

The Contention between Han “Civilizers” and Yi “Civilizees” over Environmental Governance: A Case Study of Liangshan Prefecture in Sichuan*

Thomas Heberer[†]

Abstract

During field research on environmental governance in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in 2012, the author studied the Chinese state’s efforts to promote its agenda and “civilizing mission,” the resistance of local Yi people to both, and the resulting clash of discourses on environmental protection. To understand the nature and mechanisms involved in this conflict, the author focuses on the state’s “civilizing mission” in light of Foucault’s power concept. The article examines two issues: 1) the strategies by which the central state exerts power and asserts its policies in a minority area, i.e. how it attempts to steer the behaviour of local cadres in order to implement its modernization concept, and 2) whether and to what degree it makes a difference that the researched area is a “minority” (Yi) area. To answer these questions, one county in the prefecture was taken as a case study. Furthermore, this article continuously refers to the policy field of environmental governance to substantiate the thesis of a civilizing project conducted by the centre.

Keywords: ethnic minorities; Chinese state; central–local state relations; civilizing projects; environmental governance

In Chinese studies, social scientists have developed a new perspective in tracing power relations between the centre and peripheral peoples. Stevan Harrell, for instance, speaks of “civilizing projects” “in which one group, the civilizing center,

* In February 2012, field research was carried out in Xichang city and Meigu county in Liangshan Prefecture in a collaborative project with the South-Western University of Nationalities. Interviews were conducted with local offices and officials concerning their perception of “environment,” “civilizing” the local Yi people, the “quality” of local people and cadres, responsibility contracts, and cadre performance evaluation. I also talked to members of the traditional elite (*Bimo*, *Ndeggu*), officials responsible for the Dafengding Nature Reserve (on Yi–Han relations), academics from the South-Western University of Nationalities, and local peasants. I also gathered local documents referring to the issues concerned. I am very grateful to Stevan Harrell, Li Lianjiang, Collin MacErras, Stig Thøgersen and two anonymous referees for valuable comments on an earlier draft.

[†] School of Public Management, Zhejiang University, and Institute of East Asian Studies, University Duisburg-Essen, Germany. Email: thomas.heberer@uni-due.de.

interacts with other groups (the peripheral peoples) in terms of a particular kind of inequality.”¹ Similarly, Dru Gladney, in line with James Scott, refers to the centre’s civilizing mission, and Stig Thøgersen to “civilising agents.”² During field research on environmental governance in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture 凉山彝族自治州 in 2012, the author observed how the Chinese state tries to push its agenda and its “civilizing mission,” how the local Yi 彝 people resist both, and how discourses between the two fail to find a common ground regarding environmental protection.

Some recent studies on environmental governance in minority areas link the central state’s civilizing mission to the concept of *suzhi* 素质, i.e. the quality of the local people and the attempt to improve this quality,³ an issue addressed below. Other studies have tried to apply Foucault’s power concept to environmental governance in China’s minority areas, calling it “environmental governmentality” or “green governmentality.”⁴ However, this study’s principal question concerns the technologies by which the central state exerts power and asserts its policies in a minority area, and takes Foucault’s “technologies of managing people”⁵ as a starting point. This article looks at the impact of the central state upon individual, local leading cadres and local Yi people and how the local actors respond. It provides a detailed analysis of how the state’s environmental concept translates into policy implementation and how the state’s evaluation processes, incentives and tools of communication between different administrative levels affect local policy implementation.

Within this article, I examine the hypothesis that the central state attempts to ensure implementation of its modernizing concept by steering the behaviour of local cadres with the help of specific political technologies and incentive mechanisms. I take one of the prefecture’s counties (Meigu county 美姑县) as a local case study to explore this hypothesis, and refer to one policy field (environmental governance) to substantiate the thesis of a civilizing project conducted by the centre and its local agents and to render the analysis more meaningful.

Governance and Resistance

Foucault defines “government” as the “totality of institutions and practices by which one steers people.”⁶ Accordingly, power in a hierarchical political system functions via the ability to “bring subjects to a specific behaviour” (power from within).⁷ In China, a “will to improve,” i.e. an effective implementation of policy,⁸ is implanted in both local cadres and local people by a variety of discursive

1 Harrell 1995, 4.

2 Gladney 2004; Scott 2009, 116–126; Thøgersen 2003, 202.

3 Thøgersen 2003; Sturgeon 2009, 2010.

4 Williams 2000, 2002, 207–08; Litzinger 2004, 2006; Harwood 2009; Sturgeon 2010.

5 Foucault 2010, 46.

6 Foucault 1996, 119.

7 Foucault 2005, 255–57.

8 Li, Tania Murray 2007.

and disciplinary instruments such as distinct forms of indoctrination (for example, discourses, narratives,⁹ a training system in Party schools), and a specific set of incentives including disciplinary tools (cadre performance appraisals and career advancement policies). I will draw on this concept to structure my analysis.

In rural areas, environmental concepts are primarily conceived of as projects for “civilizing” villages. The aim is to improve the “quality” (*suzhi*) of both local people and local cadres so as to enhance the civilizing (in this case, environmental) project. It will be argued here that above and beyond the civilizing process and self-assertive discourses, the effective implementation of civilizing policies at the local level requires specific incentive systems which strengthen the local cadres’ “will to improve.” This article therefore also tries to clarify the means by which the central state steers the behaviour of leading local cadres. I assert that this is primarily achieved through an appraisal system which extends from the centre right down to village level.

As a second research question, I discuss whether, and to what degree, it makes a difference that the researched area is a “minority” (Yi) area. While the local Yi are frequently blamed for local environmental degradation, Yi scholars and officials have developed a counter-discourse, arguing that the Yi have a long tradition of preserving ecology and nature, that the government disregards local knowledge, and that the state has been the real originator of environmental degradation. According to Foucault, discourses claiming to represent the “truth” are challenged by counter-discourses. The latter term refers to “a space in which the formerly voiceless might begin to articulate their desires – to counter the domination of prevailing authoritative discourses.”¹⁰ Both civilizing and *suzhi* discourses as well as counter-discourses by Yi scholars are part of the Foucaultian power concept of making subjects conform with a specific behaviour. With this in mind, I attempt to figure out what minority status means for control mechanisms as well as for resistance to them.

Resistance is not only a discursive process but also manifests itself in an antagonism between state control over land and resources and everyday resistance. It is particularly so here since local people have to deal with decision makers “they can rarely reach” (for example, regarding natural reserves).¹¹

Finally, I show that despite counter-discourses, power strategies appear to be effective – particularly since the centre does not face serious resistance or challenges at the local level. Neither local cadres nor the populace call the centre’s goals into question; rather, they scrutinize the roles ascribed to them by the centre in terms of achieving or preventing the goals set by the central state.

9 I use the term “narrative” to refer to the imagination or construction of history used in historical discourses.

10 Moussa and Scapp 1996, 88.

11 Holmes 2007, 187; Neumann 1992, 1998.

Meigu County

Meigu is a county in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, with 230,000 inhabitants. It has a high level of poverty compared to the rest of the nation. Of the total population, 99 per cent are Yi. In 2011, only 13,500 people lived in the county town, with the remainder residing in rural areas.

The establishment of a separate environmental protection office in Meigu at the end of 2011 illustrates that environment policies have gained more prominence here. Environmental problems in Meigu differ from those in industrialized areas. The list of the negative repercussions of manmade disasters is long: soil erosion, deforestation, the loss of arable and pasture land, deterioration of soil quality, siltation, desertification, overuse of non-recyclable mulch films, a lack of facilities for garbage disposal, etc. Meigu’s revenues are scant and the authorities lack the facilities and funds for providing even the most basic environmental services such as waste disposal or sewage treatment.

