be an excellent research assistant. She had grown up in a large, poor family and was accustomed to harsh living conditions. As a result, she adapted quickly to
life in the field. She was knowledgeable on basic agriculture and could explain to me (a
Belgo-Canadian suburbanite) the seasonal cropping cycles that organised village life.
Although not Dong, she made a point of introducing herself as Bai to informants in order to
facilitate more egalitarian social interactions. Her excellent memory for names and the
stories told by interviewees allowed her to gain their trust and respect. However, her
background, ethnicity and employment status combined with her lack of fieldwork
experience, led her to be very cautious initially in her interactions with me.

Suspicion toward foreign researchers is to be expected in the PRC (cf. Thøgersen and
Heimer 2006; Curran and Cook 1993; Yeh 2006). Indeed, in China there is a 'culture of
fear' and I was often reminded that I was working and living in a non-democratic country
(cf. Yang 1994). In addition to the obstacles while obtaining a research permit, 'this politics
of fear mean not only that access to interviews and data is far from ideal, but also that all
interactions and relationships are shaped to some extent by wariness of political trouble'
(Yeh 2006: 97). I was to experience this firsthand during my fieldwork in Guizhou.

One night, while walking back from the research centre with Chloe, she grabbed my arm
and whispered: 'someone is watching you!' I quickly looked around the darkened back
street before realising that she was talking about something else. She had been convened by
a provincial official and questioned about who I was, what I was doing, and what type of
questions I was asking. The official had instructed her not to give me access to internal
documents and statistics, making it clear that she was responsible for any of my wrong
doings. She further told me of a Chinese scholar who had been sentenced to jail after
collaborating with foreign scholars and providing them with unofficial, internal statistics
(cf. Rofel 1993). Such tactics confirmed to me, as Yeh (2006: 104) also notes, that "the
pressure of 'responsibility' is a disciplinary technique of the state".

31 For discussions on the historical and recent relationship between the Han majority and the Dong
(as well as other minority nationalities in Guizhou) see: Lombard-Salmon (1972), Berlie (1998),
Oakes (1998) and Herman (2007).
Chloe continued to be apprehensive throughout our time in the field and was highly suspicious when I asked questions regarding the organisation of the government or whether or not she was a Party member. There were, I soon realized, sensitive topics that needed to be postponed until I had earned her trust to a greater degree (cf. Michaud 2010). It took all my skills of persuasion, a great amount of patience, and numerous visits to her hometown to convince her that I was neither a Canadian nor a Belgian spy, but was rather becoming a friend. Even so, it was only toward the end of my stay in China that she opened up and became more critical of minority nationalities’ situation within her country.

Chloe's fear and suspicion shaped how she translated interviews and how she accounted for situations we witnessed in the village. Yet I saw clear changes in her attitude as our relationship evolved over the long course of my fieldwork. By 2009, we could discuss the situation of the village – including how locals were overtly and covertly resisting certain 'development' initiatives – in what I felt to be a more constructive way, since Chloe had sharpened her critical lens toward the role of different actors (be it government, tourism companies or villagers). In sum, such long term research cooperation allows moving beyond initial suspicion, but at the same time demands that the researcher is careful to protect not only his or her informants, but also his or her research assistants. As Chloe wanted me to realise, "...one cannot simply publish findings because it could mean the end of another academic career or the punishment of respondents" (Curran and Cook 1993: 79–80).

On two occasions, Chloe was unable to accompany me to the field. During this time, the research centre found two Master's students in anthropology to replace her.32 They were quite different from Chloe: both had grown up in Guiyang city, both had fathers holding official positions in the provincial government and both were Han Chinese. Their background, the social status of their family, and their ethnicity clearly marked them as outsiders in the village. Their positionality was revealed through actions such as wiping

32 The students insisted to come together to the field; it was the first time they were going to the countryside and it was their first experience doing fieldwork.
their seat before they sat down to interview or eat, wearing city clothes and shoes, carrying
a cell phone and an MP3 player, as well as a general condescending attitude toward village
informants. Reflecting on how to make the best of this situation, I soon realised they were
much more suited to interviewing high level Han officials (interviews that made Chloe, a
non-Han Chinese, nervous) and I readjusted my interview schedule accordingly.

Working with different research assistants forced me to consider how different
positionalities influence the type of data that is collected, including reflecting on my own
positionality, which I address below. All told, I consider that having varying points of entry
to the field enriched my research and allowed me to reflect on contrasting attitudes and
viewpoints related to status and ethnicity. My research assistants each represented a
segment of the population of Guizhou and provided me with a sample of different visions
and understandings of Chinese society.

2.6 Fieldwork outline

My PhD fieldwork was constituted of a total of 9 separate visits to the field. Time spent in
Zhaoxing would vary between 10 to 20 days and were punctuated with similar periods in
Shanghai due to family constraints (my husband and daughter were living in Shanghai for
the entirety of my fieldwork). This had the advantage of providing me with the necessary
distance to analyse the collected data (and finalize its translation) and to plan the following
visits. It however had the disadvantage of limiting my incorporation in village activities as I
was always 'coming and going'. Research activities that contributed to my knowledge
production on Zhaoxing, its inhabitants, its history and its situation are briefly listed in the
table below.

Table 1: Calendar of Research Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Research activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2000</td>
<td>First informal visit to the village; first contacts with villagers and first</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
observation of tourist development.

| Summer 2004                                                                 | Second informal visit to the village (as a local's friend - Xiao Lu); Visits to other Dong and Miao villages with both western and Chinese scholars; Establishment of contacts and cooperation with the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute and its researchers Funded by the Quebec government mobility scholarship; registered as a research scholar at Nankai University in Tianjin (南开大学) |
| Winter 2005                                                               | Maintenance of contacts with research centre. Third informal visit to the field with Xiao Lu (I was pregnant at the time)\(^{33}\), Chinese New Year celebrated in the village Funded by the Quebec/China scholar exchange scholarship; registered as a research scholar at Renmin University in Beijing (人民大学) |
| Summer 2006                                                               | Inscription at Guizhou University (贵州大学) as the first foreign PhD student; Research funded by the SSHRC (Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada) and the Fonds québécois de recherche - Société et culture (FQR-SC) Administrative hurdles to obtain an official research permit (meetings with Liping county officials) Resume cooperation with research centre and preparation of interview guides for fieldwork. Fourth and fifth informal visits to the field; one of which I was accompanied by my daughter for a 10 days period. |

\(^{33}\) As mentioned earlier, the intricacies of doing fieldwork with children is the subject of a forthcoming publication (Cornet 2012). Furthermore, it will be the subject of an invited panel organised conjointly with Tami Blumenfield at the Society for East Asian Anthropology presented at the Annual American Anthropological Association (AAA) meeting in San Francisco (November 14-18, 2012).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>First official fieldwork with Chloe; 7 official interviews taped, transcribed, transcribed and translated; observations and participant observations in daily activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2007</td>
<td>Second official fieldwork with Chloe; 14 interviews completed including interviews in Liping county and in Guiyang. Observations and participant observations in daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2007</td>
<td>Third official fieldwork with two Master students and my daughter; observation of Dong song class; school's certificate ceremony; observation of festivals celebrated in the village; general observations and participant observations in daily activities; 13 interviews completed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
<td>Fourth official fieldwork with two Master students; teaching of an English class in middle school; replanting of rice; travel from Zhaoxing to Guangdong to accompany two young girls to a manufacture. 6 interviews completed. Observations and participant observations in daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2007</td>
<td>Fifth and last official fieldwork with Chloe; 3 life histories collected; 7 interviews completed and visit to all families having participated in the research. Observations and participant observations in daily activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td>Visit to the field with western scholars (Canadian anthropologist and New Zealander geographer) and with Chloe; brief observations and participant observations in daily activities; informal interviews with villagers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.7 Collecting data in the field

When I actually began official fieldwork, permit in hand and accompanied by an officially sanctioned research assistant (Chloe), I faced numerous obstacles and dilemmas. I had to find strategies to collect the data I wanted despite constraints imposed by my own positionality and that of my assistant, not to mention those of local officials and villagers.
2.7.1 Interviewing and negotiating with local authorities

Before I left for the village, scholars from the research centre at Guizhou University made a useful suggestion: they recommended that out of respect for local authorities, I start my interviews with the highest local officials. Since my research permit was granted by provincial authorities and approved by county officials, this status allowed me to obtain audiences with the local township leader, the local Party leader, and their assistants. At the same time, this also implied that my presence was, to some extent, imposed on them by higher level authorities.

Yet, beginning my fieldwork by interviewing officials at different hierarchical levels was good advice for a number of reasons. It allowed me to introduce myself and present my project and research goals to the local authorities, while at the same time showing respect of the village's hierarchical structure. It also made me aware of the official discourse toward tourist development, economic growth, and Dong culture and preservation, at the outset of my research, permitting me to recognize subsequent deviations from it. As I found out much later, initial data collected in the field, whether from officials or peasants is generally official discourse. Following Yang (1994), by 'official discourse' I do not mean that it came from officials, but rather, I found a unifying public discourse reflected in the style of language being used by all my initial informants, projecting the hegemonic authority and politics.

Although an official permit opens the gates to data held by officials and the local elites (in this case, decision makers in the development of tourism, including private promoters), it can also be problematic. By the time I began interviewing villagers involved in tourism, I knew all the high level officials of the village. This had an impact on my interviews. Officials, knowing I would later interview villagers, concealed information they did not want passed on to villagers, such as tourist development policies regarding allocation of land for hotel construction, or new requirements for entrance tickets for tourists visiting the village. Moreover, working down the hierarchical ladder, official subordinate workers I interviewed had often been briefed on my research topic and questions by their superior ahead of time. Indeed, I recall an interview with the vice leader of the township in which he
talked for half an hour on his vision of the development of tourism in the village before I could even pose a question.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 4:**  *Distributing school certificates (picture by research assistant, June 2007)*

Furthermore, my identity as a foreign researcher with links to provincial and county officials gave me a position in the village that was sometimes manipulated by local authorities during my fieldwork. I was invited to banquets when higher level officials visited the village. I was also asked to participate in the school's certificate ceremony (see Figure 4: ) and, as I mentioned earlier, in a televised interview in the county town on tourist development. My association with relatively powerful officials permitted participant observations that contributed to my understanding of village dynamics and shed light on the positions of power of different actors in and out of the village. However, it also brought ethical dilemmas and restricted my access to certain villagers.
2.7.2 Protecting dissident informants

Despite my concerns that my position as a foreign social scientist associated with provincial and county authorities and perceived to be reporting on the village situation would hinder gaining information and views from local villagers, it actually led some villagers to participate in my research as a way to get their voices heard. Through them I acquired official documents, including a copy of the contract between the tourism company and the government and two petition letters villagers had sent (one to the provincial government and one to the national government in Beijing) against the new, official tourism scheme. I was told that these documents were considered internal and I was clearly not supposed to have access to them (cf. Thøgersen 2006: 189-205). Reading and discussing these with informants allowed me to understand the reasons for local protests, the resistance expressed in the petition letters, and also the refusal of a growing number of villagers to work for the tourism company.

In my written research, as well as in discussions with officials, I had to balance my desire (and some villagers' desire) to voice local concerns and resistance with the need to protect informants' anonymity. Moreover, I had to consider and acknowledge a wide spectrum of divergent views villagers had on tourist development and avoid promoting certain viewpoints over others. I furthermore had to be careful not to expect resistance, which meant accepting the presence of compliance despite what I felt were injustices. Additionally, as a researcher, although I could attempt to articulate the multiple perspectives of the Dong villagers on county television and through future publications, I had to be cautious to ensure that the villagers knew the limits of my power and involvement in changing their situation or redressing the injustices they had mentioned (cf. Svensson 2006). As in any fieldwork, I had to carefully reflect upon the implications of my presence in the village and local expectations of my research.

2.7.3 Accessing statistical data

A considerable challenge while researching in the PRC is accessing and obtaining reliable statistical information. Local governments within China have a history of manipulating
local statistics to hide the number of births (due to the one-child policy); to downplay the grain harvest (in order to be eligible for state financial support or avoid paying taxes); to demonstrate the success (however unsure) of new policies; and so on. As a result, official documents, including basic statistics, are difficult to obtain and may conceal official goals of which we are not aware (Thøgersen 2006: 198-199; see also Heimer and Thøgersen 2006: 16). Statistical data hence needs to be cross-checked whenever possible. For example, when I asked officials about the social characteristics of a village (demographic data such as educational level, household income, number of children, age of marriage, and so on), I was always told everything was typical and normal. I was repeatedly told that the village social situation was the same as in any other minority village of China, and I would be provided with figures that matched the nationwide state-issued averages. In order to gain a clear understanding of the particular situation of Zhaoxing, I resolved to ask the same statistical questions to officials in charge of hamlets in the village (cunzhang) and to cross check this with local elders. Unfortunately, even these statistics remained vague averages. I ended up adding additional demographic questions to my interviews (see Annex 2 for an example of an interview guide) in order to get a more accurate picture of the village situation; but what proved difficult at this point was being able to interview a representative sample of villagers.

2.7.4 Accessing the voices of villagers

The sampling technique I had privileged for my research was purposive or judgement sampling (Bernard 1995: 95). It meant that, prior to undertaking fieldwork I had made a tentative list of people I wished to interview in order to have a sample of various perspectives according to their level of implication in tourist development. I had, following the advice from my colleagues at the research centre, included numerous government officials of different levels both in order to collect the official discourse and to understand the hierarchic structure of a rural minority nationality government. However, as noted by Bernard (Ibid.): "purposive samples emerge from your experience in the ethnographic research. You learn in the field, as you go along, to select the units of analysis (people, court records, whatever) that will provide the information you need". Hence I kept my research schedule and outline flexible, changing it along the way.
The disadvantage of using non-probability sampling methods when doing research is the danger that those interviewed do not represent the wide scope of perspectives present in a given site. However, when doing ethnographic fieldwork, because of the extended period spent in the field, readjustments can be made. In my interviews, I would always end by asking the informant if they felt there was someone I should interview. In this way, I resorted to snowball sampling and realized local people often named elders as important interlocutors for my research. This gave me insight that elders held an important position in Dong society and that their perspective was both listened to and respected by most villagers. Furthermore, as I became more immersed in local dynamics, I included people I had not thought about. For example, upon interviewing a middle-school teacher, I was invited to teach one class of English. As I walked into the classroom, I realized that I had completely left out Zhaoxing's youth from my research. I thus resorted to interviewing middle school students and accompanied two newly graduated students on their way to manufactures in Guangdong province.

Altogether, I officially interviewed 47 people with various degree of involvement in the tourism industry (see Table 2: ). Interviews were semi-structured,34 taped and were between one to two hours long. They were conducted in Mandarin and were transcribed before being translated to English. Translation was generally a cooperative work between my research assistant and me (with the occasional help of my Mandarin teacher in Shanghai), involving discussions and clarifications. All interviews conducted with local villagers contained questions on the informants' livelihood activities and their involvement and perspective of recent tourist development in their village. I also included questions on their memories of the village when they were a child, depending on the age of the informant, how the village was 20 years ago, 5 years ago as well as how they see it to become in 5 years and in 20 years. The question of the presence of a tourism company in the village was also posed and discussed with the majority of informants. Lastly, depending on the

34 This type of interview involves the use of a "...interview guide [...] a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order" (Bernard, 1995:209). An example of an interview guide used in the field is joined in annex 2.
informant, questions would be added on various aspects of Dong society, its history and its culture. In addition, three unstructured interviews were conducted, collecting the life history of a divorced woman who is a restaurant owner, an IP telephone store owner and a non-local Dong carpenter, newly establish in Zhaoxing.

The main obstacle was not being fluent in the minority language spoken in Zhaoxing. It brought important constraints for my research since villagers had to express themselves in their second language, Mandarin, creating problems in translation as well as the official/authoritative positionality associated with speaking the majority language in a minority situation (cf. Gros 2010). This posed a real challenge, especially toward the end of fieldwork where I realized the presence of resistance in the village. Being unable to grasp conversations between villagers, it was difficult to discern covert resistance and recognize part of the infrapolitical activities (through for example the verbalization of a hidden transcript) that were going on in the village (cf. Scott 1990; Mittelman and Chin 2000; Michaud 2012). Hence my research had to limit itself to presenting and analysing overt forms of resistance and expressed discontentment toward tourism-led modernization; while merely pointing toward the potential presence of more infrapolitical activities among villagers, toward the government and the tourism company (such as foot-dragging, gossip and the like; Mittelman and Chin 2000: 22).

Another problem I faced during fieldwork was gaining access to the variety of people living and working in Zhaoxing. My status as a foreigner staying in the village gave me the opportunity to speak with hotel owners, bartenders, souvenir shop owners and restaurant owners easily. However I found it difficult to reach the population that was not involved directly in tourism, particularly households still relying mostly on agriculture and manufacture work. These villagers were generally quite busy or away and were often very suspicious of social researchers due to the applied nature of social sciences in China (Hansen 2006).

Furthermore, compared with state officials and those involved in the tourism industry, many villagers, especially the elderly and women, primarily spoke their minority language
(Kam) and had a relatively poor level of Mandarin Chinese. Unfortunately, my research tended to reproduce the social hierarchy greatly reinforced and sustained by tourist development in which women and elderly people are increasingly pushed aside. As noted by Dr. Doerthe Schilken\textsuperscript{35} tourist development basically cuts villages age-wise in two sections: on the one hand, the performers and people who can work in the service industry (men and young people who master Mandarin Chinese) and on the other hand, the 'less presentable old ladies with their crooked backs'. Indeed, most performances in the village are now done by young and beautiful villagers, excluding the elderly who used to take part in these performances. As noted by Sofield and Li (1998: 383) in theme parks, inhabitants are all aged "...18-25 years, and may be described as vibrant and beautiful". Furthermore, in Zhaoxing, as elsewhere, young people are the ones who can have an alternate future in the factories while older villagers are generally less mobile and can only benefit from tourism if their children or grandchildren are involved. Unfortunately, their behind the scene influence within households were beyond my reach, mainly due to the language barrier.

I nevertheless found strategies to overcome some of these obstacles using my networks, relying on my research assistants, and taking advantage of my own position and gender. In order to access peasant families I first asked Xiao Lu to assist me, since she spoke Kam and came from a peasant family. She introduced me to some of her friends and acquaintances, sometimes also acting as an interpreter. I also relied on Chloe's capacity to connect with peasant families; often initiating conversations with farmers who were tending their fields. Nevertheless, I still had difficulty interviewing village women.

\textsuperscript{35} Dr. Schilken was affiliated with the \textit{Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute}, Personal communication, 20\textsuperscript{th} of July 2007.
| Government officials                                           | Liping County leader of the Tourism Bureau |
|                                                               | Liping County leader of the Religion Bureau |
|                                                               | Local Leader of the CCP                   |
|                                                               | Township Leader (2001-2006)               |
|                                                               | One of three potential township leader    |
|                                                               | Vice-leader of the township               |
|                                                               | Head of the Cultural Bureau               |
|                                                               | Leaders of village hamlets (*cunzhang* - Zhaoxing Zhongzai, Zhaoxing Shangzhai and Zhaoxing Zhai) |
|                                                               | Vice-leader of local CCP (*zhishu*)       |
| Villagers directly involved in tourist development            | Tourism company manager                   |
|                                                               | Tourism company assistant manager         |
|                                                               | Guesthouse managers<sup>36</sup>          |
|                                                               | Restaurant owners                        |
|                                                               | Souvenir shop owners                      |
|                                                               | Antique store owner                      |
|                                                               | Bar managers                              |
|                                                               | Performance Troupe member                 |
|                                                               | Local tourist guide                       |
| Other villagers                                               | Farmers                                  |
|                                                               | High school students                     |
|                                                               | Middle school teachers                   |

<sup>36</sup> Informants underlined indicate women were interviewed.
2.7.5 Accessing women's voices

Being a Western woman researcher in China can often be very frustrating. Like Louisa Schein (2000: 26), who also completed fieldwork in Guizhou, I was "a white western woman who had undertaken to live in a part of China notorious for being rugged and remote with people known for their 'backwardness'". I was also young (early thirties) and a student, yet this was counterbalanced by a certain social status due to my 'official' point of entry. Nevertheless, being a woman clearly restricted my ability to access men, reducing my ability to gain a more intimate view of their perspectives since my interactions with the majority of men in the village was by necessity very formal. Meanwhile, women in the village tended to keep their distance. When attempting to interview women (even those Xiao Lu introduced me to), they would often call their husband to answer for them, claiming they 'did not know much about anything' and that their Mandarin was not good enough for a conversation with this outsider.

I realised about halfway through my fieldwork that my interviews to date had been mainly with higher status men (officials, guesthouse owners, elders, and souvenir shop, restaurant and bar owners) and a few high status women (restaurant owners and government officials). My inability to speak Kam, my status as a researcher and my 'official contacts' had thus far limited my access to women's perspectives. This issue was resolved both unconsciously and unexpectedly. At the time of my fieldwork, my daughter was eight months old and was
staying with my husband who was working in Shanghai. I was travelling frequently between my field site and what was then 'home' (see Table 1: ).

Figure 5: My daughter in the field (picture by research assistant, April 2007)

Twice during fieldwork, my husband had to travel abroad for work and I brought my daughter with me to the field (see Figure 5: ). Although there were an increasing number of foreign tourists visiting the village, the villagers had never seen such a small foreigner. Through this experience I learned that "children can have a beneficial impact on the research process, particularly in terms of the endeavour to achieve more egalitarian relationships with our participants [...] accompanied ethnographers are seen as less anomalous" (Cupples and Kindon 2003 : 214). After introducing my daughter to villagers, my relationship with them changed dramatically. My new identity in the eyes of locals had suddenly repositioned me in an unanticipated way (Swanson 2008).
By bringing my baby daughter to the field I had altered my positionality from that of a scholar linked with the authorities to that of a mother far from home, caring for her child. Having my daughter with me certainly delayed the work I achieved in the field and, as also noted by Starrs et al. (2001: 75), "with family along, fieldwork is no longer just about the researcher and a cluster of cherished contacts – documents and archives, peoples and places, organisations and outlooks. Suddenly logistics become far more complex". Yet this decision also facilitated considerable contact with women in the village.

Many women were curious to meet my daughter with her blond hair and blue eyes. These encounters generated numerous informal conversations and chances to interact with women. Suddenly we had a number of common affinities and shared a "common ground" (Sultana 2007: 378). Even though the level of spoken Mandarin differed among the women visiting (generally according to age), there was always someone present to facilitate conversation by translating from Dong if necessary, most often a young local woman or Xiao Lu.

In addition, by showing my vulnerability as a mother, and by temporarily shifting my focus from fieldwork to my child, I engaged in interactions that necessitated a great amount of trust on my part (not just, as is often the case in research, on the research participant's side). I had to find someone to look after my child while I was conducting interviews and this certainly was quite a stressful experience. However, looking back, there is I believe no greater sign of respect toward 'the Other' than accepting that his/her way of life and way of raising children - including food, drink, sleep, play, hygiene and so on – be applied to one's own child, even if only temporarily.

This change in my positionality was a turning point in my research, yet it would be arrogant and unrealistic to assert that through my child's presence I had become an insider. I was, and always will be, a foreigner, both educated and richer than locals, and thus comparable to the foreign tourists visiting the village. Nevertheless, this experience deepened my understanding of local reality since my daughter facilitated greater rapport and people tended to recognise me as quite different from 'those tourists' (cf. Cupples and Kindon 2003). I was given the opportunity to learn about women's realities and their perspectives
on the changes their village was facing. Interestingly, knowing women in the village also facilitated my interactions with men, since men could now invite me to their house because I knew their wives, sisters or daughters, and potential jealousies were thus avoided.

2.8 Conclusion and the limits of fieldwork

When I began studying anthropology I imagined myself doing fieldwork alone in a remote region accompanied only by my notebooks and pencils. Indeed, much of the ethnographies that constituted my anthropological education were written as if the ethnographer had no ties and could, for long periods of time, disappear in faraway villages to undertake research. When I decided the village of Zhaoxing was to become my field site, I envisioned myself living there alone for long stretches of time. However, as I prepared for what I thought was my first official fieldwork experience in the People's Republic of China, as a PhD student, the image of the "Lone Ethnographer" (cf. Frohlick 2002: 50) did not apply to my situation as three days before leaving, I found out I was pregnant. I nevertheless traveled to Zhaoxing (in February 2005) and realized once in the field that I was unable to overcome the discomforts of both pregnancy and fieldwork. I thus decided to end fieldwork with a mixed feeling of failure and relief. At the time, I felt that becoming and being a mother was incompatible with anthropological career goals. I felt an intense rupture between two woman's roles: a mother and a fieldworker. Now, six years later, mother of two children, I realize that fieldwork (constituted of before, during and after being in the field) is essentially a negotiated process (Bradshaw 2001). Fieldworkers must constantly juggle their goals, their positionality, and the realities they face both in their personal life and in the field.

The only exceptions to the ethnographer working alone were those whose spouse joined in the research and publications were sometimes co-authored (cf. Comaroff, J. & Commaroff, J.L. 1985). Sutton (1998: 111) defines it as: "anthropology's foundation myth of the lone ethnographer, the anthropologist as hero, a myth that has withstood the critical theorizing of the past 25 years". Similarly, Frohlick (2001: 50) deconstructs this image of fieldwork as "...carried out by solo, childless men or women who leave their families and home communities for long periods of time" stating it is an unrealistic model "...that perpetuates the notion that fieldwork is, or ought to be, a disembodied practice".
Reflecting on one's fieldwork, from a personal standpoint and from the preludes of administrative complexity, the building of official networks, to the complexities of interviewee and research assistant interactions, provides insight into the construction of fieldwork based knowledge. Fieldwork must be considered "...a critical journey, in which the ethnographer engages with informants, assistants, friends and collaborators, and gets involved in a myriad of encounters and events" (De Neve 2006: 87). The field as such becomes a process rather than a locality, in which the researcher is ascribed and takes on different roles that allow the gradual acquisition of insights. Detours, delays and blunders (cf. Gros 2010), as well as varying levels of cooperation, unease and suspicion by local scholars, officials and research assistants all contribute to this experience. As I have described, doing official fieldwork ascribes one with a specific status. Coupled with gender, age, education, language ability, ethnicity and whether one has a child, this composite identity leads to positions that simultaneously open doors just as others may close due to wariness, fear, and government control or restrictions.

Consequently, undertaking fieldwork is certainly not an easy task nor does it follow a straight route, as I have tried to show. Being a woman and a mother brings additional challenges that must not divert us from succeeding as anthropologists (or geographers - cf. Monk 2001). Instead, our positionality in our field site, our interactions with informants and our gathered data widens the variety of angles taken to analyse different cultures. As mentioned by Harrell (2007: 289): "...we have little choice but to present the views we learn from – or at least, through – particular individuals". We must therefore recognize the limits of our research and accept the feeling we have every time upon our return 'home': that we did not ask the right questions, did not meet all the right people and that it'd be better if we returned to the field once more... (cf. Barley 2001).
3 Guizhou province and the Dong population

3.1 Introduction

This chapter could have been entitled "the setting" as it situates the region historically and geographically. It is an attempt to expose the book within which the page of history presented here is turned. My case study, the Dong village of Zhaoxing, is located in the southern province of Guizhou. The situation villagers are facing today is not an out-of-space and out-of-time episode. It inscribes itself on an already heavily painted canvas scribbled with events. The environment surrounding and within which my case study evolves has contributed to the shaping of its history and has also, in turn, been shaped by its inhabitant's tribulations. How villagers live today, how they perceive their situation as well as how they react and contribute to changes are rooted not only in the past but also in the terrain they have made their own.

"The setting" is thus an inappropriate title as it conveys a sense of passiveness that I wish to avoid. Instead, I hope to present the case study as a lived space (cf. Lefebvre, 1974), where history and geography intertwine producing and reproducing one another. My zooming in and out on a specific area from which voices are heard serves to bring forth the human lives that remain too often hidden behind large-scale historical events. The following chapter is thus a historical and a geographical overview of the region, zooming in on the locality of Zhaoxing when specific data was available.

The first objective of this chapter is to present the foundations of present-day central state perception of Guizhou revealing why, today, the region is still considered a backward, remote, uncivilized region of China; one that is badly in need of modernization. The region is often described by a popular Han poem38 in Guizhou, "the sun does not stay more than three days in the sky; the land does not stay flat more than three feet; the man does not have

more than three pennies in his pockets". I thus begin this chapter by presenting the canvas of Guizhou, looking at its land, its climate and its population focusing on the combination of geographical, demographic, educational and topographic conditions that contribute to the province's negative reputation. "Guizhou is regarded – even today – as a region of abject poverty, uncivilized minority tribes, and general dreariness" (Oakes 1998: 8). Indeed, every time I informed Han Chinese friends from the coastal areas that I planned to visit Guizhou, I was warned of the harsh conditions of the province. 39

What is more, the history of the province also contributes to its negative reputation today. Indeed, historically, Guizhou was seen as a hostile border region inhabited by barbarians. The province has always been located on the fringe of Imperial power, far from central control and known for being inhabited by barbarians. In 1908, The French Missionary, P. Aloys Schotter (1908 : 397) stated: "among the eighteen provinces of China, the province of Kouy-tcheou is without doubt the smallest, the poorest, the most mountainous and, we may certainly add, the less Chinese" (my translation).

The second objective of this chapter is thus to provide a brief historical overview of the province showing how populations of the region have related to various imperial powers and to the advent of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Despite its rugged terrain and contrary to what Scott (2009) has asserted, the Chinese empire-state did not stop at mountains. Similarly to the villagers of Zhizuo studied by Muegller (2001: 19) I believe the population of Zhaoxing is and has been,

...neither outside a cohesive entity called "Chinese culture" nor in any simple process of being assimilated by it. Instead these peoples seed a diverse cultural field with fresh influences; they selectively appropriate its elements, reworking or embellishing them; they imagine coherent versions of it against which to pose self-consciously, inventing themselves as different.

39 Such was the case for me as a researcher (and those who came to visit me) as well as for an American tourist interviewed on 28th of May 2007.
In order to present history as a dynamic process and as continually constructed in the interaction between local agents and governing ideologies, I propose a dialectical framework. I begin with what I call an 'objective history', marking down the main historical events that may have affected the region where Zhaoxing is located and its peripheral populations. Such an overview relies on the work of historians, including Lin (1941), de Beauclair (1960), Lombard-Salmon (1972), Dreyer (1976), Jenks (1994) and Herman (2007), to cite just a few.

I then turn to what I call 'subjective history', showing what the population today classified as the Dong nationality remember, celebrate and instrumentalize to mark their identity as well as their cultural and historical specificity. I rely here on the work of Dong academics: a compilation published in 1985: *Dongzu qian shi*, (Brief History of the Dong), a book on Zhaoxing by a village leader: Cheng (2002) *Zou jin Zhaoxing. Nan dong shequ wenhua kaocha biji* (Go to Zhaoxing. South Dong community cultural investigation notes); the work of Ou Chaoquan and Jiang Daren (ed. 2002): *Dongzu Wenhua Cidian* (The Kam People Cultural Dictionary) as well as the work of Geary and his Dong collaborators (2003): *The Kam People of China. Turning Nineteen*. In addition, in order to move beyond the Dong elite's version of history, I attempt when possible to make villagers' voices transpire through their memories, their rituals, their legends and their songs, relying on interviews and observations made during fieldwork.

### 3.2 The geographic and demographic specificity of Guizhou province

My case study, the Dong village of Zhaoxing, is located in the southern province of Guizhou (see Figure 6:).
Located on the eastern edge of the limestone plateau of Yunnan-Guizhou, the province offers a rugged and inhospitable terrain with 90 percent covered with mountains of an average altitude of 1000 to 1500 meters. Its limestone ecological environment gives it a particular landscape dotted with isolated and grouped peaks, caves, subterranean rivers and rocky hills (Cai and Sanjuan 2000: 44). Accordingly, and as the poem mentioned in the

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introduction also reveals, "most experts agree that no more than 4-5 percent of the land in Guizhou is flat" (Jenks 1994: 15). As we move eastward, the average altitude of mountains decreases. Zhaoxing, located in the southeast of the province is 350 meters above sea level and is surrounded on three sides by mountains rising to 800 meters. "There is Qilin Mountain and Nongbao Mountain in the southeast, Tiger Mountain in the northeast and Xiguan Mountain in the west" (my translation, Cheng 2002: 4).

The province has furthermore a history of isolation, being away from major rivers that have long been the dominant medium of transportation in China. It is located south of the Changjiang River (also called Yangtze) which passes through Chongqing. Guizhou is peripheral to four macro-regions of development defined according to "major drainage divides" by Skinner (cited in Oakes 1998: 87). Accordingly, there are, in Guizhou, four major rivers, Beipanjiang to the southwest, Wujiang across the north, Qingshui-Yuan in the northeast and Duliujiang in the southeast. These rivers have limited navigation possibilities and the province came to be seen as: "...the region beyond which one could navigate up-river from the Changjiang (Yangtze) ..." (italics original, Oakes 1998: 87). Located in the northern part of the Duliujiang basin, Zhaoxing is crossed by two small brooks that meet in the center of the village and flow toward Xiguan Mountain before reaching the Duliu River.

In addition, the land is poor, easily damageable, while topography limits cultivation and the development of intensive mechanized agriculture. Arable land is scarce with an average of 0.9 mu/habitant$^{41}$ and is often dispersed in small valleys or on hillsides (Cai and Sanjuan 2000: 44). Deforestation in order to increase cultivated land has caused great damage on the fragile karstic environment leading to severe erosion and portions of sterile land (approx. 7.6 percent of the province, Ibid.). In Zhaoxing, each household has on average 2.36 mu of

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$^{41}$ One mu = 1/15 ha (or 0.067 ha - Cai and Sanjuan 2000: 44).
land for rice cultivation called: tian (田) and 2 mu of land\textsuperscript{42} for vegetable cultivation called: di (地)\textsuperscript{43} as well as forest land.\textsuperscript{44}

Major crops grown in Guizhou include maize, rice, wheat, cotton, sorghum, barley, millet, buckwheat, rapeseed, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, and numerous other vegetables. The best land, located alongside rivers, is used for wet rice cultivation and oil vegetables between harvests. Fruits are also cultivated including peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, oranges, pomegranates, apples and strawberries. Tea, walnuts, indigo, sugar cane, tobacco, a multitude of medicinal plants, lacquer, tung oil, logs for lumber, silk, etc. are also cultivated (Jenks 1994: 17). In Zhaoxing, more particularly, we find, alongside the river, wet rice cultivation (including glutinous rice)\textsuperscript{45}, on di land, many vegetables including hot chilies, squash, beans, cabbage, carrots, potatoes and the like, while in the forest land: log, bamboo, medicinal plants, fruit trees (waxberries) and nut trees (used for the preparation of 'oil tea'). Cotton and indigo are also grown and used for the confection of clothes.

