A DESTINATION IN TRANSITION: LHASA AFTER THE QINGHAI-TIBET RAILWAY

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Certificate of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no previously published or written material or that of any other degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgement has been made within the text.

24th June, 2009

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Abstract

The primary inspiration to undertake this study was the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway connecting Tibet with the rest of China. Half way through this study, on March 14th 2008, a violent protest occurred in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet. As a result of political instability, a tense atmosphere prevailed in Lhasa. In response to the changing political environment, the candidate shifted the initial focus of this study. Instead of examining the evolution of a growing destination as initially planned, the scope of this study shifted to examine the impact of the Qinghai-Tibet railway on the local population of Lhasa. More specifically, the key question of this study is the identification of tourism impact brought by the opening of the railway and to discuss associated socio-economic benefits and issues of tourism development in the context of Tibet.

This study used qualitative and descriptive perspectives. Two field visits to Lhasa were made from 30th May to 11th June, 2007 and 14th June to 13th July, 2008. The tense political atmosphere limited local citizen response and participation in this study. A total of 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, both formally and informally, with local residents. Observations and experiences from the two ethnographic fieldwork visits are thereafter presented.

Findings from this study indicate that tourism has created a development paradox in context of the study area. On the one hand it has been found as a tool to generate more economic growth by leading to increased job

opportunities, increased income and an increase in consumable goods. In turn, it has increased living standards for the local population. Yet, the question still remains as to whether benefits of additional tourism brought by the railway are distributed evenly across the local population, particularly if local Tibetans have benefited. As Lhasa demonstrates, instead of creating an environment for self-reliance, tourism may have marginalized Tibetans even further.

However, as this study evolved, it became clear that socio-economic changes occurring in the study area were not solely due to tourism development but caused by the broader contextual background of Tibet. Tourism is found to not play a core role in shaping the socio-economic evolution within the study area, but through changes caused by a broader political and economic context. Unlike previous studies, tourism is therefore not considered the only agent in bringing about socio-economic changes to a host community. As a result of this impact on tourism, broader contexts of the destination should be taken into consideration in future studies.

Keywords: Tibet, Lhasa, Qinghai-Tibet railway, Tourism, Socio-economic impacts

<u>Acknowledgement</u>

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents. Without their unlimited love and tolerance, I would not have had the courage to strive towards the goal in attaining a master degree. I am thankful to my parents who have trusted and granted me the greatest freedom. Most importantly, I have learned from them the importance of being persistent and hard-working.

Yet, I have to admit that this research journey has never been as easy as one can imagine. In times of doubt and tears, I am grateful to my supervisors – Dr. Thomas Bauer and Professor Bob McKercher. I am truly indebted to them for their patience and support throughout the research process. I am honoured to have Dr. Bauer as my chief supervisor who is passionate and knowledgeable on the topic. I admire his 'can-do' and 'think-out-of-the-box' character. His advice has widened my perspectives of thinking whilst working on this study. I am also thankful to have Professor McKercher as my co-supervisor, who encouraged me in pursuing the M.Phil degree in the first place. I learned from him the importance of high quality work. I am very privileged to have the opportunity to learn and work with two of the most intelligent and passionate scholars in this School.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background outline of the study.   It firstly explains the rationale to undertake the current study, from which the problem statement, research questions and research objectives are elaborated. Introduction to the destination follows – Tibet and the specific area of study, the main tourist attraction zone located in the city centre of Lhasa.   At the end of this chapter, the significance of the research study is stated.   Last but not least, a brief overview of respective chapters is then presented.

1.1 Background

The primary inspiration to undertake the current study started with the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway on the 1st of July, 2006.   The opening of the railway marks not only a historical milestone for the development of Tibet[1] by connecting Tibet to other Chinese cities but also accelerates the development of its tourism industry.   Immediately after the opening of the railway, Tibet experienced a fast paced economic growth while its tourist numbers and receipts also grew at a substantial rate (Xinhua News Agency, 2007b).   During the first year of the railway's operation, the total number of tourist arrivals outnumbered the local Tibet population, while the total of tourism receipts also accounted for 14.2% of Tibet's GDP (Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau, 2008).   Although there is a lack of

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[1] Tibet refers to the Tibet Autonomous Region in this study.   Tibet Autonomous Region was set up in 1965 and is one of the five autonomous regions in China.

statistics on the detailed breakdown of transportation modes used by incoming tourists, at the end of 2007, Tibet recorded 4.03 million tourists in total (Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau, 2008).

However, half way through this study, a violent protest occurred on March 14th 2008, in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet (which has become generally known as the 3/14 incident).   The immediate impact of the 3/14 incident caused a sudden slump in the fast developing tourist industry of Tibet.   As a result of political instability, tourism within the region was badly affected. In 2008, tourist arrivals to the region were recorded at a slump of 69%, with a 72% decrease in tourism receipts compared to figures during 2007 (Xinhua News Agency, 2008).

1.2 Problem Statement

In response to the changing political environment, the candidate shifted the initial focus of this study.   Instead of examining the evolution of a growing destination as initially planned, the scope of this study shifted to examine the impact on local residents of Lhasa of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.   More specifically, the key questions at the heart of this study are to identify tourism impact largely brought about by the opening of the railway and to discuss the socio-economic benefits and issues that are associated with tourism development in the context of Tibet.

Literature suggests that tourism is widely justified because of its economic significance in the development process of a destination. Development and promotion of tourism is largely justified on the basis of its catalytic role in the broader social and economic development (Sharpley, 2002). As a result of rapid and associated potential economic contribution, tourism is widely regarded as an effective means of achieving socio-economic development within a community (Telfer, 2002; Tisdell & Roy, 1998). Because of this, governments around the globe are justifying their claims for tourism development within their own country.

Many national governments struggle to promote economic growth in mountainous, landlocked regions inhabited by ethnic minorities considered to be behind the mainstream national culture and economy (Wood, 1997). However, the inconvenient location of these regions has in return, limited the communities' ability to compete with urban regions. As a result, tourism within economically isolated regions are developed with the purpose of enhancing the communities' socio-economic wellbeing (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Wood, 1997).

However, the success in advancing an equitable distribution of economic benefits through tourism development has not always been easy. While tourism development is promoted, the share of economic benefits is found unevenly distributed within the host population (Jackson, 2006). As indicated by Tisdell and Chai (1997), the socio-economic impact of rapid economic growth is often lop-sided. As a result, the subsequent socio-economic disparities found within a community are often disregarded.

Economic benefits do not always filter down evenly throughout a society and the socio-economic disparities can widen as the economy grows (Tisdell & Chai, 1997).

The consequences to Tibet of improved accessibility from the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway in 2006, was that they experienced rapid economic growth in the year that followed. By developing and promoting tourism growth, the regional government claimed that socio-economic conditions in this vast piece of highland could be accelerated as a result of the opening of the railway (Zong, 2007). However, political unrest as exemplified in the 3/14 incident has prompted an urgent enquiry into the matter by examining tourism impact on the local community of Tibet since the railway was built. A study is therefore timely, to examine the contribution of the railway as well as the role of tourism, as a vehicle for promoting socio-economic changes within the context of Tibet.

1.2.1 Research Questions

From this research, the candidate seeks to address the following questions:

1. What is the tourism impact that the Qinghai-Tibet railway has brought to Lhasa?

2. How does the local population perceive the socio-economic impact of tourism development in Lhasa after the opening of the railway?

3.   Have the incurred socio-economic benefits of tourism been distributed evenly within the community and shared between the Han Chinese and Tibetans?

1.2.2 Research Objectives

Objectives from the research are as follows:

-   To identify the associated socio-economic contribution of tourism in Lhasa after the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.
-   To identify the socio-economic issues associated with tourism development in Lhasa after the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.
-   To explore whether the socio-economic benefits of tourism development have been distributed evenly between the Han Chinese and Tibetans after the opening of the railway.

1.3 The Research Setting

1.3.1 Tibet

Figure 1-1: Location of Tibet

Source: Mehta (2009)

Tibet is located in the western part of China as shown in Figure 1-1 (Mehta, 2009). It is a landlocked destination surrounded by Bhutan to the south with Nepal and India to the south-west. Its native inhabitants are Tibetans, being one of the fifty-six ethnic groups within China. Since 1965, it has been one of the five autonomous regions of China and is now the homeland for a population of 2.82 million (China National Post, 2007). Covering the highest plateau region in the world with an average elevation of 4,900 meters, it is commonly known as the 'Roof of the World'.

The legitimacy of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet has long been the centre of dispute which is termed the 'Tibet Question'. Since the Chinese Central Government established its rule over Tibet in 1950, China has faced persistent opposition to its rule from Tibetans and the international community. The Chinese Central Government has maintained that Tibet has always been an inalienable part of China. The Tibetan-Government-in-Exile, however, maintains that Tibet has historically been an independent country (Sperling, 2004). A detailed account on the historical background of Tibet is outlined in Appendix 1.

Despite political controversies, the unique natural and cultural environment has made Tibet a desirable tourist destination for people from China and elsewhere. The splendid scenery and richness of Tibetan culture have long enticed Western imagination and fascination (Klieger, 1992). Lonely Planet (2009), one of the most popular travel guide books of western travellers, describes Tibet as a mysterious Buddhist kingdom with the vast Himalaya Mountains that fascinate and attract western travellers to the destination.

1.3.2 Tibet and Tourism

In terms of international tourism, Tibet was not mentioned until the arrival of missionaries from France. As a result of the first wave of travel to Central Asia in 1246 (Pommaret, 2003), the French missionaries made their first visit to Lhasa. Visiting missionaries were later replaced by travellers

searching for new avenues of trade in the second half of the 18th century. The Tibetan government at that time decided to close Tibet to all foreigners in 1810 and made it a forbidden land for international travellers (Pommaret, 2003).