Extreme poverty has given rise to illegal mining in the area and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Although strictly prohibited, illegal mining has apparently been unofficially tolerated by the county government as it provides a source of tax income as well as employment and income opportunities for local people.¹² A report in 2007 revealed that the shutdown of illegal mines in the county was more or less unsuccessful because local cadres were afraid of “offending other people” (clan members) and had become “wary of a war” and provoking conflict with the people concerned.¹³

Civilizing and Environmental Projects

With regard to “environmental policies” in China, it is important to distinguish between rural and urban development. In urban areas, a considerate use of natural resources in the sense of environmental protection is regarded as crucial, whereas environmental issues in rural areas are connected with the intention of civilizing those areas and the peasants who live there. As the field study in Meigu showed, basic infrastructure aspects such as the paving of rural roads, the provision of electricity, waste disposal, sanitary equipment, the water supply,

12 *Liangshan ribao* reported that an investigation by Liangshan Prefecture discovered at least 89 illegal mines operating in counties under its jurisdiction. See “Wo zhou zhuan xiang tingdong qude shixiao” (Effects of the special action of rectifying mines in our prefecture), *Liangshan ribao*, 16 March 2012. Owing to a lack of supervision over working safety in both legal and illegal mines, thousands of workers, almost entirely Yi, fall victim to silicosis, see [Boxun.com](http://boxun.com). 2011. “Sichuan Jingshan Yiren chenfeibing diaocha” (Investigation of silicosis among the Yi population in Jingshan, Sichuan), 6 June, <http://boxun.com/news/gb/china/2011/06/201106061513.shtml>. Accessed 4 July 2012. A report by the Meigu government in June 2012 warned against the phenomenon of heavy illegal mining and resource digging in the county, see “Meigu xian ‘qi jucuo’ jizhong zhengzhi kuangchan ziyuan kaifa si wa lan cai xingwei” (Meigu county’s “seven initiatives” concentrate on stopping excessive private digging), 15 June 2012, <http://mg.lsz.gov.cn/xwhc/mgyw/2012-06-15/4945.html>. Accessed 2 July 2012.

13 [Mg.lsz.gov.cn](http://mg.lsz.gov.cn). 2012. “Meigu xian zhengdun he guifan kuangchan ziyuan kaifa zhixu gongzuo fang’an” (Meigu county rectifies and standardizes the developing procedures for mines), 16 August, <http://mg.lsz.gov.cn/mgzww/gwj/2007-08-16/1737.html>. Accessed 21 July 2012.

the building of new and sanitary houses in a well-ordered environment (*huanwei* 环卫), etc. are covered by the “constructing a new socialist countryside” programme, which also encompasses greening, illumination and the beautification of surrounding areas. In this sense, environmental policies in China often overlap with aspects of “civilizing” local people and local development, and become distinguishable from the general improvement of local living conditions only at a later stage when they become clear policies for preventing environmental degradation. I argue that this rural programme constitutes the first step in an “environmental improvement programme” aimed at “civilizing” villages while improving the natural and social environment through “rural civilizational projects” (*nongcun wenminghua* 农村文明化).

The central state’s civilizing project is strongly related to the discourse on the “quality” of the local people and cadres, which forms part of this project and will be addressed in the following section.

The *Suzhi* Concept: Improving the Quality of Local People and Cadres

In official statements, the various stages of environmental civilization are linked to the “quality level” of local officials. *Suzhi* in this sense is related to “civilized” behaviour and a “civilized” environment or, in the state’s view, to modernity and self-discipline.¹⁴ The *suzhi* concept is also part of the state’s power concept. Its purpose is to establish new forms of social control, new patterns of rationality, and new norms and standards of behaviour while disciplining locals accordingly (a sort of “civilizing of the mind”). Concurrently, it serves as an argument used by the state to “excuse many things not getting done or not getting done well”¹⁵ by blaming the locals for their poverty and backwardness.¹⁶ This is not only true for minority areas but also for Han areas. There are, however, differences.

In Meigu, Han officials as well as those Yi officials who have adopted Han values (i.e. state values) frequently blame Yi villagers for causing environmental destruction through hunting, house building, charcoal production and the collection and sale of firewood; the Yi villagers and cadres, on the other hand, argue that deforestation is down to the work of the state and natural disasters.¹⁷

The perception that the Yi minority villages (and peasants) in Meigu have to be ecologically “civilized” or “cultivated” plays an important role here. According to this notion, cadres (particularly Han cadres) exhibit a higher *suzhi*. Hence, they are to take the lead in policy implementation. *Suzhi* appears to be a meaningful element in the daily life of local cadres who frequently draw strict boundaries between themselves and the rural population. Moreover,

14 See e.g. Yan 2003, 494.

15 Ibid.

16 A lack of *suzhi* is frequently perceived as a “potential source of chaos.” See Sturgeon 2009, 487.

17 Discussion with member of Liangshan Prefecture’s Political Consultative Conference, Xichang, 20 February 2012.

Han cadres also draw ethnic divisions between themselves (higher *suzhi*) and Yi cadres (lower *suzhi*).¹⁸

Quality, so the argument goes, can be enhanced by participating in environmental courses in the prefectural or provincial Party schools.¹⁹ Pieke has shown that the focus of Party school training has shifted from Marxist-Leninist ideology towards improving the “quality” of cadres, i.e. enhancing both their ability to solve local problems and their learning capacity.²⁰ Each official from the village level upward is obligated to attend regular training courses at Party schools in the county, the prefecture, or even the province, in rotation. There, among other things, environmental and civilizing knowledge (for example, under the label of “constructing new socialist villages”²¹) is conveyed. In Jingyetexi township 井叶特西, once a year, each leading cadre has to attend a course at the county or prefecture Party school. Township Party secretaries have to take courses in the provincial Party school. Jingyetexi’s Party secretary had already passed a course on environmental policies in Chengdu.

Apart from Party schools, the centre employs a variety of techniques to raise the “quality” of local cadres and the local population, such as dispatching Han cadres to townships and villages (*guazhi* 挂职) with the assignment of guiding and monitoring development processes in villages and townships. The centre also sends county cadres, particularly Yi cadres, to prefectural offices to familiarize them with environmental policies and standards. County offices are also given responsibility for several villages, which includes guiding their environmental development. In addition, university graduates are sent into villages and townships in order to enhance the “quality” of the rural population, particular that of the Yi and the local cadres. The local Party schools offer specific training courses for those graduates who have been trained for their rural jobs in advance. These courses also cover environmental themes.²² In Jingyetexi township, for example, I met two Han women who had been offered a chance to work for three years as village cadres, after which they would be allowed to take the examinations for local officials and thus could become state cadres. In 2012, the salaries for those jobs were 900 yuan for polytechnic college graduates, and 1,200 yuan for university graduates. “Volunteers” coming for a few weeks received 800 yuan per month.²³ The monthly salaries of these young people far surpassed the annual income of most rural people.²⁴

18 On *suzhi*, see Murphy 2004; Kipnis 2006; Anagnost 2004.

19 Interview, Sichuan Provincial Party School, 10 September 2009.

20 Pieke 2009, 50.

21 The stipulations of the government’s “constructing a new socialist countryside” campaign include, among other things, “civilizing the rural areas” and “creating aesthetic and clean villages.”

22 Interview, Jiangyin Party School, 18 August 2011.

23 Interview with volunteers in Jingyetexi, 15 February 2012.

24 A Han volunteer told me via email that she had worked as a volunteer in Meigu’s rural areas. As she could not endure the harsh conditions there she abruptly left after a few days and returned to Xichang to work for a local NGO (email received 31 May 2012).