Guizhou's climate is, however, constraining on agriculture due to temperature variation, the lack of sunshine and frequent natural disasters. Although the region is located in a subtropical zone, high altitudes keep temperatures low and fog is common. Summers can be hot in the bottom of valleys while winters are humid and cold with temperatures below

\textsuperscript{42} This is based on data collected through 14 interviews. Villagers do not refer to their land as mu/person but as a household holding. Furthermore, they differentiate between land for rice cultivation and land for vegetables. The data given by Cai and Sanjuan (2000) does not clarify which land is considered. However, even if we consider both types of land and a minimal number of people per household, it seems the villagers of Zhaoxing have less rather than more land than average in Guizhou.

\textsuperscript{43} The land for rice cultivation is also used for the cultivation of oil vegetables (油菜) as compared to regular vegetables (蔬菜) planted on 'di' land.

\textsuperscript{44} The Dong villagers of Zhaoxing grow China firs which they use extensively in their architectures. The forest is constantly replenished due to the tradition of planting a tree at the birth of a child. When the child reaches 18 years old, 'his' tree can be used to build his new house. Hence these trees are called '18 years old trees' (based on informal discussions with villagers).

\textsuperscript{45} Glutinous rice is an important part of Dong rituals and is cultivated alongside normal rice. Usually, about a fourth to a third of the field is planted with glutinous rice (based on fieldwork, working in the transplantation of these crops, 29\textsuperscript{th} of May, 2007).
zero in regions of higher altitudes.\textsuperscript{46} Heavy rainfall due to the monsoon (between 1000 to 1500 mm per year) is not easily retained in the calcareous soil and landslides are frequent as well as the flooding of rivers. In accordance with the above poem, there are 200 to 250 days of rain and fog falling upon the rugged terrain of Guizhou per year.

Poor land quality and difficult climatic conditions contribute to the precariousness of Guizhou's population, which can barely reach a level above subsistence by etching out a living from the land. Hence, historically, and still in some regions today, "…any change for the worse, whether brought by natural disaster or extortive taxation, could push them over the brink to insufficiency or starvation" (Jenks 1994: 19).

Furthermore, the geographical position within China and the topography of the province limits transportation and has thus also limited commercial activities throughout its history. As we have seen, navigable rivers are rare with no direct access to the sea and transportation relies entirely on winding roads and a limited railway system. The only profitable commercial activity was logging which could be transported on rivers (Ibid.: 22). The region of Liping, where Zhaoxing is located, actively participated in the trade and according to a local government leader,\textsuperscript{47} 75 percent of the province's economy then relied on logging. However, in 1998, a forest protection law called the: \textit{Tian ran lin baohu gongcheng} was passed henceforth prohibiting the cutting down of forests. Other goods, according to Jenks (1994), were exported but in lesser quantities and with less profit as the costs of transportation were enormous.

There have recently been tremendous efforts to ameliorate the transportation issue: highways have been built and since the 1980s, the railway has been linked to the national system in four directions. According to Cai and Sanjuan (2000: 45), there were, prior to

\textsuperscript{46}January is the coldest month with temperatures between 3 and 8°C Celsius while July is the hottest month with temperatures of 24 to 28°C. Generally, although temperatures vary greatly in accordance with altitude, the south is warmer than the north and the east is warmer than the west. The average annual temperature is around 15°C.

\textsuperscript{47}Local government leader interviewed on 27\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.
2000, 1,708 km of railway and 33,604 km of roads; numbers that have tremendously increased in the past ten years in part with the present construction of two major highways and new railways crossing the province (see Figure 7).
Passing close by Zhaoxing is the Guiyang/Guangzhou Highway, portions of which were inaugurated in April 2011. The closest exit is in Louxiang (a neighboring village west of Zhaoxing) and is called "Zhaoxing exit". Extension of the railway (see Figure 8: ) is presently being built with also a planned exit in Louxiang that will be called "Zhaoxing Station". Finally, a new airport was opened in Liping in 2006 with direct routes to Guiyang and to Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

The geography, the climate, limited transportation, coupled with questionable governmental policies (cf. Oakes 1998) have all contributed to the province's poverty. It is indeed considered the second poorest province after Tibet.

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48 The portion from Guiyang to Rongjiang was then opened and the remaining portion from Rongjiang to Louxiang remains unfinished (as of June 2011) When it will be finished, driving from Guiyang to Zhaoxing should take five hours (compared to 12 hours). Another highway is also under construction now from Louxiang to Liping.

49 From Liping, it takes between 2 ½ hours by car and almost 4 hours by bus to reach the village of Zhaoxing since the road was cemented in 2004 (compared to a minimum of 6 hours before, when road conditions were good and there were no landslides).
Despite an average growth rate of 9 percent in the past 15 years, the revenue per habitant in the province, which was about half of the national average before economic reforms, has dropped to about a third. Among its 35 million habitants, 8 million, hence almost a fourth of the population, live in abject poverty and hunger with annual revenues officially below 530 RMB per habitant (86 CAN$ - my translation, Fabre 2000: 65).

As Guizhou has economically developed in recent years, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened and although, generally, the situation has improved for most, poverty is still afflicting many parts of the countryside. A good example of this gap is visible in comparing different villages of the Dong national minority. Our case study, Zhaoxing, is particularly rich with 70 percent of the households earning above 10 000 RMB/year (1620 CAN$ - according to a hamlet leader). In comparison, in the Zaima District, Rongjiang County, also a Dong area, in 2005, the average income was under 1000 RMB per year (162 CAN$ - figures of 6 out of 12 villages). In other words, villagers of Zhaoxing have a higher monthly income than the average yearly income of other Dong areas.

Guizhou is also characterized by its high proportion of national minorities inhabiting the province. Approximately one third of the population is composed of recognized national minorities (37 percent as compared to 8 percent in the rest of China), making Guizhou one of the provinces with the most national minorities. We find, living in Guizhou, the Miao, the Buyei, the Dong, the Tujia, the Yi, the Gelao, the Shui, the Bai, the Hui, the Li and the Zhuang, as well as others in more negligible numbers. In the southeast of the province (Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture), the majority of the population is made up of national minorities. For example, in the county of Liping where Zhaoxing is

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50 Comparing villages of the same national minority better reflects the situation, as culture or minority status cannot serve to explain this growing gap between the rich and the poor.
51 Interviewed the 26th of January 2007.
52 Thanks to Dr Doerthe Shilken of the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute for provide me with this data.
53 See annex 3 for a detailed table of minority populations in various provinces as well as their proportion in these provinces.
54 Other nationalities have a population of less than 50 000 (see Annex 4 for a detailed table of national minorities populations in Guizhou).
located, the minority population is mainly composed of Dong and Miao: 324,867 and 75,718 respectively with also 24,060 Han.\textsuperscript{55} While in Zhaoxing, 99 percent of the population is Dong.

Not subjected to strict birth control, minority nationalities tend to have more children than the Han. The province had, according to the 2000 census, 24,684 births; placing the province first in the number of births (before Yunnan which had 23,237 births).\textsuperscript{56} What is more, it also has a higher density: in 1998, there were 208 persons per square kilometer compared to the country's average of 120/km\textsuperscript{2}. Although minorities and rural Han are now allowed two children,\textsuperscript{57} it is not rare to see families of five children.

The traditional ideology according to which "the more children, the more happiness" continues to this day. Especially for peasants who, in the household responsibility agrarian system, need manpower, hence more men than women. We often see this vicious circle in rural regions inhabited by ethnic minorities: these groups are poorer, have a higher birthrate and as a result, keep increasing their poverty (my translation, Cai and Sanjuan 2000: 46)

In Zhaoxing, most families interviewed had at least two children and families with three and four children were not uncommon.

According to Fabre (2000: 66), a high birth rate, coupled with limited education among Guizhou's minority nationalities, contribute to maintaining the province in a state of poverty. The Chinese state, notes Shih (2002: 213), considers "...ethnic communities are backward because of their lack of education. Consequently, schooling – which in effect

\textsuperscript{57} In the early 1970s a policy called “wan xi shao, 完稀少” meaning late marriage, long period of time between births and fewer children marked the beginning of birth control in China. In 1979, the one-child policy was implanted by Deng Xiaoping in the hope to both reduce demographic growth and ameliorate living conditions. Generally speaking, according to the policy, urban Han can only have one child; rural Han and urban minorities can have two (if first child is a girl) while rural national minorities can have three. Villagers of Zhaoxing are considered an urban national minority; hence they can have two children.
means modernization – cannot become a site in which to preserve the so-called backward culture". In order for schooling to be relevant for minorities in light of the lack of graduates' job opportunities, Shih argues for the necessity to provide local Dong populations with: 
"...ample room to practice their versions of education" (italics original, Ibid.: 213-214). Education, he states, must not only be grounded on an economic rationale but also serve the cultural reproduction of society.58

Education in Guizhou is largely given in Mandarin Chinese and centered on Han culture and values.59 When minority nationality children enter school, their knowledge of Mandarin Chinese is often very limited, having been raised in their minority language. As a result many children have difficulty grasping basic concepts and teachers often use minority language during the first years of education. However, textbooks and examinations are all in Mandarin Chinese.60 This along with the inability to pay tuition fees and the accessibility of low-skill, low paying manufacture jobs have a direct incidence on the rate of school drop-outs. According to a hamlet leader/party representative: 61

Generally speaking they [villagers of Zhaoxing] have not reached middle school; university and high school graduates are few. Most have just been to primary school. Women over forty years old do not know any characters, there are all illiterate. For example, my wife has only been to school for two years and now she knows nothing.

58 I will return to this point more extensively later in the thesis.
59 This is based on observations in Zhaoxing’s primary school and middle school, as well as visits to primary schools in the Dong district of Zaima, Rongjiang County. Numerous discussions with researchers from the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute also confirmed this trend.
60 In the hope to reduce this trend among the Dong national minority, SIL, jointly with the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute, have initiated a program called 'Bilingual Education' where the first years of school are taught in Dong (with Dong textbooks and examinations) gradually shifting to Mandarin Chinese. This project aims to assure children master basic concepts before receiving their education in Chinese.
61 Interviewed on 26th of January 2007.
It is now compulsory for children in China to attend school for 9 years and, according to a middle school teacher working in Zhaoxing, only one fourth of all children in the region go beyond these 9 years, hence beyond junior high school.

From what we have seen about Guizhou, geographically, demographically and economically, it is not surprising that negative commentaries (by missionaries, travelers, government officials, coastal urban Chinese and developers) regarding the province are abundant. According to Jenks (1994: 10), "the Chinese have almost invariably prefaced their descriptions of the area by saying it is a poor and unhealthy place". Western missionaries, geographers and travelers have also echoed these views and have often described the region as poverty stricken (Jenks 1994: 10) or as a "barren and profitless place" (Oakes 1998).

3.3 Today's yesterday: between objective and subjective history

The province is thus characterized by its rugged and remote terrain, its unstable climate, and its ethnic population presented as poor and uneducated. Lagging behind this image of Guizhou as an inhospitable territory is its history marked by a constant, albeit to varying degrees, interaction between centers of power and the province's diverse populations. Comparatively to the north of the country where the Chinese have historically attempted to keep 'barbarians out' by drawing a "frontier of exclusion", the southern part of the country reveals instead a history of attempts at drawing a "frontier of inclusion" (Lattimore 1962: 477). From barbarians, to imperial subjects to minority nationalities, the interactions local populations of southeast Guizhou have had with changing regimes of power have determined their present positionality within the modern Chinese nation-state. Harrell

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63 This listing is inspired by Yang B. (2009: 743) who has analyzed the minzu identification in Yunnan and considers peripheral populations of Yunnan went "From Barbarians to Imperial Subjects to Younger Brother Minzu". Note also that the republican period is left out of both lists as the populations of the southwest, despite efforts from indigenous intellectuals, were not officially recognized by the Republican regime (Cheung, 2003).
(1995: 4) describes this historical interaction as being marked by numerous civilizing projects,

... in which one group, the civilizing center, interacts with other groups (the peripheral peoples) in terms of a particular kind of inequality. In this interaction, the inequality between the civilizing center and the peripheral peoples has its ideological basis in the center's claim to a superior degree of civilization, along with a commitment to raise the peripheral peoples' civilization to the level of the center, or at least closer to that level [...] the civilizing center draws its ideological rationale from the belief that the process of domination is one of helping the dominated to attain or at least approach the superior cultural, religious, and moral qualities characteristic of the center itself.

Such projects bring to peripheral populations a heightened sense of self as an ethnic group and responses may range from outward resistance (he cites Tibet as example) to partial or complete implication in projects (such as the Manchus – Harrell 1995: 4-5). The majority of cases rests in between these extremes whereas populations internalize a sense of humiliation, wanting to be more like the civilizers and recognizing their backwardness, all the while discovering "...they have their own 'culture'. Before they were just living it. Now their 'culture' is a conscious and articulate value. Something to be defended and, if necessary, reinvented" (Sahlins 1992: 24-25). Harrell calls this 'ethnic consciousness' (1995: 3). Although this citation from Sahlins refers to modernization brought by the West, his argument on the indigenization of modernity (cf. Babadzan 2009) by non-western populations in recent years applies, as I will show, to my case study. In other words, the historical review presented here serves to present how the present indigenization of modernity by the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing has its roots in long term interactions with changing regimes of power in China.

The next sections aim at presenting: first, the civilizers' projects through historical events in the province and more particularly in the southeastern region; and second, the ways of remembering and interpreting past events that contribute to marking the Dong's sense of distinctiveness today (cf. Mueggler 2001). Accordingly, the objective is not to ask who are the Dong (in terms of primordial identity) and what 'cultural stuff' has been preserved through history. Rather, I am wondering how the Dong have been treated, labeled and
recognized as different (from the Han and from other non-Han groups) historically and, most importantly, how they have appropriated and indigenized these moments of history and these varying labels.

3.3.1 "Them", the Dong: objective history

3.3.1.1 The exonym Dong: origins

Before the early years of the first millennium A.D. the populations living on the margins of the Empire were referred to as Man (meaning 'barbarians' in Chinese) or Yue. According to Lemoine (1978: 895) the Dong are, for historians, descendants of a branch of the Yue tribes. Called Bai Yue (meaning hundred Yue), their name refers to the diversity of populations that occupied the south-eastern part of China. However,

...the term Yue as a reference to non-Han peoples has been used in many different ways. In late Shang times it seems to have been used to refer to people in northwest China but by late Warring States to Han times it was more generally used to indicate the partly-or un-sinicized peoples of southern China who belonged to different ethnic and linguistic groups and had no political or cultural unity (Meacham 1996: 93).

The attribution of the name Dong is an exonym believed to be derived from Xidong, a term used to denote, in 600 A.D., valleys with small rivers inhabited by barbarian populations (de Beauclair 1960). The term Dong (tong: meaning cave 洞) was then used figuratively by Chinese administration to refer to small administrative units (such as prefecture and county) in barbarian territories that were controlled by the empire. As early as 1052, following the repression of the Nong Tché Kao rebellion, hence during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), barbarian territories were divided into "tcheou, hsien [and] tong" (Lemoine, 1978: 895). According to Lemoine (1978: 895) "this designation both shows this ethnic

64 Shang civilization existed between 1766 - 1122 B.C. (although there are debates that the Shang began around 1600 B.C. and came to an end in 1027 B.C. - Schirokauer 1991: 10). The Warring State period extended between 403 – 221 B.C. while the Han Dynasty was between 202 B.C. to 220 A.D. albeit a brief pause between 9-23 A.D. whereby the Xin Dynasty was established (1 B.C. - A.D. 6 - Schirokauer 1991: 54-76).
group to be indigenous to the region and to have long been subjected to imperial power" (my translation). Its meaning then shifted to designate the populations living in these newly formed units (Lemoine 1978: 895; Geary et al. 2003: 3). It is however unclear why the Kam where the only ones to be called Dong while the Zhuang, the Bouyi, the Miao and the Yao, all neighbors to the Kam and all living in Xidong areas, were given exonyms resembling their autonyms.

3.3.1.2 *Chinese empires' gradual infiltration in the south*

The province of Guizhou, located on the fringe of Imperial power and far from central control, has a long history of being considered a hostile border region inhabited by barbarians. In fact,

...in earliest times, the 'Chinese' state occupied a rather small area on the north of China plain. The rest of what we know as China today was ruled by other ethnic groups called barbarians by the Han [...] During the period known as the Warring States (403-221 B.C.) the geographic area now known as China was more a Thai empire than a Han one (Dreyer 1976: 7).

The region of Guizhou was not however outside any form of organized ruling (or stateless as Scott defends - 2009: 10). Instead,

The region of Guizhou remained somewhat of a transition zone, for the kingdoms were generally based in the fertile lowlands of Guangxi with the mountainous plateau of Guizhou serving as an effective buffer to their increasingly powerful northern neighbors (Oakes 1998: 94).

Kingdoms were also present to the west (present day Yunnan, Tibet and Sichuan) including Cuan (338-737 B.C.), Nanzhao (740-902 B.C.), Dali Kingdoms and Mu'ge Kingdom (cf. Herman 2007). Inhabitants of southeastern Guizhou were thus not continuously under the

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65 The Warring State period was marked by numerous competing states, power over the territory being essentially decentralized (Schirokauer 1991: 33). For a concise view of the different dynasties that ruled over China, see Annex 5.
threat of only one imperial center to the north but were instead caught in between a multiplicity of raising and falling kingdoms.

For almost a hundred years after 221 B.C. the Chinese gradually reached the outer borders of the states of China, regions inhabited by barbarians, in order to integrate and conquer these territories (Hulsewé 1979: 4). From 130 B.C. the Han governments launched a "...series of far-flung conquest to the north, northwest and south [in a] process of imperial expansion" (Ibid.). A system of minimal control was established (called jimī; cf. Jenks, 1994: 39) with local elites autonomously governing their regions "...paying tribute and perhaps a nominal tax to the center" (Oakes 1998: 93). However, the country faced disunity with the fall of the Han dynasty and competing kingdoms reappeared between 220 and 589 A.D. (Schirokauer 1991: 79-100).

Under the reunifying Tang Dynasty (618-907 B.C.) relations with chieftains in the borderland areas were restored and made more official (cf. Jenks 1994: 39). At the time, inhabitants of Guizhou and of most of southwest China were called in Chinese accounts indifferently 'Miao' – and were sometimes subdivided in more or less 52 subgroups (Lin 1941: 282; Lombard-Salmon 1972; cf. Jenks 1994). According to Yang Z. (2009: 1) reference to the origin of the contemporary Miao can be traced back to work of Fan Chuo (called Manshu) during the Tang Dynasty and to the writing of a Confucian thinker, Zhu Xi, during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). In official history, reference to the Miao, as a population, only appeared during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) and was often attached to Man (meaning barbarian - Miao-Man).

Judging by their geographical position, the "Miao-Man" here referred to mainly the non-Han groups in the area that corresponds to today's Guizhou and Hunan provinces covering speakers of Tai and Tibeto-Burman and Austronesian languages such as the Dong, Buyi, Yao and Yi of today (Yang Z. 2009: 2).
It is during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) that the central government reinforced its rule over the southwest and Guizhou became 'administered' officially as a province around 1413^66 (Jenks 1994: 10; Oakes 1998: 89). The loose form of governance that had been in place became increasingly articulated during the Yuan dynasty and was "...complete with regulations governing rank, promotion, demotion, rewards and punishments" (Jenks 1994: 39) under the Ming dynasty. This system was called tusi with native chieftains governing regions of Guizhou. "Tusi, who were hereditary officials in regions inhabited by non-Han peoples, maintained varying degrees of independence from provincial and central state bureaucracies" (Mueggler 2001: 103). This form of governance was a way to pacify the border areas while keeping these populations within the system of the Chinese Ming Empire by way of tax collecting. It was a policy whereby the Chinese used "barbarians to rule barbarians" (yi yi zhi yi, Ibid.). However, as Jenks notes (1994: 41):

*Tusi* could be of various ethnic origins. They might be Han from other parts of China, members of the minority group native to the area they were called upon to control, or members of minority groups native to areas other than the ones they were called upon to control. In Guizhou, many of the tusi claimed they were Han who had received their posts as rewards for military exploits centuries earlier.

Such was the case for southeast Guizhou where, in 1391, Yang Wanba, a Han native of Jishui County in Jiangxi who had shown military valor against Miao rebels, was given the tusi title of native official over an area called Fengning (Herman 2007: 121). This large estate was later divided between his two sons into upper and lower Fengning. The former became the Duyun prefecture where Han settlement was promoted by the tusi while the lower part, which may have included the area where Zhaoxing is located, "...allowed the Miao and [Dong] who had been dispossessed of their lands in Upper Fengning to relocate there" (Herman 2007: 123). The area became known as mountainous, poverty-stricken and almost exclusively populated by non-Han peoples where "Chinese, Miao, and [Dong] bandits roamed the countryside with impunity..." (Ibid.)

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^66 Fabre (2000: 64) dates it to 1414 while She Yize (cited in Jenks, 1994: endnote 1, chap. 3) states that Guizhou became a province in 1410. Meanwhile, Ho (1959: 9) dates it to 1420.
It is unclear if the founders of Zhaoxing benefited from the lower Fengning welcoming "...barbarians and savages" (Herman 2007: 123) and what exactly brought them to this location. However, as Han immigration increased to Guizhou throughout the Ming Dynasty (continuing through the Qing Dynasty; cf. Lee 1982) upheavals raged throughout the province:

...it becomes clear, when reading the chapter on the Tusi system of Guizhou in the History of the Ming, that a year did not go by without troubles arising somewhere. Whether it was quarrels between local chiefs or conflicts with the Han, the results were the same: constant insecurity, blocked roads and goods not circulating. It was always necessary to send troops to suppress troubles... (my translation, emphasis original, Lombard-Salmon 1972: 51).

At the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the Beijing based Chinese government decided to apply direct rule and dismantle the tusi system. The policy was called gai tu gui liu and met great resistance in Guizhou, particularly in the southeast which: "...distinguished itself as a stubborn knot of resistance to direct administration" (Oakes 1998: 94). It was a form of colonization which brought Han Chinese to areas they had never set foot in (Ibid.: 95).

In Zhaoxing and the rest of Guizhou, as well as in Yunnan, the bao-jia system was established (around 1726-1731), whereas a district was divided into units called bao, each with a leader (baozhang) in charge of the conscription of soldiers and the collecting of taxes and levies (Mueggler 2001:103). This form of governance remains today, but since 1949 the units are called cun (村) and are each directed by a cunzhang (村长).

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67 Local history narrates the founding of Zhaoxing to 500 years ago, hence toward the end of the Ming Dynasty.
68 It can be translated literally as: "Change the local and hand over the flow", in other words, take control over the land and the region from the hands of the local.
69 The presence of this political division in Zhaoxing was mentioned by an elder interviewed on 29th of January 2007. According to Mueggler, this happened when: "Ortain ruled as governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou Provinces with a mandate from the reform-minded Yongzheng emperor to
Despite increased direct administration by imperial powers, Zhaoxing and other isolated villages of Guizhou remained somewhat peripheral to central government: "...as late as the 1930s, areas of the province remained the semi-independent fiefdoms of various ethnic minority groups and were beyond the effective control of the central government" (Jenks 1994: 27). For example, in the late 1930s, it took almost 30 days to travel from Guiyang to Guilin (a route which generally passes by Zhaoxing located roughly halfway between both points). Despite the Qing government's assimilation policies toward peripheral populations "...the government rarely found itself in a position to implement its declared policy, and the national minorities were, for the most part, ignored" (Jenks 1994: 163).

3.3.1.3 Han/non-Han identities during imperial era

Historical accounts of Guizhou province throughout the imperial period (cf. Lin 1941; Jenks 1994; Herman 2007; Yang Z. 2009) show that Han and non-Han groups, rather than being isolated in the hills or the valleys, were in constant interaction, exchange and communication involving mobility and frequent migrations (cf. Ou 2007; Ou and Jiang 2007; Geary et al. 2003). Han people and non-Han people were not strictly and clearly distinguished from one another, in other words, ethnic boundaries were not fixed (cf. Barth 1969).

The populations of China were represented by administrators as being on a continuum from raw (shufan: uncivilized) to cooked (shengfan: sinicised – civilized: Hua; cf. Harrell 1996: 6-7). This continuum was highly flexible and was not unidirectional; populations could both move from raw to cooked (or from barbarian to civilized) yet could also move back to raw (depending on whom they were compared to). Basically, being civilized (cooked) depended on the level of acquired Chinese Han customs and language as well as the level of submission to Han administration; hence one could be more or less Sheng Miao (or curb the power of native tusi and bring them under the control of the state (Smith 1970, cited in Mueggler 2001: footnote 3, chapter 4)". Lee (1982: 721) describes baqia as "...a national network of local security organizations" that established a "comprehensive system of population registration", which facilitated taxation and conscription.
cooked Miao). For example, during the Qianlong reign (1736-1795) in the Qing Dynasty Han migration to Guizhou increased and newly arrived migrants and administrators called all those living in Guizhou: Miao, including earlier Han migrants arrived during the Ming Dynasty (Yang Z. 2009: 3). These earlier Han migrants were considered to be barbarians compared to newly arrived migrants.

The antagonistic yet highly flexible relations between Han and non-Han populations were completely redefined with the advent of the People's Republic of China (PRC). According to Cheung (2003) however, it is wrong to think there was no local activism in order to claim ethnic status prior to the advent of the CCP. He demonstrates, through an analysis of three indigenous Miao intellectuals' writing in the Republican period, the struggles of the Miao to be recognized officially. In doing so, he revokes the idea that minorities of the southwest were passively waiting to be categorized by the CCP, showing their early-on involvement and struggle for self-definition.

Nevertheless, the Republican period (1912-1949), marked by numerous conflicts both within and beyond China and by the presence of regional strongmen (warlords – Schirokauer 1991: 312; Dreyer 1976: 39), has been consciously left out of this historical overview. Although the Central Red Army passed by the Dong areas in 1934 and held an important meeting in Liping, how this period affected the rural Dong regions of Guizhou is still relatively understudied. Furthermore, decisive in my choice to bypass this period, when recounting the past, villagers made no special mention of the Republican period throughout my fieldwork.

Populations were, up until the 1950s, largely conceived as scattered and as lacking common consciousness beyond the local (Cheung 2003: 86; cf. Unger 1997). It is with the intent to integrate peripheral populations and to instigate new social reforms and policies that groups

70 There is a link to Lévi-Strauss (1964) notion of « cru » and « cuit » as a process whereby one transits from nature to culture (Isambert 1965).
71 There is a museum in the old street of Liping attesting and celebrating their presence in the area.
of the southwest were categorized. This meant that their 'ethnic' boundaries were drawn clearly and supra-local identities were 'created'. Populations of the southwest were henceforth recognized - and constructed (Mullaney 2011) - as members of the Chinese nation instead of merely barbarians, rebels or tax payers.

3.3.1.4 The making of the Dong minzu category

The first requirement for those who would civilize is to define, to objectify, the objects of their civilizing project (Said 1979: 44-45).

With the rise to power of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party in 1949, peripheral and non-Han populations throughout China were re-categorized through an extensive national project called minzu shibie. The project was part of the process by which the newly appointed Communist Party attempted to define its national strategy for including disparate populations living in its territory and instigating nation-wide nationalist (communist) sentiments. Boundaries were fixed around groups according to criteria first established by Josef Stalin and then adapted to the Chinese context (common territory, common language, common economic activity and common psychological make-up).

Needless to say that this posed great challenges to ethnographers involved in the classification. Indeed, many groups, particularly in Guizhou: "...where the largest number of perplexing cases appeared" (Cheung 1996: 244) were and are still unsatisfied with their categorization (cf. among others, Cheung 1996; Gladney 1994; Kaup 2000; Keyes 2002).

As demonstrated by Mullaney (2011: 50), research teams working in southwest China tended to rely more on the criteria of common language, comparing "grammars and word lists to infer the existence of a common ancestry between seemingly disparate groups".

Constituted groups were then placed on an evolutionary ladder and state policies were formulated accordingly so to 'help' these groups reach the Han's level of civilization. Mullaney (2011: 90) furthermore notes that groups were constituted according to their potential to form a nationality (as defined by Stalin) with the help of state policies. Similarly to the Confucian project (of Chinese Dynasties) and to the Christian missionary projects launched toward peripheral populations, the minzu shibie project reaffirmed the distinction between center and periphery; between civilization and barbarism; or, put more
simply, between us and them (Harrell 1995). Likewise, its purpose was to demarcate different groups and to position them closer or further from the Han civilized culture and language so to establish ways to control them (and collect taxes). The idea of a continuum thus remained yet the *minzu shibie* of the 1950s aimed, for the first time historically, to draw clear, fixed and non-porous boundaries around groups. In other words, its goal was to ascribe ethnic labels according to objective features, as well as ascribing ethnic labels in order to generate the objectives features of a nationality (*minzu*). Yet as Tapp notes for Guizhou:

> Identities were not located purely according to the so-called objective, scientific criteria on which the classifications project was explicitly based, but peoples’ statements about their identities, their desired identifications and their actual ones, were listened to, taken into account, recorded and considered together with other factors such as economic type and stage of social development, history, language and religious affiliation (2002: 67).

The project therefore attempted to determine a set of objective elements that could describe and define an ethnic group while also considering the subjective feeling of otherness and group identity expressed locally (although only to a certain level, for example, just considering elites’ voices; Tapp 2002). Most often, however, faced with various versions of *minzu* (or of what constitutes an ethnic group) research teams made "taxonomic recommendations [that] listed the names of those groups that the team considered most viable, the ones into which the state should invest its energies of social engineering" (Mullaney 2011: 117).

In Guizhou, fieldwork for the classification project was undertaken between 1953 and 1956 and confronted researchers with 87 groups claiming distinct status. The challenge was both in consolidating the *Miao* ethnic category composed of numerous subgroups\(^\text{72}\) while also attributing distinct status and finding exonyms for the *Bouyi, Gelao* and *Dong* (still referred to and popularly presented as *Miao* subgroups, Oakes 1998: 105; cf. Shaw 1989).

\(^{72}\) See Tapp (2002) and Schein (2000) for discussions on the Miao category and the recent work by Mullaney (2011) for details of the classification project as it was applied in Yunnan.
The Dong were categorized by the state as a unified ethnic group with common festivals and customs. Hence with the official recognition of being non-Han, the villagers of Zhaoxing also acquired a supra-local, nationally defined identity, linking them to almost 3 million other people living in three provinces (Guizhou, Hunan and Guangxi).

### 3.3.1.5 The national integration of peripheral populations

The CCP did not only categorize peripheral populations, it brought them directly into their large scale nationalist project. Indeed, on the first of October 1949, it is with the support of the peasantry that Mao Zedong proclaimed the Popular Republic of China (P.R.C.). Relative independence and self-subsistence became increasingly difficult as villagers of China were put at work in the Grand Communist Project. Direct rule was fully installed with the reorganization of the governing machinery.

A new form of government with two parallel branches was established, with government officials and party representatives sharing power at each level (Shirokauer 1991: 352). At the village level, throughout China, this meant a local government in charge of pragmatic issues (organize villagers' work, labor and social affairs) and a parallel governing body of party officials in charge of carrying out the communist party's policies. There are thus the "doubling" of officials at all levels: two township leaders, multiple hamlet leaders (in Zhaoxing, three cunzhang 村长 and two zhishu 支书), multiple secretaries and the like.

In addition to a complete makeover of governing structures, changes affecting the countryside were most pronounced. Indeed, during Mao's time in power (1949-1976) and

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73 According to the 2000 nation-wide census, the Dong population is almost 3 million (2,960,293), they are believed to share a common language constituted of different dialects and regional variations.

74 Township leader is called xiangzhang (乡长) and local leader of the communist party is called shuju (书记).

75 Exceptionally, in Zhaoxing, one man holds both positions.

76 This information about the governmental organization of the village of Zhaoxing is based on interviews with local leaders of both organs in the village between 2006 and 2007.
even before, rural areas had been and were the main focus of socialist experiments (DeKonink and Leblond 2005: 14). In 1950, hence shortly after his proclamation, Mao also launched an agrarian reform that was to transform completely the situation of the countryside's population. During the following two years, some 46.6 million hectares of land were expropriated and redistributed to farming families (Ibid.).

Later, in 1953, collectivization was instigated and in 1955 it was imposed by force.\(^7^7\) By 1958 the experiment was pushed further with the creation of communes and the Great Leap Forward. According to De Koninck and Leblond (2005: 14), by 1957 most peasants were part of cooperatives which were all grouped in rural communes by August 1958, 8 months after the Great Leap Forward had been initiated (Shirokauer 1991: 360).

At the time, remuneration was based on the estimated needs of each household (according to the number of members) and work points were attributed to workers per day of work. As a result, individual productivity dropped except on those small plots of private land allocated during the later stages of collectivization (De Koninck and Leblond 2005: 15).

In 1958 came the Great Leap Forward which sent peasants working on large national projects leaving their fields behind often during the busy agricultural period. In addition, in order to raise the level of steel production, villagers all across China were asked to melt their metal cooking utensils and eat at communal halls. Unfortunately notes Unger (2002: 9),

Huge quantities of grain were shipped off to the cities and onward for export as rural officials competed to exaggerate the size of local harvest yields. The consequence of all this was a collapse in rural production during 1959 and 1960 and a plunge into starvation in many parts of the countryside.

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\(^7^7\) Whether the process was imposed by force or was driven by the socialist zeal following Mao's speech in July 1955 (proclaiming the peasantry had driven the revolution and were the real leaders of the nation's socialism; Schirokauer 1991: 357) is a question of how history is read and presented. Those most fervent of Mao's ideology probably imposed an acceleration of the agricultural collectivization program.
The country faced two years of famine resulting in millions of deaths. These tribulations that reorganized village life in Zhaoxing and forced it into larger State endeavours were further followed by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This revolution was an attempt by Mao to revive the revolutionary zeal of the masses and aimed at the destruction of remnants of the "old society". As noted by Mullaney (2011: 125) "called upon to root out and destroy connections to China’s traditional past, Maoist extremists targeted many facets of non-Han minority communities and cultures, from language and architecture to religion and social practices [...] Far from celebrating China’s ethnic diversity, the objective in many areas became one of assimilation".

It is only with the death of Mao (September 9, 1976) and the advent of Deng Xiaoping as the most powerful political figure (as First Deputy Premier, in July 1977) that the countryside and its peasants reacquired a relative independence in their agricultural work from the center of power. What is more, non-Han minority communities were given much more cultural leeway. With the introduction of the "Four Modernizations" (farming, industry, science and defense), Deng completely reshuffled rural conditions. The integration of peripheral populations to the modern nation-state became increasingly shaped by modernization ideals; a process I review in the next chapter.

3.3.2 "Us", the Dong: subjective history

In maintaining group boundaries and asserting their agency over definitions and representations made of them, the Dong superimpose their own narrative of history. Their history redefines the boundary between Us and Them (most often between Han and non-Han) and revokes the attributed barbarian label. Their history furthermore puts forth certain ethnic traits to characterize their uniqueness giving them the belief in a common origin.