When realising the potential of income that could be generated by tourism, the Chinese government opened Tibet up to the world in 1981 (Pommaret, 2003). Tourism development was then recognised in Tibet as a development strategy for Tibetans and other ethnic minority areas (Tang, 1995). However, Tibet's tourism industry was not one of the beneficiaries until the Central Government launched the 'Go West' campaign in 1999 which aims to help under-developed areas in western China (Zong, 2007).
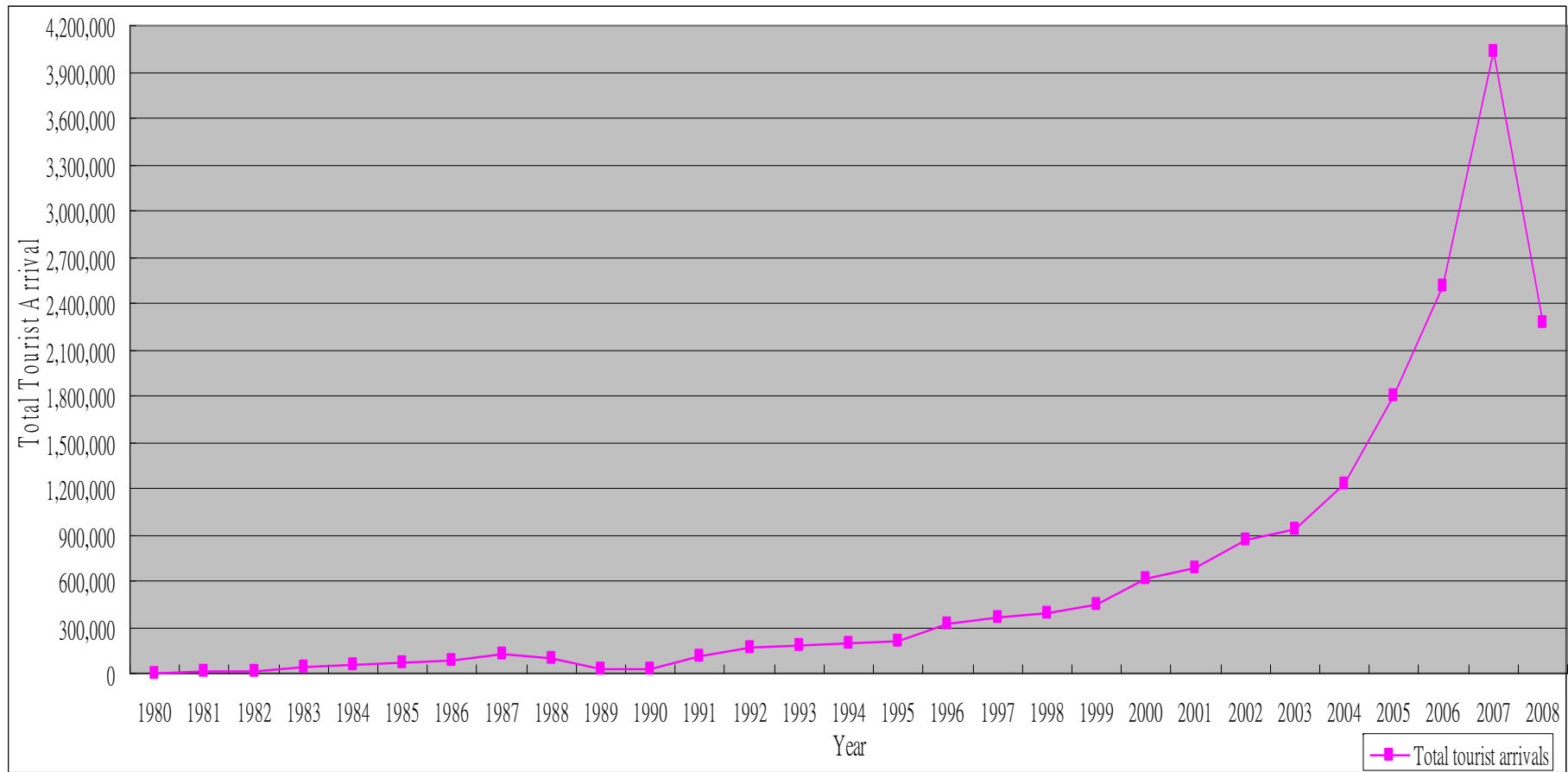
Diagram 1-1: Total tourist arrivals in Tibet from 1978 to 2008

Source: Tibet Autonomous Region Yearbook (2007)

Diagram 1-1 gives an overview of the total tourist arrivals in Tibet from 1980 to 2008, with detailed figures provided in Appendix 2 (Tibet Autonomous Region Yearbook, 2007).   As indicated, steady growth of tourist arrivals into Tibet was recorded as from the 1980's.   When tourism was first made part of the national plan for social and economic development in 1980, tourism activities started to boom at a steady rate in Tibet (Tang, 1995).   Declaration of martial law in Tibet affected tourism in 1989, while the growth of tourism is observed from the late 1990's when the 'Go West' campaign was implemented.   During 2007, tourist arrivals in Tibet reached 4.03 million. This was the first time that tourist arrivals had outnumbered the population of Tibet, but a slump in 2008 was recorded owing to the 3/14 incident.   During 2009 the TAR Tourism Bureau targeted 3 million tourists (Xinhua News Agency, 2009b).

1.3.3 The Qinghai-Tibet Railway

The Qinghai-Tibet railway was controversial in terms of the Chinese Central Government's motive in constructing the railway itself.   The train route as illustrated in Figure 1-2 shows that the railway runs from Xinning in Lanzhou (X) to Lhasa in Tibet (Z).   The first section of the railway runs from Xining to Golmud, which is located in Lanzhou (X) and Qinghai (Y) province respectively.   This was put into service in 1984.   The newly opened section of the railway runs from Golmud (Y) to Lhasa (Z) (ESRI, 2009).
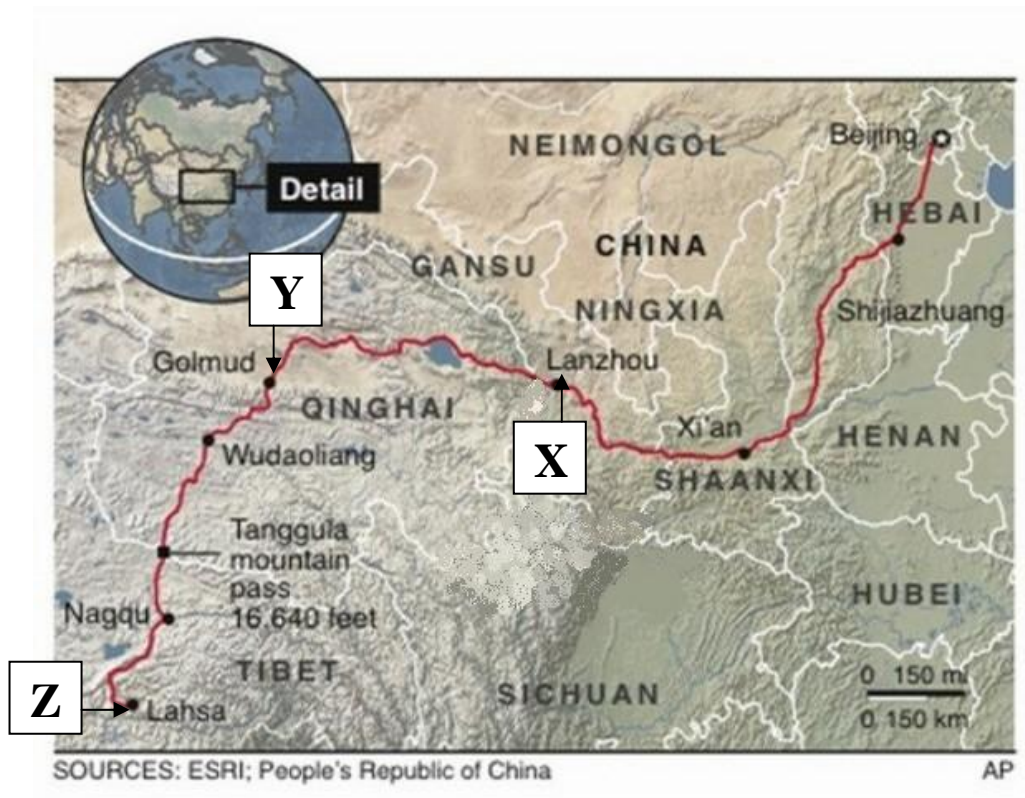
Figure 1-2: Qinghai-Tibet railway

Source: ESRI (2009)

The railway is criticized by the western media for playing an instrumental role in economic integration and resettlement. As suggested by the International Campaign for Tibet, the project's negative impact is likely to substantially outweigh the benefits conferred upon the overall Tibetan population. By creating an accessible rail route to the extreme southwest region of China, the argument of 'cultural genocide' was put forward by the Dalai Lama. He claimed that the railway *'will only increase Chinese migration, dilute Tibetan culture and militarise the region – Tibet Autonomous Region'* (Reuters, 2007). The International Campaign for Tibet (2003, p.12) quoted and reflected that:

'No single Tibetan I can think of believes the railway to Lhasa is a good

thing. In the interests of the nation and the Tibetan people it isn't good in

the long-term. But we know we are in the hands of the Chinese and they

can do what they want.'

However, the Chinese Central Government counter-argue that the railway is positive for socio-economic evolution in Tibet. From the perspective of the Chinese Central Government, the newly opened railway section (as illustrated in figure 1-2), is simply a symbolic project of China's West Development Strategy and a significant catalyst in accelerating the social development of the Qinghai Province and Tibet respectively (Zong, 2007). The Chinese Central Government regard this railway route as not only a symbolic project for China's West Development Strategy but a significant catalyst to accelerate socio-economic development in both the Qinghai Province and Tibet respectively (Li, Hu, & Dang, 2000; Qin, 2007; Wang Xi, 2006). The Chinese Central Government claim that the region's overall socio-economic evolution can be achieved through tourism development while Tibetans will also benefit in return (Xinhua News Agency, 2007a).

1.3.4 The Study Area

1.3.4.1 Lhasa – The Main Tourist Attraction Zone

Lhasa or 'Lasa' in Chinese term, the capital city of Tibet and current terminus of the railway was selected as the study area. Contemporary Lhasa covers a total area of close to 30,000 square kilometres with 544

square kilometres of downtown region – the Chengguan district. This is also known as the city centre of Lhasa, where most of the tourist attractions can be found.   Lhasa has a total population of 550,000. Approximately 270,000 people live in the down town region, excluding military garrisons.   Lhasa is home to the Tibetan, Han and Hui people, as well as many other ethnic groups such as Moinba, Lhoba, Deng and Xiarba.   According to statistics, the Tibetan ethnic group makes up 87% of the total population (Lhasa Government, 2009).

As a city with 1,300 years of history, its unique historical, natural and cultural environment has attracted tourists worldwide.   Lhasa was officially opened for international tourism in 1984 (Liu, 2007; Wang Xi, 2007).   At the beginning of the 1980's, Lhasa began to revive its former position not only as a major pilgrimage site for Tibetan Buddhists, but also an alluring tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists.   In the year 2000, Lhasa was awarded the title 'top tourist city of China' by the China National Tourism Association (Lhasa Tourism Bureau, 2006).

As mentioned by the government, tourist facilities found within Lhasa are able to cope with the massive increasing influx of tourists.

In terms of development of tourist facilities in Lhasa, the Lhasa City Tourism Bureau was optimistic before the opening of the railway (Xinhua News Agency, 2006a).   According to statistics provided by the Lhasa Tourism Bureau, it confirmed there were 239 hotels totalling 12,556 rooms and 24,184 beds in 2007 (Lhasa Tourism Bureau, 2007).   There was also adequate provision of restaurants, entertainment facilities, souvenir outlets

and 1,280 taxis, while litter bins and public toilets were also plentiful. Interested government parties are optimistic that Lhasa can cope with increasing demands from domestic and international travellers.