In addition, the prefecture periodically organizes training courses for environment officials at the county and township level. Environmental experts from central and provincial levels teach courses on improving the environment and ecology, and on the construction of environmental or ecological models at the county, township and village levels. These courses also involve visits to model townships and model villages in order to learn from their experiences.²⁵ Meigu's organizational department also regularly sets up inspection tours to other parts of the country so that rural cadres may gather new information and knowledge about rural or environmental models, and thus gain interesting insights which will enhance their *suzhi*. The Party secretary of Jingyetexi, for instance, had attended inspection tours to the cities of Chengdu, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Suzhou, where the participating cadres came across specific patterns of rural development, rural processing industries, land policies and environmental protection.

Not a few Han cadres are of the opinion that the Yi in rural areas are backward and dirty (although such attitudes are usually paraphrased politely in interview statements). Frequently, differences in environmental awareness between Han and Yi are expressed by referring to the “long-lasting slave-owner society” or the “very different cultural history” of the Yi. An official from the prefecture's environment protection office argued, for instance, that the largest project in Liangshan Prefecture (also in terms of the environment) “is the leap of the Yi from several thousand years of a slave-owner society into socialism.”²⁶ Yi people, in turn, told us that Han cadres blamed them without reason for causing environmental problems.

Between 2010 and 2012, a specific programme for increasing the *suzhi* of Yi villagers was initiated by Liangshan Prefecture. Its purpose was to transform traditional Yi habits and customs, including those which encompassed environmental issues, and to establish a spiritual civilization among Yi peasants.²⁷ In an article on Meigu's neighbouring county, Leibo 雷波, the following factors were listed as the reasons for “uninterruptedly elevating the cultural quality” of a Yi village: 100 per cent fulfilment of the birth planning policy; participation by more than 95 per cent of the villagers in the new cooperative health insurance system; a school enrolment rate of 100 per cent; no cases of drug addiction; an absence of crime; successful environment management; existence of village hygiene regulations, wastewater treatment and garbage disposal; and the elimination of environmental pollution, etc.²⁸

25 Interview with Jingyetexi township official, 15 February 2012.

26 Interview with official from Liangshan's environmental protection bureau, Xichang, 8 February 2012.

27 Chen 2012.

28 Scmw.gov.cn. 2012. “Jingshen wenming bangongshi zhuren Zhou Zhongfan guanyu Zhongyang jingshen wenming zhidaoweiyuanhui de ‘quanguo wenming jingshen’ yundong” (The head of the spiritual civilization office, Zhou Zhongfan, on the national movement for spiritual civilization launched by the Central Instruction Group for Spiritual Civilization), http://www.scmw.gov.cn/TNews_Info.aspx?id=3188. Accessed 2 July 2012.

This corresponds to the “healthy and civilized new life movement in Yi areas in Liangshan Prefecture” programme, initiated by the prefectural government in 2012. A report on Puge 普格 and Xide 喜德 counties, both of which border Meigu, revealed that “leadership groups” had been set up under the direction of the county’s Party secretary. That the Party secretary was in charge is a clear indication of the significance of this movement. The movement’s primary goal was to civilize Yi families, villages and townships, and to raise their *suzhi*.²⁹ A report on Yi villagers even noted that their *suzhi* could be raised by improving their management knowledge and their ability to learn Mandarin, by self-cultivation, and by changing their customs.³⁰

However, such patterns represent more than a discourse aimed at bringing modernity to rural areas. They not only involve a symbolic power for dominating rural areas but also encompass an ethnic aspect – i.e. that of “standardizing social practices”³¹ between the “advanced” Han areas and the “backward” areas of the Yi. This involves a discourse of hegemony and domination by the centre vis-à-vis the local Yi. The local Yi people and Yi cadres are “to learn their lack of *suzhi* in order to desire it,” thus assigning to the state the role of educator.³²

Civilizing Projects in Meigu County

Civilizing projects are part of the power policy discourses developing at the centre for moulding the conduct of local cadres and local people, and for setting moral standards. According to Foucault, discourses help to shape the conduct of people, be they local cadres, as in the case of China, or local people. They produce “truth” in the sense that they justify distinct patterns of conduct and rules of procedure.³³ Here, “civilizing” refers not only to modernization but also and far more to “a large set of rules and conventions that have to be followed [by the individual] in order to become a good citizen.”³⁴ Accordingly, the state defines itself as a “moral state” which claims moral authority as a part of the centre’s disciplinary mission.

In Meigu, the “civilizing project” discourse is a focal point of local environmental policies, although this project also aims at “civilizing” the social environment, i.e. the customs and traditions of the Yi people.³⁵ Meigu county’s environmental protection office has now implemented several “health civilization and new living movements” in Yi areas to encourage the inhabitants to become

29 Ibid. See also Liangshan zhou zhengxie. 2012. “Liangshan zhou zhengxie Li Xiaojing fuzhuxi dao wo jiao dudao Yi qu jiankang wenming xin shenghuo yundong” (Vice-president of Liangshan’s Political Consultative Conference Li Xiaojing inspects the new living movement of health and civilizing in Yi areas), 30 May, <http://222.215.152.116/newsInfo.aspx?pkId=4795>. Accessed 2 July 2012.

30 Li, Haomiao 2012.

31 Boutonnet 2011, 5.

32 Yan 2003, 505.

33 Foucault 1971.

34 Boutonnet 2011.

35 For instance, the high costs of various ceremonies and rituals such as weddings, burials, etc. See e.g. Shama 2008.

“civilized,” i.e. to wash both their clothes and bodies, to brush their teeth, to clean their houses, to sleep in beds using cotton-wadded quilts, to sit on chairs, to prepare meals on kitchen stoves, and to use tables, bowls and chopsticks when eating. Necessary utensils such as toothpaste, towels and toothbrushes were distributed free of charge.³⁶ In collaboration with a Hong Kong-based NGO, Meigu also launched a programme to inspire villagers to pay attention to their personal hygiene in daily life. The equipment required for this programme was donated by the NGO and was also designed as part of an environmental improvement and civilization programme.

A new “ecological” model village was created in Texi 特西 as part of the civilizing project. During the course of the “construction of new socialist villages,” the traditional Yi houses in the villages close by were replaced with new ones concentrated in a single village. Seen from the outside, these buildings looked like modernized Yi-style buildings. All were designed in the same stylized pattern. The government provided building materials worth 30,000 yuan to each household. Further expenses were covered by the respective households themselves, which were also responsible for the construction of the houses. According to the village head, the house type had been specified by the design department of Meigu’s planning office and had been discussed with the villagers in advance.³⁷

However, I was told informally that this “village renewal” had been imposed on the villagers against the will of the majority because the designers had not taken traditional Yi customs into account. The design of the buildings left no room for the traditional mode of ancestor worship or for ancestor tablets. Even the installation of the traditionally important fire pits and ritually important wooden roof beams had been disregarded.³⁸ At the behest of the county and township authorities, the village’s Party committee forced through the house designs by badgering each household head separately.³⁹ County authorities viewed the new buildings as an important step towards “civilizing” the Yi villages and improving their environment. The official reasoning for insisting on the new house designs was that they were “much safer.” A Yi anthropologist argued that “this new village has no future in its current form, since most Yi villagers dislike the new buildings. In my opinion, the new village destroys the local culture in the name of environmental improvement and civilizing.”⁴⁰

The above case lays bare the civilizing concept of the central state. Replacing traditional houses in Liangshan’s Yi areas springs from a project called “remoulding three types of houses in Yi areas” and forms part of the civilizing

36 Lshj.gov.cn. 2010. “Meigu xian huanbaoju kaizhan yiqu jiankang wenming xin shenghuo yundong” (Meigu county’s environment protection office launches movement for developing health civilization and a new living), 14 July, http://www.lshj.gov.cn/E_ReadNews.asp?NewsID=2928. Accessed 2 June 2012.