As I will show, the Dong do not retrace their origins beyond the present day borders of China and they tend to consider themselves part of Chinese history. Accordingly, oral histories about the Dong do not attempt to recreate a new ethnic boundary that crosses national borders (cf. Unger 1997). They could have for example included such groups as the Deo to whom they may be related (culturally and by descent). The Deo is an important clan now living in Northern Vietnam (also called White Thai) that came from Guangxi
Province around the 1800s and were originally called Kam, speaking a Tai dialect (cf. Lefèvre-Pontalis 1902; Raquez and Cam 1904; Lemoine 1997).

For the above mentioned reasons and for the sake of clarity, I have opted to use the exonym Dong for this section (and for the entirety of this thesis). Although the Dong have their own autonym: Kam, both names today tend to refer to the same group of people. I have thus preferred to give Zhaoxing villagers agency through presenting their version of history. It is also an attempt to avoid hypocrisy since data used for this section and this thesis was collected mostly in mandarin Chinese, hence locals were themselves using the exonym Dong.

### 3.3.2.1 The origins and migrations of the Dong

The Dong call themselves Kam (pronounced 'gum') in their own language and compared to the Miao who are mountain dwellers, they are considered to be essentially valley dwellers78 (Jenks 1994: 36). According to Norman Geary et al. (2003) and to de Beauclair (1960) there are numerous hypotheses concerning the origin of their autonym. In Kam language, Kam means "to cover and to conceal" and the term also refers to a tool used to separate the rice grain from the husk. The instrument has the shape of a bowl and has a lever that activates a pestle (the instrument resembles and serves a similar purpose as a mortar and pestle). Accordingly, the resemblance between this tool and the valleys in which Dong villagers are located is one of the hypotheses of the origin of the autonym. Furthermore, according to de Beauclair (1960) and Lemoine (1978: 895), the term Kam also resembles the ancient regional name of Kiangsi (Kan- now Jiangxi: 江西) from which the Dong believe to have originated.

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78 We cannot hastily categorize Dong dwellings in the past or today. Indeed, we find today Dong villages in valleys as well as on mountain slopes. For example, the village of Zhaoxing is located in the bottom of a valley and is surrounded by multiples hill villages (Tang'an and Jitang are two such examples).
Meanwhile, Geary et al. (2003: 2) argue the Dong to be descendants of the Liao which is the name that came to replace Yue and Man in Chinese documents between 116 B.C. and 618 A.D. At the time: "...almost the whole of southwest China, including today's Sichuan, Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi and Hubei, was the domain of the Liao" (Geary et al. 2003: 2). According to Geary et al., customs described in Chinese histories are similar to present-day Dong and analysis of Liao language data revealed clear links (Ibid.; cf. Long and Zheng 1998: 10-11). For Dong historians and for Geary et al., this probable line of descent reinforces the group's link to their territory and contributes to the belief in a common origin.

Dong oral history and songs recount their migration to the region stating that the Dong had faster boats than the other migrating groups (such as the Miao) and thus arrived first, keeping the valleys and the plains for themselves while the other groups had to settle in the mountains (Geary et al. 2003: 4). We find clues of this migration in the lyrics of a migration song from the regions of southeast Guizhou: Rongjiang, Congjiang and Liping.

Our [Dong] ancestors:
Where did they come from?
From Wuzhou\(^{80}\)
Beside the river Xun.
They left Dan village.
They came from a village called Dan
While they were living in Wuzhou,
The population was exploding
While they were living in Wuzhou,
The population was growing from year to year.
Parents felt that
The land was squeezing them together, a cacophonous crowd.
Children felt that
The villages were becoming unbearably overcrowded.

\(^{79}\) Modern Miao oral history however does not coincide with this version of history. Instead they assert having lived in the fertile valleys in the Rongjiang area (southeast Guizhou) where some place name refer to earlier Miao settlement. According to Geary et al. (2003: 4), the Dong may have driven settled groups out of this area (around A.D.1400) which is now predominantly Dong. See Geary et al. (2003:4) for a deeper analysis of this legend and its comparison with legends found among the Miao.

\(^{80}\) Wuzhou (梧州) is west of Guangzhou in the province of Guangdong.
Young women swarmed the plains,  
Young men swarmed the paths.  
With land scarce and people numerous, it was hard to make a living  
Life became more and more of a struggle  
Tree branches were devoured  
Then tree roots.  
Why should our ancestors get stranded there and die of hunger?  
They called people together for a meeting.  
Everyone decided to leave  
To look for a place where they could live  
[Dong] and Miao people decided to go up-river together,  
They left home in search of a decent living...  
(Translated and transcribed in Geary et al. 2003: 221)

Whether the Dong have migrated from the northeast (Jiangxi province) or from the southeast (Guangzhou), they do not consider themselves indigenous to the region.

3.3.2.2 The founding of Zhaoxing by the "Lu" family

According to elders of the village and to the history presented in a small museum in the village, Zhaoxing was founded some 500 years ago 81 by people migrating from the southeast: Guangdong in Guangzhou province having navigated up the Duliu River on China fir boats (Geary et al. 2003: 4; see Figure 9: ).

In accordance with Dong customs (cf. Geary et al. 2003) the village was built around a drum tower. These structures are believed to be essential manifestations of Dong ethnicity today (cf. Xing 1996) and each drum tower is linked to a group called tuan (团) which

81 We hoped to find demographic data and migration data of the time to confirm and/or date the founding of Zhaoxing more precisely but, unfortunately, such data focused on Chinese populations and largely ignored Yunnan and Guizhou because of their high ethnic minority populations (see Ho 1959 for a historical overview of Chinese demographics and specifically Chapter 1 for the Ming period (1368-1644)).
comprises today between 3 to 5 "extended families" or jiazu (家族). Accordingly, as the village population increased, the number of jiazu increased and new drum towers were built.

Figure 9:  Dong migration to the area: history presented in VIP hotel in Zhaoxing
(picture by author, July 2007)

As stated by a villager:

82 Jiazu is defined as a group of people who share a common ancestor such as a same great grandfather – usually within three generations or approximately 150 years.
…if you go far in the past, you end up with just one drum tower, one jiazu. Even earlier, probably all of Zhaoxing belonged to one jiazu. There's been about 500 years since the village was constructed, at the time there must have been just one jiazu. ⁸³

Historically, early drum towers were believed to be supported by only one large pillar (cf. Yang 1992: 73-79) and there are references in Chinese records of such towers as early as 1650⁸⁴ (Geary et al. 2003: 48). According to Geary et al. (2003: 48-49) one of the legend relates that men used to meet and chat under a great China fir to enjoy its shade and protection from rain. When the tree died, in order to maintain their site of gathering, these men built a drum tower in the stylized shape of a China fir.

A similar explanation came from Zhaoxing's village leader⁸⁵ who asserted that the Dong worship China firs. The shape of the tree (the trunk is straight with lots of branches and needles at the top) stands for the spirit always reaching up. As it provides protection from rain and wind, drum towers were built the same way. This type of drum tower is called one pillar drum tower (独柱鼓楼). Later, seeing that using only one pillar was unstable, drum towers were built with four, eight or twelve pillars. Nowadays, drum towers generally have twelve pillars on the outside and four big pillars in the middle (see Figure 10: ).

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⁸³ Interviewed the 26ᵗʰ of January 2007.
⁸⁴ This date, strangely, concords with villagers' story of Dong migration to the area and the establishment of Zhaoxing some 500 years ago.
⁸⁵ Interviewed the 17ᵗʰ of November 2006.
Another story recounts the origin of drum towers, revealing its construction to be part of defensive measures to protect villagers from outside incursion. It is the story of a young girl called Lou Niang (Geary et al. 2003: 47). She, as well as 10 other girls, cattle and money were requested by a local tyrant. He stated that if villagers did not hand over these 'goods', the village would be destroyed and its inhabitants killed. Elders met to discuss. To their surprise, Lou Niang joined them and suggested that they agree to the tyrant’s demands. When the tyrant came, however, the eleven girls took wooden sticks and began to hit large wooden barrels. The noise was so loud that the entire village came to the scene. The tyrant and his men, seeing such a large number of villagers gathered together, panicked and fled. Realizing the success of this tactic, elders decided to build towers with wooden drums in them so, in the event of an attack, a fire or any other danger, villagers could rapidly be warned and gathered.
These stories link the origins of drum towers to the necessity to protect the Dong population against natural elements and against outside incursion. It promotes the unity of the Dong when facing danger, marking boundaries between themselves and tyrants wanting their women and goods. It reaffirms village and local identity, associating the Dong to their surrounding environment: mountains covered with China firs. According to Geary et al. (2003: 48): "...the drum tower used to be a symbol of unity in a village, a source of inspiration in times when courage was needed. Before a village was ever built, the drum tower would be erected".

Furthermore, Zhaoxing is particular in that drum towers are not associated with surnames, contrary to what Rossi and Lau state in their famous picture book on the Dong (1991). Instead 98 percent of the population of the village shares a common last name: Lu. Elders of the village explain this particularity through oral history, stating that the Lu family arrived first. According to Ebrey (1996), throughout history, due to Confucian culturalism, numerous non-Han people would become Chinese. "Rather than say they became Chinese the Confucian way, by adopting Chinese culture, they wanted to say they were Chinese by patrilineal descent" (1996: 23). They would thus adopt Chinese surnames and claim descent from Chinese migrants. Similarly, Geary et al. (2003) note the tendency for Dong villagers to borrow Han surnames. They furthermore remark that this results in surnames that do not strictly follow clans divisions. Interestingly however, whether the surname Lu was a Han

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86 Interview with elders (27th of January 2007 and 20th of November 2006) as well as with the village leader (17th of November 2006); this legend is also recounted in “Go to Zhaoxing” (Cheng 2002).
surname or not, today it serves to assert Dong identity and the local particularity of Zhaoxing.

Nonetheless, according to locals, newcomers no longer change their name to Lu. Yet a newly settled villager clearly stated:

People here are very kind and friendly, they regard outsiders as their brothers and they are very welcoming. For example, during xingmingjie, I joined a family and became their brother. So now, I cannot leave; I am already half Zhaoxing local. Presently, it is impossible to change my name to Lu but later, it may be possible. I really want to change my name to Lu...  

Although this villager was new to the area, he was officially categorized into the Dong nationality and his ability to speak Kam language certainly facilitated his integration into the local Dong social organization.

Altogether asserting that people did adopt the Lu surname and that this is still possible today is an interesting point in that it reverses processes of acculturation with Han and Miao groups becoming Dong. Ou (2007: 18) states, for the case of Xiangye, that army garrisons were set up throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties and with them came ordinary farmers and traders who settled in the Dong areas, intermarried with Dong girls, learned Kam language and culture and simply became Dong themselves.  

Ethnic belonging was therefore not hereditary but could be acquired, in line with the more flexible notion of Chinese identity seen before the 1950s in China. This idea of the possibility of acquiring the Dong ethnicity puts into question the primordialist notion of ethnicity as an essential characteristic of identity assigned by birth into a specific group (Poutignat and

87 Interview with a Dong recently settled in Zhaoxing (5 of July, 2007).
88 Similarly, some villagers told me the story of a small town in Guangzhou where a large number of Dong people works in factories which has resulted in the inhabitants all speaking Kam language. Furthermore, the Miao and the Dong historically sharing the same territory and living conditions have always been in contact and intermarriage was and is still frequent. However, Dong and Chinese historical records always tend to represent the Dong as more powerful and as more 'cooked' than the Miao (cf. Ou 2007).
Streiff-Fenart 1995). Instead it reveals the possibility that ethnicity is locally conceived as simultaneously primordial (acquired by birth) yet also constructed and situational (similarly to the Kmhmu, cf. Proschan 1997). Furthermore, although an ethnic identity can be acquired (whether Han or not), in China it involves imagining linkage through patrilineal kinship by adopting a particular surname (cf. Brown 1996 and Ebrey 1996).

### 3.3.2.3 Histories of rebellions

Remembrance rituals and stories told in Dong oral history reveal the troubled position Dong people occupied in the Chinese social structure, meanwhile serving to reinforce today's group boundaries. Upon their arrival in the Guizhou region, we could extrapolate from Dong oral history and Han historical accounts that the Dong held an 'in-between' position with, on the one hand, other groups (later categorized as the Miao) higher in the mountains and on the other hand, the Han (or groups closer to the centralized power) which were attempting to control and acquire valley land (cf. Condominas 1976).

Competition for land and resources is a recurrent subject in Dong oral histories, one that is depicted as an antagonist relationship between the Dong and the Han. Hence stories of resistance and rebellions against Han encroachment on their land and unjust treatment by rich landlords are numerous. Many instigators of rebellions are still remembered and

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89 Indeed, according to a Chinese tourist guide (interview, 9th of February 2007), the Miao are seen as more 'barbarous' than the Dong (in Guiyang, a stubborn or strange person will be called Miao, hence the name is used in a derogatory way). This situation is in part explained by designating rebellions in Guizhou between 1854 and 1873 as the 'Miao Rebellion', hence associating destruction and suffering exclusively to the Miao minority (Jenks 1994). According to Jenks (1994: 4), "By labeling it a 'Miao' rebellion in official historiography, the authorities made sure that the stigma of having rebelled and caused vast destruction and misery was attached squarely to the Miao and not to the Han". The Han did also participate in the uprising which was by no means unified, constant, unidirectional or homogenous.
revered today. In the south, where Zhaoxing is located, one of the most celebrated rebels is a woman\textsuperscript{90} remembered as Goddess Sasui (萨岁 - meaning 'old female ancestor').

There are different theories among Chinese and Dong scholars (cf. Geary et al. 2003: 155) regarding the nature of Sa Sui ranging from a sun goddess to a land goddess to a revered ancestor and the deification of Xing Ni. In Zhaoxing we asked an elder in the village what were people's beliefs and he answered:

There is a little bit of Buddhism and also some Confucianism but most believe in Sa Sui the ancestor/goddess of the Dong. A long time ago, the local government used to treat us very badly, putting lots of pressure on us by collecting tons of taxes. Sa Sui led local people to rebel against the government and organized a battle in which she got killed. In order to honour her memory, we, Dong people, went to the place she died, today called Sa Sui Mountain, and collected some earth there. We then built altars behind each drum tower to deposit the earth and every year since then we make a pilgrimage to the mountain.\textsuperscript{91}

Geary et al. (2003) provide more details to the story of this woman which occurred during the Tang dynasty (618-907). The story recounts the persecution of a Dong family by a Chinese landlord giving insight into the type of relations the Dong believe to have held with the Han at the time. Xing Ni, a young Dong girl, had seen her parents murdered by a Chinese landlord called Li Changshun and had fled to Danyang village (at the border of Liping and Congjiang County). Later, seeing her at a singing festival, Li Changshun found her beautiful and wanted her as his fourth wife. Already married, Xing Ni and her husband tricked the landlord and escaped to a remote mountain village: Luosi. Li Changshun however, was able to find them and killed both Xing Ni's husband and her friend Wu Duneng. Meanwhile, Xing Ni was again able to escape. She took her revenge and with the

\textsuperscript{90} It has been argued, in line with the evolutionary theory that outlined the minzu shibie project, that the high number of women revered through festivals among the Dong is a remnant of a once matriarchal society (Geary et al. 2003: 156).

\textsuperscript{91} Informal conversation with elder (July 2007).
aid of supernatural powers, decapitated her husband's murderer. Unfortunately, she was later caught up by Li's son who:

...submitted a memorandum to the emperor accusing the [Dong] people of rising in rebellion, and urging the imperial court to send troops to quash the uprising. Thousands of troops were sent to capture Xing Ni and to destroy the [Dong] villages around Luosi. Rather than surrender to the emperor's troops, Xing Ni jumped from the top of a cliff into a deep pool. She was rescued at that time by the spirit of the pool who offered her a charm with which to repel the government troops, on condition that after using the charm she would be turned into stone. To save her [Dong] friends from disaster, Xing Ni was willing to sacrifice herself and she accepted the charm. As predicted, on defeating the government forces, she and four other people (some say they were her daughters) jumped from the steep cliff at Longtangkai and were transformed into five rocks (Geary et al. 2003: 7).

There is a mountain 12 kilometres away from the village which is today called Sa Sui Mountain and is believed to be Xing Ni's tomb. The soil of the mountain is considered holy and is brought back to the village in an elaborate ceremony that aims to assure the Goddess' continued protection over the village. An elder mentioned that every drum tower of Zhaoxing has an altar dedicated to Sa Sui. Each altar contains a small lump of earth which resembles a tomb and villagers put an umbrella on the top of it with a teapot. On both sides of the altar some evergreen trees are planted.92 Pilgrimages to the mountain do take place every year at the same time as the Chinese Spring Festival (during the first month of the lunar year).

References to rebellions in Guizhou continue when, in 1283, Khubilai Khan from the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) asked for the quelling of the uprising of the 'nine rivers, ten caves' which is the name that was given to the southeast region of Guizhou where our case study is located (Cheng 2002: 5). Then, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), southeastern Guizhou was the site of Wu Mian's rebellion while the north was rebelling under Lin Kuan. Both men are remembered heroes of the Dong nationality and both rebelled for similar

92 Based on an informal conversation with elder (July 2007) and an interview with a young girl (24 years old) the 26th of April 2007 (also cf. Geary et al. 2003: 156).
reasons (Geary et al. 2003: 8-11). The fact that they were forced to flee to mountains upon the massive migration of Han Chinese on traditional Dong land, and that they were compelled to pay grain taxes to the emperor despite severe droughts, are some of the reasons why the minority nationality rebelled.

These conflicting relations among different groups in Guizhou increased as "...bringing such a region to heel became, by the eighteenth century, an exceptionally important priority of the provincial and imperial governments" (Oakes 1998: 94; cf. Lombard-Salmon 1972). Throughout the application of direct rule, that brought increasing Han encroachment on the land, the province was again marked by multiple rebellions, including the Miao rebellion (1854-1873). There is some evidence that the Dong of Zhaoxing took part in the rebellion. Shi Gan Cheng (2002: 5), once village leader, found a reference to the events in one of their songs "...the xian tong six caves uprising song, recalls the peasant uprising of 1855, during the Qing dynasty, under Emperor Wenzong (1851-1861). The six caves is our Dong community now" (my translation). As Jenks (1994: 36) states, although the rebellion was associated with the Miao: "...the Bouyei (Zhongjia), the Dong, and to a lesser extent the Shui, played a significant part in the 'Miao' rebellion".

According to Geary et al. (2003: 8), there are recurrent themes in the historical events that define the Dong.

When confrontation really could not be avoided, the [Dong] finally stood up in resistance against oppression, always with an element of righteous indignation sustaining their resistance. Without interference from their oppressors, life would have been peaceful. While Xing Ni of the legend managed to thwart the emperor's troops, it was at the expense of her own life; and the [Dong] generally succumbed in the end to forces superior in battle.

In other words, the Dong only rebelled for righteous reasons and were not the barbarians described by the Han. Instead, their present themselves as peaceful, as victims of injustices due to increasing Han encroachment on their land and the growing requisition of what they considered their resources. Nevertheless, the way the Dong remember their history and
assert their distinctive identity rests in large part on the idea of an antagonist relationship with the Han; one that was greatly reinforced with the advent of the CCP in 1949.

3.3.2.4 The communist era: Dong comrades

The period following the advent of the CCP marks great changes for villagers of Zhaoxing. They became labeled Dong officially; they were subjected to a complete reorganization of local leadership and they were forced to embark on nation-scale communist projects. It is also a time when the established hierarchy between peripheral populations and controlling powers was redefined. Villagers indeed remember this period as the time when brick houses were destroyed and landlords were denounced and humiliated in public trials.

_The younger one says:_ Old people in Zhaoxing say people who build brick houses don't have good luck. We have an old saying stating that our village has the shape of a boat. If anyone builds a brick house in it, it will turn over the boat. It is superstitions.

_The elder says:_ We don't need to go back so far into history, just look recently: after the revolution, those landlords' brick houses were all torn down as the landlords were beaten down. So, brick houses are not good. Old people say people who build brick houses suffer difficulties.93

The Dong are considered to be among the eight nationalities (Zhuang, Dai, Dong, Miao,94 Li, Jingpo, De'ang and Buyi) that live in subtropical southeastern and southwestern parts of China and that build a variety of wooden houses on stilts (Steinhardt 2005: 27) differentiating them regionally from other groups whose houses are built differently. Typically, the Dong houses are called Galan and have two to three levels with the ground floor reserved for animals (see Figure 11: ). The top floor generally comprises an area used to store grains, beans, cotton wool and other items with sometimes another section reserved

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93 Interview with tailor/elder and a performance troupe member (19th of April 2007).
94 Contrary to Steinhardt, Michaud notes that many Hmong (and Miao) construct their house on the ground (personal communication 16th of October 2010).
for young men's bedrooms. The middle floor is the main living quarter with a kitchen, bedrooms and a veranda to dry clothes and vegetables, an area that serves, in the summer, to host and entertain guests. Galan style houses are today considered an expression of Dong ethnicity and are generally part of tourist representation of this nationality.

Figure 11: Galan Style house, Zhaoxing (picture by author, November 2006)

95 According to Geary et al. (2003: 53), women are not allowed to sleep in rooms above men as it brings bad luck; an idea, he states, that “was probably borrowed from neighbouring Han people”. Geary et al. furthermore note that a similar prescription is applied to drying clothes as women's skirts cannot be hung for fear of men walking beneath them (they are, instead, dried on stones or in the grass by the river).
Initially, the destruction of landlords' brick houses tended to symbolically reinforce the Dong's official recognition as a nationality especially after the creation of the Qiandongnan autonomous prefecture in 1956. However, this was soon followed by rapid collectivization which "caused a tremendous amount of resentment among minority groups, especially since it was coupled with an intense campaign against 'local nationalism'" (Oakes 1998: 106).

In Zhaoxing, it brought the destruction of the five drum towers (central symbols of Dong culture)\(^{96}\) and forced villagers to halt or hide their particular ethnic customs. An elder interviewed in the village\(^{97}\) (born in 1942) confirmed that his father generation had great knowledge of Dong musical instruments. This knowledge and interest toward Dong songs and dramas, he says, were left behind by his generation up until the 1980s and 1990s. The five drum towers of the village were all rebuilt after 1982 and given county-level protected status (Oakes 1998: 210).

According to villagers, three production teams were formed based on the existing three administrative hamlets (called cun today: 村 and bao 保 or 甲 jia before the revolution). The teams were called: Democracy Team; Red Star Team, and March Team:

There are three hamlets (cun 村) in our village (zhaizi 寨子). These three hamlets ...(while he was thinking, his youngest son continued to talk)…were divided according to geography in the past. The one on the top of the village is called upper-hamlet, the middle one is called middle hamlet, and the one at the end of the village is called lower-hamlet. It was divided like that then. (The father continued to talk): it altered the existing drum tower divisions. Like those Rentuan and Yituan drum towers, they were grouped together and called Red Star Team. It was around the 1960s and 1970s. Our hamlet was called

\(^{96}\) It must be noted that the Cultural Revolution attacked intensively Confucius "…as representing a declining slave-owner class" (Shirokauer 1991: 368). Since the five drum towers of Zhaoxing had been renamed according to the five Confucian virtues (Ren; Yi; Li; Zhi; Xin), it may have also contributed to the decision to destroy them during this period of turmoil.

\(^{97}\) 29\(^{th}\) of January 2007.
Democracy Team, the lower hamlet, Zhituan and Xintuan drum towers, were called March Team, now they are called Zhaoxing hamlet.\textsuperscript{98}

This period of collectivization is remembered by villagers as a period when food was scarce as a village leader noted: "when we began to learn how to cook, there was not enough to eat. I was born in 1960".\textsuperscript{99} An elder also mentioned: "Before life was very difficult, we didn't have enough food [...] we had collectivity mess before".\textsuperscript{100}

The dismantling of communal organizations (production teams) and the redistribution of arable land to individual families were some of the main changes villagers of China saw following Mao's death in 1976. Peasants were assigned land and were to produce a certain amount of grain but were left free to dispose of any surplus on the open market (Shirokauer 1991: 370). In Zhaoxing, land was allocated to households through drum tower groups (tuan 团), hence officially reviving the initial social structure of the village and bringing people of the same drum tower group closer together by having their land in the proximity of each other. Each person, during these reforms, was allocated $\frac{1}{2}$ mu of land for vegetable cultivation (di–地) and each tuan has a portion of forest land to manage where China fir and bamboo were cultivated for logging.\textsuperscript{101}

This marked, for villagers, the beginning of a new period in Zhaoxing's history. Accordingly, life in the village is improving, implying better economic conditions and a form of ethnic revival as Dong traditions are increasingly brought to the service of modernization projects (including tourism development), as I demonstrate in the next two chapters.

\textsuperscript{98} Based on an interview with a village elder and his son, 29\textsuperscript{th} of January, 2007.
\textsuperscript{99} Interview with a village leader, 24\textsuperscript{th} of January 2007.
\textsuperscript{100} Interview with elder/tailor, 19\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007. See Mueggler (2001) for a thorough analysis of how this period is remembered by villagers of his case study.
\textsuperscript{101} It is unclear from our interviews exactly how much land for rice cultivation each person received yet, as is the case for our key informant and research assistant, we know that third child and above in a family did not receive any land (in accordance with the one-child policy).
3.4 Conclusion

In interviews, Zhaoxing villagers appropriate the official nationalizing discourse of the Mao era by stating: "we are all Dong, we are all the same". This statement resembles Proschan's article (1997) entitled: "We Are All Kmhmu, Just the Same': Ethnonyms, Ethnic Identities, and Ethnic Groups". Proschan shows that for the Kmhmu, there are two interlocking indigenous models of ethnicity. The Kmhmu's ethnonomic usage reveals conceptions of ethnicity as situational and constructed (in part through linguistic competence in the Kmhmu language) and conceptions of ethnicity as primordial or genealogical (through descent). He argues for an approach to ethnicity that allows for both conceptions to simultaneously exist in social analysis.

As this chapter has shown, the Dong is not a pristine ethnic category that has survived through history but rather one that is constantly reconstructed and reaffirmed in part through the remembrance of often tumultuous relations between local agents and governing ideologies. It is furthermore based on an imagined common origin asserted through oral histories of migration to Guizhou; one that distinguishes the Dong from the Han and from other ethnic groups of the province. In Zhaoxing, genealogical links to the founder of the village are asserted through real or imagined patrilineal kinship. Local villagers are born into a drum tower group and newly settled villagers can take on the surname Lu.

Linguistic competence in Kam language is also considered, by Zhaoxing villagers, as an important component of Dong ethnicity and newly settled villagers who speak Dong are more easily integrated into the local social structure. A local school teacher affirmed that "... If we can keep speaking Kam in our village, I think there won't be any big changes during the next 50 years". He furthermore noted "...now in the whole Liping county, most people are Dong, but many of them don't know how to speak Kam language. Only some 50, 60 years old people still speak Kam language". Indeed, within the Dong ethnic category,

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102 Although numerous villagers referred to their ethnicity in this way, this particular wording comes from an interview done on 27th January 2007.

103 Interviewed on 2nd of February 2007.
linguistic competence varies greatly from village to village. Furthermore, the Kam language itself is not homogenous and is subdivided in two dialects (north and south) each with 4 sub-dialects (Geary et al. 2003: 35). Hence linguistic capacity, although desired, is not always considered essential to Dong ethnicity.

The observance of particular rituals and customs are, along with linguistic capacity, often cited as components of Dong ethnicity. This reveals a more primordial conception of ethnicity; one that nourishes a form of cultural pride. However, I feel I lack sufficient ethnographic data (and the linguistic capacity) to clearly state the set of essential characteristics with which the Dong define their distinct ethnicity. Doing so would have indeed required much longer fieldwork, which remains a difficult endeavor in today's rural and ethnic China. What is more, when attempting to gather the 'cultural stuff' that make up Dong ethnicity, another question arises. When asking who are the Dong, one must also wonder: according to whom? Schein (2000) and Litzinger (2000), in an attempt to render the agency of minority nationalities, have considered the implication of minority elites in defining minority ethnicity, among the Miao and the Yao respectively. However, different actors tend to define Dong ethnicity differently and also have varying power to get their voices heard. Hence I feel an immense awkwardness, having not explicitly questioned villagers on the subject, to speak in their names in terms of the cultural content of their ethnicity.

What is more, in the course of my research I had detailed numerous rituals and festivals that the Dong put forth as particular to their culture, showing both their continuity in time and their incorporation of outside elements. Despite the often pivotal role of rituals and festivals in perpetuating a distinct identity (especially in times of suffering - cf. Jing 1996 and Mueggler 2001) the sample I observed and analyzed in Zhaoxing was far from representative, with an overwhelming amount of rituals and festivals having been branded for tourism purposes. As a result, I felt my data was incomplete and did not allow me to present and do justice to the vast array of local perceptions of Dong ethnicity. Instead, as I have shown in this chapter, I chose to focus on the maintenance of group boundaries through shifting contacts with other groups (Han and other non-Han groups), hence
consciously adopting a more situational stance to ethnicity and avoiding essentializing Dong ethnicity.

What to say of the present-day Dong ethnic category then? As Cheung (1996: 266) noted:

Making of minority subject in the People's Republic of China is hegemonic in the sense that it does not merely represent the minorities in state categories, but rather it mobilizes the self-representation and self-identification of the minorities in state categories.

Similarly, Mullaney (2011: 134-135) concludes his research on the ethnic classification by recognizing the essential role of the Communist state in perpetuating, legitimizing and reinforcing the minzu paradigm through a "wide array of social engineering projects – public education, museums, dance performances, standardization of minority languages, the training of minority cadres and so forth". However, hegemonies are never total in a historical sense: "...there are also always remnants of the past ('residual') hegemonies and the beginnings of future ('emergent') ones" (Ortner 2006: 6).

From being tagged rebellious barbarians, to comrades, the Dong of Zhaoxing are now a minority nationality. This entails that their ethnic identity is now drawn on a nation-wide canvas. Accordingly, although their recounting and interpretation of history is made to fit the nationality category, it nevertheless provides them with a primordial and genealogical (imagined or real) conception of ethnicity. Simultaneously, it also demonstrates Dong ethnicity to be situational and constructed.

Hence, in the case of the Dong of Zhaoxing, their ethnicity needs to be considered both primordial and situational, which is in accordance with the approach advocated by Proschan (1997). In addition, I hope to have shown, through this dialectical historic overview, the need to also situate ethnicity historically. "For after all 'history' is not just about the past, nor is it always about change. It may be about duration, about patterns of persisting over long periods of time..." (Ortner 2006: 10-11). The reproduction of Dong culture(s) is therefore to be considered a process between local agents and governing
ideologies, or the continuous "...products of the restless operation of both internal
dynamics (local power relations) and external forces..." (Ibid.: 11).

As this process continues and as external forces seem to change under the new hegemony
of modernity and modernization, how the Dong attempt to maintain their sense of self and
of distinctiveness from the Han rests in large part on historical conditions and on their
continuing struggle for agency.
4 Modernity in Zhaoxing

4.1 Introduction

Chinese intellectual debates on theories of modernity and on the creation of a 'modern' nation-state began to be prevalent in the coastal cities of the country toward the end of the 19th century, with the decline of the Qing Dynasty and the increased incursion of western powers on Chinese territories. The goal of creating a 'modern nation', which involved transiting from a self-centered empire to a bordered land (cf. Fitzgerald 1996; Frangville 2007), altered the relationship peripheral populations had with earlier centers of power. Political, physical and cultural integration of all populations inhabiting the newly circumscribed territory became an integral part of the idea of progress inherent in the goal of modernization.

As such, changes imposed on remote populations could be compared to earlier historical processes Harrell has termed 'civilizing projects' (1995). McKhann (1995: 42 n.5) indeed notes that in China: "Confucian moralism, Morganian evolutionism, and modernization theory all hinge on what Nisbet (1969) calls the 'metaphor of progress'". Such projects, to which peripheral populations have been exposed, rest on a constructed order that is both temporal and spatial: "...the Han represent the advanced core, whereas the backward minority nationalities exist at the geographical, social, and cultural periphery" (McKhann 1995: 42). The acceleration of this dual integration (physical and cultural) characterizes modernity as a catalyst of social change, increasing the pace and breadth at which integration had previously taken place.

The notion of modernization (xiandaihua) has been and is still used today repeatedly in government discourses and is generally associated with economic development (based on liberal ideologies) on the one hand and moral education of Chinese citizens on the other (cf. Boutonnet 2009). For example, the notion of suzhi (roughly translatable as 'quality') became part of governmental discourses during the economic reforms launched in 1978. Coupled with the idea of population (renkou suzhi), it was, in the 1980s, attributing
"...China's failure to modernize to the 'low quality' (suzhi di) of its population, especially in rural areas" (Anagnost 2004: 190).

Accordingly, modernizing peripheral populations involves both physical and cultural integration to the center of power. Hence, on the one hand, it implies the complete transformation of once remote, peripheral, nonstate spaces into:

...fully governed, fiscally fertile zones [through] distance-demolishing technologies (all weather roads, bridges, railroads, airplanes, modern weapons, telegraph, telephone, and now modern information technologies including global positioning systems)... (Scott 2009: 10-11).

Meanwhile, on the other hand,

while modern nationalism certainly added ideological fuel to the state's agenda of political and economic integration of peripheral territory, it more significantly provided a new justification of cultural integration. An integrated nation-state required not only advanced administrative and economic institutions, but also a unified and modernized culture enabling people throughout the territory to communicate, trade, and otherwise interact with one another (emphasis in original Oakes 1998: 131).

In other words, in addition to "distance-demolishing technologies" (Scott 2009: 10), modernity also meant "...the othering [of] China's minorities in the interior as representing the backward and the historical past" (Ong 1996:67). Modernity as a goal to be reached indeed brought the minzu shibie project which aimed to create and affirm a "culturally integrated and ethnically unified nation-state" (Oakes 1998: 105). A process which, according to Oakes (Ibid.) has predominantly worked to perpetuate the stigmatization of minority groups as backward. In an article published in Minzu Yanjiu (Nationalities Research), Long Yuanwei (1987: 20-21) notes that: "...the inability to administer production, closed-mindedness, and objectionable customs (louxi) have retarded the development of commodity economy in minority areas" (translated and cited by McKhann 1995: 43).
One of the ways to integrate remote rural populations into the national modernizing project has been the establishment of satellite television hookups. As noted by Schein and Oakes (2006: 9) this state investment is "understood as a strategy of development and poverty alleviation, since the hope is to 'modernize' the minds of television viewers, marketizing them through inciting both consumption desires and a consequent willingness to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors". Indeed notes Hua (2009: 153-154),

the images and symbols that flow in through television usher in a new cultural order that challenges long-standing habits and ideologies [...]. [Viewers] fantasize about new lifestyles, appreciating, enjoying, and learning to adopt new status symbols, and these fantasies contribute to the construction of their subjectivities as citizens in an 'advanced', global, capitalist world.

Although the role of the media, including the Internet to which rural villagers in China increasingly have access to, is undeniably important to the modernizing scheme of the country, its homogeneity and hegemony is far from complete. It is also a medium highly used by minority nationalities themselves to assert a modern subjectivity that may or may not be in accordance with state projects. In addition, it is a tool used by the tourism industry and the state to standardize commoditized images of ethnicity (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). There ensues a translocal public space where modernity is defined and debated, along with notions of ethnicity, by actors with varying power (cf. Schein and Oakes 2006; see Figure 12: ).