The main tourist attraction zone located in the city centre of Lhasa is examined, as it is here that the most impact from the railway will be felt. As illustrated in Figure 1-3, this zone is a composite of the essence of tourist activities found in Lhasa (Travel China Guide, 2009). Within this zone there are three world cultural heritage sites, the Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple Monastery and the Norbulingka as circled in Figure 1-3. These are the 'must visit' attractions of Lhasa. Other tourist facilities such as accommodation, restaurants, shopping facilities and entertainment are also found within this world heritage belt.

Heritage attractions are important elements in attracting tourists to visit a specific destination or place. In empirical studies, attractions have been viewed as central to the tourism process (Reinius & Fredman, 2007; Richards, 2002). In particular, cultural attractions have become a crucial component in constituting the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Kim, Cheng, & O'Leary, 2007).

World heritage sites with their specific historic, scientific and aesthetic qualities, have a universal value that makes many sites favourite tourist attractions (Drost, 1996). The growth of tourism as induced by the opening of the railway line brings not only opportunities for economic development but also threats to issues of culture conservation as well as the management of the world cultural heritage sites in Lhasa (Liu, 2007; Wang

Xi, 2007).   The heavy concentration of tourist activities found within this heritage belt justifies the focus on socio-economic changes as induced by the opening of the railway.
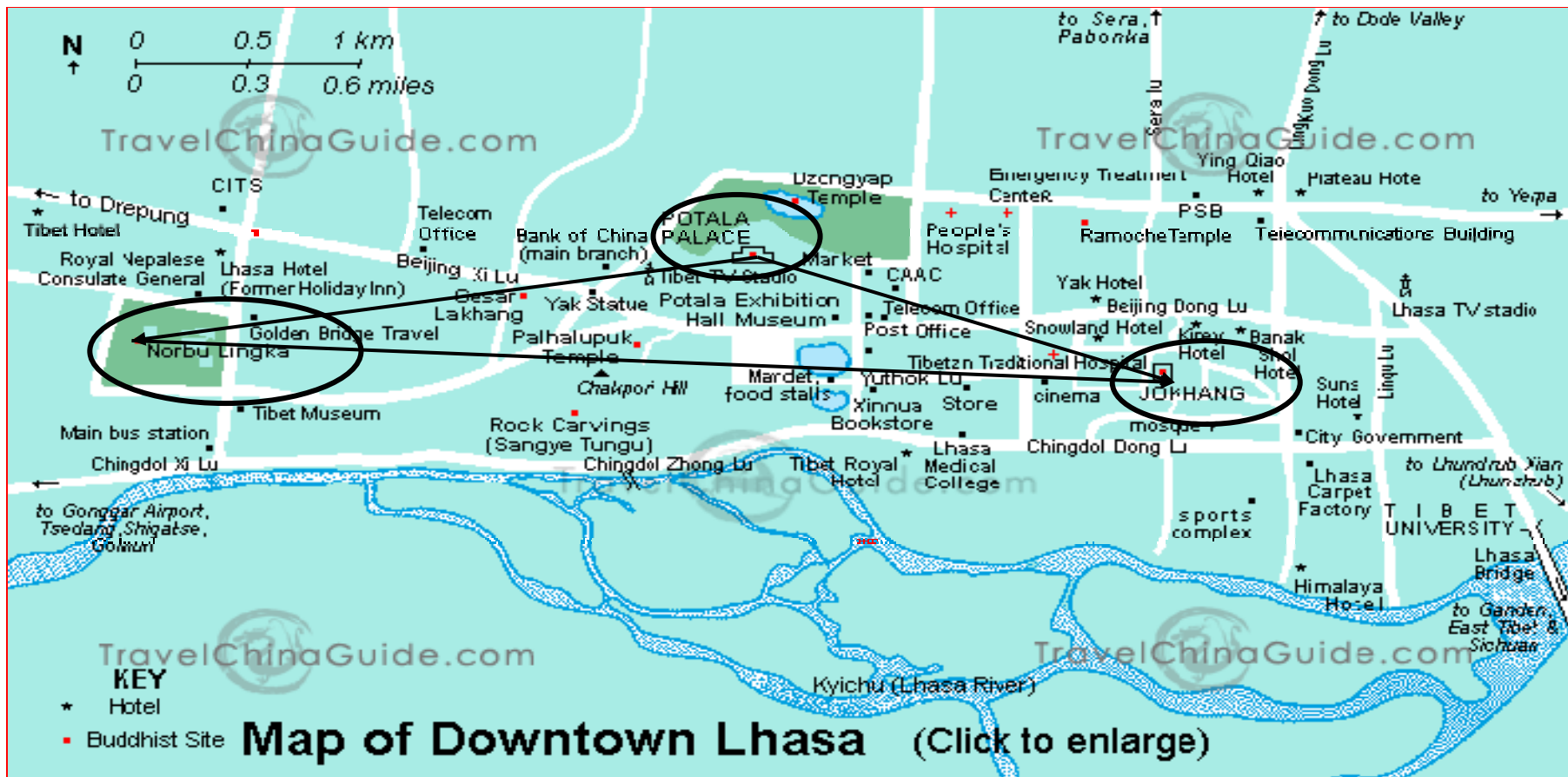
Figure 1-3: Main tourist attraction zone in Lhasa

Source: Maps of China Net (2009)

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research study seeks to make a contribution at academic and industry levels. In most of the main stream tourism studies, researchers have studied the growth, development and spatial dimension of tourism development in locations around the globe. Only a few English language studies focus on examining tourism impact in the context of Lhasa, Tibet. Previously, scholars focused on tourism topics such as crisis management (Schwartz, 1991), destination image (Klieger, 1992; Mercille, 2005) and the impact of Tibetan culture on tourists (Bentor, 1993; Shackley, 1994). Unfortunately, not many scholars have actually visited Tibet, even during the period of their research. Two studies have recently been published, one focuses on examining the impact of the railway before its actual operation (Lustgarten, 2008) and the other addresses the impact of the railway on the travellers' choice in travel destinations (Su & Wall, 2009). A study specifically examining tourism impact of the railway can hence fill the gap and contribute to the bank of knowledge already available.

While socio-economic aspects of tourism have attracted the most attention in mainstream tourism research, the majority of this study adopts a tourism-centric approach to examine the impact of tourism. However, it is argued that tourism only plays a minimal role in contributing to the socio-economic development of a destination (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Harrison, 2007). Moreover, tourism is shaped by site specific conditions under which tourists and hosts interact (Tosun, 2002).

By carrying out an ethnographic study in the context of Tibet, this study is able to provide a holistic overview of tourism impact brought to the local population. Therefore, results generated from this study can add to the block of current knowledge by specifically addressing the socio-economic impact of tourism. In return, it will fill the literature gap by addressing influential forces of the broader political and economic environment in shaping socio-economic evolution of a destination.

Last, but not least, this study will also contribute to industry level; although findings derived from this study will first contribute to destination level. Chinese Central Government's goal for tourism development in Tibet is to reduce inequalities and redistribute social goods. Findings of inter-relationships between tourism and socio-economic disparities of Han Chinese and Tibetans will provide further insight into policy adjustment and implementation, thereby achieving sustainable tourism development within the destination.

Although residents have been positioned as one of the critical components in successful tourism systems (Easterling, 2004), empirical studies have rarely been carried out to understand the impact of tourism from the perspective of the local Lhasa population. This study will examine the type of socio-economic impact that tourism has on the main tourist attraction zone. Results generated will be important, as they will facilitate better planning and management of tourism within the study area.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background to the study. Research rationale, destination and significance of the research are presented. The review of literature in Chapter 2 introduces the relevant literature background which underlies this study. It addresses research gaps in the study of tourism development in the context of Tibet, the relationship between railway and tourism development within a destination and the respective socio-economic impact of tourism development. Chapter 3 outlines the research methods and instruments used in collecting primary and secondary data. Data analyzing techniques are also discussed. Findings, interpretation and discussions are presented together in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes this thesis while implications and suggestions for future study are elaborated in detail.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a literature background relating to the research purposes of this study. It has been organised into three main sections. The first section introduces a contextual background of the study area, while ethnic conflicts in certain destinations were also discussed. Section 2 addresses the importance of a transportation network to tourism development in which the political implication of building a railway is also elaborated. This serves to provide an understanding of possible roles of the railway. The final section provides an account of the general impact of tourism development. Both the positive and negative socio-economic impact of tourism development is elaborated in detail. At the end of each section, relevance of literature to this research study is discussed.

2.1 Tibet

2.1.1 The Socio-political Context

Is Tibet an inalienable part of China or is Tibet an independent nation? While this study aims not to provide an answer to the question, this section intends to give an account of the unique socio-political context of Tibet. It is important to provide the reader with the socio-political background of the research setting which will help in understanding the complexity of the issue under investigation. This study also takes place in a context specific setting; hence an elaboration of the related contextual background is required.

Located in the western part of China, debate revolves around the geographical boundary of Tibet. The name 'Tibet' is a shifting one, varying according to the standpoint taken (Goldstein, 1997; Pommaret, 2003; Sautman & Dreyer, 2006). From the perspective of the Chinese Government, Tibet refers only to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) which was formed in 1965 with Lhasa as its capital city.

The Tibetan government-in-exile, which was formed when the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959, claimed that Tibet refers to the whole of the ethnic and cultural region that includes three provinces: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. This region is referred to by the Dalai Lama as 'Greater Tibet', which is a land that covers 3,800,000 kilometres square and contains a population of 6 million Tibetans.

The idea of a united Greater Tibet was then raised by the 13th Dalai Lama, who tried to initiate it after the collapse of the Qing dynasty. The 13th Dalai Lama raised the question of Greater Tibet at the Simla conference in 1913, but it was rejected by the Beijing government. The convention was then ended with a compromise, which declared that Tibet would be autonomous but also acknowledged China's sovereignty over the region (Goldstein, 1997). The Beijing government has yet refused to ratify the convention, so it was left unsigned as the 13th Dalai Lama insisted that the autonomous region should cover all areas populated by Tibetans. Goldstein (1997) points out in his book, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon'*, that a politically united Greater Tibet has never been established. Moreover, the Dalai Lama seldom extended his administrative control

beyond the boundaries of the Tibet Autonomous Region while in 1728, the Qing government placed the large ethnic Tibetan areas in Kham and Amdo under the jurisdiction of Yunnan, Gansu and Sichuan (Goldstein, 1997).

When examined further the long and complicated history of Sino-Tibet interaction (as indicated in Appendix 1), the core of the 'Tibet Question' is of a political issue. According to Goldstein (1997), the core of the Tibet question is about control of a territory and who rules it, as to who lives there and who makes decisions as to what goes on within the destination. The 'Tibet question' has captivated interest and passion from people around the world since troops of the People's Liberation Army entered Tibet in the 1950's, particularly since the 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959. The 'Tibet Question' is interesting largely because of the fact that the fundamental cause of the Han-Tibetan ethnic conflict is complex and vicious (Lopez, 1998; Norbu, 1995).

The Chinese Government and the Tibetan government-in-exile have engaged in a dialogue regarding the 'Tibet Question'. Contents of the dialogue feature mostly the possibility of the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and the degree of autonomy of Tibet (Smith, 2008). The first series of talks and delegation visits which took place between 1979 and 1984, ended with no results. This was followed by a period of little or no communication between the two sides. Talks revived in 2002 and have continued through 2007 but have so far proven equally fruitless (Smith, 2008).