37 Interview with village head, Texi, 12 February 2012.

38 Ibid. On the significance of fire pits and interior design for ancestor worship, see Wu 1993, 40.

39 Informal discussion with Chinese professor of Yi studies, Meigu, 13 February 2012.

40 Informal discussion with Chinese professor of Yi studies, Meigu, 15 February 2012.

programme. James Scott calls this process “miniaturization,” i.e. “the creation of a more easily controlled micro-order in model cities, model villages, and model farms.”⁴¹ According to the respective plan for Liangshan Prefecture, a total of 1,125,000 people were to be resettled in new buildings between 2003 and the end of 2012. However, only 105,000 people had been resettled by April 2010.⁴² Here, the carriers of civilization – in this case the county and township cadres in Meigu – “tended to see rational order in remarkably visual aesthetic terms. For them, an efficient, rationally organized city, village, or farm was a city that looked regimented and orderly in a geometrical sense.”⁴³

This section has shown that state “civilizing” projects are designed by higher authorities and implemented by local cadres. The following section addresses the case study of a nature reserve in Meigu county in order to illustrate how civilizing projects exclude local knowledge and the local people from local developments.

Dominant and Subjugated Knowledge in the Power Hierarchy

Within power discourses, Foucault discerns between “totalizing” knowledge and local knowledge, the latter being disqualified by the state.⁴⁴ The case of the Dafengding Nature Reserve 大风顶国家级自然保护区 in Meigu county perfectly illustrates this power discourse. There are many Yi villages close to the reserve, and some villages were resettled in the past to places outside the reserve. Traditionally, the natural environment of this area formed part of the local economic cycle and provided many items of everyday sustenance (firewood, medicinal herbs, hunting, edible plants, mushrooms, etc.) to the local Yi people.⁴⁵ Today, however, only administrative personnel and scientists (i.e. those with a high *suzhi*) are permitted to enter the core area of the nature reserve, meaning that the local Yi (i.e. those deemed to have a low *suzhi*) can no longer fulfil their traditional function as forest conservators.

Logging, herding, the collection of medicinal herbs, land utilization, hunting and pastoral use have all been explicitly prohibited. To compensate for the loss of these economic resources, including the forests and pastoral land, the Meigu government originally promised to create new job opportunities for the local Yi and to initiate social projects in the area. However, owing to the fiscal woes of the county, these promises have not been followed through. As the economic situation of the local Yi people has deteriorated, fewer cattle have been raised and increasing frustration has inevitably led to attempts to override the prohibitions. The local people regard the nature reserve as a traditional part of their economically useable heritage. As a result, clashes between the authorities and the local

41 Scott 1998, 4.

42 Fan 2012.

43 Scott 1998, 4.

44 Foucault 2003, 7–8. For more on this concept, see Philo 2007.

45 For more on this issue, see Qi et al. 2004.

people are on the rise. Poaching, the illegal felling of trees, the collecting of firewood and the grazing of cattle on the reserve's pastureland are becoming increasingly commonplace. In 2008, for instance, a major conflict arose when yaks bred by local Yi began to wander more and more frequently into the reserve area, damaging both forests and grasslands. Allegedly, the county government ordered that a number of the yaks be slaughtered, and the remainder driven out of the reserve area. These measures were met with vehement protests from local Yi, who argued that this area was their traditional forest and pastureland.⁴⁶ In addition, forest and animal protection regulations also provoke anger when, for example, wild boars, which are protected by law, eat and damage the crops of the local peasants. None of the existing administrative bodies feel responsible for this problem; consequently, the peasants have started to kill the boars in violation of strict regulations forbidding this. The local Yi argue that the office in charge of administering the nature reserve is responsible only for the forests and not for animal protection, and that they are therefore entitled to kill any boars which damage their fields.⁴⁷

In general, the local people are regarded as troublemakers, and their knowledge of local fauna and flora and their traditional role as conservators of nature are ignored. It is no surprise that the Yi react against their exclusion from their traditional forest and pastoral areas by resorting to the “weapons of the weak.”⁴⁸ In point of fact, they are merely attempting to protect and preserve areas which have ensured their survival for many centuries. Jianchu Xu et al. have argued that forests are less a product of nature than of culture, since they “are present because of the actions of the local people who live in and around them.”⁴⁹ Accordingly, these authors also criticize the resettlement of people from mountainous areas into lowlands, arguing that this practice leads to disease, alcoholism and other problems among the displaced people while at the same time alienating them from those areas which have traditionally played tremendously important religious and social roles in their livelihoods. Furthermore, resettlement frequently destroys the communities and knowledge of a specific locale, and strips a natural environment of its traditional conservators. According to their argument, the traditional belief systems of the Liangshan Yi have contributed significantly to ecological protection and biodiversity.⁵⁰

The above three sections have shown how, in the name of improving the environment and ecology, the “civilizing” mission of the central state translates into central–local discourses about the “quality” of local cadres and local people, about civilizing villages, and about different concepts of knowledge within the hierarchical system of power. The centre uses “civilizing” discourses as a tool of indoctrination in order to shape the conduct of local people and reframe

46 Discussion with head of nature reserve, Meigu, 14 February 2012.

47 Interview with professor of Yi studies, Xichang College, Xichang, 9 February 2012.

48 See Scott 1985.

49 Xu, Jianchu, et al. 2005.

50 See also Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge 2000, 8–10.

their norms. The intention of these discourses is to structure the possible fields of action of local people and cadres and to have an impact upon the probability of their conduct. In the following section, the article discusses the steering technologies and disciplinary power employed by the central Chinese state to bring local cadres into line, and shows how this matches Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power as a means in the administrative system to achieve discipline and conformity among people.

Disciplinary Power Aimed at Fostering the Civilizing and Environmental “Will to Improve” among Local Cadres

Above and beyond civilizing discourses, there are further technologies used by the central state to instil its civilizing, modernizing and environmental ideology into local cadres in Meigu. In the following section, I elucidate how the state attempts to ensure that a “will to improve” is internalized by local cadres. Incentives are naturally required in order to foster a will to improve a given local ecological situation. It is necessary therefore to clarify the role of evaluation systems in steering the behaviour of local cadres so that they implement environmental governance in Meigu.

Since the Chinese party-state lacks the institutions required to guarantee and monitor full policy implementation at the local level, further mechanisms are needed to influence the behaviour of local officials. The cadre appraisal system is one such important instrument for doing so. It is an example of how the central government strives to instil power from within among local cadres and to improve governance at all administrative levels.⁵¹

As elsewhere in China, Liangshan Prefecture assigns specific policy targets to its counties and the respective county leaderships each year. The targets are stipulated in so-called “responsibility contracts.” The performance and behaviour of leading local cadres in each policy area are evaluated at the end of a given year. In Meigu county, leading cadres and the county offices are inspected by the prefecture, and the counties are finally ranked according to the appraisal outcome. However, incentives alone are not sufficient for steering and disciplining the behaviour of local cadres. I argue that the evaluation system has four major disciplinary and/or surveillance functions, which not only affect the interaction between Liangshan Prefecture and its counties but also the conduct of local cadres. This holds for all policy fields and not just environmental policies.

First, appraisal figures as an instrument of political communication between Liangshan Prefecture and its counties by means of responsibility contracts. In these contracts, the prefecture communicates its expectations in terms of environment policy implementation to the respective county leadership and its sub-agents (township and village cadres). The environmental policies set out in

51 On how cadres are indoctrinated and compelled to comply with the system, see Kipnis 2008.

the contract elucidate the significance assigned to them by the prefecture within a wide array of policy fields.

Second, the cadre appraisal system is essentially an incentive and steering system. County and township officials must meet the targets prescribed by the prefecture. The latter even expects cadres to conduct policy experiments and to create models (for example, in terms of environmental policies) in order to be positively evaluated and promoted. This is a major reason why leading local cadres attempt to design specific policies and models according to particular local conditions and to implement priority tasks assigned by higher echelons. Leading local officials must meet their assigned targets if they wish to climb the career ladder and increase their income.