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104 Thanks to Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy for pointing out the important role of the media in the social transformations of rural China. How the media is used by the state, by the private industry and by people themselves to assert different visions of modernity as well as how minority nationalities use and indigenize media images of ethnicity in ways that suit their ends are complex issues. In the case of Zhaoxing, elder villagers often watched Dong theater and Dong opera on VCRs while young boys and girls spend endless hours in Internet cafes chatting or playing games. The role and the impact of the media at large in the lives of Zhaoxing villagers clearly requires further research.
Figure 12: Villagers gathered to watch Dong soap opera on a small television (picture by author, February 2005).

Modernity, in minority rural areas, thus involves physical and cultural integration through state policies for the development of infrastructure, administrative structures, market reforms, population control, and agricultural reforms all contributing to increasing labor productivity, household incomes and consumer power (Ong 1996: 66). Modernity furthermore involves integration into the cultural entity of the Chinese nation-state where the Han (and Han culture: wenhua) represents the modern (or the goal to attain) and where minority groups are considered backward, in need of development and modernization.

Hence, in government discourses, the polar model prevails: modernity is conceived as oppositional to tradition. For example, during the Maoist era, traditions were blamed for
Guizhou's backwardness and inability to develop (Oakes 1998: 107). Ethnic particularities of peripheral populations were seen as (and are still partly considered) obstacles to modernity:

...a remnant from an obsolete past, a pre-modern feature in need of "straightening up" - or redressement, in Michel Foucault's language [...] the ethnic factor is not an asset but an obstacle to the effective implementation of modern (that is, rational and effective) development programs (Michaud 2012: 220).

There have, however, been recent attempts by Chinese scholars to advocate a reconceptualization of the dichotomy traditions/modernity. Instead of an oppositional conceptualization where traditions are seen as obstacles to modernization, Fangjun (2009: 9) points out that "...many traditional elements could well be used to exert positive effects on the drive toward modernization". Hence instead of depreciating traditions and advocating their replacement with more 'modern' ways, these are now selectively instrumentalized to serve modernization goals.

For the poverty stricken province of Guizhou, minority nationalities' positionality at the bottom of the social hierarchy is once again reaffirmed through modernization discourse and projects. As a result, and similarly to previous civilizing projects, minority groups' ethnic consciousness is heightened. However, in light of the increased pace of change and the group's relative lack of power toward state-led modernization schemes, local cultural reproduction becomes stamped with a two-folded orientation: a sense of humiliation towards one's culture (a sense of backwardness) and a nostalgic attempt at holding on to one's identity to face these high paced changes (Sahlins 1993).

105 An attempt at such erasure had been done though the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) during which the state pressure on minority to conform and take massively part in the socialist modernization reached its peak. Minorities were not allowed to show any overt signs of difference from the Han. As mentioned for Zhaoxing, all drum towers were destroyed, the Dong language was prohibited and villagers were not allowed to perform their festivals.
In this chapter, I analyse the recent changes the village of Zhaoxing has undergone in terms of physical and cultural integration. I investigate the various infrastructure developments that have altered the village's outlook and the economic and social reforms that have reorganized village life in the past 30 years (since the 1978 reforms launched by Deng Xiaoping). I also examine the educational reforms that have attempted to increase the cultural integration of minority nationalities and their relative success in Zhaoxing. Finally, I turn to the analysis of villagers' points of view toward these recent changes, demonstrating their appropriation, reworking and sometimes resistance to processes of modernization.

4.2 Case study: recent changes in Zhaoxing

In Zhaoxing, increased physical integration began when the village's general outlook (see Figure 13:) was altered by the enlargement of the main path crossing the village through the destruction of houses on both sides and the building of a road leading to the next town to the east (Shuikou 水口). This increased peasant mobility contributed to the development of Zhaoxing as a market town. From a market town, it continued to develop and is today considered a xiang (乡) town or small town/township (cf. Guldin, 2001: 17) serving as an administrative seat to 22 administrative hamlets (cun: 村) and 52 natural villages (zhaizi: 筑子).107

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106 According to one villager, this road was built in 1976 while another villager states it was finished in 1989. Considering the turmoil that the country was in before and after Mao's death (September 1976) as well as the modernization policies that were applied much later, I tend to favor the 1989 option. Indeed, as we will see, most infrastructure development in Zhaoxing began around the 1990s (interviews 30th of January, 19th of April 2007).

107 Cun and zhaizi are difficult to translate as both translate as "village". However, based on the interview with the leader of the Communist Party in Zhaoxing, zhaizi denotes a geographical place while cun denotes a group of people (which can be distributed in more than one zhaizi); (Interview on 24th of April 2007). For the sake of clarity, I will in this thesis use “hamlet” to denote cun and “village” to denote zhaizi. Unless otherwise stated, when I speak of the village of Zhaoxing, I am referring to the three hamlets that constitute the village physically instead of administratively. I am thus referring to a population of 4000 inhabiting a bounded geographical space at the bottom of a valley composed of approximately 800 houses.
According to Wang and Hu (1999: 81), a small town is defined according to three criteria: its population which must be around 31,000, its administrative functions which are below the county level in the administrative echelons, and its economic role as a rural market center. According to the local leader of the Communist Party, the population of Zhaoxing (xiang) is 21,000. Nevertheless, it is officially recognized as a 'small town' and is treated as such by government authorities. As a small town Zhaoxing benefits from government investments in the development of infrastructure (shown in the Table 3:) such as: "...road construction, communication networks, and water and electricity supplies" (Wang and Hu 1999: 87). As a result, through infrastructure development, the relative isolation and

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remoteness that has historically marked Zhaoxing is increasingly becoming part of a romanticized past, as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Infrastructure development in Zhaoxing 1950s - now\textsuperscript{110}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of infrastructure</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical services</strong></td>
<td>Building of a hospital</td>
<td>1950s\textsuperscript{111}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electricity supplies</strong></td>
<td>Small homemade power station</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State electricity</td>
<td>1992/1996\textsuperscript{112}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Road to next market town eastward (Shuikou - serving as the main road going through the village)</td>
<td>1976/1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road to the county town (Liping)</td>
<td>January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road to market town westward (Louxiang)</td>
<td>January 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airport (in county town of Liping)</td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water management</strong></td>
<td>Construction of a river bed (reducing flooding)</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{110} Source: these data were collected through interviews with villagers in Zhaoxing between 2006 and 2007.

\textsuperscript{111} When we asked the exact date to the informant (the hospital head), he answered: "I am unsure, it was already there before I was born, maybe in the 1950s" (interviewed 24\textsuperscript{th} April 2007).

\textsuperscript{112} When the data differed in the interviews, the varying dates given by informants are indicated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Construction of a middle school</th>
<th>Between 2000 and 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication networks</td>
<td>Internet (from dial-up to high speed broadband)</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First website of the village (for tourism purposes)</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Closing of the government-run convenience store(^{113})</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Guldin (2001: 5-6) remarks:

> Labor migration, rural enterprises, rising production, and globalization have all combined to end the isolation of the Chinese countryside. For most of the country, former commune peasants have become farmers, workers, and entrepreneurs, as they engage in national and often international nexus and as they are engaged in turn by new ways of thinking, interacting, and consuming.

The application of small town development policies to Zhaoxing also encouraged farmers to diversify their economic activities (to husbandry, fishing, logging and handicraft production) through new regulations liberalizing rural trade and labor mobility. This development strategy is part of: "...a state-led push for modernization [...] in which [...] there is an increasing determination to seek techno-economic policies that are basis to this form of developmentalism" (McGee 2011: xiii). According to Wang and Hu (1999: 81) the development of small towns, the implementation of the household responsibility system in agriculture and the promotion of rural non-agricultural development are the three strategies set up by the Chinese post-socialist state (or hybrid socialist state; cf. McGee 2011: xii) to modernize rural regions in China.

These strategies indeed brought a shift in economic activities to rural areas. In 1978, agriculture employed roughly 70 percent of the labor force (Guldin 2001: 5). With the

\(^{113}\) This allowed for individual households to open their own convenience stores (see Table 4).
dismantling of People's Communes that followed and the introduction of the household responsibility system, whereby individual households were allocated land to farm and collectivist structures were abandoned, the proportion of Chinese working exclusively in agriculture dropped considerably to 57 percent in 1993 (Guldin 2001: 5) and 47 percent in 1999 (Gale and Tuan, 2000). Following these three strategies, new policies were introduced to promote nonagricultural rural employment to slowly replace state-owned enterprises. This rural employment included the development of township and village enterprises (TVE) run by lower-level local governments (cf. Wang and Hu 1999; Guldin 2001).

In Zhaoxing, as in the rest of Guizhou, logging was greatly increased and became a pillar industry for the entire province until 1998. According to a local government leader,114 75 percent of the province's economy relied on logging until the creation of the "natural forest protection program" in 1998, which prohibited the cutting down of forests.

Furthermore, market liberalization policies that began with the economic reforms of 1978 (epitomized by Deng's Four Modernizations) continued in 1984 with new regulations to increase rural trade and labour mobility followed by the 1985 'Spark Plan'115 to accelerate the modernization of rural enterprises and in 1987 by export-oriented strategies linking rural enterprises with the export market (Wang and Hu 1999: 80).

In Zhaoxing, this has resulted in the development of numerous sideline small businesses allowed by access to financial loans, greater infrastructure, market liberalisation, increased

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114 Interview on 27th of April 2007.
115 The Spark Project focuses on the development of fishery cultivation, live-stock farming; the opening up of mountainous areas; the processing and the use of animal and plant oil; the development and use of biological technologies; the development of fast-growing forests and the general use of forest products; the processing and general use of farming and side-line products; the development of small commodity technologies including those helpful to the development of tourism; the application of new technologies and materials; the development of commodities such as cotton, silk and linen fabrics (cf. Embassy of the People's Republic of China in India (2004) “The Spark Project” Online: http://in.china-embassy.org/eng/szyss/jm/zhongguonongye/agricultureplanning/t143140.htm (page consulted on the 18th of January 2011).
peasant mobility and greater independence from state control (through decentralization policies). During my fieldwork, the local government and villagers of Zhaoxing obtained a World Bank loan (World Bank 2008: 118), having been selected with four other villages, to help develop tourist infrastructure. According to World Bank representatives,\(^\text{116}\) 10 to 20 percent of the loans will go directly to villagers to help open hotels (roughly 1 million RMB – 160,000 CAN$). The remaining of the loan is given to the local government for projects such as a tourist bus parking lot and an ethnic museum.

Accordingly,

When freedom succeeded control, when market mechanism replaced the government directives, rural industry has been restructured, reorganized, and expanded rapidly into the production of consumer goods for sale to urban areas or even exported aboard. These new enterprises have been accompanied by increased commercial and service activity, reviving the role of these small towns as market centers (Wang and Hu 1999: 85)

Listed in the table below are the sideline businesses that have opened and have contributed to the diversification of economic activities in the village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{116}\) Interviewed in the village on 29\(^{th}\) of May 2007.

\(^{117}\) Source: Observations through fieldwork. Tailor shop also has IP telephones and some goods which could classify it as a convenience store. One of the beauty salons seemed to serve secondary purposes as elsewhere in China (prostitution). Although changes have occurred since this countdown took place, it shows an ongoing diversification of livelihood strategies by villagers of Zhaoxing. More recent data (collected in May 2009) show an increase in tourism related activities - more souvenir shops, hotels, restaurants, Internet cafés, etc. however, although the number of tourists continued to increase, the presence of prostitution was no longer visible in the village.
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cake Shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pond shop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Electrical appliances store</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various repair stores</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bookstore</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Photographer/photo development shop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer shop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Home goods store</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes shop</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Antiques Store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture shop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Souvenir Store</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeds store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Internet Café</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Salon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ticket office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming and Animal Husbandry station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rice grinding shop</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese medicine station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Art gallery</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe store</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Computer copy center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cd/dvd Store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tea oil press</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone company</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wood working store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete store/renovation store</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café/Bar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Butcher (pig)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience store</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Motorbike store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP Store (phone services)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jewellery workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty products store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cell phone store</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although policies promote a diversification of economic activities, in Zhaoxing, agriculture remains the main source of revenue (or at least, of subsistence). Yet it is shifting from an essentially subsistence form of agriculture to a market oriented agriculture; a change that
could in part be analyzed as a form of agrarian transition (Riggs 2005). With the dismantling of communes and the redistribution of land titles under the responsibility of families, although land remained the property of collectives, farmers were given the right to manage their agricultural output and to sell any surpluses on the open market.

The production brigade (which represents a village or a group of hamlets) and the production team (which represents a hamlet or a part of the village that holds small agricultural tools) constitute then the new level of collective property (my translation, He 2007: 119).

In Zhaoxing, there are thus three production brigades (hamlets) and five production team based on drum tower groups (tuan). My field notes on the subject mention:

Each tuan has received its area of fields: one section for one drum tower group, another section to another drum tower group. This distribution where members of one drum tower have their fields close by to one another reinforced drum tower group cohesion. According to an informant, the leaders of the three hamlets in Zhaoxing and the elders (zhailao) representative of all five tuans were both in charge of land titles distribution. The process was done equitably without anyone favouring their own family (field notes 29th of May 2007).

Due to exaggerated land requisition by local governments throughout the country, households now have, as of 1998, a signed contract that details and attempts to protect exploitation rights for a 30 years period (He 2007: 122).

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, following the new policies and the decollectivisation of the PRC's countryside, agricultural output increased making the country the greatest producer of wheat (90 million tons in 2004 compared to 60 million in the US), of paddy (190 million compared to 125 million in India), of pork meat (48 million compared to 9 in the US) and an important producer of corn (130 million compared to 300 million in the US – Aubert 2005: 492). Although these are official statistics (hence possibly overestimated), it is undeniable that these new agricultural policies have led to great
This increase is attributable to new hybrid crops (seeds of which are sold to peasants by the state)\(^{118}\) and the massive use of chemical fertilizers. However, the fractioning of the land brought by the redistribution has limited the agricultural intensification (the development of agro-businesses) by keeping agricultural activities to the level of household exploitations (or small farm holdings). In addition, due to the mountainous area in which Zhaoxing is located crops are grown in terraced paddy fields which limit the mechanization of agriculture (see Figure 14: ).

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\(^{118}\) Informal conversation with a young farmer in Zhaoxing while replanting rice (29\(^{th}\) May, 2007); she furthermore stated that when she was young, they would use their own seeds.
Yes I have 2 hectares of fields. I grow rice, oil vegetables, and cabbage. I also have 2 hectares of land where I grow some garlic, sweet potatoes, cotton and so on. The cotton is used for making quilt; we don't sell any for income. These two hectares of fields can only provide us with daily food. We don't have any other income, unlike those agriculture villages that can grow a lot. Here growing rice doesn't bring much income. We can only grow about 500 to 1000kg of grains per year. We don't have lots of farming land; most of the land is mountain landscape.

Nonetheless, villagers of Zhaoxing have, in the past 20 years, raised their income with sidelines revenues brought, for example, by locally managing small businesses or by members of the household working in factories outside of the province. Comparatively to other Dong villages of the province, they also greatly benefit from the development of tourism which provides opportunities for additional revenues through the service industry (restaurant, hotels, souvenir shops, transportation, etc.). According to a hotel owner, 70 percent of villagers have a monthly income above 800 RMB (approximately, 120 CAN$). According to his estimate and to various data collected in the village, the average monthly income tends to increase by 200 RMB (30 CAN$) per year since 2004 (Table 5: ). Through interviews with villagers and informal conversations, incomes in the village (as of 2006) ranged from 550 RMB to 3000 RMB per month (82 CAN$ to 445 CAN$).

Table 5: Estimated average monthly income for villagers of Zhaoxing (1990-2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Monthly income (RMB)</th>
<th>Monthly income (CAN $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Between 300 and 400</td>
<td>Between 45 and 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

119 Villagers distinguish fields (田) from land (地).
120 Interviewed on 1st of February 2007.
121 Interviewed on 26th of January 2007.
Comparatively, in Zaidan, an isolated Dong village located in the neighboring county of Congjiang that has no road access and no tourist development, villagers have an annual income of approximately 1600 RMB (240 CAN$). In other words, their annual income is comparable to Zhaoxing villagers' monthly income.¹²²

The quest to build a 'modern nation' and to develop remote areas has brought to Zhaoxing infrastructure developments, increased mobility, economic opportunities (through diversification) and greater agricultural outputs (through the household responsibility system, new crops and fertilizers). The integration involved in modernizing the country has furthermore led to efforts on the part of the government to increase accessibility to education. Accordingly, education is seen as the medium through which minority nationalities can be integrated into the modern nation-state:

Via state-controlled education system, the government seeks to transmit the message of national commitment, love of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and cultural homogeneity. Therefore, patriotic education (aiguozhuyi jiayu) is especially high on the state's agenda for non-Han peoples living in the border areas. It preaches the common history of all ethnic groups within China since the legendary Yellow Emperor, and the common political, economic, and cultural interests or all people in the PRC (Hansen 1999: xii)

¹²² The poverty line, established by the World Bank, is US$1 per day; hence Zhaoxing villagers are not considered below the poverty line (Tang, 1999: 99). Meanwhile villagers of Zaidan are clearly below the poverty line. Data given by Dr. Doerthe Schilken, affiliated with the Guizhou University Southwest Minority Language and Culture Research Institute (贵州大学西南少数民族语言文化研究所).
In 1986, the government passed the Compulsory Education Law\textsuperscript{123} whereas children throughout China have to attend 9 years of schooling. The law makes education obligatory for all children and adolescents in the country and announces investments in the building of schools and the training of teachers. Education shall be dispensed in Putonghua although it is mentioned that: "…schools in which the majority of students are of minority nationalities may use the spoken and written languages of those nationalities in instruction" (Compulsory Education Law of the PRC 1986: Article 6). Special funds to carry out education in minority languages, including the creation of textbooks and the training of teachers are, however, often inadequate or inexistent (cf. Hansen 1999; Postiglione 2006). Moreover, minority nationalities that do not have an officially recognized written script are automatically excluded from this article.\textsuperscript{124}

Despite the government discourse of equality between all minzu (nationalities) the educational system in China is seen as a mean to civilize backward populations and to help get rid of bad habits obstructing the modernization of the nation (cf. Hansen, 1999). Hence the educational system contributes to instilling a sense of cultural inferiority in minority students (cf. Blum 2001).

Education in the Dong minority villages of Guizhou remains sporadic. Similarly to Yunnan, smaller villages typically have a lower primary school (two or four years), larger villages have a complete 6 years primary school, meanwhile towns/townships have up to junior high school (3 years) and county towns have at least one senior high school (3 years - Hansen 1999: 22). Indeed, in Guizhou, most isolated villages have small primary schools and access to secondary education often involves hours of walk. To reach senior high

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{124} In 1951, a special committee was set up to promote literacy among national minorities. As a result, in 1958, a plan was put forward to create written scripts. Ten were created: Zhuang, Dong, Bouyi, Miao, Yi, Hani, Lisu, Wa, Li and Naxi (Hansen 1999: 14-15).
\end{footnotesize}
school, students are obliged to move to a county town where all senior high schools are located.

Zhaoxing Township has a complete primary school as well as a junior high school which were built 14 years after the adoption of the Compulsory Education Law (between 2000 and 2001). Courses are dispensed essentially in Putonghua yet, as I saw during my fieldwork observations, sometimes explanations may comprise some Kam, especially for younger primary school students. Additionally there is, in Zhaoxing's primary school, singing classes that are taught in Kam. All the teaching material is in Putonghua and although the Dong officially have a written script, only some university educated villagers have studied it. Generally and when necessary, as is the case for the singing teacher, Kam is phonetically written in Chinese characters.

In Zhaoxing Township, there are less than ten university graduates, two of whom are women. As is the case in Yunnan (cf. Hansen 1999), graduates rarely return to work in their hometown and instead seek higher paying employment in the city.

Consequently, students are often criticized for being more concerned about their own individual aspirations than about the common good. Clearly, the problem for political authorities and educators alike is how to teach minority students to dissociate themselves from their parents' and grand-parents' worldview, religion and customs while convincing them to return as civilizers to presumably backward areas (Hansen 1999: 24).

Those who return to their hometown can gain access to local government (lower level) work as was the case for one of my informants.

Modernity, as an ideal promoted by all levels of government, has pushed villagers of Zhaoxing in processes of change to which responses range from gladly engaging in them to

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125 Interview with singing teacher, 18th of November 2006.
126 Based on informal interviews with villagers in Zhaoxing and in surrounding villages (Tang'an and Jitang) as well as discussion with a university graduate working for the local government.
strongly resisting. These changes simultaneously increase their integration to the Chinese nation-state and provide them with opportunities to rethink and reshape their situation. Accordingly, Zhaoxing villagers differently conceive and speak of modernity; they differently indigenize the state version of modernity, and have different visions of what they consider modernity has brought to their lives, what it has destroyed and taken away.

4.3 Villagers' points of view

In order to grasp villagers' points of view on the recent changes presented above, my interviews comprised questions about how their village was 20 years ago and 5 years ago. I also asked them how they imagine their village will be in 5 years and again in 20 years. By asking questions based on a linear model, I thought I would grasp villagers' notions of change. Indeed, one of changes often associated with 'modernity' is to have altered the notion of time from being cyclical repetitions imposed by nature (and agricultural seasons) to time being linear, going from past to present and future driven by notions of progress and evolution (cf. Giddens 1990). However, when analyzing villagers' responses, I found that there emerges, in their discourses, both a linear and a cyclical perception of change. There is indeed a sense of humiliation where change is conceived as desirable, necessary and linear, as a sign of progress and development. Yet there is also a sense of nostalgia where change is seen in a more cyclical way, whereas local culture is reproduced through adaptations and resistances. It is precisely this interweaving (along with varying agency and control over change) that I aim to bring forth in the next section.

4.3.1 From isolation to connectedness

In my memory, 20 years ago, here was like a paradise isolated from the world. We had very few modern things. At that time, I felt very good and I often have a picture in my mind of our old house area with no other houses around, just fish ponds. At that time, during winter, my grandma often went out to get sunshine. When the sun was out, she would take a small stool out and sit in the sun. I often remember this picture. It was so tranquil and peaceful, not like now,
so noisy. At that time, I would often chase dragonflies with a bamboo stick; it was really a feeling of being in paradise.  

When asking villagers how life was different 20 years ago, responses repeatedly refer to isolation and are tinted with nostalgia. Prior to the 1990s, the village had no paved roads, no state electricity and "...some people did not even think of going out of the village for their whole life." The village was not linked and readily accessible by roads, railways and airports and was (as mentioned in the history chapter) peripheral to state power. Moreover, according to villagers, life was simpler and more traditional; villagers were self-sufficient. "Before we lived our lives with our doors closed, we would just work on our own farm. Boys went to farm in the mountain and girls stayed at home to do embroidery and make clothes." To which another villager adds:  

...in the 1990s there was very poor transportation and information was limited, we did not know much about the outside world. There was no main road in the village and the paths were very narrow, we could hear music at night. At the time people's life was more primitive, it was like paradise, people felt very good and there wasn't lots of impact from outside information or assimilation.  

To most villagers, the biggest change they noted in the past 20 years is undeniably the linking of the village to a network of roads, increasing greatly its accessibility and villagers' mobility. Prior to 2005, when the road to the county town Liping, and the road to the closest western village Louxiang, were both concreted over, the village was indeed physically isolated. Although a network of dirt roads had linked the village to the rest of the province, these were frequently subjected to landslides, completely isolating the village for days. The road to Louxiang allowed for the development of market exchanges and increased the number of tourists. Indeed, the south-eastern tourist route gained in popularity  

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128 Interview with antique shop owner, 19th of November 2006.
129 Interview with an elder and his son on 19th of April 2007.
130 Interview on 24th of April 2007.
131 Mobility here is not in the sense of migration which is still greatly restricted through the Hukou system of registration (cf. Chan and Buckingham 2008; Wang and Hu 1999). It refers instead to visits to neighboring villages during market days or to the county town for various purchases.
as minivans became affordable to Western and urban Chinese individual tourists while rented vans and buses no longer risked being stranded in mud slides. The south-eastern tourist route passes by Kaili, Leishan, Rongjiang, Congjiang, to Zhaoxing and leads to other Dong villages located in Guangxi (Sanjiang) before reaching the famous city of Guilin, and Yangshuo (see Figure 15:).

Figure 15: Map of Zhaoxing's connection to surrounding villages and cities (tourist map available in Zhaoxing, scanned by author)

It is however the road to Liping (the county town) that has impacted villagers' lives the most. Senior high schools as well as most suppliers to local stores are located in Liping; hence this new connectivity has become extremely useful for villagers. Going to Liping and back is now a one day excursion. County authorities hierarchically directly above local government have also tended to use this new connectivity by multiplying their visits to the
village. Zhaoxing is indeed often presented to visiting government officials of various levels and parts of China as a 'success development story'.\textsuperscript{132} What is more, as shown in table 3, in the fall 2006, the county town of Liping inaugurated an airport linking the eastern part of Guizhou to the capital town of Guizhou province, Guiyang, and to one of the major town of Guangxi province, Guilin. This transportation service has had, however, very little impact for villagers of Zhaoxing who cannot afford plane tickets, and for tourists who still prefer longer, albeit beautiful, bus routes. Accordingly, most passengers were entrepreneurs, government officials and a few foreigners doing research or teaching in the region.

The construction and inauguration of a highway (partly inaugurated in April 2011 - Figure 16: ) as well as that of a railway may, on the contrary, have greater impact of villagers' mobility. Villagers and government officials praise the accessibility it will provide for the village, attracting tourists coming from the urban areas on day tours as well as reducing the distance between manufactures located in Guangdong province where at least one person per household works. As mentioned by the local head of the Communist Party:\textsuperscript{133} "we shorten the space and time so that people will have a stronger desire to travel", speaking of potential urbanites touring from Guiyang or Guilin.

\textsuperscript{132} Interview with head of the tourism bureau in Liping, 28\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.

\textsuperscript{133} Interview on 24\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.
When asking villagers their opinion on the construction of the highway, many showed relief that the highway exit and the train station will both be located closer to Louxiang, 10 minutes east of Zhaoxing by car. At least three villagers mentioned the belief that living close to main arteries is dangerous and unlucky as it drains positive energy and lets in negative elements (cf. Feuchtwang 1974: 131-132).

4.3.2 Changes in revenues and mentalities

Recent changes brought the physical integration of the village to the rest of the province and nation; moreover, it brought clear economic development. Villagers repeatedly remarked in interviews that recent changes generally increased their revenues. Most remember times when there was not enough to eat and meat was scarce "Before life was
very difficult, we didn't have enough food. All our income was from farming, but after the reforms in the 1980s, things got much better. Everything became better. You know before, we had that collectivity mess". Meanwhile another villager recounts: "20 years ago, the village was very behind [underdeveloped] the street was not tidy, it was difficult to walk in the alleys, and everywhere was very messy, dirty and bad. When we began to learn how to cook, there was never enough to eat. I was born in 1960". Still another said:

Changes in our life are big. For example before, if you wanted to eat meat here in the township there was only one food station [a public food station that belonged to the government]. Each Spring Festival, the government would give each household two half kilos of meat, the most given was 6 half kilos, it was rarely more than 10 half kilos. Yet if you had good relationships you could maybe get 10 to 15 half kilos. Life was like that then, it was very difficult to eat meat. Since we have developed tourism, during the Spring Festival, each family that lives on the main street can kill one pig […]. Later, there even came a butcher that began working in the street. Now everyone can buy meat as they wish, if they have money.

Economic development however, as remarked by less fortunate villagers, involves inflation. Although the "…World Bank particularly is impressed with China's efforts of sustaining economic growth between 8 to 9 percent in 1996 while keeping the inflation rate below 10 percent" (Tang 1999: 95), villagers of Zhaoxing are seeing the price of everyday goods increase steadily. In 2011, the inflation rate of consumer prices is 5 percent, according to the CIA World Factbook.

On the one hand, this can be advantageous as some villagers can increase their revenues from the sale of agricultural goods and animal husbandry. Such is the case for the inhabitants of the village of Jilun, an agricultural community located close by Zhaoxing,

134 Interview with elder on 19th of April 2007.
135 Interview with government official and elder on 24th of January 2007.
136 Interview with hotel owner on 26th of January 2007.
137 Compared to Canada where it is 1.6 percent in 2011. Central Intelligence Agency; The World Factbook 2011, consulted on the Internet (//www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2092.html), 5th of July 2011. This situation was also observed by Sarah Turner (2011) among the Hmong in upland northern Vietnam.
where 10,000 RMB (approximately 1500 CAN$) worth of vegetables are sold each year in Zhaoxing. The vice director of the village also mentioned that six pigs and two cows from Jilin are sold in Zhaoxing every day.\(^\text{138}\) Or, as another villager mentioned:

\[\ldots\]the advantages are that you can make money by selling anything. Every family has money, for example, vegetables, before it was sold at 2 Mao for a half kilo, now it can be sold at 2 Yuan for a half kilo. This is the advantage. Also, for example, before meat was 2 to 5 Yuan for a half kilo, now it can be 8 to 9 Yuan for a half kilo. Everything can be sold at a high price…\(^\text{139}\)

On the other hand, it also can be disadvantageous by creating an economic pressure on those whose revenues are minimal; those living essentially on subsistence farming and for whom the price of everyday goods constantly increases.\(^\text{140}\)

This contributes to yet another problem for villagers: the widening gap between rich and poor. Accordingly, Tang (1999: 97) remarks that in China "\ldots the egalitarian ideal of 'everyone eating from the same pot' gave way to the principle of 'to each according to his labor'.\" As mentioned above, a hotel owner\(^\text{141}\) estimates 70 percent of households have an annual revenue above 10,000 RMB (approximately, 1500 CAN$). The remainder 30 percent are, according to him, those:

\[\ldots\]that do not have good conditions to do business, and their mind is not so open [to doing business], they cannot figure out what they should do. Their lives only depend on planting fields or they will go out of the village to work in factories. Contrarily, people who have very good business can raise altogether 500,000 to 600,000 Yuan, in Zhaoxing…

\(^\text{138}\) Interviewed on 3\(^\text{rd}\) of February 2007.

\(^\text{139}\) Interview with hotel owner on 26\(^\text{th}\) of January 2007; 2 Yuan = 0.30 CAN$, 5 Yuan = 0.80 CAN$ and 9 Yuan = 1.45 CAN$.

\(^\text{140}\) Interview with a farmer on 20 and 21\(^\text{st}\) of April 2007.

\(^\text{141}\) Op. cit. 26\(^\text{th}\) of January 2007; 500,000 to 600,000 Yuan = 80,670 CAN$ to 97,000 CAN$. Although these amounts seem excessively high, households may comprise up to 10 people, often with 4 or 5 adults contributing financially to the household. From fieldwork observations, only 2 or 3 households had such 'very good businesses'.
This reveals a shift in mentality as villagers are now: "engaged in turn by new ways of thinking, interacting, and consuming" (Guldin 2001: 5-6). This shift was expressed by another villager:\footnote{142}

...20 years ago, the economy was very behind. At that time, people would feel ashamed to sell vegetables on the market. Now we have tourist market and there is nothing to feel ashamed of; people can sell whatever they want. Before people would think you came to sell because you were poor. Before we had a self-sufficient economy and the idea was rooted very deep. If you had something to sell on the market, people would look down upon you, because you were poor. Now peoples' attitudes have changed [...] Before we wouldn't think of the economic value and efficiency. Now this has changed.

Throughout fieldwork, new ways of relating to money were repeatedly voiced. It has become acceptable to seek economic gain. Interestingly though, the valorization of being self-sufficient was still active, especially during the planting season. Villagers explained that everyone was expected and able to produce enough rice for oneself and for one's family since all had received land titles through the redistribution that followed the household responsibility policy. If one is not self-sufficient, villagers consider it is because the planting was badly done or work in the field was neglected.

Although it has become acceptable to seek economic gain, the discourse on this change of mentality is also often nostalgic:

\begin{quote}
Before, we Dong people, were very hospitable and we would not charge people money when serving them food. But after the commercialization, we are affected by the outside and start to make money. So now, if you go to one's place, he will consider the money aspect. Therefore we often say that 20 years from now, the friendly feeling among Dong people will disappear.\footnote{143}
\end{quote}

\footnote{142} Interview with a school teacher and educational administrative staff on 2\textsuperscript{nd} of February 2007.  
\footnote{143} Interview with an elder on 30\textsuperscript{th} of January 2007.
4.3.3 From primitive to modern

In short, the main changes villagers noticed in their village in the past 20 years have been: greater mobility and accessibility as well as economic development with the related consequences of inflation and changes of mentality. The linear, evolutionary conception of time brought by modernity, through infrastructure, economic and cultural development, has, as we have seen, placed, and perpetuated the position of, national minorities at the bottom of a social hierarchy. This discourse of backwardness, used to justify development and often state incursion, has been taken up by villagers, albeit not blindly.

In Zhaoxing, backwardness is often associated with dirtiness and the recent cleanness of the village has become a measure of 'being modern'. Accordingly, the third most mentioned change is the general outlook of the village and the sentiment of its increased order. There are three elements that are repeatedly associated with this change: the paving of roads and path, the government incentives to be clean, and new policies toward the raising of farm animals.

As a local government official stated: "20 years ago, the village was very behind [underdeveloped], the street was not tidy, it was difficult to walk in the alleys, it was very messy, dirty and bad." A primary school teacher added: "Before we only had muddy road and in rainy days, we got mud all over the body and in the sunny days, we got dust all over". The incursion of the government in assuring the village was 'clean' was also mentioned by villagers, an elder mentioned: "...the biggest change is that our living standard has improved. Now our houses are changed. Before we used to put things messily, now the government advocates us to be neat. We are much cleaner than before." Meanwhile another villager remarked: "...It seems there are lots of eyes on the street watching you now, so people no longer litter and spit on the street – people's quality has improved and our culture quality has improved".

144 Interview with a local government official on 24th of January 2007.
146 Interview on 19th of April 2007.
147 Interview on 24th of April 2007.
Moreover, villagers mentioned that in recent years, many efforts have been made to improve the village's sanitation with laws forbidding animals to wander around and people hired to clean the streets. Tourism development plays an important role in giving villagers a feeling of being 'gazed at' (Urry 1992), a point I will return to in the next chapter.

4.3.4 Tentative recovery and resistance

Although villagers held a discourse in which the government helped them 'improve their quality', some villagers however were proud to recount the time when they impressed county government authorities. For example, an elder relates:

Our clan was the first to build walk paths. The path we walk on now was first built by our clan. Before we had no money, the farmers built the path by themselves. I often said we owe the path to our clan's farmers. They helped to build it voluntarily. Before the road and paths in Zhaoxing were very poor and full of mud. Once we built it, other leaders at higher levels of local government noticed it. Then the county level, the district level and the provincial level officials all came together to visit us. They put great importance on this and felt embarrassed because even we farmers could think of this (yet these officials couldn't do it before the farmers). Then they invested money and asked people from all over the Zhaoxing to build roads like the ones we had built (emphasis added).