Failure in solving the 'Tibet Question' is attributed mainly to the divergent standpoints that the Chinese and Tibetan government-in-exile hold (Sautman & Dreyer, 2006; Smith, 2008). The Chinese have consistently denied that there are any unresolved political issues with regard to Tibet including Tibetan autonomy, insisting on confining the issue to the personal future of the Dalai Lama.

For the Tibetan-government-in-exile, the issue has been about the political status of Tibet and the nature of Tibetan autonomy. The Dalai Lama claims he has no intention of setting up an independent Tibet and would accept Chinese rule, but at the same time maintaining religious autonomy within 'Greater Tibet'. The Chinese accuse him of inciting Tibetans to challenge 'the stability of the State' and therefore refuse to change its hard-line attitude towards the Dalai Lama for the foreseeable future (Righter, 2008; Shi, 2008). Whilst Beijing continues to consider the Dalai Lama as a dangerously subversive political agitator, dialogue between the Chinese and Tibetan government-in-exile could never be successful.

2.1.2 The Socio-economic Context

In light of the previous discussion regarding the political status of Tibet, this section continues to examine the Chinese State's influence on socio-economic development within the region. Despite political controversy, socio-economic conditions in Tibet have improved a great deal.

The recently announced public holiday known as the Serf's Emancipation Day was to mark the abolition of slavery in Tibet (Hu & Wu, 2009). From the Chinese perspective, a significant socio-economic improvement in Tibet has been generated since the adoption of the economic reform in 1978 (Hu & Wu, 2009). Table 2-1 outlines the comparative figures and indicates the socio-economic improvement in Tibet between 1959 and 2008. March 28th was also recently declared the Serf's Emancipation Day to mark the abolishment of slavery in Tibet.

Table 2-1: Figures indicating socio-economic improvement in Tibet from 1959until now (2008)

	1959	2008
Total GDP	600 million RMB (88 million USD)	39.2 billion RMB (5.7 billion USD)
GDP Per Capita	142 RMB (22 USD)	14,000 RMB (2,058 USD)
Roads	8,500 km	48,600km
Average Life Expectancy	35.5 years	67 years
Population	1 million	2.8 million
Infant Mortality Rate	43%	0.66%

Source: Xinhua News Agency (2009a)

The Chinese Central Government describes how Tibetans were rescued from 'the hell on earth' since the peaceful liberation of 1950. In addition, the Chinese State's special subsidisation for development in terms of capital, technology and personnel during the past decades should not be undermined. According to statistics (K. Yang, 2008) in approximately 40 years since the

Tibet Autonomous Region was founded, from 87,586 billion RMB[2] (12,880 billion USD) of financial expenditure, 94.9% came from the subsidies of the Chinese Central Government.

With financial subsidization from the Chinese Central Government, the socio-economic situation in Tibet has improved. The policy of urban-rural population transfer has yet to create an adverse effect upon local Tibetans which was adopted in the 1980's (Dreyer, 2003). The Chinese claim it is one of the measures to encourage Han Chinese to migrate to Tibet and contribute their skills to its development. The western forces, however, argued that the Chinese Central Government aimed at assimilating the Tibetans by importing many Han Chinese into the region (Norbu, 2006).

The model for such population colonization strategy is the historical experience of Inner Mongolia. As a result of the policy in transferring population, the Mongolians are currently a small minority in Xinjiang, where the Han are close to becoming a majority (Fischer, 2008). Such a policy was also blamed for creating a two-tier wage scale by marginalizing the local Tibetans as the incoming migrants – Han Chinese received preferential treatment in hiring and promotion (Dreyer, 2003). In addition, the Han Chinese is almost entirely concentrated in towns and cities in most Tibetan areas.

In-migration to Tibetan areas is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. The key issue is not whether the population balance has shifted toward Tibetans or the Han, but that the latter have dominated urbanization (Fischer,

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[2] USD and RMB is exchanged using the approximate rate of 1USD = 6.8RMB

2008).   According to a Chinese scholar, the number of Han businessmen and craftsmen in Tibet was very small in the past, but has increased rapidly as a result of the policy in allowing people to travel and engage in private business (R. Ma, 1991).   Such a policy has therefore brought in a number of immigrants from the Sichuan province and even eastern coastal provinces to Lhasa.

The number of floating immigrants in Lhasa is very high.   Han businessmen, craftsmen and construction workers who have more training and from more advanced regions, have obvious advantages in competing with native Tibetans in the local labour market (R. Ma, 1991).   In other words, the current Chinese migration is critical in terms of its exclusionary impact on economic opportunities outside agriculture, marginalizing the average Tibetan from dynamic areas of modern development in Tibet, which are mostly concentrated in cities and towns.

2.1.3 The Ethnic Tension

The Han-Tibetan encounter and tension are a result of its complicated socio-political historical background.   As outlined in Table 2-2, the tension is an ongoing socio-political conflict between the Han Chinese and Tibetans. According to Norbu (1995), the explosion of political unrest in 1959 and 1989 is an inevitable reaction to Han hegemony.   This is because the Han monopolized regime form policies that enhance the Han State power and privilege Han settlers, marginalizing the Tibetans both politically and

economically. As a consequence, the Han Chinese have greater access to education and job opportunities within Tibet and even control the country's natural resources and foreign trade (Norbu, 2006).

Table 2-2: Political unrest in Tibet

1950	The People's Liberation Army (PLA) first entered eastern Tibet (Chamdo) and then continued on to central Tibet.
1951	The Tibetan representatives signed a seventeen-point agreement in Beijing with the Chinese Central Government (Goldstein, 1997). The agreement affirmed Chinas' sovereignty over Tibet and agreed that the Chinese Central Government was allowed to set up a military and administrative committee and headquarters. PLA troops entered Lhasa and peacefully 'liberated' the Tibetans.
1959	An anti-Chinese and anti-Communist revolt erupted in Lhasa (Lopoz, 1998). The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India.
1987 – 1989	A series of riots broke out in Lhasa and martial law was later declared that all foreigners, inclusive of journalists, were evacuated and not allowed to stay in Lhasa (Ma, 2008).
2008	A violent political protest broke out in the city centre of Lhasa. Rioting, looting and burning of buildings were reported (Ma, 2009). All foreigners and residents from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, including journalist, were banned from entering Lhasa and Tibet.

Source: Author

Concerns over the exacerbation to exclude local Tibetans from the rapid economic development process have been raised by western forces. The western media and scholars argue that even during the midst of rapid economic growth, local Tibetans are easily out-competed due to the qualitative difference between migrants and local Tibetans.

Scholars argue that the out-of-province migrants in Tibet are indeed more competitive and generally have higher education and skill levels than local Tibetans (Fischer, 2008; R. Ma, 1991; Norbu, 1995, 2006). From the perspective of the West, the 3/14 incident in 2008 is claimed to be a manifestation of the uneven share of economic benefits between Han Chinese and Tibetans (Reuters, Associated Press, & Agence France-Presse, 2008).

The uneven share of economic benefits has consequently caused ethnic tension within other destinations. Ethnic violence occurred in many cities in Indonesia. As stated by Pudjiastuti (2002), conflict between people of different ethnic backgrounds have spread and mushroomed in many places within Indonesia, especially since the end of Soeharto's era, the former President, in 1998. It is argued that the base of conflict in 1998 is of economic interest between the Indonesian and Indonesian Chinese (Pudjiastuti, 2002). The consequence of ethnic conflict has resulted in weak economies and turbulent politics which have in return affected the rising regional or province tensions and reducing national integrity (Pudjiastuti, 2002).

Similarly, ethnic conflicts occurred also in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan society is an ethno-religious mosaic while the relationship between Tamils and Sinhalese is found antagonistic (Perera, 1999, quoted from Uyangoda, 2007). Such a hostile relationship between the two ethnic groups was mainly attributed to the policies as adopted by the Sri Lankan Government. By passing the 'Singalese Only Bill' (Official Language Act, no. 33 of

1956), no status of parity was given to the Tamil language. The Sinhalese-Tamil conflict was then brought into the forefront of Sri Lanka politics (Uyangoda, 2007).

The access to education in Sri Lanka has also been ethicized since the 1970's. The post independence Sinhalese nationalism has sought to curb the Tamil presence in education (Uyangoda, 2007). Along with education policies, the constitutional provisions in the 1972 Constitution favoring Sinhalese language and Buddhist religion convinced many Tamils that they were perceived as a marginal community. For example, Tamil speaking students have to score much higher marks than Sinhalese speaking students to gain admission to universities. In general, these policies have impacted on the chances of the Tamils gaining access to higher education but also on the overall process of relationships between the two ethnic groups.

As a result, the adoption of both language and education policies have placed barriers on employment. With the discrimination that has occurred over time within state sector employment, Tamils mainly fill administrative and professional positions. According to the census of public and corporate sector employment in 1990, Sri Lankan Tamils accounted for only 5.9% of those employed within state services (Uyangoda, 2007). This explains why leading business ventures are mostly Tamil-owned. As a result, ethnic riots involving Tamils and Sinhalese occurred in 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983 respectively. This gradually developed into militarization and brutalization during the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict.

In conclusion, ethnic tension in various countries is examined. More specifically, ethnic tension within Tibet, Sri Lanka and Indonesia were examined according to its specific contextual background. It is observed that much of the ongoing discussions revolve around the socio-political and socio-economic status of Tibet, while many studies are politicized according to their stand-points and perspectives. A study that adopts a holistic approach in examining the impacts of the railway on the Lhasa can hence fill in the existing literature gap.

To be more specific, this study intends to investigate the particular associated socio-economic impact of tourism as found after the opening of the railway. As noted, there is still little empirical evidence regarding the way tourism impacts on local residents in the context of China (Fan, Wall, & Mitchell, 2008). This study can hence fill the literature gap by carrying out empirical studies and addresses the issue of tourism impact from the local population perspective and hence contributes to the bank of knowledge available.

2.2 The Railway

2.2.1 Transportation and Tourism Development

Within tourism literature, most researchers relate the importance of a particular transportation mode to the successful development of tourism within a destination. It is argued that the provision of transport infrastructure is the pre-requisite for successful development. Advances in

transportation play a critical role in the development of domestic and international tourism (Abeyratne, 1993; Chew, 1987; Mak, 2003; Page, 1994, 1995 & 2005; Prideaux, 2004).

A transportation network facilitates mobility of people. It is stated that the early movement of travellers from origin to destination was made possible by well-engineered road systems, organized road transport based on horse and cart teams and organized sea travel in the Mediterranean and hospitality sector (Prideaux, 2000). Such a view has been supported by several researchers claiming that advances in transport and communication have decreased travel distance and made the greater part of the globe accessible (Butler, 1997; Pigram & Wahab, 1997). For example, the advent of long-distance, large capacity aircraft has made mass tourism a reality of international scale. Development of tourism in Hawaii was facilitated by the improvement of transportation modes within its airline industry (Kaiser & Helber, 1978).