Third, the appraisals constitute a control and pressure system in the form of performance ratings. As a rule, only cadres consecutively assessed as “excellent” can – ideally and typically – gain promotion. Many cadres have complained that the appraisals place them under enormous pressure; a major reason for this is that they take place frequently and regularly and can have a massively negative effect on careers, thus making leading cadres feel insecure. Moreover, the contracts include both rewards for target fulfilment and disciplinary action in the case of non-fulfilment.

Finally, the evaluations serve as an instrument for internalizing social and political control as well as a disciplinary instrument in the sense that they induce the cadres to conform to the so-called developmental concepts of the state. With the help of the evaluations, the upper levels design an ideal frame of reference for the local cadres.⁵²

By tying a cadre’s performance to career advancement, a system of individual pressure and control is created. Cadre appraisals focus on whether the disciplinary system has worked successfully and whether the priority targets in a given year have been met. If not, for example in the case of the non-fulfilment of priority tasks, the state may punish the responsible officials by either cutting their salaries or bonuses, by not offering them promotion, demoting them, or by applying the Party’s other disciplinary instruments.

The areas targeted by responsibility contracts⁵³ can generally be divided into “hard” issues (for example, those related to the current political priorities of the central leadership such as economic growth, social stability, birth planning, etc.) and “soft” issues (such as social security, education, etc.). In Meigu, which intends to become an ecological county at the provincial level, environmental policies have become a “hard” issue. The hard targets are strongly linked to career advancement and rewards, and must be achieved under all

52 Heberer and Trappel 2013.

53 Each year, the prefecture assigns specific policy targets to its counties (the county leadership). Those targets are stipulated within so-called “responsibility contracts.” The performance and behaviour of local leading cadres in each policy field are evaluated at the end of a given year.

circumstances; the soft targets, although mandatory, are not necessarily related to promotion and remuneration, so there is less pressure to fulfil them.

The introduction of fixed implementation responsibilities by means of “target responsibility contracts” across China (in the case of Meigu county, between the county and the prefecture, between the county and its townships, and between the township and its villages), in combination with the attempt to tie target fulfilment to career advancement and income, has generated new incentive structures for local cadres. The contract between Meigu and Jingyetexi township concerning environmental issues was drawn up by the township government and Meigu’s environmental protection office. In 2012, this contract included detailed targets set for fighting soil erosion, eliminating water contamination, afforestation, forest protection, and improving the environment of civilizing villages. In turn, the township drew up a contract with the village administration committee in each village under its jurisdiction.

These targets clearly illustrate the civilizing discourse. Environmental targets included “cleanliness, maintaining order, beautification and institutionalization within the villages.” A programme of measures focusing on waste, wastewater, livestock grazing, illegal digging for natural resources, and sanitation and hygiene inside and around houses was implemented in the villages. Particular attention was paid to handling issues such as the “six disorders,” which included the random dumping of rubbish, discharge of wastewater, the unrestricted wandering of livestock, chaotic car parking, illegal digging for minerals, and the uncontrolled collection of firewood. Each farmhouse was to be responsible for its own rubbish, pools of water on the ground, and unhygienic housing conditions – a programme already described in this paper as a civilizing project.⁵⁴

Villages are obliged to report on the progress of these measures twice a month to a “leadership group,” which was set up by the township government in order to monitor and control the implementation of the programme in the villages. Both the township and Meigu’s environmental protection office review progress in the villages at the end of the year, and the township officials must present at least some proof of the programme’s success in order to avoid criticism by county authorities which might negatively impact upon their career advancement. At the end of the year, the general situation is assessed by higher authorities.⁵⁵

In Jingyetexi township, following the appraisal of the environmental situation in the villages, the township Party secretary informed me that two of the 11 villages had been assessed as excellent (*youxiu* 优秀), six as up to standard (*hege* 合格), and three as poor (*cha* 差). The excellent ones were rewarded with a banner, and both the excellent and up-to-standard villages received an additional 300 yuan each for their office expenses. Those classified as poor had their office expenses cut by 300 yuan per village per year (out of a total of 5,000 yuan, provided by the township), thereby slightly reducing their chances of ever catching

54 Jingyetexi Government 2011.

55 Ibid.

up with the more advanced villages. The Party secretary continued that, “Owing to the low environmental and hygienic standards of villagers and village cadres, more than one fourth of the villages have not met the standards. Awareness of this issue among the villagers is rather low. Many villagers have not even been to the county town.” He believed that environmental improvements and environmental awareness were a developmental process: “I pin my hopes on the return of migrant workers who may bring with them new standards from the outside and can serve as local role models.”⁵⁶ To that end, two university graduates were sent into the villages in order to propagate tidiness and hygiene.

To perform well in their evaluations, each village had to hit its respective forestation and hygiene targets. One person in each village was assigned to take care of rubbish collection. This person had to bring the rubbish into the township for disposal (which is funded by the county), for which they were remunerated. In Texi model village, this task had been assigned to a *ndeggu*⁵⁷ in order to confer greater authority upon this duty. For this task, he received an annual allowance of 1,000 yuan from the county’s environmental protection office.⁵⁸ Traditionally, the *ndeggu* in this village was responsible for mediation and was also a member of the village’s Party committee.

The county also set the township goals in areas such as forest protection (including, amongst other things, fire prevention, clamping down on illegal logging and forest clearance) and combating illegal mining. In order to encourage the villages to hit their respective targets, the county’s environment protection office inspected the environmental situation in the township and its villages every three months. Each township cadre had to inspect each entire village at least three times a year. Furthermore, meetings with the village leaders, during which each village was required to submit a report on its environmental situation, had to take place in the township every four months. In turn, the town leader in charge of environmental issues had to report regularly to the county government.

In respect of environmental work, the environment protection office of Liangshan Prefecture appraises the work of both the vice-mayor responsible in Meigu for environmental protection and the head of the county’s environment protection office. An interviewee in Xichang, however, told me that, “Superior Yi officials frequently evaluate lower Yi officials rather positively, particularly if these cadres belong to the same or friendly clans.”⁵⁹ Moreover, the fact that they have local knowledge also earns Yi cadres bonus points in their appraisals.

56 Interview with Party secretary, Jingyetexi, 17 February 2012. On migrants from Liangshan, see Liu, Shao-Hua 2011, 50–79.

57 The *ndeggu* (*degu*) are the headmen of the Liangshan Yi and traditionally have played an important role in arbitration. See Ma 1992; Liu, Yu 2001, 116–17.

58 Interview with *ndeggu*, Texi village, 12 February 2012.

59 Discussion, member of Liangshan Prefecture’s Political Consultative Conference.

According to the outcome of the environmental evaluations in 2011, Liangshan Prefecture graded its counties according to four categories, with 1 being the top category and 4 the bottom. Meigu was classed as category 3.⁶⁰

Another tool used in local cadre surveillance consists of so-called “periodical priorities,” known in Chinese as *yipiao foujue* 一票否决 (the “one item veto” rule). It defines situations which are to be avoided at all costs or targets which must be met. *Yipiao foujue* targets are assigned by the central leadership, the provinces, the Liangshan Prefecture, or sometimes even by a county, according to local requirements. *Yipiao foujue* means that if one requirement is not met, all the local leadership’s other achievements are negated. If, for instance, environmental targets are part of *yipiao foujue* and have not been met, then all other indicators such as GDP growth or the preservation of social stability are – at least in theory – null and void. It is therefore absolutely necessary for local leaders to hit these targets, since failure to do so will negatively affect their appraisals and consequently their prospects for career advancement and promotion.