In this statement we clearly see an attempt at revoking the label of backwardness attributed to rural villagers. This elder also questioned the alleged need of outside help to lead local development. There is, indeed, in Zhaoxing a minority of villagers, all from the same drum tower group – some of whom are respected elders that consistently stand up and loudly affirm their oppositions or opinions toward decisions taken by local and less local cadres on the development of Zhaoxing. They have, for example, sent petitions to different levels of government for allowing outsiders to come and develop tourism in their village; they have protested against a plan to move Zhaoxing's junior high school to another location and have expressed their anger toward land requisitions for the building of hotels by a private company.

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There is indeed extensive plans to develop the village and its surrounding, to modernize it and to render it more attractive to tourism – a paradox I will explore in the next chapter; yet these plans are not necessarily made public. The local leader of the Communist Party is in charge of what he calls the local social economic development. Accordingly, he is responsible for making work plans, short term and long term plans and he furthermore informed us that he was presently working on the 11th 5-years development plan in line with the Party's guidelines. Details of this plan were locked in a closet and we could only briefly take a look at it. There are furthermore plans to develop a "New Zhaoxing" in order to keep the "Old Zhaoxing" an authentic primitive ethnic village. These plans, as well as the future location of the new village are also kept secret, officially to avoid land speculation.

It would be incorrect however to assert that decisions regarding the village are done without any form of consultation with villagers as there are 'free elections' in Zhaoxing. However, as Yao (2009: 129) remarked in a northern China village: "…free elections have not significantly improved the village governance because they have not empowered villagers beyond the elections into the process of decision making and management". Furthermore, during fieldwork I encountered an incident where the local government leader had been reelected for a second 5 years mandate yet was 'promoted' to another village. While the leadership was uncertain (three potential village leaders were running for future elections), a new local leader of the Communist Party, who had held the position of Head of the Tourism Bureau in the Liping county government, was appointed to the village. This shift of power revealed a clear plan toward Zhaoxing's future: one intertwined with tourism as I demonstrate in the next chapter.

4.4 Conclusion(s)

Zhaoxing has, in the past 20 years, been the site of infrastructure developments, greater government incursion, market liberalization, increased and obligatory national education

149 Interview on 24th of April 2007.
leading to changes in villagers' mobility, opportunities, disparities and mentalities. Roads have been built, communication networks have been set up and the village acquired state electricity. Villagers of Zhaoxing have been able to diversify their economic activities leading to a decrease in urban migration and to an increase in revenues. There are also been changes linked to a form of agrarian transition with the increased use of pesticides and hybrid crops, as well as changes in local governance practices discussed in Chapter Three.

With these changes, according to villagers, the village is no longer isolated. Furthermore, it is now possible and acceptable to seek economic gain and briefly put, the village is now on the way to becoming 'modern'. According to Oakes (1998: 22), modernity, as an ideal, with government policies pursuing physical and cultural integration, has however generated paradoxical sensibilities for villagers of Guizhou:

...a wary faith in progress accompanied by a melancholy sense of loss, a need to recover a sense of authenticity and repair the ruptures of modernization even while realizing that such ruptures create whole new landscapes upon which we must live and from which we must derive meaning.

This sense of rupture from the past is particular in Zhaoxing. It rests on a paradox as development is mainly driven by the development of ethnic tourism. In Guizhou, according to Oakes (1998) and in accordance with what we have seen on the history of the province, in the 1990s tourism became the main driving force towards modernization. It became seen as a "comprehensive modernization strategy" (Ibid. 1998: 125) that could raise incomes, attract infrastructure investments, increase commercial consciousness\(^\text{150}\) and bring cultural development. Tourism has become, in Guizhou and in Zhaoxing, the medium through which rural minority villagers imagine modernity (Ibid.).

As a result, villagers conceive their situation as transitional and many have expressed clearly in interviews the contradictions and paradoxes of their situation:

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\(^{150}\) Accordingly, minority groups are asked to conceptualize cultural practices in terms of commercial projects (Oakes, 1999: 321).
In five or 20 years, it will definitely be better [...] in 20 years, I believe we will all have our own cars, but no matter how good our living conditions are, we will still live in wooden houses. It is only by living in wooden houses that we can get money.\textsuperscript{151}

In Zhaoxing, conceiving of modernity through the lens of tourist development, or more precisely ethnic tourism development, has made villagers ponder and question the meaning of both their 'minority culture' and 'modernity':

First you want to protect minority culture; it means you have to protect it in its original state. Second, in 1978 the reform policies in China advocated that we develop and modernize but if we want to protect our culture and preserve it in its original state that means we cannot improve and develop our economy [...] People here think to develop minority culture and economy is a big paradox. Modernity advocates good conditions including diet and living conditions but if you want to protect primitive culture, you cannot develop, so people are confused.\textsuperscript{152}

How villagers of Zhaoxing attempt to indigenize the changes and processes that are affecting their everyday lives is shaped in large part by the state's ideal of modernity, yet also rests on a medium (tourist development) that necessitates the crystallization of 'obstacles to modernization – traditions' as central components to modernization, a paradox I discuss in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{151} Interview with an elder and his son on 19\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.

\textsuperscript{152} Interview with the local Cultural Department Director on 18\textsuperscript{th} of November 2006.
5 Tourist development in Zhaoxing

5.1 Introduction

In Guizhou, one of the driving forces of modernization is tourist development. In terms of income per capita, the province is one of the poorest in China and is lacking infrastructure to attract industrial investments. It has thus vigorously turned to tourism as an alternative means of economic development (Tan et al. 2001: 16). As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, tourist development became a central component of Guizhou's provincial policies in accordance with the campaign to "Open Up the West" (xibu da kaifa) announced in 1999 by the CCP (Goodman 2004: 317; cf. Lew et al. 2003). In 2000, Yang Shengming, the director of Guizhou Provincial Tourism Administration, clearly advocated the development of tourism as the best - if not the only - means to modernize the province and more particularly, the areas inhabited by rural minority nationalities (cf. Sofield and Li 1998; Tan et al. 2001; Tak-chuen 2005; Yang, Wall and Smith 2008). In other words, it is through tourist development that the modernization goals of economically, physically and culturally integrating remote populations to the nation-state can be fully achieved.

Economically, tourism is a highly lucrative industry and quantitative measures of its success are impressive in Guizhou (UNWTO, 2010). This form of economic development however implies both negative and positive changes: new employment niches, diversification of revenues, economic disparities, inflation, and the danger of over-dependence on an unstable and seasonal economic activity as well as the exodus of economic gains to non-local companies. In other words, there are costs and benefits which may be unequally distributed.

Tourist development also affects the physical environment: it may safeguard attractive ecosystems while simultaneously destroying others through, for example, infrastructure...

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construction (Oakes 2004: 484). It may furthermore increase pressure on natural resources leading to conflicts between local populations and tourism developers (Wall and Mathieson 2006). Tourist development also redefines space into a marketable and consumable object fit for the tourist gaze (Urry 1992); a process which may or may not be compatible with local economic and social activities. The environmental and geographical issues related to tourist development have led researchers and policy-makers to consider, promote or debate forms of "sustainable development" and "ecotourism", advocating long-term planning and controlled development (Mac Nulty 2011; Wall and Mathieson 2006; Hall and Lew 1998; Butler 1993).

As an economic activity, as a mean to develop and modernize or as a tool to promote nationalist sentiments, tourist development is also highly political (Richter, 1989). State involvement in controlling, planning and promoting tourism restructures the government's relationship with its citizens (Wood 1984; Sofield and Li 1998). It increases state incursion through the enactment and implementation of environmental, economic and cultural policies, especially visible in developing economies (Yang, Wall and Smith 2008: 751). Tourism policy-making involves numerous stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations and businesses (Airey and Chong 2010: 296) among which power is often distributed unevenly with each pursuing their own interests.

Closely linked to other processes of change, tourism is "...just one of an entangled web of 'globalizing' processes that have been affecting the world for some time" (Erb 2000: 710); it is a "...catalyst for a much broader process of commercial development and modernization" (Oakes 1995: 209). The notion of catalysis used in chemistry to indicate the modification or acceleration of a chemical reaction by addition of a catalyst could well be used to denote the relationship tourism holds to modernization. In other words, the development of ethnic tourism accelerates and serves the country's modernization schemes in minority nationalities' regions. Using tourist development to bring modernity to remote regions hence brings, directly and indirectly, economic, political, geographic and environmental changes.
What is more, it also leads to cultural changes. Tourism is "...the largest scale movements of goods, services, and people that humanity has perhaps ever seen" (Greenwood 1989: 171) It has the particularity of bringing consumers to products instead of products to consumers (Tilley 1997: 74). In the case of ethnic tourism, defined as a variety of site-seeing that targets specifically cultural uniqueness and exoticism (Cohen 2001: 28), what is marketed and sold to an audience is a people's living space and ways of life. Culture is packaged in a few recognizable characteristics including architecture, rituals, customs, dance, music and crafts which can then be promoted and sold as a commodity (Turner and Ash 1975: 140; Wilk 1995; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

In addition to the question of the commoditization of culture, ethnic tourism also raises issues of authenticity whereas some tourists seek to experience authentic, traditional lifestyles resulting in the *mise en spectacle* of ethnic attributes that specifically represent traditions. Accordingly, the locals, instead of only attending to the needs of the tourist, are part of the attraction. Their lives, their habits, clothes and daily activities are 'on show': "...a living spectacle to be scrutinized, photographed, tape recorded, and interacted with in some particular ways" (Van den Berghe & Keyes 1984: 345).

The process of tourist development begins, according to Cohen (2001) as a novel and strange phenomenon that can have external impacts. It then quickly develops and creates a distinct sphere (a tourist sphere) kept separate from everyday life where locals stage selected aspects of their culture. However, this sphere is not permeable and the front stage and back stage of a community slowly merge together resulting in a tourist culture (Picard 1992). "In such places tourism become so intertwined with the local society and culture that a point may be reached at which virtually no difference remains between their 'staged' outside appearance and the 'authentic' internal communal life" (Cohen 2001: 42). Tourism becomes an integral part of that culture (Wood 1997: 4).

As noted by Oakes (2006: 169-170) this model of tourist development rests on the problematic notion of authenticity. Authenticity is a slippery term that assumes a dichotomy between 'the original' traditional way of life and the 'replica', or the spectacle
shown to tourists. There are three main problems with this perspective of authenticity. First, as mentioned by Bai (2007: 256): "...there is no reason to assume an 'authentic' ethnic culture was there before the advent of tourism". It is indeed difficult to clearly demarcate the historical moment at which point the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing were leading an authentic, traditional way of life. Accordingly, authenticity in tourism refers to an imagined past constructed for the present. Second, using notion of authenticity to analyse tourist development implies considering such development from the point of view of tourists, while "...for villagers themselves, tourism allows for a self-conscious act of replication which is no less 'authentic' or meaningful" (Oakes 2006: 168).

In other words, the concept of authenticity is neither applicable nor useful to render the locals' points of view as it tends to lead to an etic rather than an emic approach to tourist development. Third, still from the point of view of tourists, the state representation and construction of tourist sites in China is based on the country's own history and interpretation of travel; one that "...reject[s] the 'romantic gaze' and fear of commodification that continue to dominate Western discourse of tourism..." (Nyíri 2006: xi). Hence, domestic tourists may, in large part, be what Bruner (2001: 883) calls post-tourists, seeking a good show rather than staged authenticity (cf. Nyíri 2006). Hence even from the perspective of tourists, especially domestic tourists, the notion of authenticity is not always applicable.

In addition, tourist development in China is largely state-sponsored and controlled. As part of the modernization scheme, it involves commercial, economic and social integration of minority nationalities, some of which I have shown in the previous chapter. Mullaney (2011: 125) notes: "the minzu of the southwest became commodities, with the fifty-six minzu model serving as the organizing logic of the goods and services within the emerging economy". Tourist development indeed involves: "...policies regarding ethnic minority culture and its preservation, in which ethnic identity becomes officially associated with certain standardized cultural forms and unambiguous symbolic markers" (Oakes 1997: 36). Similarly, Nyíri (2006: 16) notes, "...certain ethnicities, just like scenic spots, acquired a standard set of cultural references..."
Indeed, "there is a certain 'museumization' of the ethnic minorities in the idealized presentations of their culture for tourist consumption which also raises issues broader than authenticity and extends into the difficult questions of cultural integration, assimilation and political control" (Sofield and Li, 1998: 386). Hence, at stake here is also who has the power and authority to represent and negotiate the ethnicity presented and sold to tourists (cf. Macleod and Carrier 2010).

In the process of ethnic tourist development, local ethnic communities do not tend to stand by quietly, instead they attempt to adapt, use or resist the new parameters of action such development offers (cf. Tak-chuen 2005: 259). It is indeed commonly agreed that tourism is not an outside force imposed on static cultures but is rather an element that enters the dynamic process of cultural reproduction.

By virtue of the practice of objectifying culture in the show people are beginning to learn that they have to negotiate and transform it [...] it provides an arena for the exercise of conscious choice, contextualizing practices, modes of representation, rationalization and justification. In short it promotes increasing self-reflexivity (italics original, Tilley 1997: 86-87)

Ethnic culture becomes something to be discussed, debated, an arena where populations can exercise their ethnic options (Wood 1997: 19; cf. Bai 2007; Schein 2000; Notar 2006). Indeed, notes Wood (1997: 15),

...nowhere have local people been powerless or passive. These responses, however, take place in a context defined by the structure and policies of the state, the preexisting field of interethnic relations, and the particular features of the tourism industry...

Looking closer, I encountered in Zhaoxing a people who found in tourism a way to revive and preserve local traditions (cf. Oakes 1997: 66). Through opportunities and constraints, Zhaoxing villagers indigenize modernity, via the vernacularization of tourism (Merry, 2006). In their everyday actions, they authentically make sense of change and attempt to adapt it to their visions of a better tomorrow.
In this chapter, I analyse some of the main tourist development policies enacted by the state and provincial governments applied to southeast Guizhou. I then consider chronologically the development of tourism in the village of Zhaoxing. Some of the issues and tensions brought by ethnic tourism development, from a local's perspective are then scrutinized. How villagers of Zhaoxing adjust their actions according to their historically troubled positionality in the Chinese nation-state and what they consider might be effective resistance in light of their limited power are some of the issues I examine in this chapter.

5.2 Tourist development in southeast Guizhou

Tourism development in Guizhou officially began in 1982 with the establishment of the Provincial Tourism Bureau as a branch of the foreign affairs office (Wu et al. 2000: 7; Oakes 1998: 159). Two circuits were established and promoted on the international market: a western route and a south-eastern route (Oakes 1998: 161). The south-eastern route passing through the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture offered the visit of ethnic villages where local customs and festivals were the main attractions (Ibid.: 159). The circuit passed through Kaili, Xijiang, Congjiang, Rongjiang, Louxiang before reaching Zhaoxing and continuing to Sanjiang county in Guangxi province (see Figure 17: ).

154 Meanwhile, although also featuring ethnic villages, the western circuit offered nature sights such as the famous Huangguoshu Falls, caves, forests and lakes (cf. Oakes 1998: 159-161).
In 1984 and 1985, the central government issued new tourism policies that stimulated local initiatives through four transformations (Xu 1999: 25, Table 6: ). These policies promoted the packaging of resources for tourism; they also focused on developing domestic tourism, on attracting foreign investments and on transferring tourism management from government agencies to independent firms.
In 1985, the Qiandongnan prefectural tourism bureau (QTB) was established and villages were selected to receive and entertain foreign guests. At first, Miao villages were promoted because the Japanese made up the majority of foreign tourists. At the time, "the idea that the Miao and the Japanese came from the same origins [had] become popular in Japan after teams of Japanese ethnographers visited Qiandongnan in the early 1980s and published books on the Miao" (Oakes 1998: 169). The Miao borderlands became, according to Oakes (1998: 170), the site of a:

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155 Translated as: “Five investors going into action simultaneously” (Xu, 1999: 25).
156 According to Oakes (1998: 171-172) nature sites and the development of a nature oriented tourism were under the jurisdiction of other government bureaus such as the ministry of construction and forestry or the hydroelectric bureau leaving the control and management of ethnic tourism in the hands of the QTB.
...misplaced search for authenticity [...] Qiandongnan came to be marked as the authentic source of unique and exotic traditions by the most significant judges of touristic modernity: "developed" Western tourists themselves. In many ways, Qiandongnan was a pioneer region for Guizhou's touristic modernity. Ethnic tourism as a force of cultural development emerged there first, and initially due to the demands of Western tourists.

As for the Dong minority nationality, between the 3rd and the 10th of October 1986, at the Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris, the Chinese Dong Songs Chorus constituted of Dong women of Guizhou performed their Grand Dong Opera six times (see Annex 6). According to the pamphlet (1986, Annex 6): "the Dong choir, invited by the Autumn Festival, was composed of eight young girls of the Dong minority from Guizhou province. They interpreted polyphonic songs, mostly love songs, in which the lyrics were often improvised and of an ancient form" (my translation).\(^{157}\) To numerous villagers of Zhaoxing, to the head of the tourism bureau in Liping\(^ {158}\) and to Jia (1993:1), this international visibility, coupled with government initiatives to promote domestic and international tourism in the region, launched the development of both domestic and international ethnic tourism in Dong villages of Guizhou.

Dong villages such as Gaozeng and Jitang – the latter being located three hundred meters up the mountainside from Zhaoxing – were then also selected as ideal villages to develop and serve as models to other villages in the region. They became labelled scenic spots (Nyíri 2006) and received Prefectural Minzu Affairs Commission funds administered by the tourism bureau (\emph{minwei} funds) to maintain and develop their unique \emph{minzu} character (Oakes 1998: 172 and 178-179). The Duliu basin, where Zhaoxing is located, was only officially opened to foreign tourists in 1993 (Oakes 1997: 56). Hence the village obtained official recognition when, in 1994, the National Tourism Association (NTA) emphasized: "Zhaoxing as the comprehensive site of Dong ethnic tourism" (Ibid.: 211). Since then, tourism has become one of the main driving forces of cultural development (\emph{wenhua fazhan}), of modernization and of economic development in the village.

\(^{157}\) See also Jia (1993).
\(^{158}\) Interviewed on 28th of April 2007.
At the turn of this century, the number of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the province continued to increase. According to a World Bank Report (2007: 12): "...in 2001 Guizhou attracted 23,840,000 visitors - 320,000 (1.3 percent) from abroad and 510,000 (2.1 percent) from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan; and 23,000,000 (96.6 percent) domestic visitors". Additionally, some 37,950,000 inhabitants of Guizhou are estimated to have traveled inside their province for overnight stays (Ibid.).

The following year, in 2002, the "Guizhou Provincial Tourism Development Master Plan"159 was elaborated in collaboration with the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and the Guizhou Provincial Tourism Administration (GTA). This Master Plan (MP) was officially approved by the CNTA in 2003 and was henceforth adopted as the official guideline for tourism development in Guizhou (World Bank 2007: 16). It proposed specific tourism clusters and areas including the region where Zhaoxing is located (D on Figure 18: ).

Additional provincial plans followed such as the *Guizhou Provincial Rural Tourism Development Plan* (RTDP) approved by the CNTA in June 2006 and the *Guizhou Eleventh Five Year Socio-economic Plan*.¹⁶⁰ The former "...is to provide strategic guidance for the development of Guizhou's rural tourism sector with special emphasis on ethnic and cultural tourism" (World Bank 2007: 18). The latter defines: "...socio-economic targets for the period 2006-2011, as well as strategies to achieve them" (Ibid.). It proposes the continued development of transportation infrastructure which translates, in Zhaoxing, as better and faster accessibility.

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¹⁶⁰ In interviews and discussion with local authorities, these plans were mentioned and served as blueprints to the shape of local tourism development schemes.
These provincial policies, increasingly focusing on using tourism as a catalyst to modernization shaped tourist development in Zhaoxing. In the following section, I chronologically analyse this development before presenting villagers' points of view.

5.3 Zhaoxing's three phases of tourism development (1982 - 2010) \(^ {161}\)

For analytical purposes and based on data collected through my interviews, \(^ {162}\) I have divided Zhaoxing's tourism development into three phases. The basis of this division is villagers' changing implication in tourist development. As such, these stages are not the foundation of a model; they do not purport to be applicable elsewhere. Further research in other villages remains crucial in envisioning micro responses to macro policies and to reveal the complex local absorption, manipulation or resistance to new market parameters brought by tourism.

In the initial stage, between 1982 and 2001, tourist development was mainly led by a few members of the local government, who started to promote their village and built infrastructure to receive visiting guests. Then from 2001 to the end of 2003, individual families became directly involved in the development of tourism by opening home stays and restaurants. Finally, the third stage, from 2003 until 2010, is characterized by the arrival of a Guiyang tourism company in the village and the increased direct involvement of the Guizhou government (county and provincial) resulting in a tremendous acceleration of Zhaoxing's tourism development.

Similarly to the previous chapter on modernization schemes, I aim to reveal the structuring elements of villagers' actions before presenting their relative and often unequal agency and

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\(^ {161}\) Although official fieldwork was undertaken between 2006 and 2007, recurrent visits to the village were made before (2000, 2004, 2005) and after (2009). Additionally, some factual data was collected in the summer 2010 and in the summer 2011 by two students of mine (whom I gratefully thank here).

\(^ {162}\) For example, the head of the Tourism Bureau in Liping also discussed Zhaoxing's tourist development according to a three phase model resembling the one I present here (interviewed on 28th of April, 2007).
active participation in the changes their village is facing. As I will show, the development of tourism in Zhaoxing has been shaped by accommodations between various actors among whom there is an uneven distribution of power (Oakes 1998: 12). Research also revealed that different drum tower groups (tuan) have had varying implications in tourist development and in its manipulation, appropriation or disengagement.

5.3.1 The first phase: local government-led development (1982 – 2001)

At first, according to a tourism promoter based in Liping, tourists came mainly from the more developed neighboring province of Guangxi. The leader of Sanjiang county, bordering Liping county where Zhaoxing is located, had made tremendous efforts to have his county recognized as the seat of true Dong culture. Zhaoxing, with its many drum towers, beautiful setting and being so close to Guangxi was often included in tourists' travel plans to the Dong region; tourists were often unknowingly taken across the provincial border to visit the village.

Local infrastructure to receive these tourists was first developed by the local government. In 1982 the local government's Cultural Department gave a local official the mandate to open and run the first hotel in Zhaoxing. The same year and during the following three years, drum towers in the village were rebuilt and wind and rain bridges were renovated. By the 1990s, a second hotel had opened (called minzu zhaodaisuo), followed by the Post Office Hotel (youdian bingguan), which opened in 2001. Except for the Post Office Hotel, the other two institutions also offered food and drinks, tourism information and guides as well as the sale of local handicrafts and souvenirs.

163 Interviewed in Liping on 5th of November 2006.
164 Interview with the first owner of this hotel and since 1987, the director of the local Cultural Department, on 18th of November, 2006. In 2003 the contract terms changed and fees were increased, the guest house was thus passed on to another villager until 2006 at which time the building was attributed to a tourism company. In 2009, the hotel and the buildings located on the same side of the street (including the post office hotel) were all destroyed in order to free the space to build a public square. During my first visit to the village in 2000, it was the hotel I stayed in.
As mentioned in previous chapters, the village was, at the time, physically isolated and difficult to access. Transportation to and from Zhaoxing was limited as it relied on the local bus system that linked market towns on market days. Moreover, the network of dirt roads in the region was frequently subjected to landslides. Prior to the mid-1990s, the village had no state electricity and villagers relied on a locally built power station which worked with generators. The main economic activity of the village was subsistence agriculture with agricultural surpluses increasingly being sold on the market.

In 1995, a co-project between the Norwegian and Chinese governments established four ecological village museums in Guizhou, one of which is in the neighboring village of Tang'an and is called the "Tang'an Dong Ethnic Eco-museum". The selected villages became living museums and have "...no walls with each object, person and event being part of the collection". Foreign investment in this remote locality increased Zhaoxing's international visibility, especially since visitors were required to be based in Zhaoxing because Tang'an lacked accommodation facilities.

In line with the modernizing schemes of the province, this period is marked by government investment in infrastructure including a road to Shuikou (19 kilometers to the east of Zhaoxing, toward Sanjiang county town in Guangxi province) and the introduction of state electricity. It is furthermore marked by the closing down of the government-run convenience store (which promoted the diversification of economic activities for villagers) and the building of a junior high school.

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165 This information is based on visits to Tang'an and informal interviews with villagers. Further information was found in an article on China-Norway cooperation using the example of another similar project with the Miao village of Longga (where the construction of a museum and the opening up to tourists was on the 31st of October 1998). For additional information, see http://www.norway.org.cn/arkiv/minorities/ecomuseum/ (page consulted in Chinese on the 23rd of April 2011).

5.3.2 The second phase: self-development (2001 - 2003)

By the year 2001, Mister Lu, noticing the increasing number of visitors coming to the village, decided to build his own guesthouse near the largest drum tower (Lituan drum tower). He and his household were the first villagers to seize the economic opportunities offered by the development of tourism. In addition to opening a guesthouse, he also created the first website of the village for promotional purposes. This household encouraged others from their drum tower group (Lituan) to open guesthouses and some villagers began to sell Dong handicrafts to visiting tourists.

In an attempt to beautify the village, Mister Lu also suggested to cover mud paths around the drum tower with small decorative stones. As recounted earlier (section 4.3.4) he recalls the visit of government officials to the village once the project was completed:

> Once we built it, the county level, the district level and the provincial level officials all came together to visit us. They attached great importance to this and felt embarrassed because even we farmers could think of it before they did. Then they invested money and asked people from all over Zhaoxing to build roads like the ones we had built.\(^\text{168}\)

Such initiatives led the government to also invest in village infrastructure, burying electrical, telephone and television wires, developing the sewage system and paving roads. In addition, attention was given to the prevention of fires which could destroy Zhaoxing's potential as a tourist site (see the case of Gaozeng discussed in Oakes 1997: 58).

With the tourism Master Plan (MP) elaborated in 2002, this period marks the beginning of greater government (and international agencies) involvement and control of tourist development. At all levels of government in the province, tourism officially became a priority to accelerate the economic development of Guizhou and to alleviate poverty, particularly among ethnic minorities.

\(^\text{167}\) For reasons presented in the methodology chapter (Chapter Two) of this thesis (cf. also: Cornet, 2010: 143) I have decided to use pseudonyms for my informants.

\(^\text{168}\) Interview on 30\(^\text{th}\) of January 2007.
5.3.3 The third phase: private company led tourism development (2003-2010)

In line with the 1984/85 tourism policy, the management of tourism by 'independent' firms was promoted in Zhaoxing. Accordingly, a Hong Kong company briefly attempted to obtain a contract to manage the village and its surroundings. However, it is only in 2003 that Zhaoxing, along with 8 other surrounding villages and Sasui Mountain, become officially managed by a non-local firm. Villagers interviewed, especially those of the Lituan drum tower group, consider this event marked the beginning of a new phase of tourist development. The Guiyang-based company called Fenghua obtained a 50 years monopoly contract for the development of tourism in the Zhaoxing area. At the time of fieldwork, the company was locally managed by a Han man from Huishuan District in Zunyi city (Guizhou).

A contract, of which I obtained a copy, was signed between the Liping county government, Zhaoxing's three hamlets – Zhaoxing, Zhaoxing Zhongzhai and Zhaoxing Shangzhai, and the company. In terms of economic clauses, the contract specified the percentages of benefits the company must give the county government and Zhaoxing's hamlets. These percentages varied between 10 and 30 percent according to profit. In addition, the contract required Fenghua Company to invest a minimum of 35,000,000 RMB (5 700 000 CAN$), of which 6,000,000 RMB (970 000 CAN$) had to be invested before the opening of Liping airport planned for late 2006. Starting in 2006, in order to have priority access to drum towers in the village for tourist performances, the company had to give each drum tower group (tuan) 10,000 RMB (1600 CAN$), then 20,000 RMB (3200 CAN$) in 2007 and 30,000 RMB (4860 CAN$) in 2008. Furthermore, beginning in 2009, sale of gate tickets to access the village was to begin with benefits distributed among the three parties.

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169 This document, I was told, was considered 'internal' (内部 neibu) and I was clearly not supposed to have access to it (cf. Thøgersen, 2006: 186-205), raising the issue of protecting informants who provide such information (see Chapter Two and Cornet, 2010).

170 As mentioned earlier (footnote 107, section 4.2), administratively, the geographical space constituting the village of Zhaoxing is composed of three hamlets. Although it was not specified in my interviews with villagers, I believe we can suppose similar contracts were signed with other neighboring hamlets involved in the transaction.
Besides specifying the economic retribution of tourist development, the contract also specified each party's responsibilities. The company had, for example, to: "…increase the speed in developing the scenic area and establish Zhaoxing as the flagship of Liping ethnical cultural travel zone" (my translation). Responsibility for formulating tourism legal policies, having them approved by higher level governments, as well as establishing adequate compensatory measures for expropriation of farming land, mountain fields and other local architectures were also enunciated. The contract moreover stipulated that local people should be prioritised at all times for employment and that the company must protect ethnic architecture and heritage. Accordingly, stated the contract, the company shall not build any brick houses or oversize buildings. Most of all, the main responsibility of the Fenghua Company was to promote Zhaoxing scenic area and to increase its overall income.

The contract attributed educational responsibilities to the county government. Its responsibilities include instructing villagers to follow the company's tourism management regulations as well as organizing villagers to work on the protection of Dong cultural heritage such as drum towers, wind and rain bridges, opera stages, dancing, costumes, diet and festivals. It must also work with villagers to ensure security and prevent fires.

Lastly, as stipulated in the contract, the three hamlets have the responsibility to assist the company in developing, building and operating the scenic area. It must ensure the cooperation of locals and solve problems and issues raised by villagers. Hamlets are also responsible for supervising the sale of gate tickets by the tourism company and ensure tickets are exclusively printed by the Liping county government Tourism Bureau.

The arrival of the Fenghua tourism Company in the village accelerated tourist development revealed by the growing number of tourists visiting Zhaoxing (see Table 7: ). The village gained in popularity, especially among domestic tourists which were specifically targeted by the tourism company following the 1984/85 Tourism Policy. Indeed, as we have seen, domestic tourists visiting the province of Guizhou already counted for the majority of all visitors to the province in 2001 (section 5.2 - 96.6 percent - World Bank Report 2007: 12),
hence the objective was to find ways to attract these increasingly numerous domestic tourists to Zhaoxing.

Table 7: Zhaoxing: approximate number of tourists per year\textsuperscript{171}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total visitors per year</th>
<th>International visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>28 000</td>
<td>13 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>42 000</td>
<td>17 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>65 000</td>
<td>17 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding to its popularity, in October 2005, Zhaoxing was recognized by the \textit{National Geography of China} journal as one of the most beautiful ancient towns in China. The book, showcasing the scenic splendors of China, was first published in Chinese and later translated into English in 2006. It includes, amongst other natural beauties, the country's most beautiful mountains, landscapes, lakes, deserts, forests, gorges, coastlines, waterfalls, as well as China's six most beautiful country towns and villages. Furthermore, adding to Zhaoxing's popularity on the tourism market, the Chinese edition of the \textit{National Geographic} magazine, in its \textit{Traveler} edition, cites this Dong village as one of the Most Attractive Places of 2007 (最具诱惑力的目的地 zui juyou huoli mudidi). In March 2008, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage has submitted the candidacy of Dong villages of Southeast Guizhou (counties of Liping, Congjiang and Rongjiang) to be listed on the UNESCO Heritage List.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{171} This data is official data given to my research assistant and I by the new leader of the village (interviewed 27th of April 2007). Indeed, in 2005, according to the World Bank's report (2007: 15) the Qiandongnan prefecture of Guizhou had 33 rural tourism sites that received 1,500,000 visitors. These numbers concord with the official data collected in Zhaoxing, as each site would have received an average of 45 000 visitors that year.

\textsuperscript{172} Mentioned by the local Leader of the Communist Party (interviewed on 24\textsuperscript{th} April 2007). UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Tentative List: "Dong Nationality Villages in Southeast
In this last phase of tourist development, the number of guest houses, of hotels, of restaurants and of souvenir shops has increased at a fast pace. From three guesthouses in 2001, the village has, as of the summer 2011, more than 30 lodging facilities. The tourism company has built three high class hotels: Zhaoxing Bingguan, Zhaoxing VIP Hotel and another that was under construction in the summer 2010 (see Figures 19, 20 and 21). From the provincially selected tourism clusters and areas in the 2002 Master Plan (Figure 18), a number of improvements were targeted such as greater accessibility through the development of road infrastructure; the development of tourism reception facilities such as the development of service centers at the entrance of key sites and the development of a wide range of accommodations (see Figure 19). In the years between 2003 and 2011, these have been developed and continue to be developed in Zhaoxing.


173 This recent data was provided by Etienne Després, a student of mine, who was in the village on the 7th of June 2011.
5.4 Locals' points of view

5.4.1 Economic and political issues

Tourist development in Zhaoxing has brought opportunities, constraints and tensions. Economically, it has improved living conditions, including the creation of new employment niches and diversification of revenues from operating tourism related businesses, some of which I have discussed in the previous chapter. Most villagers interviewed see this as positive change, noting their life has never been so easy. Others remarked that it improved local employment and reduced the number of people leaving to work in factories. The head of the local hospital\textsuperscript{175}, whose wife runs a guesthouse, stated that tourism brings direct and indirect economic benefits. People can build guesthouses, souvenir shops or restaurants and benefit directly from the presence of tourists. Because they neglect their fields to do so,

\textsuperscript{174} Note the newly built highway in the background.
\textsuperscript{175} Interviewed on 24\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.
they buy vegetables from the local market which makes tourism indirectly benefit other villagers. "Most minority people have favourable evaluations of the economic impact of tourism, while a smaller number of people also recognize some negative aspects, such as the increase in prices of local goods" (Yang and Wall 2009: 565). Indeed, economically, tourism is perceived as a good thing by most people interviewed. Only one farmer remarked that inflation had increased his living costs. At the time of the interview, his two daughters and wife were working in factories in Guangdong.

The tensions and negative aspects of tourism mentioned by villagers throughout my fieldwork were generally associated with the presence and control exerted by the Fenghua Company. For example, the process by which the contract was signed created tremendous tensions in the village. One of the three hamlets (Zhaoxing zhongzhai, comprising Lituan) initially refused to sign and asked for changes to be made in the distribution of benefits. When asked why it was only this hamlet that refused to sign the contract, villagers asserted their zhai lao (or tuan leaders) involved in the discussions were the only ones who actually took time to read the details of the contract to the local population. Upon interviewing the hamlet's leader (cunzhang), he confirmed that he took part in the signing process and stated: "... it took two or three months to sign it. Actually it took one or two years to sign".

According to Mister Lu, the contract seemed to be purposely unclear on the redistribution of benefits generated by the taxes collected from the revenues of all hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops and other businesses. Zhai lao and other villagers of Zhaoxing Zhongzhai involved in the signing process asked for a greater percentage of redistribution (see Table 8: ), minor changes were then made to the original contract and according to Mister Lu: "we were forced to sign".