Likewise, transport had a significant impact on the development of tourism in Australia. Hall (1991, pp.22 & 80) claimed that *the evolution of tourism in Australia is inseparable from the development of new forms of transport'* and *'a clear relationship exists between transport development and tourism growth'*. In 1992, the Australian Commonwealth Department of Tourism also stated that the development of the nation's relatively decentralized tourism industry was contributed to mainly by efficiency, quality and capacity of the nation's transportation network (Prideaux, 2000). As a result, the development and expansion of tourist destinations are, in

part, based on the need for adequate access to resort areas, their attractions and resources. However, most of these studies were again found operating at destination level as well as in the context of a developed country.

2.2.2 Railway and Tourism Development

While the importance of a well connected transportation network is widely recognised for tourism development within a destination, studies rarely link a railway line specifically to tourism development. Railroad building is essentially regarded as political. In the wake of the fast growth of railways from 1840 onwards, a railroad carried the symbols of political and strategic utility. According to Ambrose (2000, quoted Neilson & Otte, 2006), *'The locomotive was the greatest thing of the age. With it man conquered space and time'*.

Introduction of the railways followed different paths in different countries and a common pattern emerged. The railways transformed, redefined and expanded the limits of the civilized world (Neilson & Otte, 2006). The construction of the Trans-Siberia railway has been dominated by strategic and political motives (Witte, 1892, quoted Neilson & Otte, 2006). Design of the railway line was the crucial link used as a vehicle to Russia's penetration of East Asia. In addition, the railway, a great facilitator, can mobilize and deploy armies. The American Civil War was the first demonstration of military capabilities of the locomotive. The Prussian

wars of 1866 and 1870 also made the European Great Powers take note of railway warfare (Neilson & Otte, 2006).

For nearly a century railways have been a central part of empire infrastructure and a vital tool of modern warfare. The path of the empire may no longer run along the railway track. The railways' impact on great power politics and strategy holds important lessons on the impact of more recent technologies which have under-pinned contemporary international relations (Neilson & Otte, 2006).

Until now, the rhetoric of 'nation building' still dominates Australian media coverage of the railway. In a discussion regarding the role of communication and transportation during the build-up to Federation, phrases like 'technological nationalism' and 'technological federalism' were used to describe the author's faith in railway construction in uniting and developing Australia (Bishop, 2002). The author supports also the notion that 'technological federalism' existed since the railway was first proposed. Similarly, it is also stated that the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway produced a wave of immigrants in the 1880's (Reitz, 2002).

Studies in other fields also show that a railway was not always built for tourism purposes. Rail transportation was not solely developed to serve tourists (Eagle, 1989). D'Souza (1998) stated that trains first carried passengers in 1830. For example, the railway constructed between Liverpool and Manchester was first featured with special provision to carry passengers in addition to the usual freight. Railroad travelling was later

made possible for low income groups because of the comparatively low ticket price.

According to Durie (2003), arrival of the railway changed the tourist industry in Scotland by increasing its tourist traffic. Some coastal resorts and also many other parts of Scotland were developed as a result of increased railway mobility. Continual improvement in rail transportation technology helped open up accessibility to the Highland areas in Scotland. Introduction of the railway changed the scale and character of tourism development in Scotland.   Although tourism in Scotland was not the initial reason for creation of their railways, it changed Scotland from being elite to becoming a mass tourism destination. Opening up localities in the north west Highlands and the Borders encouraged a widening of access to tourists from all levels of society (Durie, 2003).

Similarly, the transcontinental passenger service of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) helped expand their tourism industry.   Since the CPR came into operation, a substantial expansion of   mountain hotels in Western Canada were built during the period between 1899-1914 (Eagle, 1989). Construction of new hotels in meeting demands of mountaineers and mountain lovers at the Chateau Lake Louise was initiated from 1899 onwards. The most important of the CPR mountain hotels was the Banff Springs Hotel. Eagle (1989) pointed out, that by the year 1900 Banff had become the top three mountain resorts on the North American continent.

The railway also had a particular significance toward tourism development in Romania,   as it played a key role in Romanian modernization (Turnock,

2001). Once people became more mobile after the opening of the railway in Romania, the tourist industry became established. Resorts and tourist facilities were developed alongside the railway line. Likewise, this study aims to examine the associated tourism impact that the railway has brought to Lhasa. In particular, within the scope of this study, the candidate aims to investigate socio-economic changes that tourism development has brought to the local population living within the study area.

2.2.3 The Qinghai-Tibet Railway

The rapid growth of tourist arrivals in 2007 was largely due to the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway. A railway connecting Tibet to the rest of China has been a dream of the Chinese for a hundred years. After the establishment of the Chinese Republican Government in 1911, a rail line to connect Tibet with the rest of China had been blueprinted by Dr. Sun Yat Sen (Zong, 2007). As claimed by some Chinese scholars, the underlying intention was to connect Tibet with the rest of China (N. Zhang, 2006). Such a railway was also important to consolidate and develop the frontier so that Tibetans could benefit in terms of transportation, along with economic and cultural exchange through the development of tourism (Zong, 2007).

However, because of internal political instability and lack of financial and technical support, the plan was postponed (Zong, 2007). It was not until the former General Secretary, Mr Jiang Zeming, made the construction of the railway line one of four priority projects in the Tenth Five-Year Plan

(2001-2005).   Construction of the rail line was started in 2001 and completed in 2005 with an investment of 33.09 billion RMB (4.87 billion USD) from the State Council (Chinese Railway Publication, 2006).

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway is now the world's highest, being 200 meters higher than the Peruvian railway in the Andes, formerly the world's most elevated track (Access Tibet Tour, 2007).   The highest point is 5,068 meters at the Tanggula Mountains with 550 kilometres of track laid on permafrost.   The Fenghuoshan Tunnel, at 4,905 meters above sea level, is the world's highest rail tunnel on permafrost, while the Kunlun Mountain Tunnel being 1,686 meters, is the world's longest plateau tunnel built on permafrost (Access Tibet Tour, 2007).   Three more new lines will be built in the next ten years to link Lhasa with Shigatse in the west, Nyingchi in the east, and Yadong, a major trading town on the China-India border (Xinhua News Agency, 2006b).   Appendix 3 presents a list of railway schedules and ticket prices.

Tibet is now a more accessible tourist destination since the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway.   The railway has not only reduced the cost of transport but also introduced a more comfortable way of travelling between Tibet and other provinces in China, proving to the world the economic strength and technological ability of the Chinese Central Government.   The days of expensive air flights or an arduous bus trip from the nearest neighbouring province to Lhasa ended once the railway opened.

2.2.4 Studies on the Impact of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway

As previously mentioned, studies investigating tourism development in the context of Tibet are rarely found in English literature. Yet, Tibet is a popular research topic of Chinese scholars. By searching 'Tibet' in the China Journal Full-text Database, research studies of tourism development in Tibet emerged as from the 1980's. A total of 1,050 articles were found by typing in 'Tibet and Tourism'. Among the academic articles, 58 specifically addressed the railway and its associated impact at destination level.

Commonly investigated topics among Chinese scholars are summarised and listed in Table 2-3. Broadly speaking, the railway is generally regarded as a catalyst to improve the environment for investment and hence lead to further economic growth in Tibet. Findings have also indicated that the railway facilitates further tourism development because of the improved transportation infrastructure within Tibet (Duan, 2007; Qi & Shi, 2007; Qin, 2007; Xiao, Hou, & Li, 2003; W. Zhang, 2006). The topics showed that no studies were found to address the issue from the local residents' perspective regarding socio-economic changes since the opening of the railway.

Table 2-3: Common focus of study among Chinese Scholars

Common Focus of Study	Authors
Railway and the impact of tourism development in Tibet	Duan (2007); Lai (2003); L. H. Li and He (2006); Q. Li (2007); Qi and Shi, (2007); Qin (2007); Wang Xi (2006); Xiao, Hou and Li (2003); Zhai (2008); H. X. Zhang and Liu (2007); W. Zhang (2006);

	Zong (2007)
Railway and strategies for sustainable tourism development in Tibet	Chen and Wang (2005); Deng and Zheng (2007); Zhong (2007); Zhu, Xie and Liu (2005)
Railway and culture preservation in Tibet	Lan, Chen and Yang (2007); Xu (2007)
Railway and the change of tourist markets in Tibet	Cai and Yang (2007); Tan (2006); J. Zhang (2007)

Source: Author

Positive conclusions were drawn from the studies. In terms of specific positive impact that the railway brings to the local community, the economic aspect of change draws most of the attention from Chinese scholars. Results include increased employment opportunities, increased income and increased consumable goods being postulated (Wang Xi, 2006; Zong, 2007), although hardly any empirical data was provided.

However, a mixed result was generated regarding the railway's socio-cultural changes. While some researchers stated that the railway helped preserve traditional Tibetan culture (Lan, Chen, & Yang, 2007; Xu, 2007), negative aspects of change include adverse effects upon the Tibetan environment.

Some researchers also raised concerns over the sustainable development of the tourist industry in Tibet as well as the preservation of the unique socio-cultural environment and vulnerable ecosystems (Chen & Wang, 2005;

Deng & Zheng, 2007; Zhong, 2007; Zhu, Xie, & Liu, 2005). Yet, these studies focus on examining the impact of the railway at destination level.

Despite abundant provision of research studies found in Chinese language literature, none of them were found to carry out empirical studies. Investigations regarding tourism development in the context of Tibet are scarce. Only a few western scholars have explored Tibet in the context of its tourism industry. Six journal articles have been found focusing on examination of tourism development in Tibet (Bentor, 1993; Klieger, 1992; Mercille, 2005; Schwartz, 1991; Shackley, 1994; Su & Wall, 2009). Topics revolve around crisis management after the 1989 riot in Tibet, the perceived destination image of Tibet and the impact of the railway on travellers' destination choice

It is also noted that findings were generated mostly from secondary data sources as well as the researcher's own interpretation, hence reducing the credibility of the studies. Moreover, only two of the studies were found to focus on the setting of Lhasa (Liu, 2007; Wang Xi, 2007). Both authors provided a historical review on the development of tourism in Lhasa. None of the studies examined the impact of the railway on the local population. Lustgarten's (2008) book, *'China's great train: Beijing's drive to reach the West,'* gives quite a comprehensive account of the socio-economic impact that the railway brought to local residents before its actual operation in July, 2006. Yet, what makes this study different from his book is that the candidate intends to address tourism impact that has been brought about since the opening of the railway.

In addition, it is found that most existing studies on the attitude and perception of local residents adopt a quantitative approach. Many previous studies used either the 5-point or 7-point Liker scale, while results are also analyzed using statistical techniques such as t-test, regression and cluster analysis (Blake, Arbache, Sinclair, & Teles, 2008; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). The use of structural equation modeling (SEM) is a rising trend amongst tourism scholars (Gu & Ryan, 2008; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002). Therefore, the adoption of a qualitative approach combining fieldwork observations and experiences within this study, contribute to existing literature in terms of the research methodology employed.