In Liangshan Prefecture, environmental protection has already become part of *yipiao foujue*.⁶¹ The same holds true for Meigu county.⁶² In 2012, the county enacted a specific set of legal regulations, the “Meigu county regulations for ecological and environmental protection,” to deal with transgressions against ecological developments and environmental protection; this made environmental evaluations much stricter, at least in form.⁶³

The evaluations described above are clearly a major control instrument; they are used by higher-level administrative echelons to bring lower levels into line. But, they are more than just an instrument of control; they can also be used as a tool of punishment in the case of non-compliance or poor performance by leading local cadres.

This section has described the disciplinary and punishment technologies which the central state has at its disposal and how various incentives can encourage the environmental will among local cadres. The next section shows that local cadres and people are not passive subjects. They are also agents, impacting upon and modifying the implementation of policies and thus also exerting power.

60 Lsz.gov.cn. 2012. “Liangshan Zhou renmin zhengfu guanyu biao Zhang 2011 niandu huanbao mubiao kaohe xianjin xian shi de tongzhi” (Notification of the People’s Government of Liangshan on commending the advanced environment target evaluation of counties and cities at the end of 2011), <http://www.lsz.gov.cn/Detail/xxgk2011-fggw/2885/11dbdbf8-162d-4151-9704-af4ce8405c0a>. Accessed 4 July 2012.

61 Lshj.gov.cn. 2012. “Liangshan zhou diyici huanjing baohu dahui tichu wei renmin qunzhong tigong tianlan, shui qing, dijing de shengchan shenguo huanjing” (A big meeting on environmental protection of Liangshan Prefecture proposes to provide the population with blue sky, clean water and clean soil for production and living), 6 April, http://www.lshj.gov.cn/E_ReadNews.asp?newsid=4809. Accessed 4 July 2012. Interview, official from Liangshan’s environmental protection bureau.

62 Mg.lsz.gov.cn. 2012. “Meigu xian ‘liu jucuo’ qieshi jiada huanjing baohu lidu” (Meigu county’s “six measures” are crucial for strengthening environmental protection), 18 April, <http://mg.lsz.gov.cn/xwhc/mgyw/2012-04-18/4802.html>. Accessed 4 July 2012.

63 Ibid.

Sometimes strategies are developed at the local level in order to counterbalance the narratives and intentions of the centre.

Counter-Discourses, Counter-Narratives and Counteractions among the Local Yi

The blame laid on the Yi for environmental destruction has provoked counter-discourses and counter-narratives in which the Yi people attempt locally to steer state discourses in an opposite direction. Many Yi scholars and officials argue that Yi culture exhibits a strong tradition aimed at preserving the environment and nature. According to this view, environmental protection and ecology have always played a prominent role in traditional Yi culture: it is not the Yi who are responsible for the deterioration of the ecological situation in Liangshan, but rather the process of decivilization carried out during the entire course of the developmentalist programmes of the PRC.

During the course of research into the thinking and behaviour of local Yi entrepreneurs in the year 2000, one interviewee in Zhaojue 昭觉 county pointed out that, “The Han chopped down our trees [i.e. during the Mao era], and nowadays they [the Han] accuse us of destroying the environment. The facts show who the real destroyers are.”⁶⁴ In February 2012, one village head in Meigu explained that during the Yi rebellion in the 1950s, the People’s Liberation Army burned down entire forests in order to prevent rebels from hiding there and that such methods further contributed to the deforestation process in Meigu.⁶⁵ From this view point, the destruction of forests was not due to economic reasons but was apparently part of a control technique employed by the armed forces.

It is argued by many Yi that cultural traditions for preserving forests were long prevalent among the Yi. The *Bimo* 毕摩 (Yi priests) played a specific role as the traditional protectors of the forests: cutting down too many trees was believed to disturb the spirits. Sacrifices were offered annually to the forest spirits in exchange for protection.⁶⁶ Traditionally, the *Bimo* were responsible for designating certain areas as taboo zones in order to keep humans out. It was forbidden to enter “sacred groves,” i.e. forest areas associated with distinct spirits, in which clans sometimes had their burial places, and which still exist in Liangshan today. They believed that violating these taboos would lead to serious illness or natural disasters. Traditionally, trees were cut down only for building houses, and tableware was frequently made of leather in order to protect the forests. The consumption of certain animals was also taboo, a practice viewed by Yi scholars

64 Heberer 2007, 192.

65 Interview with village head, Meigu, 13 February 2012.

66 Interview with *ndeggu*, Bimo Research Centre, Meigu, 16 February 2012.

as an expression of biodiversity.⁶⁷ All these customs are perceived as clear examples of a traditional, ecologically sustainable use of resources.

Many Yi scholars present themselves as more ecological than the Han and argue for the existence of a specific Yi particularity. In these discourses, for example, it is argued that the Yi should revert to their traditional ecological values and continue to propagate those values among the younger generation.⁶⁸ Protecting the environment – so the argument goes – is part and parcel of nature worship and the traditional concept of harmony among the Yi. This concept also includes the protection of local flora and fauna as part of animist perceptions and the worship of nature.⁶⁹ While many of these statements correspond to reality, they are sometimes stretched or exaggerated in order to counter the official discourses. They are part of a self-assertive discourse among the Yi who are frequently blamed for environmental and ecological problems by Han cadres.⁷⁰

These arguments assume that indigenous knowledge could contribute to cultural and biological diversity. Emphasizing this role of local knowledge is an important part of the counter-discourse among the Yi. The political centre (central government), on the other hand, perceiving itself as the “civilizing centre,” regards itself as superior and invariably attempts to translate this superiority into a modernizing ideology, which it imposes upon so-called “backward” minorities. Local population groups and their local knowledge are simply excluded from this ideology (as shown by the case of the Dafengding Nature Reserve, discussed above).⁷¹ Many cadres are of the opinion that, when it comes to environmental protection, the local population is more a disturbing factor than a source of valuable indigenous knowledge.

A *Ndeggu* divided ecological development in Meigu into three stages:

The first period prior to the democratic reform in 1956/57⁷² was marked by harmony between man and nature and the existence of large primeval forests. The second period, after the democratic reform, was characterized by anarchic circumstances in which government policies were no longer in accordance with specific local conditions, many forests were cut down, and the ecological balance was destroyed; and the third one from the agricultural reforms of 1979 on, when there was a return to family-based farming and the villages and households once again became responsible for specific forest sections. Detailed contracts now determine who may cut down which trees in order to prevent irregular deforestation, and households and villages have commenced reforestation programmes which improve the situation. Their endeavours are accompanied by promising reforestation projects of the state which are gradually taking local knowledge into account.⁷³

Both sides base their arguments on *cultural superiority* or *scientific superiority* of their respective civilizations. What they leave out are certain objective factors

67 Zhu 2007; Ma 2010.

68 Qubi 2007.

69 Dong 2007.

70 Interview with professor of Yi studies, Xichang College, 7 February 2012.

71 Xu et al. 2005.

72 A campaign for abolishing the social structures among ethnic minorities.

73 Interview, *ndeggu*, Bimo Research Centre. For an example of endorsing local knowledge, see Ye and Guo 2012.

that have changed since 1956: population growth, productivity increases and poverty.