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177 See Cable (2006: 52) for details of a comparable experience in the village of Manchunman, Yunnan.
179 Interviewed on 30th of January 2007.
Table 8 shows the redistribution percentages suggested by the tourism company in the contract. It reveals that a majority of benefits are attributed to the company and that these increase with benefits. Included in the second column are the percentages villagers demanded, as they were hand written on the copy of the contract I obtained. Interestingly, these villagers' demands did not alter the proposed format of redistribution and also left the county government's retributions untouched.\footnote{180}

\footnote{180} I unfortunately was unable to obtain the final version of the contract, yet it can be assumed that it still involved a large majority of benefits to be attributed to the company. In addition, it was unclear how long the signing process took yet one villager said it was finally signed in 2005 (interviewed on 26\textsuperscript{th} of May 2009).
Table 8: Retribution of benefits on the contract "Agreement on Developing and Operating Zhaoxing Scenic Area" according to the tourism company and to Zhaoxing Zhongzhai villagers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Tourism company (proposed in the initial contract)</th>
<th>Zhaoxing Zhongzhai villagers (demanded changes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>70 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villagers</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liping county government</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 500,000 RMB</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villagers</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liping county government</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1,000,000 RMB</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>80 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1,000,000 RMB</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>80 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Villagers</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liping county government</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hamlet which initially refused to sign was the one where the first guest houses were built and where villagers, such as Mister Lu, had actively cooperated to beautify the village by building pedestrian paths around their drum tower. Mister Lu frequently mentioned the case of Longji in Guangxi province, a tourist site that had prohibited non locals to manage and develop tourism. He strongly felt that he and other Zhaoxing villagers could and should develop tourism by themselves in order to keep benefits in their own hands.

Yang, Wall and Smith (2008: 760) note: "…minority people who once made an income from small-scale tourism are frequently marginalized as they are not able to compete with
experienced Han entrepreneurs ". Similarly, Yang and Wall (2009: 564) assert: "minority people are not well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities presented by tourism due to their limited education and lack of both business experience and capital". However, the economic successes of Mister Lu and families in his hamlet seem to prove that they could do without the help of Han developers. Nevertheless in part because of the historical context of minority nationalities in Guizhou (cf. Oakes 1995: 212) and because of the administrative hierarchical structure in charge of tourism policy-making (Airey and Chong 2010), local initiatives not included in larger tourist development schemes are not encouraged. In other words, local involvement is promoted yet macro modernization schemes tend to limit local innovation and promote instead standardized models of tourism development.

Whether the resistance expressed in the signing of the contract is the result of local leaders neglecting to read the contract out to villagers, it is undeniable that Zhaoxing Zhongzhai had been the most involved in tourism development before the arrival of the Fenghua Company. This, in turn may be specifically why its leaders actually took time to explain the intricacies of the contract. Nevertheless, discontent toward the tourism company grew beyond Zhongzhai as new tensions emerged.

One of the first hotels the tourism company built in the village, the Zhaoxing Hotel (see Figure 20: ), was originally the local government building and numerous villagers saw its transformation into a hotel as a symbolic power shift between the local government and the newly established tourism company. The second hotel the company built was the Zhaoxing VIP hotel (Figure 20: ) located on the eastern end of the village. The source of discontent was the expropriation of farming land which entailed as well as the villagers' perception that it was an oversized building. As such, it did not respect contract terms. Moreover, two
villagers (a carpenter and an antique dealer)\textsuperscript{181} complained in interviews that they were still waiting to be paid for work related to the hotel's construction.

\textbf{Figure 20: Government building changed into the Zhaoxing Hotel (picture by author, September 2006)}

\textsuperscript{181} Both were interviewed respectively on 20\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007 and on 19\textsuperscript{th} of November 2006.
On the 1st of August 2005, villagers of the three hamlets in Zhaoxing\textsuperscript{183} sent a petition to the Central Government in Beijing which stated:

The provincial and county government helped Zhaoxing improve its facilities with state funds yet it also let a private company from Guiyang called Fenghua Company, which invests very little money, come to develop Zhaoxing’s tourism. Once this company came to Zhaoxing, they forced our local government to move and changed the local government building into a hotel, they expropriated farming fields to build high buildings which seriously affected the whole image of Zhaoxing as a Dong village...Can we say that what our provincial and county government did is recruiting business and attracting

\textsuperscript{182} www.tripadvisor.com (page consulted on 16\textsuperscript{th} of October 2011).
\textsuperscript{183} The petition is signed by: People from the Zhaoxing Big Village; Village Committee of Zhaoxing Zhongzhai; Village Committee of Zhaoxing Shangzhai and Village Committee of Zhaoxing.
investments? Or is it just handing over the management rights of Zhaoxing to some private company?\textsuperscript{184}

The petition ends by stating that numerous other petitions have been sent to county and provincial governments but villagers received no answer. According to Yang and Wall (2009: 564), in China, tension between state regulations of tourism and ethnic autonomy is revealed in the fact that the government at all levels is involved in tourism planning and development. Local, county and provincial governments are often direct beneficiaries to tourism's economic success while simultaneously, officially coordinating different interests. However, as implied by these petitions and as also noted by Yang and Wall (Ibid.), Zhaoxing local community does not oppose government-led tourism development yet deplores the lack of local consultation and particularly the domination of a Han-run tourism company that sees ethnic groups and their culture as exploitable resources. This was revealed in an interview by a lower-level manager of Fenghua Company: "…if tourists no longer come to Zhaoxing, there are tons of other villages elsewhere".\textsuperscript{185}

Local people had tried however to participate and voice their opinions on the shape of tourist development they hoped for their village. According to the township leader (xiangzhang), villagers frequently came to consult him on issues related to tourism development.\textsuperscript{186} As he frequently expressed villagers' views to higher levels of government and to the Fenghua Company, villagers re-extended their trust in his leadership through a ballot held on the 8\textsuperscript{th} of November 2006. On the 16\textsuperscript{th} of November, it was officially announced that the township leader had been re-elected through free competitive elections for another five-year mandate. Not long after however, in the beginning of 2007, he was officially 'promoted' to another village. The reasons of his transfer are unclear and rumours in the village suggested he defended villagers' interests over those of the Fenghua

\textsuperscript{184} This is my translation of a copy of the petition given to me by a villager in 2007. The petition cites the example of Longji, a scenic site in Guangxi province that prohibits the involvement and investments of outside (private) companies as a possible alternative for Zhaoxing's tourism development.
\textsuperscript{185} Interviewed informally on 4\textsuperscript{th} of June 2007.
\textsuperscript{186} Interviewed on 17\textsuperscript{th} of November 2006.
Company, or in other words, over tourist development.\textsuperscript{187} A villager from Zhongzhai explained: "...they [the tourism company] do whatever they want. Because we were forced to sign their contract, our township leader was not happy. So they even made the government change our township leader to another."\textsuperscript{188}

Hence, tourism-led economic development may go against the hypothesis that improved economic conditions lead to increased rural participation and democratization (O'Brien 1994). Free elections may give villagers a feeling of greater control over local leadership, yet it does not seem to increase their involvement in local decision-making processes. Furthermore, the appointment in Zhaoxing of a new local leader of the Communist Party, who had previously held the position of Head of the Tourism Bureau in Liping county government, revealed clearly tourism oriented development plans for the village. According to one of the candidate for the position of township leader: "the county government did this on purpose. The government wants him to accelerate tourism development here because he has lots of experience. Normally this is the responsibility of the township leader but now he is mainly in charge and we are assisting him..."\textsuperscript{189} Tourist development has increased state incursion in village affairs while diminishing the local government's power to represent local villagers.

### 5.4.2 The village as tourist space

In addition to the above-mentioned economic and political issues and tensions related to tourist development, the issue of space was very sensitive to villagers of all three hamlets. Indeed, with the development of tourism came the commoditization of village space. The process of making a space, a site open to tourism involves, according to Alsayyad (2001: \textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{187} It is difficult, especially for a foreign researcher, to know the entire story. As mentioned in Chapter Two, I was repeatedly told to avoid political issues in my research and this situation seemed to be just the kind of situation authorities did not want me to know about. When I met for an informal dinner with the demised township leader in Liping in February 2007, he did not outwardly explain his transfer, nor did he reject my hypothesis.

\textsuperscript{188} Interviewed on 20 and 21\textsuperscript{st} of April 2007.

\textsuperscript{189} Interview 24\textsuperscript{th} of April 2007.
4), the act of engagement, or in other words, the process by which the "gaze transforms the material reality of the built environment into a cultural imaginary". In order to market and beautify the village for tourism, the Fenghua Company and the local government have brought numerous physical changes to the village. Similarly to Lijiang in Yunnan province, the village was 'cleaned' and decorated to fit "...an imaginary vision of tourist sensibilities" (my translation; McKhann 2001: 43). Chinese red lanterns have been suspended on house fronts along the river and the main road, colored neon lighting have been placed on one of the drum tower's roofs, spot lights have been installed on some of the houses' roofs, satellite dishes have been removed, cleaners have been paid to collect garbage and sweep paths and a new wind and rain bridge has been built on the outskirt of the village (see Figure 22: ).

Figure 22: Newly built wind and rain bridge on the western end of the village (picture by Frédéric de Verle, summer 2010)
Entrance gates were also extensively renovated or completely reconstructed between 2002 and 2005. The village now has three: one is located on the western end of the village, one on the northern end and a third on the eastern side of the village. With mountains to the south, every road access into the village is marked by an entrance gate. The development of tourism in the village has emphasized the role of these gates in various ways. In line with the restriction to build additional houses in the village of Zhaoxing, these serve to demarcate Zhaoxing proper. In addition, they serve as the welcoming site for visiting guests (mainly important government officials or large groups of tourists). The Fenghua Company's performance team, composed of beautiful young girls and boys, offers welcoming ceremonies that follow a set of standard routines including a first blocking at the gate, with some drinking and singing and a procession into the village followed generally by a song and dance performance under a drum tower. Oakes observed these "...fairly standardized reception routine[s]" in Miao villages of central Guizhou (2006: 183) and I also experienced a similar welcoming ceremony in the Miao village of Xijiang during the summer 2004 (Figure 23:).

For tourists that are part of organized tours (both domestic and international) a visit to nearby villages (such as Tang'an) is generally organized for the next day. Tourists are encouraged to hike to these villages and to enjoy a stroll in the surrounding terraced paddy fields. Outside of organized activities, tourists tend to walk around the village and visit its many souvenir shops. The evenings are generally marked by singing and dancing performances. Tourists rarely stay beyond two days depending on their time of arrival. Individual backpackers may stay on longer yet rarely spend more than three or four days in

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190 According to Geary et al. (2003: 46), villages always comprise at least one entrance gate, whether elaborate wooden architectures or just a simple marking such as a stone placed in the path. These serve three purposes: 1) discourage outsiders from entering the village, whether spirits or human beings; 2) keep domestic animals inside or outside the village; 3) as a designated space that can be blocked in hosting ceremonies for weddings, for visits from officials and now, for entertainment for tourists.
and around the village. The company hopes to develop and promote surrounding villages and make Zhaoxing a 'home base' for visiting other 'more traditional' Dong villages.

Figure 23: Welcoming ceremony of tourists by the Fenghua Company’s performance team (picture by Fenghua Company, April 2008)

Generally speaking, domestic tourists visiting Zhaoxing tend to seek 'a good show' (cf. Nyíri 2006) and enjoy performances by the Fenghua Company's troupe. International tourists, particularly western tourists (from Europe, Australia and North America) traveling alone or in small groups, tend to prefer hikes to more remote villages and enjoy watching

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191 Based on fieldwork interviews and observations of tourists.
192 Interview with Fenghua Company’s manager on 6th of July 2007.
the Dong villagers' everyday life. Toward the end of fieldwork, however, an increasing number of foreign organized tours were visiting the village and tourists' average age increased. Numerous groups of tourists (mostly coming from France) were composed of individuals above 50 years old. This new type of tourist in Zhaoxing required certain adjustments from the Fenghua Company as these visitors sought to experience a certain (imagined) form of authenticity yet they also tended to request a high level of comfort.  

The company has furthermore built two parking lots on the outskirts of the village as part of a plan to make Zhaoxing completely pedestrian. As announced in the contract, the company also plans to charge an entrance fee to the village. As mentioned by Nyíri (2006: 7), "...tourism in China is understood by its managers as the consumption of bounded and controlled zones". Charging a fee to enter the village would clearly mark the village as a scenic spot to be consumed. At the time of fieldwork, the sale of gate tickets had not yet begun yet brought numerous debates among villagers on such things as the price of the ticket (unofficially set at the high price of 80 RMB - 13 CAN$) and on whether visiting families and friends would also have to pay. Some villagers also feared that if tourists paid to enter the village, they would expect villagers to offer them a show which, they felt, may not be compatible with their everyday agricultural and social activities.

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193 Based on informal interviews with passing tourists and an interview with a tourist guide catering to foreign tourists (Guiyang, 9th of February 2007) as well as the interview with the Fenghua Company's manager, 6th of July 2007.

194 Increasing tensions accompanied rumors of corruption related to these parking lots which cost 100 000 RMB (1620 CAN$) but for which the company and the government claimed 200 000 RMB (3200 CAN$ - based on informal conversations with villagers, 26th of May 2009).

195 Tickets, however had been sold in the past, yet instead of entrance gate tickets, these were sold as one paid for lodging. When I first visited the village in 2000, there was such a ticket (see Annex 7). According to a guesthouse manager, the tickets went from 5 RMB (0.80 CAN$) to 10 RMB (1.60 CAN$) to 15RMB (2.40 CAN$). Guesthouse owners would get 20 percent (interview held on 26th of January 2007). Despite contract terms, tickets to enter the village were still not being sold in the summer 2011 (again, thanks to Etienne Després for this information).

196 Villagers considered this a high price compared to previously sold tickets at less than 15 RMB (2.40 CAN$ in 2000). Also, tourist found it quite expensive when comparing with other villages nearby (Langde, Jiaomeng, Xijiang) that have entrance fees that vary from 15 RMB (2.40 CAN$) to 60 RMB (9.70 CAN$).
Such changes seemed to bring the village of Zhaoxing on the path to becoming a theme park village (cf. Oakes 2006). Accordingly, in 2006, new rules were also established to prohibit the building of new houses in the village and to impose a prescribed style in renovating old houses. The goal was to keep Zhaoxing as a 'pure primitive ecological and cultural village'. As is the case for Dai villages in Yunnan studied by Yang and Wall (2009: 565), "...in an attempt to maintain the exotic appearance of ethnic villages, managers have formulated many regulations to conserve their uniqueness and 'purity', such as the conservation of traditional Dai architecture".

Elder villagers complained that the village could no longer grow, despite their children having children. Some families, especially those with boys due to the patrilocal organisation of Dong lineage, must now all live under the same roof, however small the house may be. To some, this is perceived as a prohibition to enjoy better living conditions although their village is officially developing. Others clearly understand that to keep the village attractive to tourists, they must preserve their 'Ganlan-style' architecture. However, as mentioned above, what angered villagers the most is the fact that the tourism company did not submit to these regulations when building the VIP hotel and again, later, in building a new accommodations and service center at the western entrance of the village (Figure 20: and Figure 22: ). Yang and Wall (2009: 565) have noticed a similar situation whereas a tourism company built modern souvenir shops in Dai Yuan, Yunnan, although prohibiting villagers from building in modern architectural styles; "this contradictory and hypocritical behaviour exacerbates tensions between the two sides".

Meanwhile, a carpenter and a wood carver also complained about the obligation to apply for a special permission to renovate their house; an application that includes a 2000 RMB (320 CAN$) deposit as a guarantee to follow the 'Ganlan-style'. They remarked that however they renovated houses there were always excuses not to give the deposit back. In

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197 Interviewed on 20th of April 2006 and on 5th of July 2007.
addition, farmers, whose fields are located on the other side of the mountain, also complained that their request to enlarge the path leading to their fields had repeatedly been refused. Similarly to the villagers of Huashisho studied by Oakes (2006: 187) they were told: "it would destroy the scenery".

Villagers of Zhaoxing find they must negotiate between new opportunities provided by the development of tourism and the constraints ethnic tourism imposes on the shape of their modernization. Meanwhile, the local government, pressured by county and provincial schemes of tourist development, must find ways to complete the development of Zhaoxing as a scenic spot while also accommodating locals’ desire to enjoy the material benefits associated with modernity. In order to do so, there are plans to build a 'New Zhaoxing' where people could build modern houses; a new village, 7 kilometres away, where all signs of modernity, such as schools, government and administrative buildings would be located.

The first step related to this project that was announced by local authorities was to move the junior high school to another location. The school is strategically located up the mountain side above Zhaoxing in an area offering a spectacular view on the village. Villagers from Zhaoxing (including all three hamlets) and from the surrounding villages of Jitang, Dengjiang and Xiage vigorously opposed this project and sent a petition to county authorities on the 6th of July 2006. They argued the present location to be ideal for learning; that moving the school would imply some families could no longer send their children to school due to increased walking distance and they threatened to work against the development of tourism in their village and drive the tourism company out if their voices were not listened to. As of the summer 2010, the school had still not been moved and the construction of 'New Zhaoxing' had still not begun.

One was formally interviewed on 20th and 21st of April, 2007; another was interviewed on 24th of January 2007; meanwhile other farmers expressed their discontents through informal conversations. This is my translation of a copy of the petition I obtained during fieldwork (see a copy of the translated petition in Annex 8).
5.4.3 A new vocabulary of difference: the authenticity debate

The intention to build a 'New Zhaoxing' is, according to the local Leader of the Communist Party, based on the idea that: "...we don't want to develop Zhaoxing into a pure commercial town [like Lijiang in Yunnan]. Our original idea is to give Zhaoxing back the Dong village's authenticity". However, how authenticity is defined differs between the local Head of the Communist Party, the Fenghua Company, local elders, the local government and local youth. Furthermore, power among these stakeholders is unevenly distributed and shapes local debates over the definition of Dong ethnic culture.

One of the most important players in the authenticity debate is the local Party Leader who previously held the position of Head of the Tourism Bureau in Liping. Throughout the interview he explained the difficulty in finding a balance between protection and development:

We don't want to develop tourism in the form of pillage seeking short term profit. We are assigned here by the Party organization; we have to think for long term development. We have to find a connecting point between preserving and developing [...] In fact what I am trying to do is to establish a "Zhaoxing Model". I wonder how Zhaoxing can lead the whole area become rich under the guidance of the Party. We are going to use our own things - our golden bowl [means valuable things, here it means ethnic culture] to help us develop. In the meantime, I am also trying to find a way to develop and protect our culture so it can find its unique place in the multiplicity of cultures worldwide.

According to him, tourism can revive Dong ethnic culture and it can protect it. As noted by Airey and Chong (2010), tourism policy making in China rests on trial and error (policy-oriented learning) and for the development model of Zhaoxing, the Party Leader wants to distance himself from the Lijiang model (cf. MacKhan 2001), which, he believes, is too commercialized and where there is little original ethnic culture left. He wants to formulate plans for local Dong culture to continue to develop while being able to attract tourists and

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200 Interviewed on 24th of April 2007.
201 Interviewed on 24th of April 2007.
respond to their demands. The building of a 'New Zhaoxing' is an important part of such a plan.

Another plan to protect culture is, according to the Party leader, to bring ethnic culture into the classroom. He believes most changes in Dong culture are brought by local people who have left to work in factories and come back thinking Dong costumes and songs are not fashionable: "...they aspire for modern conditions, high buildings, brand clothes and they prefer pop music". With the development of tourism in the village, many have returned and the Leader is trying to develop a program so to be able to 'teach' returning villagers Dong culture: "...we are thinking of a program 'entering the ethnical culture course'. We want Dong culture to go into the classroom". In other words, the educational goals of the modernizing Chinese nation-state may be adapted to teach minority nationalities what it means to be 'ethnic' for tourism purposes hence both serving the state's definition of ethnic culture (cf. Mullaney 2011) while attempting to shape its touristic revival. Indeed,

...the states in Southeast Asia seek to emphasize primarily the relatively superficial, external and therefore non-threatening (Wood 1997: 23) manifestations of ethnicity that are precisely those most accessible to visiting tourists: costumes, arts and crafts, dances and similar performances. Ethnic identity tends thereby to be reduced to a folkloric display, most prominently in China… (Cohen 2001: 45).

Accordingly, the aspects of ethnic culture that are promoted for tourism, by the state and, as I will show, by the tourism industry, in Zhaoxing are the village architecture, handicrafts, opera theatres, festivals as well as singing and dancing performances. On the other hand, lineage organisation, the use of medicinal plants and recipes, agricultural techniques, religious beliefs, and culinary particularities (except for local brewed alcohol) are for the most part not promoted and packaged for tourist consumption.

It must be noted however that whether any of the Party Leader's plans will actually be applied in Zhaoxing remains questionable. A Chinese anthropologist working at Guizhou
University202, who studies the Miao village of Xijiang, explained that local leaders throughout Guizhou have elaborated similar plans yet have rarely obtained funds to achieve them. Furthermore, as noted by Tak-chuen (2005: 262):

…local officials are not evaluated by their actual performance, but through their endeavors to demonstrate their vision, to get funding and investment instead. Thus to win favorable appraisal from their superiors, local officials have to continuously indicate that they are committed to these goals and they are endeavoring to formulate plans to accomplish the goals.

As noted by Yang and Wall (2009: 566) the government focuses on planning tourism development, meanwhile tourist entrepreneurs prioritize economic returns. As such, as noted by a villager: "the real leader is the government and the tourist company is the executor".203

Indeed, throughout the interview with the Party Leader,204 he repeatedly asserted the government's control over the tourist company: "...the company came to develop tourism as a business developer. They came to transform cultural resources into tourism products and to do marketing promotion of Dong culture. It is however the government that controls tourism development: the company needs to ask government approval before they do something and they have to meet the criteria we establish and avoid over-commercializing cultural resources".

On the other hand, one of the most respected elders in the village stated:

The Fenghua Company is the one making the big plans. They are very smart. They are doing the planning, but use the government force to persuade us. The

202 Informal conversation on 23rd of November 2006 at Guizhou University – Huaxi.
203 Interviewed on 24th of April 2007 (afternoon).
204 Interviewed on 24th of April 2007 (morning).
government acts in front and they instruct behind the curtains. In fact they are planning and the government is listening to them.\textsuperscript{205}

The change of leadership following the signing of the contract and the company taking over the government building to transform it into a hotel are some of the events that have brought villagers to lose trust in their local government's capacity to represent their interests.

Much more concerned with profit, the authenticity advocated by the tourism company is based on a theme park model which reproduces key elements of the media representation of minority nationalities. As mentioned by Yang and Wall (2009: 566):

\begin{quote}
Tourism entrepreneurs, who cooperate with the government, often take control of ethnic resources, commodify ethnic cultures, and determine cultural expressions in the tourist zones. They are the key actors in selecting and shifting aspects of ethnic cultures to produce "authentic" cultural images, traditions, and lifestyles that meet commercial needs.
\end{quote}

In seeking to attract domestic tourists, as we have seen with the construction of space, the Fenghua Company promotes the \textit{mise en spectacle} of ethnic culture according to the canons presented in theme parks. Nyíri (2006: 68) indeed remarks that compared to the contemplative nature of Western tourism, for Chinese tourists "...performance, not 'everyday life' is expected and appreciated". Hence he adds, "...landscape is experienced not so much for 'its own' sake as it is as a sign for a set of cultural references" (Ibid.). Domestic tourists, targeted by the tourism company, seek to confirm the popular image of Dong ethnicity through seeing Dong popularized architecture and attending a Dong performance that includes singing.

Indeed, the Dong are generally typified by their great singing culture and their carpentry skills. Hence theme parks present the Dong nationality in an area generally comprising a Wind and Rain Bridge, a Galan-style house, and a drum tower under which are presented

\textsuperscript{205} Interviewed 29\textsuperscript{th} of January 2007.
beautiful young girls singing the Dong's famous grand opera song *Dongzu Dage* (Figure 24:).

As Oakes (1997: 48) remarked:

In the four theme parks I've visited, the Dong villages all feature identical drum towers, covered bridges, waterwheels, and post-pile houses, despite a great variety of forms and styles throughout regions populated by Dong. Filtered by representations in tourist theme parks and by images in television, film, and other media, *minzu* groups are associated with very specific and delimited cultural markers that are standardized and circulated in China’s burgeoning industry of cultural commodity production.

Figure 24: *Shenzhen China Folk Culture Villages (Picture by author, July 2007)*
Moreover, as remarked by Comaroff and Comaroff (2009: 24):

…those who seek to brand their otherness, to profit from what makes them different, find themselves having to do so in the universally recognizable terms in which difference is represented, merchandised, rendered negotiable by means of the abstract instrument of the market; money, the commodity, commensuration, the calculus supply and demand, price, branding.

According to this model, the 'original' villages that served to inspire the building of theme parks dedicated to minority nationalities (China Folk Culture Village parks) are themselves, when developing tourism, asked to replicate these theme parks' style of rituals, displays and performances. As Bruner (2001: 893) remarks for the case of the Maasai in Kenya, the representations made in the tourist country are re-appropriated locally and given back to tourists. In this case, this occurs in the domestic tourists' cities via China Folk Cultural Village parks.

While material culture is marketed to fit tourists' desires, for elders of the village, following the turmoil of the 1960s and 70s, tourism is seen as an opportunity to revive ethnic culture. As observed by Oakes (1997: 65), tourism provides: "...a way to embrace modernity without losing their traditions, a way to ensure that Zhaoxing remain authentically Dong". In other words, "...tourism has nurtured a sense of being ethnically distinctive" (Bai 2007: 254).

As stated by two local elders in their sixties:

With tourism, the biggest change is attitude. Tourism helped the development of ethnical culture. For example, our ethnical musical instrument, my father generation was very familiar with them. In my generation we were 'educated' and left those things behind. In the 1980s and 1990s we were still not very fond
of those Dong songs and dramas but with the development of tourism, we started to learn them again.206

I think after the development of tourism, our primitive lifestyle became stronger. Before tourism, a few people were wearing Dong cloth and colored the cloth. But now, you can see more people wear the Dong cloth. We all wear the Dong cloth at festivals.207

In addition, other villagers also consider one of the advantages of tourism is the revival of culture:

After the development of tourism our [ethnical culture] is getting better. Now you can hear the sound of beating the cloth every evening [cloths are made of cotton, are dyed with indigo and are beaten with a wooden hammer to fix the color]. 3 years ago, you wouldn't hear it. It had disappeared years ago. Now it came back because of tourism (Figure 25:

Lots of traditional Dong customs were nearly forgotten by people before the development of tourism. Now, we started to recover the old Dong culture, such as Dong songs, Dong Dage [Dong Grand Choral song], Dong opera and so on. Lots of these traditional customs would have been lost if we had not done anything. Now lots of them are recovered.208

206 Interviewed on 29th of January 2007.
207 Interviewed on 20th of November 2006.
208 Guest house manager, interviewed on 1st of February 2007.
Indeed, for elders and for some villagers, tourism has not only permitted the revival of ethnic culture, it has allowed them to proudly present it to the rest of the country and to the rest of the world. Tourist development hence may provide a certain sense of pride.

Nevertheless, some villagers blame the company for presenting an inauthentic version of their customs:

For example, when I see the costumes the performance team wears, I think the company really doesn't know about Dong traditional culture. Their costumes are not made of Dong cloths, it is not traditional enough. So when tourists look at the performance they are disgusted. Why don't they use the local cloth? If they use it, others who come here will know we are really Dong. In the past, Dong people would wear a chicken feather in their hair. Many minorities worship birds but now, the people in the performance team just wear flowers in their hair. By the feather the Dong used to wear in their hair, scholars could find
the different origin of the Dong people. If the performance team used costumes that were really used in the past, scholars could study how ancestors used to live. Now because they have changed the costume, scholars cannot trace back the past. The same could be said for clothes... 209

The Head of the Cultural Bureau in the local government, who is also the village's singing teacher, has stopped working for the Fenghua Company performance team. According to him, 210 they changed songs and performances to make them more colourful and elaborate (Figure 26: . As a result, he believed, they are distancing themselves from more traditional performances. In order to contribute locally to the revival of Dong ethnic culture, villagers have set up their own performance teams that are under the guidance of the Head of the Cultural Bureau mentioned above. He however admits having difficulty competing with the company's performance team which has higher level government contacts and has more funds. But, he says, our troupes allow tourists to see the "...pure primitive ecological culture of the Dong being performed". 211

209 Antique store owner, interviewed on 19th of November 2006.
210 Interviewed on 18th of November 2006.
211 Ibid.
Most of all, as expressed by an elder and his son, Dong customs became attractive to Zhaoxing's youth as they came back from working in factories, thus allowing the generational reproduction of culture.

Young people become more and more indifferent to their minority culture and they are influenced by culture from outside of the village. When young people come back from outside the village, they become indifferent to their culture and don't love it as before. Now because the government advocates the development
of minority tourism, they are forced to develop their minority culture and they [the young people] feel it is also good to develop tourism.\(^\text{212}\)

Oakes (1997: 66) had remarked however that the youth of Zhaoxing were much more ambivalent about their traditions. As mentioned by a performance troupe member:

> The first year I joined the *Fenghua* Company Performance Troupe, we learned Dong songs with the Culture Department Head. Now, he does not work for the company anymore. The songs we learn have been adapted to modern times; they are faster and nicer to listen to.\(^\text{213}\)

In interviews and informal conversations, young people were much more willing to revisit cultural customs to make them more 'attractive' and modern. Nevertheless, according to the Head of the Cultural Bureau, there were tensions between the tourism company and its young performance workers. The company had not given them their promised bonuses based on benefits (approximately 10 percent) and salaries were kept low (between 300 and 400 RMB per month - 50 to 65 CAN$). Hence I was not surprised to learn, on my last visit to village in May 2009, that all performance members from Zhaoxing who were working for the tourism company had quit. A villager furthermore mentioned the company had a hard time recruiting performance members locally, having to go to Congjiang to find workers.\(^\text{214}\)

The packaging of ethnic culture for tourism in Zhaoxing rests on the idea of promoting its Dong authenticity. This vision of authenticity is one that is 'out of time' or beyond the reach of time (Duara 1998: 294). It entails a revival of ethnic customs, especially external expressions of ethnicity as defined by the state and presented in China Folk Cultural Village parks. It rests on a vision of authenticity as something that can and has in part been lost to modernity, both as a way of living and in terms of material culture. Meanwhile the tourism company looks to package a product that will sell, villagers, both young and old,

\(^{212}\) An elder tailor and his son, interviewed on 19\(^{\text{th}}\) of April 2007.

\(^{213}\) Performance troupe member interviewed on 7\(^{\text{th}}\) of July 2007.

\(^{214}\) Informal interview, 26\(^{\text{th}}\) of May 2009. Congjiang is the neighboring county; the town of Congjiang is located approximately 60km to the southwest of Zhaoxing.
try to find a variety of ways to indigenize change by giving local and historical meaning to their 'revived culture'. Generally speaking, in so doing, elders tend to romanticize an imagined past, a pre-revolution, pre-modern period when life was simple and the village was: "...like a paradise island isolated from the world".\textsuperscript{215} Younger villagers, most of them having been to the city for manufacture work, look to their ethnic culture with a mix of pride and shame; tagged backward yet attractive, they try to navigate an in-between position where they can choose what aspects of modernity and what aspects of traditions they wish to have. The Leader of the Communist Party, being a Dong himself, yet being invested with powers to accelerate tourist development in Zhaoxing tries to balance protection and development with the elaboration of numerous plans, which for now, are locked in the closet of his office.

5.5 Conclusion(s)

The inhabitants of Zhaoxing are experiencing modernization through tourist development schemes. As a catalyst to change, tourist development shapes modernity in numerous ways. Accordingly, economic development is mainly driven by the expansion of a tourism-oriented service industry; space is re-constructed and renovated according to an imagined authenticity and politics as well as education are increasingly driven by tourism related interests. In addition, cultural revival is promoted and debated among actors with varying power. As clearly noted by McKhann (2001) for the case of Lijiang, we cannot paint the picture of Zhaoxing's tourist development and the shape it is taking without presenting the active part played by local inhabitants. In no way a homogenous group, villagers of Zhaoxing express their views on the recent changes their village underwent in a variety of ways. They, however, have shown to be able to come together (even beyond the village per se) to oppose changes such as the moving of the junior high school or simply to have their voices and viewpoints heard.

\textsuperscript{215} Elder interviewed on 29\textsuperscript{th} of January 2007.
As bearers of Dong culture, they have entered the authenticity debate, creating their own performance troupes and refusing to work for the company's troupe. Authenticity is not the search for an original state of affairs stemming from a precise moment of history; instead, it is a constant dialogue and debate that involves different actors, each with their own interests. The power struggle involved in the (re)presentation of Dong ethnic culture, as remarked by Oakes (2006: 187), makes authenticity "a regime of power [...] a contest over whose authority would determine its meaning".

The development of tourism in Zhaoxing has renewed the vocabulary of difference between Han and non-Han, to one between the visited and the visitor, reaffirming the ethnic boundary. It is a vocabulary fraught with tensions between local and non-local meanings in which actors find themselves caught in a game of cultural ping pong. In addition, it reproduces old tensions whereas the non-Han are once again asked to stand at the traditional, primitive and exotic end of the civilization spectrum. Hence although tourism has permitted a form of ethnic culture revival that brings pride to Dong villagers, it perpetuates villagers' positionality as 'not-yet' modern.

Despite the changes noted in this chapter and the debates surrounding the revival of ethnic culture, interestingly, numerous villagers asserted in interviews that their daily habits have changed very little since the development of tourism. Those directly involved in tourism say they have accommodated visitors' tastes in their cooking habits,\footnote{One noted that they were doing much more stir fry for example, interview 26\textsuperscript{th} January 2007.} or have learned a few words in English to sell their handicrafts,\footnote{Interview 21\textsuperscript{st} of November 2006.} yet most villagers assert their everyday life has not changed radically with the development of tourism. When pressured to enunciate recent changes to their village, they point, as I have shown, to new and better infrastructure, improved economic conditions and the revival of ethnic culture. Yet they continue to worship their ancestors, to organize themselves in lineages, to mark specific moments such as marriages, the birth of a child, a baby's first month birthday, funerals and harvests with
rituals they learned from their parents and which have always been appropriated and adjusted by different generations according to changing circumstances.\textsuperscript{218}

There are numerous probable explanations to why villagers assert their lifestyles have not changed with the development of tourism in their village. One may be that such is the case; there have not been radical changes like those they have historically experienced, such as collectivization and de-collectivization. It may also be that the outward expressions of ethnicity promoted by tourism constitute a front stage they are used to present to outsiders while keeping other customs away from the gaze of the state. To assert tourism has not affected their lifestyles is also a way to show their culture's resistance to Han-driven development schemes; the discourse is in itself empowering. Finally, the adaptive nature of culture which constantly combines reproduction with innovation to deal with changes in the social structure makes it difficult to pin point precise changes; as the only consistency is change.