2.3 Tourism Development and its Impact

This section aims to review and analyze tourism impact studies previously conducted. Studies on the impact of tourism have been investigated since the 1960's. In general terms, according to Easterling (2004), topics evolved around four broad perspectives, namely the host-guest interaction and relationship, impact of tourism in general, impact of tourism as perceived by the locals and response and adjustment strategies to the impact of tourism. As previously mentioned, this study therefore falls into the category of targeting the investigation of socio-economic changes associated with tourism development after the opening of the railway in Tibet.

Tourism is a worldwide phenomenon, impacting significantly on societies in various ways. Diagram 2-1 provides an outline of the major impacts of

tourism development in general (Butler, 1974).   While the importance of tourism development has been recognized in both developed and developing countries, the unprecedented expansion of tourism has given rise to a multitude of economic, environmental and social impacts which are concentrated in destination areas (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, & Wanhill, 2005; D'Souza, 1998; de Kadt, 1973; Fotsch, 2004; Inskeep, 1991). However, according to some western tourism scholars, impacts of tourism are not clearly understood, possibly due to the prevalence of a rather one-sided view that primarily focuses only on the economic impact of tourism (Louw & Smart, 1998).

THE MAJOR IMPACTS OF TOURISM
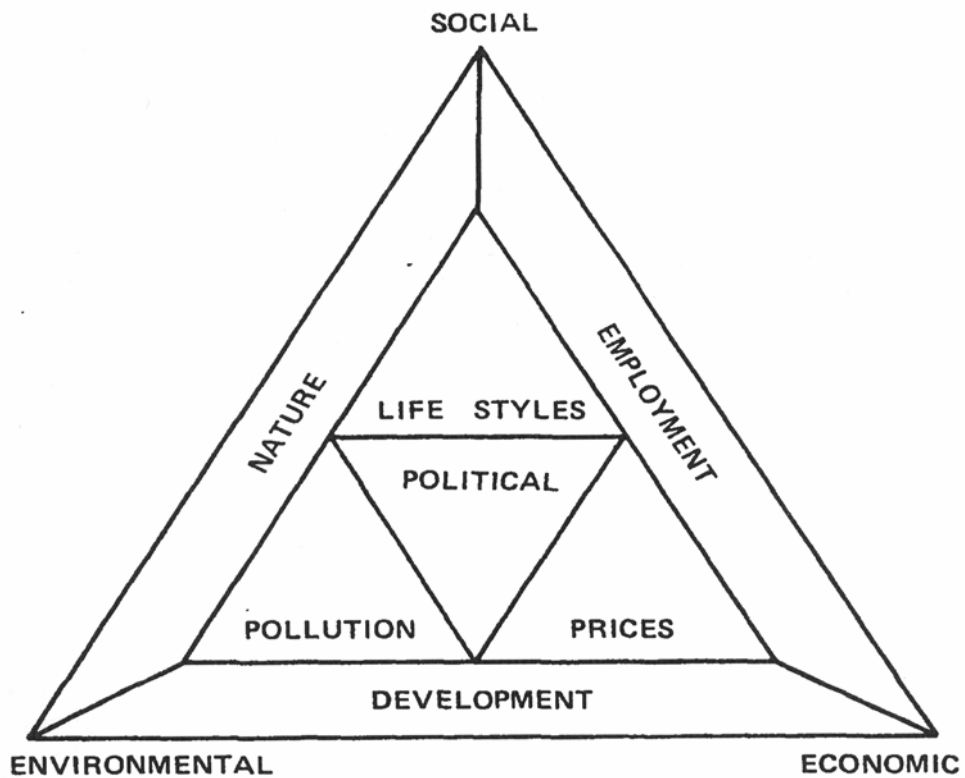
Diagram 2-1: Major impacts of tourism

Source: Adapted from Butler (1974)

From previous literature, findings regarding the general impact of tourism development can be classified into four stages. Mings (1978) indicated that the decade of the 1960's has been described as a period of unparalleled optimism over the potential of tourism and the benefits to economic development.

Such widespread optimism diminished rapidly during the 1970's while researchers were more critical of the benefits of tourism, but they also called for more studies in examining the role of tourism (Mings, 1978). Tourism studies in the 1980's viewed tourism as an invisible export industry in the tertiary sector and focused on studying the international markets and competitive exports (Telfer, 2002).

From the 1990's, more tourism studies have embraced the concept of sustainability. Coming into the 21st century, studies evaluating alternative types of tourism development, including eco-tourism have been a prevalent trend (Campbell, 1999; Holden, 2003; Tsaur, Lin, & Lin, 2006; Warnken, Bradley, & Guilding, 2005). Moreover, most of the research settings are found to be in developing countries. The need for additional research remains, although studies on the impact of tourism have been investigated for decades (Easterling, 2004).

2.3.1 Positive Socio-economic Impact of Tourism

Within the scope of this study, tourism development is to be examined in terms of its associated socio-economic changes on the local population of Lhasa. Tourism has long been regarded as a panacea to the socio-economic development within a destination. To many countries, tourism is often regarded as a panacea and 'cure-all' for economic, social and environmental reasons, especially for developing countries (Chok, Macbeth, & Warren, 2007; Saveriades, 2000).

There is considerable support for positive economic outcomes of tourism within the literature. In an attempt to synthesize the positive economic aspects of tourism, Easterling (2004) itemized the details as in Table 2-4. These are elaborated upon later.

From the summarized table, positive economic aspects include: contribution to economic growth, increased employment opportunities, standard of living and improvement of development and infrastructure spending. While many of the studies have demonstrated the positive economic impact of tourism on a host community, tourism development is widely accepted in that it contributes to the economic growth of a destination. At a macro-economic level, the growth of tourism was found to have resulted in the increase of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Findings have indicated that tourism induces economic growth in some of the developing countries such as Bali (Wall, 1996), Antalya (Kuvan & Akan, 2005), Botswana (Mbaiwa, 2005) and Brazil (Blake et al., 2008), etc.

At a micro-economic level, the development of tourism also leads to the establishment of community-based tourism initiatives which have resulted in income generation and employment for local people. Some recently published studies have also supported the fact that tourism generates employment opportunities (Boxill & Severin, 2004; Mbaiwa, 2005; McKercher & Fu, 2006). The increase in income to local residents and improvement of local infrastructure and facilities will therefore improve the standard of living for the local population (Blake et al., 2008; Harrison, 1995; Lee & Chang, 2008; Mbaiwa, 2005)

Table 2-4: Positive socio-economic aspects of tourism

Socio-economic Benefits	Findings
Economic Growth	- Tourism is perceived to increase economic growth and is a dominant factor in economy
Employment Opportunities	- Tourism results in increased employment
Standard of Living	- Tourism has significantly increased standards of living for the community
Support for Infrastructure	- Tourism enhances investment, development and infrastructure spending
Improves Quality of Life	- Tourism development is believed to improve residents' overall quality of life
Promotes Cultural Exchange	- Tourism is viewed as providing opportunities to meet people from other cultures, thereby promoting cultural exchange
Increased Demand for Local Arts	- Tourism has increased demand for historical/cultural exhibits and art
Increased Understanding of Different Cultures	- Residents report enhanced understanding of differences
Revitalised Traditional Practices	- Residents believe that tourism has revitalised traditional practices leading to their preservation
Preserves/Strengthens Cultural Identity of Hosts	- Residents believe that tourism has helped to preserve the cultural identity of the host population
Greater Pride in Community	- As a result of tourism development, there is greater community pride and cohesion

Source: Adapted from Easterling (2004)

Tourism's role to reduce poverty has been a particular focus of discussion during the recent decade. In an attempt to investigate the impact of tourism development in alleviating poverty in the Brazilian population, Blake et al. (2008) indicate that tourism development has brought economic benefits to the lowest-income group of the Brazilian population. It also has the potential to reduce income inequality, though the high-income groups benefit at the same time. However, this study has been a breakthrough. Most previous studies were set in the context of specific projects and programs and little research evidence has been suggested to quantify the impact of tourism expansion and its effects on distribution of income within a destination.

2.3.2 Negative Socio-economic Impact of Tourism

While tourism is promoted as a potential economic development tool, concerns over its negative impact and consequences from this form of development are questioned. Rapid growth of tourism has given rise to increasingly pronounced economic, environmental and social effects (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003; Inskeep, 1991; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). However, more attention has been given to the more obvious economic impact, with comparatively little consideration being given to environmental and social consequences of tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).   .

Table 2-5: Negative socio-economic aspects of tourism

Socio-economic Costs	Findings
Increased Cost of Living	- Tourism results in increased cost of living for host population
Increased Prices	- Residents perceive that tourism results in increased prices (i.e., food, services, goods, land, etc.)
Benefits not Distributed	- Residents believe that economic benefits accrue to a minority of the host population
Employment is Seasonal or Temporary	- Employment is seasonal and is typically for low wages and long hours
Increased Economic Instability	- Residents believe that tourism is responsible for fluctuations in income and prices
Increased Prostitution	- Residents believe that tourism results in increased prostitution
Loss of Native Language	- Residents report that as a result of the influx of tourist languages, their native language has been lost
Tourism Destroys Community Relationships/Character	- Tourism erodes the social fabric of communities and exacerbates class divisions - Tourism increases inter-generational conflict and destroys friendly relationships
Resident Attitudes Worsen Over Time	- Residents' negative attitudes may become hostile behaviour. - Conflict between hosts and guests is inevitable
Tourism Intensifies Labour Burdens	- Burden of accommodating tourists intensifies residents' stress and exploits workers
Tourism Leads to a Loss of Authenticity	- Tourism creates inauthentic behaviour on the part of the host population
Increased Prostitution	- Residents believe that tourism results in increased prostitution

Source: Adapted from Easterling (2004)

Table 2-5 gives an overview of negative economic and socio-cultural issues, while relevant issues are elaborated on in the sections that follow. Since the 1970's, literature has focused on the negative impact associated with tourism. Studies were carried out to examine various associated costs. Evidence emerged that tourism could erode the physical and social environment of the destination (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Mbaiwa, 2003, 2005; Saveriades, 2000). The growth of tourism has prompted observers to raise many questions concerning the social and environmental desirability of encouraging further expansion (Dyer, Aberdeen, & Schuler, 2003; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Mbaiwa, 2003, 2005).

As mentioned in previous sections, tourism has proven to be a very successful tool to improve the socio-economic conditions of destinations around the globe. Likewise, tourism is promoted as a potential economic development tool in alleviating the regional socio-economic disparities of China. In pursuing regional development, many regions and cities in China have embarked on a tourism-oriented development (L. Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008). In particular, with the enforcement of the 'Go West' campaign since early 2000, 12 provinces in western and inland China have sought to develop its tourism industry aimed at regional development. In other words, the tourism industry is used as a driver for regional development as well as achieving a balanced share of economic benefits within the host community.