In addition to counter-discourses, local Yi people also take up counter-strategies, such as illegal mining, sometimes with the collusion of county governments and local people; these emanate from the poverty of the local Yi. In one of Meigu's townships, for instance, I witnessed hundreds of Yi people digging for agate and illegally selling the stones to external traders. This has led to the destruction of an entire mountain slope and has increased the danger of progressive soil erosion and landslides. Although the prefectural authorities prohibited this practice in 2010, it was still prevalent in February 2012; local authorities were clearly not giving it their attention. I myself was unable to discern any governmental efforts to prevent the local people from "illegal digging." The *Liangshan ribao* 凉山日报 reported that a peasant could earn more from selling just one agate stone than he could by growing and selling potatoes for many years. According to representatives of both the prefecture and the county, digging had been stopped in 2011; this, however, was a fabrication propagated by the local authorities.⁷⁴

This section has shown that the hegemonic discourses of the Chinese state have provoked counter-discourses among the local Yi which differ strongly from those in Han areas. However, even though those behind the counter-discourses resist the power of the centre and the dominant discourse is challenged, the local counter-discourse does not really challenge the dominant discourse. The "civilizing" mission of the central state ignores the fact that the Yi have their own local knowledge which might enhance the modernizing concept of the centre without undermining it. In turn, counteractions, such as the prevalence of illegal mining and violations of environmental regulations, are strongly related to widespread local poverty. Such counter-strategies represent less a form of permanent resistance to the centre's policies than a short-term pattern of behaviour arising from a specific local situation, in this case extreme poverty.

Conclusion

This article has examined the techniques used by the state to enforce its "civilizing" and environmental concept at the local level. On the basis of Foucault's power concept, I have shown that the state in China can effectively⁷⁵ enforce its "civilizing mission" by paraphrasing it as "environmental development" and by developing

74 See Xu, Xiangdong. 2011. "'Kuangfeng' de Meigu manao liangnian shenjie kuangzhang baibei" (The price of agate stones in Meigu has increased a hundredfold in two years), *Liangshan ribao*, 14 December, Part 1 at: http://www.ls666.com/channel/city/2011-12/20111214_city_zh_78749.html, and Part 2 at: http://www.lsrp.cn/html/2011-12/15/content_40295.htm. Accessed 4 July 2012.

75 It is important to differentiate between *effective* and *efficient* policy implementation. The former refers to the outcomes that are consistent with local development goals as laid out in the policy guidelines and work reports of, namely, county governments. The latter is understood as gaining the best possible results in terms of resource allocation and administrative capacity. In this article, I speak more of effective implementation, since "efficiency" is very hard to measure.

strategies of indoctrination (discourses, narratives) and applying disciplinary instruments. The central state uses specific techniques to steer the civilizing and environmental behaviour of leading local cadres and to instil in each of them a “power from within.” This power from within comprises a “will to improve” regarding the civilizing targets of the centre and also the actions taken by higher echelons to apply the above-mentioned techniques so as to enforce the implementation of policies and the improvement of the ecological situation. Behind this stands a wider rationale: the protection of resources for the wealthy eastern part of China.⁷⁶ I have argued that these power strategies appear to be effective – particularly since the centre does not face serious resistance or challenges at the local level. The Yi see themselves as being part of China and attempt to show “that their place in China was underestimated by the previous paradigm.”⁷⁷ Neither local cadres nor the populace call the centre’s goals into question; rather, they scrutinize the roles ascribed to them by the centre in terms of achieving or preventing the goals set by the central state. As long as the conduct of leading local cadres corresponds to the demands of the centre, the central state prefers to steer rather than to punish. Nevertheless, both techniques remain available.

Many of the discourses and control systems are the same as in Han areas, where the rural–urban divide calls for a similar “civilizing” approach. In the “model” villages in Han areas that I visited, the basic issues and problems were much the same. However, beyond the civilizing policies and actions in Han areas, I also found distinct features of environmental policy implementation in Meigu. The “minority” status, for instance, legitimizes counter-discourse among local ethnic minorities, since Han peasants would probably find it harder to claim that they possessed valuable “local knowledge.”

The state also promotes other distinctions between Han and Yi areas. For example, trips are organized to allow Yi cadres to visit advanced Han areas in order for the Yi to see how backward they are and how to handle the “civilizing” project in their respective minority areas. Also, specific institutions in Yi society are promoted to emphasize so-called “traditional ecological values,” and traditional Yi elites, such as *Bimo* and *Ndeggu*, are viewed as “environmental policy actors.”

Despite a coherent incentive system and group formation, there is still a rift between local Han and local Yi cadres. On the one side, there are diverging networks based primarily on Party membership among the Han, and on the other, there are the clan or ethnic affiliations among the Yi. In addition, Yi cadres are given preference in terms of promotion, whereas the Han cadres perceive themselves as professionally superior. Even the evaluation standards for Yi cadres may be lower than those for Han cadres. Furthermore, Han cadres frequently blame the local Yi people for environmental and ecological degradation.⁷⁸

76 Cf. Yeh 2005, 14.

77 Harrell 2001, 151.

78 Such accusations by Han cadres are not targeted solely at the Yi, but at other ethnic minorities as well. See Williams 2002, 31.

Against this “Han discourse,” a Yi counter-discourse has developed which calls attention to environmental and ecological traditions among the Yi and blames “the Han” for neglecting indigenous local knowledge and conservation patterns.

To conclude, the state figures as a modernizer and civilizer not only in Han areas but also in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. However, owing to ethnic variations and segregation, the modernization project functions somewhat differently in Meigu than it does in Han areas. On the whole, the internalizing project is implemented by means of the same or similar instruments in both Han and Yi areas. Whether the centre has been really successful in enforcing its concept of environmental development and in instilling in local cadres a “will to improve” – both in terms of “civilizing” and improving the environment – will have to be answered by further case studies. In Meigu, on the one hand, the “civilizing project” seems to be effective (for example, in creating new villages, shaping the behaviour of local cadres, and improving the ability of local cadres to tackle local problems). On the other hand, there are informal counter-activities conducted by the local people and cadres (see the agate case mentioned above). However, the latter does not challenge the hegemony of the central state.

摘要: 在 2012 年的凉山彝族自治州环境治理领域的研究中, 笔者对以下方面做了研究: 1) 政府致力推动其议程以及完成其“文明化使命”, 2) 当地彝族人民对此做出相对的反应, 3) 关于在环境保护问题上产生对话的不同意识。为了了解这个矛盾的本质及其运行机制, 笔者从福柯 (Michel Foucault) 的权力概念的角度出发着重对政府的“文明化使命”进行了分析。本文将探讨两个问题: 1) 国家 (state) 如何施加权力并坚持其主张的战略, 鉴于, 如何在少数民族地区试图引导当地干部的行为, 以执行其现代化政策的设想, 2) 所研究的区域是一个“少数民族”(彝族)地区, 是否以及在多大程度上与其他非少数地区有所差别。为了回答这些问题, 本文以一个辖自治州的县作为个例研究。此外, 本文还将不断提及环境治理领域的政策, 对国家文明化工程实施的论点加以论证。

关键词: 少数民族; 文明化工程; 环境治理

References

- Anagnost, Ann. 2004. “The corporeal politics of quality (suzhi).” *Public Culture* 16(2), 189–208.
- Boutonnet, Thomas. 2011. “From local control to globalised citizenship: the civilising concept of *wenming* in official Chinese rhetoric.” In Corrado Neri and Florent Villard (eds.), *Global Fences: Literatures, Limits, Borders*. Lyon: Université Jean Moulin, 79–103. Also, http://univ-lyon3.academia.edu/ThomasBoutonnet/Papers/439254/From_Local_Control_to_Globalised_Citizenship_The_Civilising_Concept_of_Wenming_in_Official_Chinese_Rhetoric. Accessed 2 July 2012.
- Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge. 2000. “Yunnan xuanyan: tigao shengwu he wenhua duoyangxing de yuanjing he xingdong” (Visions and actions for the enhancement of biological and cultural diversity). *Cultures and Biodiversity Congress 20–30 July 2000*. Kunming: Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge.