\textsuperscript{218} The analysis of which, in terms of cultural continuity, reproduction and transformation is still, for the Dong nationality, highly under studied by western scholars.
6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

I have begun this thesis with the research question: how do the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing, Guizhou Province, China, perceive and indigenize the economic transition led by China's modernization and in particular ethnic tourism since the 1990s? To answer this question, I have reviewed the specificity of being Dong when facing tourism-led modernity and the fact that these recent changes are embedded in historical dynamics. I have also surveyed the notion of modernity itself and the changes it has brought locally. Then I have turned to an analysis of the particularity of using ethnic tourism as the principal catalyst of modernization. For each of these themes I have attempted to consider and interpret the various viewpoints of Zhaoxing villagers and their responses. As indeed, similarly to the Tswana studied by Comaroff and Comaroff, the Dong have constantly made an effort "...to fashion an understanding of, and gain conceptual mastery over, a changing world" (1991: 31). In so doing, I have consciously moved away from the premise that minority nationalities of China are passive victims of the homogenizing force of modernization and I have tried instead to convey their agency. In this chapter, I review the three aspects treated in this thesis: history, modernity and ethnic tourism. Then I produce a synthesis of villagers' viewpoints and show the complexity of domination, resistance and agency at the local level.

6.2 The historical Dong villagers of Zhaoxing

Use the past to serve the present

—Mao Zedong

Village elders are sitting under the Rentuan drum tower waiting for the convoy to arrive. The festival being celebrated is called \textit{tai guan ren} (抬官人) and is considered a Dong custom celebrated throughout the Dong country. In fact, it is
even advertised in tourism brochures and on Internet sites\textsuperscript{219} as one of multiple tourist attractions the Dong have to offer. In Zhaoxing, the festival portrays a reversal of a situation the Dong faced periodically during Imperial times. It consists of one person who dresses up as an important official from the county town and who sits in a sedan chair fixed over two bamboo poles. As the official is carried around the village, people dressed up as aboriginals (wearing simple clothes and dirt on their faces and legs) come to block the road and sing songs. The official has to give them money. Then some girls also come to stop the convoy and once again, the official has to give them money. The official who would, in Imperial times, be carried on a sedan chair to collect taxes is now the official who is blocked by villagers and who must give villagers money. Interestingly, this festival is performed in other Dong village without the reversal found in Zhaoxing (fieldnotes, winter 2007 - cf. Geary et al., 2003: 208-209).

This scene reveals that the Dong of Zhaoxing, despite living in a rugged and inhospitable region, have a long history of contacts with domination schemes. It furthermore shows through this reversal that the Dong of Zhaoxing both assert their agency in the recounting of history and claim their uniqueness among the Dong national category. It also hints at how such festivals are advertised by the tourist industry and revived by Dong villagers; a point I will consider in this discussion.

Zhaoxing was founded approximately five hundred years ago, toward the end of the Ming Dynasty. Since its very beginning, its inhabitants have interacted with neighbours and with officials of different regimes. Evidence of historical contacts is found in such festivals as the one described by Geary, in the Confucian names given to the five drum towers of the village, or in the celebration of Chinese New Year\textsuperscript{220} among other examples. These indicate

\textsuperscript{219} See for example: \textit{China Highlights} (page consulted on 3\textsuperscript{rd} of October 2010) http://www.chinahighlights.com/southeast-guizhou/travel-tips.htm

\textsuperscript{220} In Zhaoxing, during New Year festivities, each drum tower group holds particular activities. For example, the \textit{Yituan} drum tower does the Lion Dance (called \textit{sashizi} 撒石子). The second day after new year until the 4\textsuperscript{th} day, members of the drum tower group perform on the street with a typical Chinese large lion moppet brought to life by several men hidden underneath. \textit{Rentuan} drum tower also offers performances on the second day after New Year doing the 'mask changing' (called \textit{biàn liǎn} 變臉) presentation which they play across the village (following the river flow). This is also a Chinese tradition practiced around China and consists of rapidly changing face masks. The \textit{Lituan} drum tower does the Dragon Dance (called \textit{wǔ lóng} 舞龙) also performed across China and
that populations of the southwest were not completely isolated but were in constant interaction, exchange and communication with other groups. The history of the Dong thus attests historical relations with other societies which have contributed to the present-day situation and positionality of the villagers of Zhaoxing within the Chinese nation-state.

Although the official history of the province clearly demonstrates that peripheral populations were subjected to various forms of control and domination, their subjective recounting of this history reveals that the Dong did not simply passively comply. Indeed, in too many narratives of Chinese domination, peripheral populations are depicted as victims of sinicization and appear as "neo-historyless" peoples (Sahlins 1999: ii). In other words, paraphrasing Sahlins (Ibid.), it is often considered that as soon as imperial powers reached minority areas, populations lost their agency and slowly also lost their cultures (cf. Berlie 1998).

I have found that, when they recount their history, villagers of Zhaoxing emphasize rebellions and resistance, asserting their agency and reaffirming their identity as distinct and unique. The maintenance of a distinct Dong identity is processual and depends in large part on the repeated reaffirming of boundaries through and with history. This does not however imply that boundaries are impermeable, as for example, when newcomers arrived in Zhaoxing, they were integrated into Dong patrilineal groups by taking the Lu surname. As I have shown, up until the classification project of the minzu shibie, ethnic categories were fluid and were based on a continuum whereas one could be more or less Han (and most probably, more or less Dong). The classification project fixed these categories and scholars have shown that minorities (although mainly the elite) were involved in the project rather than being passively receptive of this new taxonomy (cf. Tapp 2002; Litzinger 2000). In other words, and to speak broadly, the Dong identity villagers of Zhaoxing assert today overseas (in Chinatowns); the performance consists of bringing to life a dragon on a number of poles. All drum tower groups play Dong drama (also called opera) including Xintuan and Zhituan that do not, comparatively to the others, hold other activities. Dong drama consists of a staged performance also highly charged with Han elements (such as musical accompaniment for example) yet it is played in Kam language (based on formal and informal interviews in the village 2006-2007).
is in large part based on interactions with others and on the reproduction of group boundaries through changing historical circumstances.

6.3 The indigenization of modernity

The rise of modernization and globalization is defined as the increased cultural, physical and political integration of all peoples of the world and evidenced by the presence of "...global systems – systems of capital, technology, ideology, and representation" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: 11). These however, have not necessarily brought, as once believed, cultural homogenization. History, it seems, has proven wrong "Marx's prophecy to the effect that Western hegemony is human destiny"221 (Sahlins 1993: 2). Despite this, we are seeing a myriad of tactics and responses varying across time and space throughout Asia and elsewhere (Michaud and Forsyth 2011; Caouette and Turner 2009; Appadurai 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993 amongst others).

Local responses to global influences of the modernist discourse and practices (Escobar 1995) have indeed been unexpected, various and stemming from a wide range of local conditions. As Sahlins (1999: ix) says "unified by the expansion of Western capitalism over recent centuries, the world is also being re-diversified by indigenous adaptations to the global juggernaut". It has brought what he terms the "indigenization of modernity". Resuming Sahlins, Michaud (2011: 2) defines this indigenization as the fact that "economically and politically weak societies facing powerful outside influences are indeed changed by these influences; but they also actively and creatively use what power they have to interpret and adapt these to suit their own concerns". Although power may, in facing capitalist development, be greatly reduced due to the constraints such a system tends to

221 As pointed out by Bernard Bernier, Sahlins here seems to simplify what Marx wrote. Marx noted that capitalism as a system, which had its roots in Western Europe and North America, was extending everywhere in the world. It is not Western hegemony that Marx saw happening but capitalist hegemony. Whether history has proven Fukuyama (1992) wrong or not implies a debate over capitalism that is comparable to the philosophical debate over the two theories of modernity (Taylor 1999), an analysis of which would take us out of the scope of this thesis.
impose on people, "subordinated actors are never wholly drained of agency except perhaps in fairy tales" (Ortner 2006: 149).

Sahlins notes, in "The economics of develop-man in the Pacific" (1992: 13), that the first "...impulse of the local people is not to become just like us, but more like themselves" a process he calls 'develop-man'. At this stage, the contact with the 'outside' so to speak, is selective and serves to harness the evolution of traditional culture (1992: 17) through the acquisition of western goods. This material relation to the West has brought "...the most extravagant traditional ceremonies anyone could ever remember. More pigs have been eaten and more pearl shells exchanged in these recent shindigs than was ever done in the good old days..." (1992: 13). In other words it has brought the 'develop-man' of traditional culture not so much in line with Western standards but with indigenous standards.

He notes however that there has been a shift from 'develop-man' (selective encounter to Western material goods) to development (a more eclectic relation with Western commodities). Modernity, modernization schemes and capitalism (or market oriented social organization) as they infiltrate further, tend to generate a double-edge process whereby populations at once feel humiliation toward their culture and discover its value (cf. Sahlins 1992). Robbins (2005: 12) summarises: "...humiliation is 'double-edge' in that it can lead people to develop a cultural self-consciousness that, after an initial period of humiliation, they can use as a basis from which to resist further Western dominance".

Encounters between global commands and local cultures thus generate both humiliation and pride which together work to reproduce and transform structure. The former instigates a desire for change counterbalanced by the latter which indigenizes this change into the indigenes' own system of the world. The interrelation of humiliation and pride in formatting the local creative ways of dealing with outside influences is transparent throughout the Dong case study exposed in this thesis. Yet, as I will show, my fieldwork data questions and complicates numerous aspects of Sahlins' indigenization of modernity.
6.4 Multi-scale modernity

One of the main obstacles I faced when trying to apply Sahlins' theoretical framework to my case study is the fact that when 'modernity' reaches the villagers of Zhaoxing in the form of development projects (such as infrastructure and economic development as well as educational and cultural policies), it has already been extensively filtered. As I have shown in the introduction, modernity in China has taken on a particular shape (as xiandaihua) coherent with the country's history and political ideologies. Accordingly, there has already been an 'indigenisation of modernity' at the national level. Politicians, academics and entrepreneurs constantly debate and remake a version of 'modernity' that fits the country's profile while, as is the case for politicians, attempting to assure continuous legitimacy to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership. They have made an effort to portray changes brought by modernity not as radical changes but rather as a form of development without Westernisation ('develop-man'; Babadzan 2009: 122).

Accordingly, the speech by President Hu Jintao in 2005 on "harmonious society" (hexie shehui 和谐社会 discussed in 1.1.2) is considered to be greatly inspired by Confucianism and represents in itself a nationalist discursive and ideological way to indigenize modernity (Boutonnet 2009). It revisits the "Asian Values" debate born in the 1980s in Singapore and Malaysia, which was an attempt, by Lee Kuan Yew, then Prime Minister of Singapore, and Mohamad Mahatir bin Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia, to offer a concerted Oriental response to the hegemony of Western values regarding democracy and human rights. Similarly, in his speech, Hu Jintao advocates the nation over the community, the society over the individual, thus justifying individual social inequalities for the good of all in the long run (Boutonnet 2009). As noted by Lathan (2002) it has brought forth the notion of 'transition' which works rather effectively as a social palliative.

Yang (1996) has shown that when the notion of modernity entered the nationalist discourse in China, it meant the repudiation of domination ideologies that had long been dedicated to maintaining and reproducing social structure. From a governing philosophy of harmony based on the past, Chinese leaders had to begin thinking of the country in terms of linearity,
progress and evolution. Putting harmony as a future goal meant that it had been lost; and this loss is associated by the Communist Chinese historiography to the intrusion of Western powers first epitomized by the Opium Wars (1839-1842). Callahan (2004) has indeed noted that the concept of humiliation, as a prerequisite for structural changes in Chinese society, has been extensively used by Chinese leaders making the notion nationalized and serving nationalist goals. Callahan (2004: 200) furthermore notes, "...this nationalization of shame has accompanied a denationalization of industry and a liberalization of markets around the globe". In other words, as Sahlins (1992) remarked, humiliation has been an important component in the restructuration associated with, and necessary to, modernization schemes.

### 6.5 The indigenization of indigenized modernity

What matters to us here is that not only is modernization filtered as a project, but humiliation itself also trickles down and is altered before it reaches villagers in the form of concrete policies and acts of developments. Hence in the case of Zhaoxing and other minority nationality regions, the encounter with modernity is not one to be equated with a brute encounter with the "West". Instead, it comes in the form of new elements integrated and adapted to the existing structure of relations between dominant national ideologies and on-the-ground everyday practices. As such modernity tends to reproduce the historical center/periphery distinction that has marked the history of the southwest region. Harrell (1995) has termed this structure of dominance "civilizing projects" which rest on a perpetuated hierarchy between Han and non-Han whereby, throughout Chinese history, this dichotomy has been associated with other binaries such as civilized/barbarians; cultured/infantilized; male/female; modern/ancient and more recently, tourist/touree. The us/them dichotomy is thus constantly reproduced yet also evolves and changes shapes.

These civilizing projects, as mentioned in the introduction, have been considered by scholars to be a form of 'internal colonization' to which peripheral populations have been subjected (Hechter 1975; Goodman 1983; Oakes 1998; Schein 2000). The minzu shibie project, and the way it has mobilized the vocabulary of difference for minority nationalities could accordingly be one of the best examples of a form of internal colonization. However,
as defended by Tapp (2002), instead of leading to acculturation and assimilation, that project may have instead stopped and reversed imperial historical processes of cultural integration by fixing clear boundaries of difference. It has been repeatedly shown that minority nationalities were involved to different degrees in the project itself and were active in adopting, formatting and adjusting labels to their own needs. Never have populations remained passive 'victims' to such projects and every step of the way they have attempted to maintain control over their lives and their livelihoods. Looking at the subjective history of the Dong highlights such attempts through the recounting of overt resistance and the remembrance rituals still actuated today.

Now, under the new hegemony of modernization, and especially in light of tourist development, such boundaries are once again reaffirmed. Modernization is considered another 'civilizing project' whereas backward, not-yet-modern minority nationalities need help to reach the level of the advanced and modern Han. The humiliation the nation faced at the national level is reproduced down the ladder and brought to the local level in discourses of improving the quality of the population (suzhi; cf. Anagnost 2004) and in blaming the "...cultural 'backwardness' of the population, a charge directed explicitly toward the large proportion of non-Han minorities in [Guizhou] " (Oakes 1998: 112).

It seems clear however that, as was observed elsewhere, modernization schemes and especially tourist development have also contributed in a roundabout way to increase cultural self-consciousness by providing an acceptable public arena in which to express one's own culture. Humiliation seems to be indeed double-edged as it is necessarily accompanied by pride "...people are becoming aware – and defensive – of what they call their 'culture'"(Sahlins 1992: 24). This pride in Zhaoxing is apparent in Mister Lu's statement that villagers wish to develop tourism themselves and most importantly, that they feel they are capable of doing so. This is detectable in the debate villagers are having over authenticity and in their active involvement in the representation of their culture.

This brings up the second issue I faced when analysing the Zhaoxing case study in light of Sahlins' framework: How can we make sense of this prise de conscience that makes people
aware of their culture as "a conscious and articulate value, [as] something to be defended and, if necessary, reinvented" (Sahlins 1992: 25), when modernization as a form of change relies in large part on the commoditization of this renewed interest and defensiveness towards culture? This is the point I elucidate next.

6.6 The indigenization of tourism-led modernization in Zhaoxing

Ethnic tourism-led modernization clearly reveals a paradox, the tenets of which I have exposed in this thesis. Briefly put, in the quest for false modernity as Oakes (1998) would say, which postulates the linear evolution of society, traditions are to be repudiated to make place for modernity. But tourist development instead asks for the - albeit selective - explicit exhibition of these traditions. When analysing the indigenization of modernity with tourism as a catalyst, culture becomes both the medium through which a population encounters modernity and attempts to make sense of it, while simultaneously formatting this culture to fit the image of the opposite to modernity: representing the modernizing populations as traditional.

As an element that slowly grew in importance since the 1990s, tourist development in Zhaoxing has reshuffled local conditions and circumstances, as well as local and translocal fields of forces. I have shown that, according to the villagers interviewed, since the development of tourism closely linked to national modernization schemes in the village, accessibility and mobility have increased; villagers' sources of revenue have diversified; mentality toward economic activities has changed though self-subsistence has remained highly valued; living standards have improved; and ethnic culture has been revived.

The representation of Dong culture has become highly debated at different levels. It is recognized that the minzu shibie project of ethnic classification has brought a taxonomy that now serves the tourism imagery through homogenized differences. Each ethnic group is increasingly defined according to a number of characteristics, put forth by the tourism industry and the media, meanwhile cultural traits deemed 'backward' are downplayed and considered obstacles to modernization. Consequently, this has brought a form of selective
cultural preservation whereas architecture, costumes, songs and dances are maintained while customs associated with religion or shamanism are considered unfit for the Chinese Marxist modernist agenda (Michaud 2009b; cf. Michaud 2011: 220).

Compared to other Dong villages of Guizhou, Hunan and Guangxi that do not develop ethnic tourism, and where access to modernity does not depend in large part on such development, the village of Zhaoxing is explicitly 'packaged' as a Dong village. In other villages where modernizing schemes have not been coupled with the development of tourism, brick houses have replaced the 'traditional' Ganlan wooden houses and villagers are not asked to perform their culture in standardized, theme-park like ways. To any outsider, be it tourist, ethnographer, foreign or Chinese, the contrast is undeniable. Dong villages without tourist development often have nothing visible to denote its inhabitants are Dong. They simply have adopted the visible signature of any other rural village in Guizhou that has been standardized through the national push towards economic growth and progress. Tourist development thus maintains outward manifestations of Dong culture. In other words, to outsiders, Zhaoxing could be seen as much more representative of Dong culture than Louxiang, or Pilin nearby; at least according to the standard presented in theme parks and promoted by tourist entrepreneurs. But do the inhabitants of these other villages, feel more or less Dong than their neighbours in Zhaoxing?

The point here is not to denote essential cultural characteristics in terms of primordial identity that would allow me to say what are the minimal requirements to qualify as Dong in cultural terms. I have been interested by how the Dong have been historically treated, labelled and recognized as different from the Han and from other non-Han groups (including other Dong villages) and most importantly, how they have appropriated and indigenized these labels in the midst of recent tourist development. This implies

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222 There has been however recent efforts, in the form of funds, toward the renovation and construction of drum towers in Dong villages of the Xiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture situated along the eastern tourist route.
considering culture as processual, reproduced and altered through time according to shifting situations and circumstances.

Behind the question of what constitute Dong identity, lies the debate on authenticity in which villagers of Zhaoxing have been implicated to different degrees. A debate where, as can be expected, villagers themselves are not all holding the same position and pursuing the same interests and in which they neither hold the same power nor the same agency. In addition, as we have seen, the debate involves local and non-local actors as much as translocal, provincial and national actors (or actants). \(^{223}\) Locally, among villagers interviewed, I have found differences in agency as power and in agency as ideas of intention (Ortner 2001: 81) that vary according to livelihood strategies. Accordingly, in the next section, I propose a tentative typology to analyse this variety of agency in terms of livelihood strategies.

### 6.7 Livelihood clusters, agency and forms of resistance

As with any typology, the distinction is for analytical purposes and does not imply strict distinctions in reality, it is simply an attempt to expose tendencies and bring forth local variability in terms of both agency and domination. As Trân (2009: 159) has noted, the absence or presence and shape of resistance depend largely on the perception actors have of their situation. Who they blame for their difficulties will determine the form of resistance, if any, and the target(s) of this resistance as well as the mean(s) by which agents assess their resistance will be fruitful. In addition, actors "...adjust their forms and methods of collective action according to the context of political opportunities and their understanding of what might be effective resistance" (Trân 2009: 174). I furthermore noted, in the

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\(^{223}\) As noted by Reid-Henry (2003: 185) "... actants, a term I borrow from Latour (1999), who in turn borrows the term from semiotics, where it is used as a broad correlate for "actor" but also allows for nonhumans to possess agency". In this case, I take these to be such things as modernization ideologies and historical hierarchies of dominance. In other words, what I have largely grouped under 'structure'.
introduction (section 1.7) that agents do so according to their relative position; as benefiting or not, or as being disadvantaged from a given situation.

Accordingly, I have identified four livelihood clusters that seem to influence the perception villagers have of their situation and their resulting actions and reactions in their encounter with tourism-led modernization. I have called these: 1) tourism cluster; 2) administration cluster; 3) local government cluster and 4) farming cluster. I begin by defining each cluster and how different livelihood strategies locate villagers differently in the face of tourist development and on the domination scale. Then I analyse how different clusters may cooperate or clash in defending varying local interests and how the indigenization of tourism-led modernity emerges out of context-specific interactions between structure and agency (Trân 2009: 161).

6.7.1 Tourism cluster

This cluster is made up of villagers directly involved in tourist development through managing guesthouses, souvenir shops, bars and restaurants. The majority of these villagers come from Zhaoxing and they still tend their fields, still considering subsistence agriculture to be their main activity. If members of the household are either busy with tourists or unavailable to work in the fields however, the most successful households increasingly hire workers during planting and harvesting seasons. Other households simply rent their fields out.224 During fieldwork, I witnessed this new social distinction. It was during the period villagers were transplanting rice. This activity is intense and employs every member of every household for a 3 to 4 day period. During the day the village is generally empty and most other economic activities except tourism related economic activities are stopped for the period. One day, as I was in the rice fields helping out a family, I noticed two villagers strolling around in the paddy fields. I later wrote in my field notes:

224 Interview with Hotel owner on 21st of November 2006.
From afar, they looked like tourists. Strolling around the paddy fields, their clothes spotless, looking as if they were on holidays. Around them, other villagers were working, bent in half, bare feet in the fields, transplanting rice. As they reached the field I was in, I recognized them and noticed they were eating sunflower seeds, looking down at us from the side of the rice paddies. As other villagers, they were surprised to discover me working in the fields. They laughed and asked if I knew how to work in the fields. Then they left, walking slowly looking like rich landlords coming to supervise their workers. Although it was only partly the case, their attitude revealed arrogance, a feeling of superiority that economic success has a tendency to give newly prosperous individuals. The woman I was working with told me that far from being tourists, they are local villagers, yet they and their lineage group are owners of three of the most successful guesthouses of the village and are well connected to Chinese and international tourism agencies.\textsuperscript{225}

This couple's presence in the fields as non-workers dressed in clean clothes embodied the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the end of the "...egalitarian ideal of 'everyone eating from the same pot'" (Tang 1999: 97).

Many villagers from the tourism cluster are pioneers in the development of tourism in Zhaoxing and have raised their income tremendously through this new economic activity. They are mobile, often visiting other tourist villages to learn and share experiences, and are connected beyond the village, for example with tourist guides in the provincial capital Guiyang.\textsuperscript{226} One household even has one member married to a Western foreigner who is himself a tourist guide bringing groups of foreigners to visit the village. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the initiative to develop tourism came from one household and its hamlet centered around Lituan drum tower. Now, as other villagers seized the opportunity of this new economic activity, households and individuals of this clusters come from every hamlet of the village.

The arrival of the tourism company in the village has brought members of this cluster to strongly react and resist outside infringement in what they considered their new profitable

\textsuperscript{225} Fieldnotes, 29\textsuperscript{th} of May 2007.
\textsuperscript{226} Interview with one such tourist guide whose office is located in Guiyang on 9\textsuperscript{th} of February 2007.
economic sphere. They are thus very voluble and active in defending their autonomy in developing tourism. It is members of this cluster who resisted the most to the contract terms with the Fenghua Company and who later organized resistance through petitions against the presence of the tourism company, and against the moving of Zhaoxing Junior High School. They are capable of drawing people to their cause within and beyond the village of Zhaoxing.

The form of resistance they use and advocate could be described, according to Li and O'Brien (1996: 29) as:

'policy-based resistance' to defend their 'legitimate rights and interests' (hefa quanyi). Individually, policy-based resisters cite laws, government policies, and other official communications when challenging over taxation, and the use of force, and they shower officials with complaints, asking for the dismissal of corrupt cadres and demanding improved accountability. Collectively they organize visits to government offices to protest rigged elections and lodge complaints that demand the repeal of 'local policies' (tu zhengce), the removal of 'local emperors' and the lifting of illegal local impositions.

In addition to complaining about unfair distribution of tourism benefits and against land grabs by the company, members of this cluster have also complained about the interdiction to open hotels (bingguan): that quality level of accommodation they are not allowed to develop as it is the monopoly of the Fenghua Company. One way they have countered this interdiction is by providing high quality accommodation in their guesthouses, which in the end compares with those offered in the company's hotels. As a result, one of the best

227 In terms of rural resistance in China, Li and O'Brien (1996) have outlined three types of villagers: dingzihu (recalcitrant villagers who use overt resistance in the form of violence); shunmin (compliant villagers who are unknowledgeable and fearful, thus who rarely resort to overt acts of resistance) and diaomin (policy-based resisters who use the law to resist local corrupt cadres).
guesthouses in the village has been granted three flowers by the tourism bureau of Guizhou.\textsuperscript{228}

Resistance in this group is thus mostly overt, policy-based and directed toward the tourism company and the county government which was signatory to the tourism contract. As noted by Li and O'Brien: "since the introduction of the household responsibility system, more and more villagers appear to conceive of their relationship with the state in contractual terms [...] A policy-based resister, as a rule, is willing to fulfill his or her state obligations, but only if the township government honours its obligations" (1996: 41). In this case, the main source of grievance stems from actions (or lack of) by the tourism company and the county government that do not comply with the contract terms villagers unwillingly signed.

Villagers do not blame central government and its policies of developing their region through tourism. They direct their complaints (largely in the form of petitions) to higher levels of government. Again, as noted by Li and O'Brien (1996: 43): "...complainants bypass one or more levels of government when proceeding up the state hierarchy; the higher one goes, it is widely believed, the more successful one is likely to be". The central state is considered the protector and benefactor and it is the county that is considered the evil along with the Fenghua Company, which explains why complaints are generally directed to the provincial and national levels of government.

Lastly, it is individuals and households from this cluster who take the most risks, by investing in, and contracting loans for, the transformation of their houses into guesthouses, restaurants or souvenir shops. As tourism develops, they increasingly neglect agriculture and make tourism revenues their main source of livelihood. Increasingly independent from government aid and proud of their success as many feel they have achieved something meaningful, this cluster strongly and overtly asserts its opinions. It is dominated by

\textsuperscript{228} In order to increase the development and quality of tourism in Guizhou, this system of rating home stays is in the making and is part of the Guizhou Provincial Tourism Development Master Plan mentioned in Chapter Five.
members of Zhongzhai hamlet in the center of town who are setting the example and often acting as leaders in both resistance activities and in proposing alternative ways to develop tourism for local benefits. Their pride in their culture and in their capacities makes them leaders in defending local interests.

6.7.2 Waged state employees cluster

The second cluster is composed of villagers whose livelihoods depend principally on wages from state employment, working as educational administrators, teachers, hospital head and staff.229 Following land redistribution, wage state employees were not given subsistence land and are generally not directly involved in tourist development. Members of this cluster are usually compliant and view tourist development in the village as a positive development that leads to better living conditions for most. Their livelihood being dependent on government wages, they are unwilling to openly defy authorities and have an attitude of disengagement from other villagers’ grievances. Even when they witness or are subjected to mistreatment "...compliant villagers usually remain diffident (unless they are mobilized by others) and steadfastly maintain that openings rarely exist to challenge cadres" (Li and O'Brien 1996: 33).

Not overtly outspoken, villagers in this cluster include some of the most respected elders in the village whose opinions are listened to and considered. It is villagers of this clusters that have stressed in interviews the importance of maintaining Dong language in the village, especially when facing national modernization and tourist development. A local Dong middle school teacher asserted: "Dong language will continue to be passed on generations; language is a nationality's symbol".230 Generally with a fair level of formal education, they tend to adhere to the transition discourse as a social palliative and may summon people to 'wait and see' instead of taking drastic actions. As employees of the state, they "...fail to perceive (or deny) precisely what policy-based resisters believe and act on:

229 A member of this cluster, working as an educational staff, told me his monthly salary was 1800RMB (278 CANS).
that economic reforms and other institutional change have markedly improved the prospects for popular resistance" (Li and O'Brien, 1996: 34). They point to advantages the government has given them, such as the reduction of tuition fees and they praise tourism development for the local employment opportunities it provides to local youth.231

When they do overtly complain, they generally blame the Fenghua Company instead of the government. Nevertheless, although not directly involved in tourist development, villagers interviewed from this cluster may indirectly entertain economic ties to this business as an add-on to their wages, as for example the hospital head whose wife runs a hotel or a primary school administrator whose wife runs the largest convenience store in the village. They may also have relatives who own land and they will maintain a link of reciprocity with them, such as when lending a hand at times of harvest or transplanting. They are the most compliant cluster and many of them, to reach their positions, are also party members.

6.7.3 Local government cluster

Dong local villagers who are part of the local government are, in Zhaoxing, in a somewhat awkward situation. As mentioned earlier (section 4.2), Zhaoxing is a township composed of 22 administrative hamlets (cun: 村) and 52 natural villages (zhaizi: 畔子). The physical village of Zhaoxing is formed of three hamlets (Zhaoxing Shangzhai; Zhaoxing zhai and Zhaoxing Zhongzhai). This local government cluster is composed of hamlet leaders and their assistants as well as the township leadership team, except the township leader himself who is non-local. I exclude also from this group the local Leader of the Communist Party as he is also not local, yet I include his assistants who are locally recruited.

Lower level local leaders interviewed all own land and their livelihoods depend largely on agriculture, complemented with low wage government salaries.232 Some have developed sidelines businesses such as bamboo basket weaving, and another has opened a restaurant.

231 Educational administrative staff interviewed on 2\textsuperscript{nd} of February 2007.
232 A hamlet leader told me he was paid 120 RMB per month (18.50 CAN$) in 2007.
for tourists. They are thus implicated to different degrees in tourist development yet were clearly made responsible, in the tourism contract with the Fenghua Company, to assure villagers' cooperation and compliance. However, as conflicts arose between villagers from the tourism cluster and the tourism company, these local leaders' first reaction was to voice these local concerns and to act as representatives of Zhaoxing people. Because they did not assure cooperation and compliance, they were then subjected to a reshuffling of local government positions: the township leader was replaced; a new local Leader of the CCP was brought in and given (supposedly exceptionally) power over the village. This course of action and type of sanction is not unique to Zhaoxing and has been noticed by Zweig and Chung (2007: 43) in their survey of 120 villages in four counties in Anhui and Heilongjiang provinces: "...conflict between two centers of power, the appointed party secretary and the elected - and therefore more legitimate - village director, has reportedly led to some backtracking on the electoral process. In some locations, the same person is again holding both posts". Such is the case in Zhaoxing with the local Leader of the CCP being the sole director of the township.

Members of the local government are involved in tourism development, they are summoned by the Leader of the CCP or the township leader to attend meetings where they are informed of higher level government's plans and are expected to convey new policies and regulations to villagers, working as top-down mediators. The opposite, however, whereas local members of government served as representatives and spokespersons for villagers in their dealings with higher levels of governments has greatly decreased with the expansion of tourism and the increased implication of non-local government agents and private entrepreneurs in village dynamics.

Nonetheless, when villagers of the tourism cluster react to and resist pragmatic issues such as land seizures, unequal distribution of benefits and the like, villagers of this cluster may decide to help and support them by signing the petitions and expressing grievances to higher level officials, albeit increasingly with tremendous carefulness. When expressing their resentment, similarly to the tourism cluster, they do so through 'policy-based resistance' or on contractual terms. For example, one hamlet leader expressed his
grievances toward the Fenghua Company saying it had not respected contract terms on agreed investments for building basic infrastructure. In addition, he also remarked that big projects undertaken by the tourism company were always favoured by the county government over small local projects or initiatives.\textsuperscript{233} Therefore, as local leaders, members of this cluster are clearly aware of the power issues related to tourist development; yet they have, in the past few years, seen their capacity to manage the village locally reduced as decisions were increasingly made above the village level.

However, as remarked by Yang and Wall (2009: 565):

> Although some entrepreneurs advocate "mutual engagement and development" between the park and the villages, they are more concerned about maximizing economic benefits and expansion of the business than about village development. They advocate cultural preservation mainly for the sake of safeguarding commercial profits, and many of them view the former as the responsibility of the government.

Villagers of the local government have thus been the most active in the authenticity debate and in defending a local version of the representation of Dong culture. Under the banner of the need to protect and preserve Dong culture, and as representatives of bearers of this culture, they present themselves as the guardians of authentic Dong culture. Being well positioned because they are local and thus they can speak of Zhaoxing's uniqueness and cultural wealth, they attempt to defend their visions of what it means to be Dong. They accordingly actively engage in the amalgam fashioning 'modern Dong traditions' for tourism purposes.

One of the most active villager in this debate is the Head of the Cultural Bureau\textsuperscript{234} who insists on villagers' right to choose what they prefer from both modern and traditional lifestyles and is convinced villagers will adopt such things as modern clothes yet will retain

\textsuperscript{233} Interviewed on 25\textsuperscript{th} of January 2007.
\textsuperscript{234} Interviewed on 18\textsuperscript{th} of November 2006.
Dong living, farming and festival customs. As mentioned earlier in this thesis (section 5.4.3), he is also the village's singing teacher and he has stopped working for the Fenghua Company, organizing his own performance troupe which, he states, delivers more 'traditional' performances to tourists. He is thus overtly resisting the attempted cultural takeover of tourism entrepreneurs and strongly believes it is the local government's responsibility to "...take action to preserve minority cultural heritage" (Yang and Wall 2009: 565). According to the vice director of the township, he and other hamlet leaders have toured Guizhou and Guangxi with their performance troupe to present Dong culture and to learn from other touristic villages.

Although their power is increasingly limited, members of this cluster are active in promoting the uniqueness of Zhaoxing Dong culture and are building links with other minority nationality villages in order to find constructive ways to protect minority culture. Because they hold views similar to the ones of the tourism cluster, they often cooperate yet they often find themselves in an awkward situation that tends to restrict their actions and complaints to essentially cultural/authenticity issues; a sphere of debates where they found they can have some legitimacy.

6.7.4 Farmers cluster

The last cluster I found in Zhaoxing is made up of farmers. Farmers were, up to recently, mainly relying on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, in light of the inflation of the price of everyday goods brought about by tourist development, they have resorted to sending members of their household to work for wages in factories. Members of the household who remain in the village may also help others in their fields for a wage (approximately 300 to 400 RMB – 45-60 CANS per year). For instance, one farmer interviewed works for a household that became involved in tourism and whose members have no time left for farming. Farmers selling their labour are at the bottom of the local social hierarchy in terms of revenues as well as in terms of getting their voices heard.