However, concerns over the negative impact and consequences of this form of development are questioned. As indicated by Tisdell and Chai (1997),

the socio-economic impact of rapid economic growth is often lop-sided, while the subsequent socio-economic disparities found within a community are often disregarded. In times of rapid economic transformation, economic gains always take precedence. It also indicates that economic benefits do not always filter down evenly throughout a society and socio-economic disparities can widen as the economy grows.

Tourism studies report that scholars have argued that residents have been marginalized and subordinated in the tourism development process. While the tourism industry provides employment to the local population, locals generally hold poor-quality and low-paying jobs that mostly involve manual work (Morais, Dong, & Yang, 2006; Nyaupane, Morais, & Dowler, 2006). Most of them are employed as front-line workers such as cleaners, drivers, cooks and security guards, while only a few are employed as professional guides and assistant managers. In addition, while tourism contributes positively to people's income, previous findings also indicate that there is a disparity in wages between local and expatriate staff, even when they happen to occupy the same position. However, locals are often put into a disadvantaged position because of economic leakage from the host community.

Many developing countries are promoting tourism for the economic benefits it can generate. However, tourism is found to decrease self reliance and foster dependency in the context of developing countries (Lepp, 2008). Dependency is commonly understood in reference to Frank's theory of underdevelopment published in 1967. Frank described the global

economic system as having a developed centre and an under-developed periphery. Dependency is expressed in the core-periphery relationship (Britton, 1982, 1996; Hall, 1994). The periphery becomes dependent on the core to purchase its raw materials and to supply manufactured goods. This leakage then creates economic development in the centre while stunting it in the periphery.

Dependency theory has mostly been used to describe the relationship between the western tourism generating centre and the periphery destinations of the developing world. To summarize, tourist destinations in the developing world are dependent on markets, expertise and capital located in the centre or in the tourist generating west. Amenities and standards cannot be provided in the periphery without investment and expertise from the Centre. Consequently, the money tourists spend in the periphery often leaks back to investors and experts within the centre. According to previous literature, leakage of tourism revenue from developing countries can exceed 50% (Brohman, 1996; Brown, 1998; Honey, 1999). Dependency theorists argue that tourism is more for the benefit of capitalists and tourism generating countries, but not self-generating for the host countries. Consequently, this has created a great deal of animosity between the local population and expatriates with their foreign capital. The large amount of capital required to invest and promote tourism development, along with the expertise and knowledge required, has to be imported.

Modern theorists have argued that foreign investment will re-generate the economy and help the balance of payments. The question remains unanswered as to whether tourism promotes economic growth and development. Most of the developing countries still remain in persistent poverty, economic inequality and destruction of culture and communities. This is all in the name of tourism development.

By reviewing the existing studies on core-periphery relationships, most research was conducted in the context of small island states. Studies were carried out to examine whether mass tourism promotes economic growth and development and why those developing countries are suffering from foreign dependency along with persistent poverty, economic inequality and destruction of cultures and communities owing to tourism development (Khan, 1997).

As suggested, island tourism is characterized by dependency (Macleod, 2004; Sharpley, 2003). In an attempt to examine the role of tourism in the development of south Pacific destinations, Fiji was found to be dependent on the core capitalist economies. Although tourism was found to be generating employment, foreign exchange earnings and becoming a dominant economic sector, marginalization of local enterprises was also indicated (Britton, 1982, 1996; Khan, 1997). More recent studies also indicate that tourism generates only a minimal economic impact on developing countries. Rural development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana is one example.

It indicates that foreign domination and ownership of tourism facilities has led to the repatriation of tourism revenue, domination of management positions by expatriates and lower salaries for citizen workers (Mbaiwa, 2003, 2005). Tourism also failed to contribute to rural poverty alleviation in the Okavango region.

Another study also suggested that tourism increased dependency in Bigodi Village, Uganda. It is suggested that development is more complex than the improvement of economic conditions while it can be understood as a process towards self reliance (Lepp, 2007, 2008; Sharpley, 2000). Although it indicates that tourism has created benefits such as education opportunities, improved housing and extra income, tourism in Bigodi is characterized with an external locus of control instead of fostering self-reliance (Lepp, 2007, 2008).

In a nutshell, changes, whether economic, environmental or socio-cultural are inevitable and it is likely that rapid growth rates in tourism will accelerate change (Wall, 1997). Tourism development is often wanted by some destination areas because of certain positive changes which may be anticipated, but for other sections of the community, tourism may not be so desirable (Boxill & Severin, 2004; Dyer et al., 2003; Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, & Carter, 2007; Gjrald, 2005).

Previous studies on the impact of tourism examined issues of unequal development and the hierarchical relationship that embodies the hegemonic power of developed nations and trans-national corporations (Cheong & Miller, 2000). It also indicated that those host communities in landlocked

regions who embrace tourism development would depend on a number of factors such as the socio-political, economic and environmental situations in that region (Wood, 1997). As a result, while investigating the impact of tourism within a destination, the political and socio-economic context is hardly ever taken into consideration (Nyaupane et al., 2006). From this, a study on tourism development in the context of Tibet is of interest. As the destination is in a relatively early stage of tourism expansion, a study to investigate the socio-economic impact of tourism development is therefore very timely.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

This chapter has reviewed literature from the main concept to construct the essential background and framework for undertaking this research study, namely the context of Tibet, railway and tourism development.

Section 2.1 illustrated the lack of tourism studies in the context of Tibet while section 2.2 illustrated the importance of transportation to development of the tourism industry in certain destinations around the globe. The railway, however, is recognised as a tool for political purposes. Studies on the impact of tourism were also elaborated in detail.

Section 2.3 continued by giving an account of associated socio-economic impacts of tourism on the host population. Each section was concluded by addressing the literature gaps.

The next chapter, Research Methodology, aims to demonstrate the means to

achieve the research questions and objectives as outlined in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives an outline of the research methodology utilized in this study. The chapter begins by giving an overview of the research process which is then followed by addressing two research philosophies in social science research. Justification for the adoption of a qualitative research perspective is then outlined. This is followed by an explanation of the participant's selection process. The data collection process, which includes procedures in conducting semi-structured interviews, field visits and field observations are elaborated on. Qualitative content analysis, as employed to analyze data of this research study, is described. Trustworthiness and limitations of this study are also provided.

3.1 Overview of the Research Process

An overview of the current study's research process is presented in Table 3-1. The table is important not only to give an overview of the research process, but to summarise the respective phases undergone in this study. On the whole, there are two stages involved in the planning process of this study. The first stage of the research starts from March 2007 until the outbreak of the 3/14 incident, while the subsequent stage continues from the incident until the submission of the thesis itself.

Table 3-1: Overview of the research process

Research Period	Phases of the Research Process
March – May 2007	Background search and data familiarization
May – June 2007	First field visit to Lhasa - Developed an initial networking with the public, private sectors, academia and international organizations
June 2007 – March 2008	Developed the research framework - Identified the problem area, consolidated the related literature, defined the research methodology - Identified and made contact with targeted participants through phone calls, mail and emails
March 14th 2008	*3/14 Incident*
March – June 2008	Re-defined the research framework - Re-defined the targeted participants - Made contact with government officials through phone calls, mail and emails
June-July 2008	Second field visit to Lhasa - Contacted the participants on site - Conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants
July 2008 – May 2009	Refine the research framework - Made contact with the targeted participants through phone calls, mail and emails Data analysis - Analyzed, coded, categorized and synthesized - Report writing and refinement

This study started in late March 2007 and ended in December 2009. After the first two months' background research and data familiarization, the candidate first undertook a field visit to Lhasa between May 31st and June 11th 2007. The candidate had never been to the destination prior to carrying out this study. By taking the 57-hour train journey from Guangzhou to Lhasa, the candidate not only realised an opportunity to have first hand experience by travelling on the newly constructed Qinghai-Tibet railway, but that it was also invaluable to understanding the thoughts of passengers and gaining a personal experience of the destination. The remaining months were spent identifying the problems, consolidating literature and defining methodology.

As mentioned in the previous section, occurrence of the 3/14 incident affected the research process. Despite political tension, the candidate made her second field visit to Lhasa and conducted semi-structured interviews with local residents in the main tourist attraction zone as outlined in Section 1.3.4. From the two field visits, the experience and observations gained were also recorded as field notes for later analysis. Primary data gathered from interviews and field visits were later transcribed, analyzed, coded, categorized and synthesized. Secondary data was also considered as an additional source to enrich the bank of data already available.

3.2 Research Perspective

A qualitative research perspective has been adopted. Research perspective refers to the general view and use of research methods (Glatthorn, 1998). There are two dominant research perspectives, namely quantitative and qualitative methods (Snape & Spencer, 2003). In the social science context, quantitative research methods seek to investigate the social world in ways that emulate the 'scientific method' as used in natural science. It emphasizes the use of hypothesis testing, causal explanations, explanations, generalization and predictions. It usually refers to the counting and measurement of items (Berg, 2004).

A qualitative research method involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach. Employment of a qualitative approach seeks to address questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). A qualitative approach is hence concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced (Berg, 2004; Mason, 1996). Such a method places more emphasis on producing a holistic form of analysis and explanation that is rich and contextual (Mason, 1996).

To address the research questions and achieve the research objectives as stated in section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, it is more appropriate to adopt a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach is more appropriate when it seeks to explore in-depth information about an issue within a social setting or an individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Although similar study designs have been conducted by Chinese scholars as stated in Chapter 2, this study focuses on examining socio-economic changes that the railway has brought about in the context of Lhasa and particularly in exploring the role of tourism in the evolution process of a destination. In addition, an ethnographic approach is also adopted by describing the candidate's on-site experience from the two field visits. Such an approach is also contributing to enrich the currently available data bank, therefore giving more insight into the findings of this study.

In general, the adoption of a qualitative research method enables the exploration in understanding the issues more in-depth. It is considered an appropriate method as it can help to: (1) understand the meaning of the events, situations, experiences and actions that participants are involved and engaged in; (2) understand the particular context within which the participants act, also the influence of this context on their actions; (3) identify phenomena and influences out of anticipation and generate theories about them and (4) understand the process of events and actions (Maxwell, 2005). In other words, the adoption of a qualitative research method enables the candidate to understand the phenomena and insight from a context specific setting – the main tourist attraction zone as located in the city centre of Lhasa. A qualitative research method is therefore appropriate and justifiable by using a qualitative and descriptive approach.

3.3 Selection of Participants

3.3.1 Participant Selection Process

This section continues to describe the participant selection process. After the decision to address the issue from a qualitative research perspective, the candidate continued to identify and screen the targeted population. By definition, population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003). The initial intention was to include public, private and academic sectors as target participants within this study. Unfortunately, most of the identified participants refused to take part in the interview process owing to political sensitivity at the time that this study was carried out. Having no access to reach the public sector, the focus was put on studying only local residents residing or working in the study area – the main tourist attraction zone. These participants were approached in person by the candidate during the first field visit and later accompanied by a Tibetan university helper for interviews during the second field visit to Lhasa in June 2008.

A non-probability sampling method was employed in this study. It is widely used to select participants in qualitative research studies (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). According to Ritchie et al. (2003), non probability sample units or groups, are selected on the basis of reflecting those particular features found within the sampled population.