- Chen, Simei. 2012. “Liangshan Yizu diqu tushuguan fuwu xin nongcun youxiao moshi yanjiu” (Study on an effective model of libraries serving new villages in Yi areas in Liangshan). *Sichuan tushuguan xuebao* 2, 22–23.
- Dong, Renda. 2007. “Xinan Yizu chuantong wenhua zhong de hexie sixiang” (Harmony ideology in the traditional culture of the Yi in Southwest China). *Xinan daxue xuebao* 4, 63–66.
- Fan, Meixia. 2012. “Sanfang gaizao dui Yiqu chuantong minju tese de yingxiang pingxi” (Impact of remoulding of three house patterns in Yi areas on traditional living features). *Sichuan minzu xueyuan xuebao* 2, 32.
- Foucault, Michel. 1971. *L'ordre du discours (The Order of Discourse)*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, Michel. 1996. *Der Mensch ist ein Erfahrungstier (Man is an Experiential Animal. Discussion with Ducio Trombadori)*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Foucault, Michel. 2003. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*. London: Verso.
- Foucault, Michel. 2005. *Analytik der Macht (Analytic of Power)*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Foucault, Michel. 2010. *Kritik des Regierens (Critique of Governing)*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Gladney, Dru. 2004. *Dislocating China. Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and other Sub-altern Subjects*. London: C. Hurst & Co.
- Harrell, Stevan. 1995. “Introduction: civilizing projects and the reaction to them.” In Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 3–36.
- Harrell, Stevan. 2001. “The anthropology of reform and the reform of anthropology: anthropological narratives of recovery and progress in China.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30, 139–161.
- Harwood, Russell. 2009. “Negotiating modernity at China's periphery. Development and policy interventions in Nujiang Prefecture.” In Elaine Jeffreys (ed.), *China's Governmentalities. Governing Change, Changing Government*. London: Routledge, 63–87.
- Heberer, Thomas. 2007. *Doing Business in Rural China. Liangshan's New Ethnic Entrepreneurs*. Seattle: Washington University Press.
- Heberer, Thomas, and Rene Trappel. 2013. “Evaluation processes, local cadres' behaviour and local development processes.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 84, 1048–66.
- Holmes, George. 2007. “Protection, politics and protest: understanding resistance to conservation.” *Conservation and Society* 2, 184–201.
- Jingyetexi Government. 2011. “Jingyetexi xiang chengxiang huanjing zonghe zhili gongzuo mubiao zerenshu” (Target responsibility contract of Jingyetexi township for urban–rural environment governance).
- Kipnis, Andrew. 2006. “Suzhi: a keyword approach.” *The China Quarterly* 186, 295–313.
- Kipnis, Andrew. 2008. “Audit cultures: neoliberal governmentality, socialist legacy, or technologies of governing?” *American Anthropologist* 35, 275–289.
- Li, Haomiao. 2012. “Minzu diqu xiangcun luyouyu xin nongcun jianshe huodong fazhan yanjiu” (Study on the interaction of development of rural tourism in nationality areas and constructing a new countryside). *Linye jingji* 5, <http://mall.cnki.net/magazine/Article/LSZG201205018.htm>. Accessed 16 July 2012.
- Li, Tania Murray. 2007. *The Will to Improve. Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Litzinger, Ralph A. 2004. “The mobilization of ‘nature’: perspectives from north-west Yunnan.” *The China Quarterly* 178, 488–504.
- Litzinger, Ralph A. 2006. “Contested sovereignties and the critical ecosystem partnership fund.” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 29, 66–87.
- Liu, Shao-Hua. 2011. *Passage to Manhood: Youth Migration, Heroin and Aids in Southwest China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Liu, Yu. 2001. “Searching for the heroic age of the Yi people of Liangshan.” In Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Perspectives on the Yi of Southwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 116–17.

- Ma, Erzi. 1992. “Qiantan Liangshan Yizu Degu” (A superficial discussion of the Degu of the Liangshan Yi). *Liangshan minzu yanjiu*, 99–107.
- Ma, Erzi. 2010. “Liangshan Yizu chuantong wenhua he zongjiao xinyang dui shengwu duoyangxing de baohu” (The traditional culture and beliefs of the Liangshan Yi and protection of biodiversity). *Yuan shengtai minzu wenhua xuekan* 2, 2–7.
- Moussa, Mario, and Ron Scapp. 1996. “The practical theorizing of Michel Foucault: politics and counter-discourse.” *Cultural Critique* 33, 87–112.
- Murphy, Rachel. 2004. “Turning peasants into modern Chinese citizens: ‘population quality’ discourse, demographic transition and primary education.” *The China Quarterly* 177, 1–20.
- Neumann, Roderick. 1992. “Political ecology of wildlife conservation in the Mt. Meru area of north-east Tanzania.” *Land Degradation & Rehabilitation* 3, 85–98.
- Neumann, Roderick. 1998. *Improving Wilderness. Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Philo, Chris. 2007. “‘Bellicose history’ and ‘local discursivities’: an archaeological reading of Michel Foucault’s *Society Must be Defended*.” In Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power. Foucault and Geography*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 341–367.
- Pieke, Frank N. 2009. *The Good Communist. Elite Training and State Building in Today’s China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Qi, Dunwu, Xiaoqin Wang, Miao Miao et al. 2004. “Sichuan Meigu xian Dafengding guojia ji ziran baohuqu xiaoxing lulei shengwu duoyangxing fenxi” (An analysis of biological diversity among small mammals in Dafengding natural reserve in Meigu county, Sichuan province). *Sichuan dongwu* 2, 108–112.
- Qubi, Aguo. 2007. “Liangshan Yizu chuantong wenhua yu xiandaihua de shuangxiang tiaoshi” (Yi traditional culture and their mutual adaptation to modernization), 21 November, http://222.210.17.136/mzww/news/8/z_8_5528.html. Accessed 14 June 2012.
- Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shama, Muji. 2008. “Yi qu nongcun xiangfeng wenming jianshe de diaocha yu sikao” (Investigation and reflection on the construction of a rural civilization in Yi areas). *Liangshan minzu yanjiu*, 1–6.
- Sturgeon, Janet C. 2009. “Quality control: resource access and local village elections in rural China.” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, 481–509.
- Sturgeon, Janet C. 2010. “Governing minorities and development in Xishuangbanna, China: Akha and Dai rubber farmers as entrepreneurs.” *Geoforum* 41, 318–328.
- Thøgersen, Stig. 2003. “Parasites or civilisers: the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party in rural areas.” *China: An International Journal* 1.2, 200–223.
- Williams, Dee M. 2000. “Representations of nature on the Mongolian Steppe: an investigation of scientific knowledge construction.” *American Anthropologist* 102, 503–519.
- Williams, Dee M. 2002. *Beyond Great Walls. Environment, Identity, and Development on the Chinese Grasslands of Inner Mongolia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wu, Jingchong. 1993. *Liangshan Yizu fengsu (Customs of the Liangshan Yi)*. Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe.
- Xu, Jianchu, Erzi T. Ma, Duojie Tashi, Yongshou Fu, Zhi Lu and David Melick. 2005. “Integrating sacred knowledge for conservation: cultures and landscapes in Southwest China.” *Ecology and Society* 10(2), <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol10/iss2/art7/>. Accessed 25 May 2012.
- Yan, Hairong. 2003. “Neoliberal governmentality and neohumanism: organizing suzhi/value flow through labor recruitment networks.” *Cultural Anthropology* 18(4), 494–523.

- Ye, Hong, and Hong Guo. 2012. “Difangxing zhishi yu minzu diqu de jian fangzai. Yi Yizu erbi wei li” (Local knowledge and reduction of natural disaster precaution). *Heilongjiang minzu congkan* 2, 147–150.
- Yeh, Emily T. 2005. “Green governmentality and pastoralism in western China: ‘converting pastures to grasslands’.” *Nomadic Peoples* 9, 9–29.
- Zhu, Wenxu. 2007. “Yizu chuantong wenhua de huanbao linian” (Environment protection concepts in traditional Yi culture). *Zhongguo minzu* 10, <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/2ee4724533687e21af45a9ab.html>. Accessed 25 May 2012.