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In interviews, farmers were the only ones to denounce officials' corruption. Despite being eligible for government funds to alleviate poverty, one farmer noted: "No really poor people can enjoy the state welfare. Only those who are related to officials are taken care of by the state". They furthermore complained about land seizures, low compensations \(237\), interdiction to farm on certain hill sides above Zhaoxing and to rebuild a road to faraway fields. One farmer stated:

Our government assigned the Fenghua Company to take care of tourism here. We agreed that the land is ours and they take care of tourism. But we need a road and there is nobody that can lead us to open this road. We don't know what to do. The most difficult part is that we, villagers, cannot convince them on this point. Other villagers can carry things up and down to their fields using trucks while we have to carry everything on our backs. If there was no tourism, we could defiantly build this road. We should have built it before tourism, now it is too late… \(238\)

Benefits generated by tourist development are thus rather limited for members of this cluster. According to the contract, the Fenghua Company must give each drum tower group 10 000 RMB (1600 CAN$) in 2006, 20 000 RMB (3200 CAN$) in 2007 and so on to use these spaces for performances. Interviewed in the beginning of 2007, one farmer said he had only received a total of 70 RMB (11 CAN$) after the money was redistributed among drum tower group members. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that the Fenghua Company can be of help as, from time to time, it hires local villagers for manual work which can provide extra income.

Lastly, lacking guangxi (relations with officials) and capital to invest, households in the farmers cluster are unable to renovate their houses for tourism purposes. Those whose houses are nicely located on river banks or on the main street may attract tourism entrepreneurs (whether local or not) and some farmers have been asked to rent out their

\(236\) Interviewed on 20\(^{th}\) and 21\(^{st}\) of April 2007.
\(237\) Compensation is 300 jin (half kilos) per mu of land (0.067 hectare).
\(238\) Interviewed on 20\(^{th}\) and 21\(^{st}\) of April.
houses. However, because of the interdiction to build new houses and the delays in building a "New Zhaoxing", these villagers have, for now, nowhere else to go.

### 6.7.5 Other important actors

There are numerous other actors, local and non-local, at play in Zhaoxing’s dynamics of social change. One of the most important in terms of decisional power in the village is the local Leader of the CCP who used to be the leader of Liping County Tourism Bureau – the county Zhaoxing is part of. It is thus relevant to present his point of view and his vision of 'what it means to be Dong'. This leader is a non-local Dong, coming from an adjacent township that has a different dialect and distinct customs. He holds a Chinese university degree and was appointed as the local CCP leader in August 2006. His role, he states, is "...to carry out national administrative laws and regulations; [to be] responsible for guidelines and policies, including ethnic policies enacted at the national level, to implement them and carry them out and to develop and use local limited resources to develop the local economy".

Zhaoxing, being part of the Qiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture, benefits from a certain autonomy associated with ethnic autonomous administrative units, which Herberer (1989: 25-26) defines as:

> Autonomy is to mean that these autonomous organs – within their constitutionally and legal conferred rights – are entitled to make certain decisions and to draft special regulations adapted to specific aspects and requirements of the nationality (-ies) and area(s) involved as regards the realization of autonomy, including other special provisions in the interest of economic and cultural development of autonomous areas. These provisions, however, have to be submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Parliament of the People's Republic of China) for approval (...) Regional autonomy may, therefore, be defined as local self-government practised "under the leadership of the central people's government" with authorities in autonomous areas having the status of local governments; these are controlled though, by higher or central authorities.

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239 Interviewed on 24th of April 2007.
Concretely, as argued by Herberer, numerous obstacles have arisen for minority nationalities to gain access to this autonomy such as obstacles of a political nature: including the low educational levels and the non-availability of qualified staff among minority nationalities to fill senior level positions in the government. Moreover, the safeguard and maintenance of minority languages through the educational system has also been obstructed by the lack of trained teachers and of minority language teaching material. Economically, although autonomous regions have the right to manage their own taxes and natural resources, interference from higher level authorities is common (for the case of Guangxi province, cf. Herberer 1989: 31).

Because of Zhaoxing's recognition as a scenic spot and its promotion as a village representative of Dong culture, higher level authorities' involvement in local dynamics tends to jeopardize local township autonomy. The local Leader of the CCP follows directives from upper-levels of the government and has the responsibility to adapt and adjust them to the local situation. As a result, that leader formulates plans and hopes to achieve what he calls "the Zhaoxing Model". He however has to consort with a Han-dominated tourism industry and tourist entrepreneurs (in this case the Fenghua Company) who do not support ethnic autonomy (Yang and Wall 2009: 564).

Being university educated, the local Leader of the CCP advocates a standardized 'academic' definition of Dongness. Although recognizing regional particularities that may serve to position Zhaoxing favourably on the tourism market, his vision of Dong identity is largely based on Han and Dong scholars' definitions; a characterization that allows clear cut boundaries with other minority nationalities and serves the interests of the tourist industry. For example, during the interview, when I asked him about the role of elders in the village or details on a particular festival, he referred to a dictionary called: "The Kam People Cultural Dictionary (dongzu wenhua cidian)" published by native Dong scholars.

See SIL Bilingual Education Project for attempts, by an international organization to promote minority language use in schools: [http://www.sil.org/literacy/kam.htm](http://www.sil.org/literacy/kam.htm) (page consulted on the 27th of April, 2011).
There is one other main actor in Zhaoxing: the manager\textsuperscript{241} of Fenghua Company, who harbours a vision of Dongness that tends to reproduce the Han/non-Han historical dichotomy with the latter (little brother) receiving 'help' from the former (big brother) in order to modernize. Accordingly, among the first steps the company took upon its arrival in the village was infrastructure development in order to beautify the village, such as burying electrical wires, renovating village gates and drum towers, putting Chinese red lanterns along the riverside and building parking lots on the outskirts of the village. In other words, the village was modernized so to be more traditional according to a Han vision of Dong identity.

The relationship between the manager of the tourism company and the local leader of the CCP is unclear. Each asserts he is in control. The CCP leader claims power over ideology and planning while the company seems to have more control over the concrete means to achieve local plans and goals. The company, having investments in two other cities of Guizhou (Zunyi and Anshun) and its headquarters being in the provincial capital Guiyang, also has close ties to the Guizhou Provincial Government, above Dong leaders in the Qiandongnan Autonomous Prefecture (including Liping county leaders).

6.8 Conclusion

Sivaramakrishnan (2005: 351) has noted that for small farmers, it is often difficult "...to figure out who is responsible for what policy out of a confusing array that impinges on their lives. Thus, it is difficult to have a cogent plan of resistance that traces a reliable line between resistive act and ameliorative outcome". For Zhaoxing villagers, the Fenghua Company is clearly a Han-controlled outside force newly brought to the village for the sake of tourist development. It is an easy target for those who disapprove new regulations, policies, and developments, whether or not these are in fact enunciated by the company itself or higher levels of government. At the same time, numerous villagers from all clusters

\textsuperscript{241} Interviewed on 6\textsuperscript{th} of July 2007.
have also recognized the role of the Fenghua Company in the improvement of their livelihoods, admitting its presence has helped develop tourism. This reveals the intermingling of both humiliation and pride, and the varying dosage of each for different livelihood clusters.

In Zhaoxing, the type of response villagers show toward social change is largely determined by one’s position in the local hierarchy, both in terms of the success of his or her livelihood strategies, in terms of their capacity to enjoin others to their cause, as well as in terms of their capacity to represent 'authentic' Dong culture to outsiders. For now, depending on their positionality, their agency, their interests and their sentiment toward their culture, villagers have largely relied either on overt policy-based resistance or have been outwardly compliant. They have not shown overt violent resistance (dingzihu cf. Li and O'Brien 1996). But the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing like to perpetuate the idea that they could resort to such options if the limit of what they consider 'legitimate' domination is reached and their livelihoods seriously endangered. They do so for instance through their remembrance rituals to Sasui and to other Dong rebels who have violently stood up against imperial powers in the past while, with the tai guan ren festival mentioned in the beginning of this chapter (section 6.2), villagers of Zhaoxing are capable of imagining a reversed social order in which it is they who collect money from officials (cf. Scott 1990)

These clusters as well as the two influential actors presented above are thus all positioned differently within Zhaoxing society and in facing tourism-led modernization. Each reveals different interests and involvements in changes the village is facing. But clusters are not strictly bounded, with members having lineage ties with individuals in other clusters. In effect however, in terms of livelihood strategies, it seems villagers of Zhaoxing no longer stand on equal grounds, as may have been the case during the Maoist era. As such, they do not stand as a homogeneous group against another homogenous entity that asserts domination through modernizing and tourist development schemes. As noted by Oakes (1998: 83): "the struggles over modernity take place on a terrain in which power is distributed extremely unevenly", to which I may add that such is also the case for agency. In turn, this influences the shape, presence or absence of local covert and overt resistance.
7 Conclusion

Ethnology, based on long term observation, listening and synthesis, remains, more than ever, indispensable. It is good that specialists exist to explain the actions and thoughts of peoples of the world. Ethnology is not the study of disappeared peoples. It is no longer a science of traditions; it has become a science of changes (Guerreiro 2010: 251).242

I began this thesis wondering what was happening to the Dong villagers of Zhaoxing and wanting to know what was their agency in facing tourism-led modernization. In order to grasp their situation and their perspectives, I have made numerous visits to the village between 2000 and 2009 and have undertaken long-term fieldwork between 2006 and 2007; an endeavour I have detailed in chapter 2. The perspectives I was able to have access to were highly dependent on my positionality as a foreign social science researcher accompanied by research assistants (whether Han or Bai), as a young woman and as a mother. What is more, my inability to speak Kam language was unfortunately a great obstacle to seeing and sensing the scope of local resistance. In other words, it clearly restricted my access to covert expressions of resistance and to the hidden transcripts (Scott 1990) partly expressed in gossips, in late-night discussions or through insinuations. I was nevertheless able to access much information through informal conversations, observations and participant observations.

Linguistic competence is an important component of Dong identity and newly settled villagers who speak Kam are more easily integrated into the local social structure. Accordingly, as I have shown in chapter 3, Dong ethnicity is both constructed and genealogical through real or imagined descent via the adoption of the Lu surname. Dong identity does not rest on a pristine ethnic category that has survived through history, instead it has shifted and changed; its boundaries constantly reaffirmed through remembrance

242 L'ethnologie, qui se fonde sur l'observation de longue durée, l'écoute et la synthèse, reste toujours indispensable. Il est bon que se trouvent encore des spécialistes qui puissent expliquer les actions et les pensées des peuples du monde. L'ethnologie n'est pas l'étude de peuples disparus. Elle n'est plus une science du traditionnel, mais une science des changements (Guerreiro 2010:251).
rituals and through the subjective recounting of local history. Dong identity has thus been and is still constantly reproduced in a process involving local agents, governing ideologies as well as internal dynamics and external forces. Changes villagers of Zhaoxing are facing today are inscribed on a historical canvas.

Recently, during the past 20 years, the village of Zhaoxing has been subjected to state-led modernization schemes that have brought infrastructure developments, greater government involvement in local issues, market liberalization and obligatory national education. As shown in chapter 4, for Zhaoxing villagers in general, living conditions have improved and revenues have increased as well as mobility. This has brought villagers into a transitory period in which they look to the future with hope yet maintain a sense of nostalgia, “…a melancholy sense of loss” (Oakes 1998: 22) that is characteristic of the paradoxical sensibilities of modernity.

Modernity in Zhaoxing, as we have seen in chapter 5, is largely driven by tourist development which crystallizes the ‘obstacles to modernization – traditions’ as essential components. Instead of repudiating traditions, tourist development relies on their revival and their commoditization. This has generated a debate over authenticity in which villagers attempt to have their voices heard, as bearers of Dong culture, against a marketed image of ethnicity that tags them as ‘not-yet’ modern. Furthermore, this development has brought a profit-seeking Han-managed tourism company to the village reproducing the historical dichotomy between Han and non-Han where the Dong minority nationality is once again expected to stand at the bottom of the hierarchy. Local tensions were clearly palpable during fieldwork as villagers attempted to assert their agency over the physical space of their village and over their increasingly marketed culture.

But, as I have defended in chapter 6, villagers do not stand as a homogenous group resisting a homogenous domination. Indeed, on the ground, as Rodriguez (1998: 53) has noted in her research on resistance and accommodation among the Taos of New Mexico: “…in one sense, there is nothing subtle about what is going on here. But in another sense, what is going on seems extremely oblique, veiled, convoluted, and complex”. In Zhaoxing,
local responses, reactions and resistances are shaped in large part by the livelihood strategies different villagers have adopted. These depend on villagers’ implication with tourist development, on their relation with the government and on their power to draw other villagers to their cause.

Domination also is multiple, complex as well as changing according to circumstances. Indeed domination depends on power: institutional power and power in actual social relations. Accordingly, Giddens (1979) has distinguished between what he calls domination – “power as organized into the cultural or institutional order” and power “…as an actual social relation of real on-the-ground actors” (cited in Ortner 2006: 5). Power, as mentioned earlier, has been considered in this thesis not as pervasive and restricted to the ‘state’ but as negotiated and gained in “selective appropriation, evasive improvisation, explicit resistance” (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 15). Power can be obtained and used by various actors on the ground to try to bend or influence the structure of things in ways that best suit their needs and desires as individuals, as lineage groups, as a community or as ethnic groups.

Power needs further defining as it also refers to agency; or as Ortner (2001: 78) would say: "agency as power". In her article on "Specifying agency", she states (Ibid.) agency "is virtually synonymous with the forms of power people have at their disposal, their ability to act on their own behalf, influence other people and events, and maintain some kind of control in their own lives". Ortner (2001: 81) goes further and distinguishes between agency as power, closely related to domination and resistance and agency as ideas of intention which is about "…people having desires that grow out of their own structures of life, including very centrally they own structures of inequality". She later reformulated this form of agency as "agency of (cultural) projects" (2006: 152) whereas agents played their own serious games (Ortner 2001; 2006). Hence agency is enacted not only in dealing with external forces but also in shaping historical forces that have brought disadvantage to individuals or groups within a community. She considers for example how Tshidi women, studied by Comaroff (1985), try to alter the reproduction of structure and of their own culture mainly because they see themselves treated as: "...docile bodies ready for sex, marriage, and hard agricultural labor" (Ortner 2001: 80). Tshidi women do this through
defiant acts in initiation rites such as "...provocative song and dance, intrusive noise and explicit accusations" (Ibid.). There is in Zhaoxing agency of (cultural) projects where actors are differently positioned in the local hierarchy of dominance and are thus seeking different opportunities. Their various actions may maintain and reproduce the existing structure or may bring it to change.

The mistake, in the endeavour to capture social change in light of modernization, is to consider the latter as a homogenizing force, a steamroller that replaces cultural diversity with technology, science and rationality. As noted by Sahlins (1999: ii): "...when we change it's called progress, but when they do - notably when they adopt some of our progressive things - it's a kind of adulteration, a loss of their culture" (italics original). Furthermore, when people seem to overtly refuse to change, we consider issues of resistance. One way out is to consider how modernity is indigenized and appropriated locally through resistance yet also through what may be necessary, strategic, or compromised compliance. Again, Sahlins (1999: v) observes: "... local societies of the Third and Fourth Worlds do attempt to organize the irresistible forces of the world-system according to their own system of the world - in various forms and with varying success, depending on the nature of the indigenous culture and the mode of external domination" (italics original). They do so within internal dynamics that shape the direction of change as individuals and livelihood clusters hold divergent views and agency in the constant reproduction of their culture.

Understanding social change hence involves considering power as dominance and as inherent in day-to-day interactions, and structure as a multi-scale historical process. According to Giddens, structure must be conceived as a process, something in the making “...a becoming rather than a being” (Karp 1986: 135). As such, it is inherently historical and linked to space and time (Giddens 1981). Structure to Giddens is both virtual and actual. As noted by Karp (1986: 135): “...structure is a process, [...] structures do not exist at any point in time and space, [...] our models of structure exhibit tendencies in action” (cf. Karp and Kendall 1982). It is reproduced while constantly opening opportunities for change through practice, hence following, metaphorically, more of a spiralling course. It
necessitates that we consider continuation and modification as complementary and reciprocal conditions of ‘structure’ (cf. Jullien 2009).

It thus seems clear that, in order to gain a better "...understanding of the full gamut of alternative modernities which are in the making in different parts of the world" (Taylor 1992: 215), more in-depth analysis of local dynamics are necessary. These need furthermore to be conceived and explained in a historical perspective to help present the current situation according to "...how the subjects see themselves and how they grasp their current challenges" (Michaud 2011: 221).

The Dong of this case study have cohabited for five hundred years with numerous dominant powers; they have been tagged barbarians, imperial subjects or communist comrades. Recently, they were strictly categorized into one of fifty-six national ethnic groups; they have been subjected to sinicization and to increased state incursion; and their capacity to escape the gaze of the state (Scott 2009) has been greatly reduced with the development of distance-demolishing technologies such as railroads, high speed highways, the media, the Internet. As Unger (1997:8) notes for the Bai minority nationality: "... it is easy for them to assert pride in being Bai, especially since [...] they had gradually become ‘Chinese’ over the centuries on their own terms. Such may also be the case for the Dong and at any rate, it appears the villagers of Zhaoxing consider: the Dong are still there, and they are still Dong."

Sahlins asserts this about the Eskimo (cf. Sahlins, 1999: vii).
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研究计划

标题：中国贵州少数民族侗族地区旅游业对本地巨结构的影响。

研究课 题

目前，旅游业已经成为一个给边远地区少数民族居住地带来发展的一个主要途经。

对于“基础设施和经济都虚弱的，不足以吸引主要的经济投资（Tan Chee Bang, 2001: 16）”的贵州省来说，这是一件大事。

结果是，当地的少数民族正日益受到“少数民族旅游业”发展的影响。

这种形式的旅游业关键的吸引力是少数民族的传统文化。

(赵子, 1998 : 161)
例如，贵州东南部的侗族以其独一无二的鼓塔和风雨桥的建筑为特征展示给国内外的旅游者。

考虑到大部分传统风格，那些完美民俗代表建筑最具有吸引力。

这些地方以前同现在的功能发生了根本的变化。

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在村民日复一日的生活中，这些地点的功能现在是：

1）一个新的角色，服务于一个新的目标，那就是旅游业。

2）当地村民不同程度地意识到需要对他们的地方空间有一个新的认识。
可行的假设是：

原来不是旅游村，现在变成旅游村民对他们居住的空间的理解也有一个新的变化。

目标：
1. 确定旅游业的发展对鼓楼和风雨桥的用途的冲击；
2. 确定旅游对村民在建筑空间思维局部的影响；
3. 通过采访和不受旅游活动影响的村民，从当地人的观点考虑旅游业的冲击。

研究方法：

通过延长逗留在肇兴寨，黎平县，贵州省，庄的时间（四到六个月），采访村民和观察思考并与当地侗文化研究者的积极合作来达到这个研究目标。

肇兴，位于贵州省东南与广西接壤处，它清楚地被标为对外开放的旅游村。

全寨 800 余户，人口 4000 余人，为全国最大，最古老的侗寨。寨内有五座鼓楼，五座花桥，五座戏楼，加之当地浓郁的民族风情，早已蜚声中外。

学术意义：

虽然旅游业在中国的南部少数民族地区以空前的速度发展，但是有关它的地方性冲击和彻底而详细的研究仍然几乎是零。
通过对少数民族地区旅游业现象的具体事例的研究和多方面上下关系的分析，我们才能开始社会改变理论的研究。

因而，此研究希望有助于这个正在增长的对旅游业更深层次的地方性研究的需求，尤其是在中国的少数民族中。

到目前为止，它建立在把旅游业视为一个现代化的工具（Oakes，1998）；一个一体化或汉族吸收少数民族的工具（Schein，2001）；或者是一个改变少数民族男女关系的因素的最新的研究上。

这个课题将更着重于考虑社会和文化领域的观念，并试图提供一些有关目前中国农村正在经历的改变的一个局部思维视角。

的确旅游空间经常处于多变和竞争它会给这些地区的经济和政治带来巨大的影响。目前，此影响正改变着中国的农村。
研究结果：

短期，这个研究将纳入到我的博士论文中（计划在2006年秋天完成）。研究成果可能出版并在国际和国内会议上交流。

此外，它将为达到我的事业目标提供可能：成为人类学教授和研究员，填补目前缺乏加拿大的民族学者在中国做专门研究的空白。

最后，这研究希望能扩展加拿大和中国学者之间的合作关系，并以法语、英语和汉语联合出版研究成果。

参考书目：


Annex 2: Example of an interview guide used in the field

First interview:

- I am Kang Miao. I am a PhD candidate at the Department of Ethnology in the University of Montreal. I am now in China working with the Southwest Institute of Hanology at Guizhou University. This is my research assistant, Zhao Yujiao. She is a Guizhou native and studies at Guizhou University. She can help me translate.
- Here, I want to say sorry because my Chinese isn't very good, so sometimes I have to let my assistant help translate. This interview will be slow, I hope you can understand. In addition, because I'm concerned that I might not fully understand what you say, I'll record our conversation. I can then listen to it again.
- You don't need to worry about the interview causing you trouble. This research is approved, and I also signed a code of ethics with my university. This is the document I signed with my assistant and the research center.
- I do these so that you can see that the interview we had is completely confidential, there's no need to worry.
- My research topic is: tourism development. I mainly want to understand the impact of tourism on the daily lives of people in Zhaoxing. I am more interested in tourism not only as an economic problem, but also as a problem that affects each person's daily life.
- From 2000, I have visited Zhaoxing many times, I've seen many changes.
- To better understand the social organization situation, I will interview the village's heads of households first. Because the village's heads of households are the most knowledgeable about the Han customs and the lives of the villagers, your answers will be very important to my research.
- My interview is divided into two parts. The first part is the social organization situation, including data about the different families in Zhaoxing. The second part is about tourism, mainly to understand your views on tourism.
- If you don't understand any of the questions, you can ask me. I hope you can fully understand every question. Of course, if you don't want to answer my questions, you don't have to.
现在我开始录音了。

请告诉我您的名字
您是村民组长/村长/寨老?

1. 村民组长/村长/寨老主要是做什么的（主要责任是什么）?
2. 村民组长/村长/寨老是怎样当选的?
3. 村民组长/村长/寨老的任期是多长时间?
4. 村民组长/村长/寨老这个职务是被政府认可的吗（镇一级、省一级，国家一级）？这是否只是限于当地认可的一种身份?
5. 谁给村民组长/村长/寨老工资？（他们工资吗？）
6. 工资是多少?

一个族的概念是什么?
7. 你的村有几个家族?
8. （你怎么称呼你的族（dou, ji, jiazu）?）
9. 一个人的姓和组有关系吗?
10. 在肇兴有多少个督？（有多少个组？督和族有什么区别）
    一个督有几个忌?
11. 一个忌里有多少个翁?
12. 一个翁里有多少户人家?
13. 住户的多少是否和寨子里的鼓楼，风雨桥和戏台的数量有关？如果有关，主要是在那一方面相关?
14. 寨子里鼓楼的命名和组/村有什么关系？鼓楼的名字和什么有关系?
15. 你认为每个组/村都有自己的传统吗？每个组/村在文化方面有什么不同，（比如唱歌、跳舞等）?
16. 同一个组/村的人可以结婚吗?
17. 有没有确保有亲戚关系的人结婚的措施呢？如果有，是不是有组/村长来主管这个事情？
18. 结婚有没有很多规矩？在肇兴有没有比较赞成同辈表兄妹结婚的？
19. 如果一个女孩子结婚了，她是不是要搬 ban 到她丈夫的组/村里去呢？
20. 你们组/村里有多少人？
21. 组/村人口的年龄结构是怎样的？
22. 你们组/村人口在 2000、2004 和今年的平均收入怎样？收入是在逐年增长吗？
23. 在组/村里，依据婚姻状况来划分，人口的分布是怎样的？
24. 你们组/村居民的平均受教育情况怎样？

现在我们简单地讨论一下你个人对肇兴旅游业发展的看法：
25. 你知道为什么寨子里有旅游业？是什么吸引游客来这里？
26. 你觉得随着旅游业的发展，寨子有没有发生变化？如果有：

   1.1 这些变化是什么？
   1.2 你觉得在哪些方面变化最大？或者你认为在哪些方面受到的影响最大？

27. 你觉得你们寨子在 5 年后会是什么样子？
28. 在 20 年后会是什么样子？
29. 你觉得自从旅游业发展起来以后，你们的日常习惯有没有变化？如果有，是在哪些方面？
30. 你觉得当游客在这里的时候，你的日常习惯会发生变化吗？如果是，会发生哪些变化？
31. 你认为发展旅游业的优势和弊端是什么？

   a. 你能否告诉我旅游业带来的两个正面的影响？
   b. 能否告诉我旅游业带来的两个负面的影响？

32. 在来访的游客中，你是否看到他们的一些积极的或者是良好的品质？如果有，是什么品质？
33. 在来访的游客中，你是否看到他们的一些消极或者不好的品质？如果有，是哪些？
34. 你觉得中国游客和外国游客有什么不同？
35. 对于寨子旅游业的发展，你认为还有哪些我应该了解，或者你希望该增加哪些方面的内容？

最后几个问题

36. 您多大年纪了？
37. 除了做村民组长/村长/寨老之外，你的主要工作是什么-或者主要收入来源是什么？
38. 你的文化程度是什么？
39. 你结婚了吗？
40. 你有孩子吗？
41. 你的孩子还住在寨子里吗？
42. 他们结婚了吗？
43. 你和孩子家都住在一起吗？如果不住在一起，谁还跟你一起住？

最后一个问题：

44. 如果你可以到世界或者中国旅游，你最想去哪里？
Annex 3: Table of national minority populations in various provinces of China in numbers and percentage (2000 census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>National minority population</th>
<th>Percentage of total province population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total of China</strong></td>
<td>105 226 114</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region</td>
<td>16 829 564</td>
<td>38.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunnan</td>
<td>14 158 815</td>
<td>33.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guizhou</strong></td>
<td>13 336 008</td>
<td>37.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xingjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region</td>
<td>10 969 592</td>
<td>59.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibet Autonomous Region</td>
<td>2 457 759</td>
<td>93.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qinghai</td>
<td>2 216 913</td>
<td>45.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region</td>
<td>1 895 830</td>
<td>34.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex 4: Table of national minority population of Guizhou province (census 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population of Guizhou</th>
<th>35 247 695</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han</td>
<td>21 911 687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miao</td>
<td>4 299 954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouyei</td>
<td>2 798 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dong</td>
<td>1 628 568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tujia</td>
<td>1 430 286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yi</td>
<td>843 554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Undistinguished Nationality</td>
<td>710 486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelao</td>
<td>559 041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shui</td>
<td>369 723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai</td>
<td>187 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>168 734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>56 082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhuang</td>
<td>52 065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian</td>
<td>47 531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>44 926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yao</td>
<td>44 392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maonan</td>
<td>31 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulao</td>
<td>28,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchu</td>
<td>21,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>2,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>1,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiang</td>
<td>1,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uygur</td>
<td>1,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hani</td>
<td>891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jing</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingpo</td>
<td>413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dongxiang</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Va</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naxi</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoshan</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazak</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xibe</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daur</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisu</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salar</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulong</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahu</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lhoba</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewenki, Russian, Blang, Achang, Foreigners Joining in Chinese Nationality, Nu, Kirgiz, Tajik, Hezhe.</td>
<td>Less than 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oroqen, Jino, Monba, Pumi, Baoan, Deang, Tatar, Uzbek, Yugur,</td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Annex 5: Chinese historical periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHINESE HISTORICAL PERIODS</th>
<th>DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE SHANG STATE</td>
<td>1766 B.C. – 1122 B.C. or 1600 B.C. – 1027 B.C. (debated dates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN ZHOU</td>
<td>1027? B.C. – 771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN ZHOU</td>
<td>771 B.C. – 256 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD</td>
<td>722 B.C. – 481 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARRING STATES PERIOD</td>
<td>403 B.C. – 221 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QIN DYNASTY</td>
<td>221 B.C. – 207 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMER HAN</td>
<td>202 B.C. – A.D. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIN DYNASTY (WANG MANG)</td>
<td>A.D. 9 – A.D. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATER HAN</td>
<td>A.D. 25 – A.D. 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE KINGDOMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEI</td>
<td>220 – 264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHU HAN</td>
<td>221 – 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WU</td>
<td>222 – 280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN JIN</td>
<td>265 – 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERIOD OF DISUNITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIXTEEN KINGDOMS</td>
<td>304 – 439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN WEI</td>
<td>386 – 534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN JIN</td>
<td>317 – 419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIU SONG</td>
<td>420 – 478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynasty</td>
<td>Reign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHERN QI</td>
<td>479 – 501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIANG</td>
<td>502 – 556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN WEI</td>
<td>536 – 566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN ZHOU</td>
<td>557 – 580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Unified in 577 by Northern Zhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTERN WEI</td>
<td>534 – 560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN QI</td>
<td>550 – 577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEN</td>
<td>557 – 588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUI</td>
<td>581 – 617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China Reunified in 589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANG DYNASTY</td>
<td>617 – 755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN LUSHAN REBELLION</td>
<td>755 – 763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATE TANG</td>
<td>763 – 907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONG DYNASTY</td>
<td>960 - 1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liao Khitan (907 – 1119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jin (Jurchen – 1115 – 1234)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Song (960 – 1127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Song (1127 – 1279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mongols (1234 – 1279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YUAN DYNASTY</td>
<td>1279 – 1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mongol conquests (1206 – 1279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinggis Khan (1206 – 1227)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MING DYNASTY</td>
<td>1368 – 1644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QING DYNASTY</td>
<td>1644 - 1911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: SCHIROKAUER 1991
LES FILLES DE LA TORTUE

LOUIS DANDREL

Étrange peuple qui, entre autres singularités, s'exprime dans la vie quotidienne aussi bien en chantant qu'en parlant. Chez les Dong, tout le monde sait chanter et leur pays est communément appelé : « la mer des chansons ». Travaillé, cérémonies, rencontres, salutations, tout est prétexxe à musique ! Est-ce la contrepartie d'une culture qui a longtemps ignoré l'usage de l'écriture ?

Les premières mentions du nom des Dong dans les mémoires historiques remontent au XVe siècle, sous la dynastie des Ming. Ils ont la réputation d'être « féroces et difficiles à administrer ». Ils occupent de préférence les plaines sud-orientales, où ils peuvent s'adonner à la culture du coton. Au XVIIe siècle, les Dong sont considérés comme « sinisés », les révoltes ont été éteintes, les guerres les ont repoussés sur les hauts-plateaux des provinces du Hunan, du Guangxi et du Guizhou où ils sont toujours établis. Ils sont un peu plus d'un million, vivant dans des villages sur pilotis, surmontés d'une tour de tambour.

Les Dong sont célèbres pour leurs architectures. Leurs ponts et leurs tours témoignent de leur adresse à travailler le bois : ils n'utilisent ni clous, ni rivets, les éléments sont assemblés par mortaises et tenons. Les tours, hautes parfois de dix étages, sont les lieux de rassemblement favoris : on vient y faire la conversation, les jeunes s'y courtisent, on y organise des fêtes. Et là aussi, on chante !

Le chant est d'abord le grand livre de l'histoire des Dong. On y raconte l'origine du peuple, descendant d'une tortue qui eut douze « enfants » dont un dragon, un serpent, un tigre mais aussi un homme et une femme qui eurent l'idée de se marier. On y raconte la légende du Dragon Bleu qui part vers les mers du Sud quand vient le déglut et de ses fils qui bâtissent un pont immense pour le rejoindre — ce qui expliquerait l'origine des constructions sur pilotis. On y raconte la vie des ancêtres, leurs combats et leurs victoires.

Le chant, c'est aussi le rituel des cérémonies, des mariages, récoltes, c'est aussi les formules de la rencontre et de l'adieu, c'est aussi et surtout le langage de l'amour. Les jeunes filles et les jeunes gens le pratiquent en virtuoses. La voix est le premier moyen de séduction.

Huit jeunes filles, invitées par le Festival d'Automne, forment le chœur de la minorité des Dong de la province du Guizhou. Elles interprètent des chansons polyphoniques, chansons d'amour pour la plupart, dont les paroles sont souvent improvisées, d'une forme très ancienne. La mélodie se développe sur un bourdon ou bien les voix se déplacent parallèlement. Ce répertoire pourrait être, selon certains musicologues chinois, à l'origine de la musique byzantine.
Chœur de la minorité des Dong, province du Guizhou.
Annex 7: Entrance gate ticket to Zhaoxing, sold in 2000
Annex 8: Petition to maintain Zhaoxing Middle School in its current position (my translation)

Liping County Government:

In order to develop tourism our county has achieved great success in promoting tourism specialized in ethnical culture. All of the success should be attributed to the Party and government's wise leadership with the help of the good cooperation from people. Zhaoxing, as the key scenery spot in Liping’s tourism, has gained a lot from these recent developments. We, especially the people from Zhaoxing are very encouraged and proud of this. However, we can’t accept the new decision made by the government about moving Zhaoxing local government and other governmental units to Xingping Qiaotou, especially the decision of moving Zhaoxing middle school. We all together 14 village people, including Zhaoxing Big Village, Jitang, Dengjiang, Xiage are against this decision. **We strongly request not to move Zhaoxing Middle School.**

I. Zhaoxing Middle School is (1) the best location chosen by our Zhaoxing people, it has beautiful scenery around and offers a wide vision. It is an excellent location for a school. (2) It is located in Zhaoxing village, which is the center of Big Zhaoxing and is thus very convenient for transportation. It is easy for students to access the school and thus allows us to apply the Educational Bureau regulation stating “students have to attend nearby schools”.

II. To develop the tourism is a happy thing for all Zhaoxing people. It brings lots of opportunities to Zhaoxing’s economy and improves people’s living quality. Currently the Zhaoxing middle school doesn’t restrict the development of tourism at all. On the contrary, it adds one more tourist visiting spot for Zhaoxing. If we do some renovation on Zhaoxing middle school according to the Dong traditional style, we believe it will become a shining visiting spot of Zhaoxing. **Now lots of**
architectures in Zhaoxing are renovated in this way, do they affect the beauty of Zhaoxing?

III. The planned new location of Zhaoxing Middle School is in a remote area and is in a bad environment. It doesn't meet the standard to build Zhaoxing middle school and also doesn’t follow any long-term developing plan. The new location has no people around and the environment is not proper for a middle school. It doesn’t apply our Dong old custom that states “smart place produce intelligent people”.

IV. The new location of the school is far away from the center therefore it is difficult to keep good and experienced teachers. This will also deeply affect the quality of teaching at school. Zhaoxing and the other 14 villages represent 70 percent of the population. There are 4/5 students who do not need to live on campus. If the school is far away from their home, then it will cause lots of difficulties for the school management, and will raise issues of student’s transportation safety.

Due to the above reasons, Zhaoxing people and people from the villages around Zhaoxing are strongly appealing for the keeping of Zhaoxing middle school in its current location and are asking not to move it. If the government ignores our petition and moves the school, all of the people of Zhaoxing and the villages around Zhaoxing will fight against this act and will strongly protest against it. Now we submit this petition to Upper Level Government to ask them to cancel the plan of moving Zhaoxing Middle School.

If the upper level government doesn’t listen to our people’s voice and still plans to move middle school, we will (1) not cooperate with the tourism developer to develop tourism in Zhaoxing and will drive them out of Zhaoxing; (2) take back the land which was provided by Zhaoxing to the middle school for free before and make it the property of Zhaoxing’s people, making sure no office nor individual can use it.

July 6, 2006