In other words, the characteristics of the population were used as the basis for selecting samples, while the chances of selection for each sample are unknown. In selecting samples, local residents of Lhasa were used as the sample frame. Samples were then selected within the sampling frame from those who met the criteria as described in Table 3-2:

Table 3-2: Criteria for identifying the main participants

Main Participants	Criteria
Residents of Lhasa	- Tibetans, Han Chinese and Expatriates from the community or private business sectors
	- Reside / work in the study area
	- Resided / worked in the study area before and after the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway

Owing to the scarce contacts available and the fact that that this study took place in a politically sensitive period, a snowballing approach could only be adopted to gain more access to targeted study units. This approach involves asking participants who have been interviewed to identify other people they know who fit the selection criteria (Ritchie et al., 2003). According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), this approach allows the researcher to get to know participants, therefore allowing them to introduce themselves to others that may be relevant to the topic of study.

Although it could be argued that the diversity of the sample frame is compromised by employing the snowballing approach, the actual number of cases studied is relatively unimportant in theoretical sampling (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). In addition, it is more important that the potential of each case aids the researcher to develop a theoretical insight into the area of social life being studied.

3.3.2 Profile of the Participants

A total of 25 formal and informal interviews were conducted during the second field visit to Lhasa between June and July 2008. Characteristics of the participants are identified in Table 3-3 and 3-4. Their backgrounds vary between respective interviewees. The intention of the interviews was to have a mixture of participants so as to gain opinions from local residents within a community and hence reduce biased perspectives. Interviewees were either Han or Tibetan ethnicity, male and female aged between 25 and 50. Their occupations varied from civil servants to academia backgrounds and from the tourism industry to non-tourism related jobs. All participants resided and worked in Lhasa before and after the opening of the railway, the shortest being two years and longest since their birth.

Table 3-3:   Demographic profile of the interviewed participants

(Formal interviews)

Number of Participants	Ethnicity	Age	Occupation	Length of Stay in Lhasa	Length of the Interview
1	Han 1	40+	Civil Servant	40+	1 hour and 30 minutes
2	Tibetan 1	40+	Restaurant Manager	24+	1 hour and 15 minutes
3	Tibetan 2	50+	Department Dean	50+	1 hour and 15 minutes
4	Tibetan 3	30-40	University Lecturer	30-40	45 minutes
5	Han 2	25	Customer Services Officer	2+	45 minutes
6	Tibetan 4	40+	Guest House Owner	2+	30 minutes
7	Han 3	40+	TV Program Producer	5+	45 minutes
8	Han 4	25	Tourist Guide	3+	40 minutes
9	Han 5	27	Hotel PR Assistant Manager	2+	45 minutes
10	Tibetan 5	25-30	Tourist Guide	10+	1 hour and 30 minutes
11	Expatriate	30+	Tour Operator	5+	Replied through email

Table 3-4: Characteristics of the interviewees taking part in casual conversations

(Informal interviews)

Number of Participants	Reference Number	Ethnicity	Age	Occupation
12	Tibetan 6	Tibetan	30+	Souvenir Stall Owner
13	Tibetan 7	Tibetan	40-50	Souvenir Stall Owner
14	Han 6 (Sichuan)	Han (Sichuan)	30+	Souvenir Shop Owner
15	Han 7 (Chongqing)	Han (Chongqing)	50+	Food Stall Owner
16	Tibetan 8	Tibetan	30+	Souvenir Stall Owner
17	Han 8 (Guangzhou)	Han (Guangzhou)	30+	Guest House Owner
18	Han 9 (Henan)	Han (Henan)	30-40	Taxi Driver
19	Tibetan 9	Tibetan	50+	Housewife
20	Tibetan 10	Tibetan	25	Student
21	Tibetan 11	Tibetan	30+	Businessman
22	Tibetan 12	Tibetan	50+	Souvenir Stall Owner
23	Han 10 (Sichuan)	Han (Sichuan)	30+	Travel Agent Manager
24	Han 11 (Guizhou)	Han (Guizhou)	30+	Taxi Driver
25	Han 12	Han (Hunan)	30+	Civil Servant

Because of the difficulty in gaining formal access to more participants, informal conversations with the host population were also recorded during the candidate's stay in Lhasa between June and July, 2008. A total of 14 relevant casual conversations were collected. Table 3-4 gives a brief account of the host population encountered during the second field visit. From the 14 recorded informal conversations, the guest house owner (Han 8) and civil servant (Han 12) knew the candidate's identity prior to the conversations.

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This was because the candidate met the former two parties during the first field visit while the latter party was introduced by a civil servant (Han 1). The candidate did not expose her identity as a researcher to the remaining 12 participants, mainly because of the difficulty in gaining informed consent from locals at the time of research. The reason for this was that the host population was reluctant to participate in any of the interviews and admitted to being afraid of getting into possible political trouble. It should therefore be noted that samples outlined in Table 3-4 were made on a random basis and made up of encounters by the candidate during June and July, 2008. .

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Secondary Data

Both primary and secondary data were employed in this study. Secondary data collection started in March, 2007 and ended just before the thesis submission in June, 2009. Secondary data refers to the information gathered by someone other than the researcher who is conducting the current study (Sekaran, 2003). Sources of secondary data taken into analysis include books and periodicals from the field of tourism, social sciences and political economy which are written in either English or Chinese. Government publications, as collected from the Tourism Bureaus in Lhasa and the Tibet Autonomous Region during the second field visit were also analysed.

Other sources include annual reports, internet web pages and other archival records in both English and Chinese. Gathering and collection of secondary data have certain advantages. According to Sekaran (2003), the advantage of seeking secondary data sources saves time and costs of acquiring information. However, using secondary data as the sole source of information has the drawback of becoming obsolete and not meeting the specific needs of the particular situation or setting (Sekaran, 2003).

3.4.2 Primary Data

With the purpose of creating a more comprehensive picture of the research questions, various primary data collection methods such as field visits, field observations and face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed. Collection of the most current and up-to-date information is important to provide answers to the research questions. Details are elaborated in the following sections.

3.4.2.1 Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

Primary data were collected in Lhasa during the two field visits. Semi-structured in-depth interviews, field visits and observations were used to seek answers to the research questions and objectives as presented in

Chapter 1.   Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as the main primary data collection method.   Accordingly, in-depth interviews are modelled after a conversation between equals rather than a formal question-and-answer exchange (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) and possess the advantages as outlined in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5:   Advantages of face-to-face interviews

Advantages	- Can establish rapport and motivate respondents
	- Can clarify the questions, clear doubts, add new questions
	- Can read non-verbal cues
	- Can visualize aids to clarify points
	- Can obtain rich data

Source: Extracted from Sekaran (2003)

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as the main primary data collection method for two reasons.   It first enables pursuit of emergent topics and themes at the time of the respective interviews.   Additionally, the adoption of such a technique also enables the candidate to probe more deeply than the initially planned questions.   According to Berg (2004), a semi-structured in-depth interview is to implement a number of pre-determined questions and special topics.   As attached in Appendix 4, a

set of pre-determined interview guides in both English and Chinese were used with respective interviewees.

The interview guide comprised of two parts. A set of open-ended and descriptive questions were firstly used in order to understand the general background of participants enabling expansion of conversations for the latter interview process. The second section consisted of questions relating to infrastructure and facilities, employment opportunities, standard of living, cultural exchange, cultural preservation and language and social issues. These aim to articulate insight relating to study research questions and objectives.

Questions were tailor-made to fit the situation of respective respondents while the interviews were carried out in Chinese or English where appropriate. The questions were asked in a systematic and consistent order while probing beyond answers to the prepared standardised questions. By probing further, the interviewer could draw out an in depth story from the subject and elicit more information to a given question (Berg, 2004).

3.4.2.2 Field Visits and Observations

In addition to semi-structured face-to-face interviews, a qualitative ethnographic approach is also adopted in collection of primary data. In exploring the changes that tourism development has brought to Lhasa, two field

visits were made to the study area, this being the main tourist attraction zone as outlined in Chapter 1. These visits lasted two weeks and one month respectively. The first took place between 31st May and 11th June, 2007. Conversations were initiated particularly onboard with railway passengers on simple descriptive questions, such as reasons for taking the railway trip, purpose of their visit, trip details and their perception of the railway and destination. All communications were conducted in Chinese, Cantonese or English where appropriate. The content of communication was then taken as field notes for data analysis in the latter stage of the research process.

By undertaking the first field visit, the candidate was able to travel on the train, participate in tourist activities and talk to tourists both on the train and on-site. This visit enabled a better understanding of the agent of change – the railway as well as the study area of Lhasa. This first field visit also enabled the candidate to establish an initial network with key stakeholders from the tourism industry in Lhasa. In the first field visit, informal interviews/casual talks were conducted with tourists, the host population, tour operators, souvenir stall owners and academics from Tibet University.

This enabled the candidate to gain a more thorough knowledge of the destination as well as establishing the initial rapport with key stakeholders in the area under study. In order to facilitate the interview process, the candidate stayed in Lhasa for another month from 14th June to 13th July, 2008, enabling data to be collected on-site. The main purpose of the second field visit involved conducting face-to-face on-site interviews with the host population and

collection of observational data. On-site observations covered those of tour guides, souvenir stall owners, food stall owners and tourists' behaviour, along with interaction between tourists and locals as well as interaction between local people.

The one-month stay in Lhasa served two purposes. It first enabled the candidate to encourage potential participants to take part in the interviews. A Tibetan student was also recruited during the second field visit, being fluent in both Tibetan and Chinese. Other than serving as a translator and later in cross-checking interview notes, he also helped establish rapport and trust with the targeted participants. The one month residence also enabled the candidate to conduct both formal and informal interviews with local residents. So as to facilitate the latter stage of data analysis, the candidate carried out participant observation in the form of taking pictures. On the whole, primary data collection was made possible by extending the stay in Lhasa and employing multi data collection methods which included semi-structured in-depth interviews, and field observation.

In summary, varied methods were adopted in collecting primary data. The employment of multiple data collection methods also has the advantage in helping compensate the shortcomings of respective methods while at the same time triangulating the collected data. According to Decrop (1999), although each method has its own limits and biases, use of multiple data collection methods, either different qualitative methods or a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, paves the way for more credible and

dependable information which hence minimises bias (Beeton, 2005). In addition, the recruited Tibetan university student also served as a source of data verification by accompanying the candidate when the main interviews were conducted. Both the candidate and student helper cross-checked interview notes immediately after the respective interviews, ensuring correct interpretation of answers.

3.5 Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis is adopted in this study. Unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis is not fundamentally a mechanical or technical process. It is, rather, a process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Qualitative data analysis is an intuitive and inductive process from which researchers analyze and code their data. Throughout the analysis, researchers attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what has been studied and to continually refine the interpretation (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

In qualitative research, data and content analysis is an ongoing process (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Given the diversity in qualitative data analysis, Berg (2004) has identified a standard set of analytical activities. Diagram 3-1 identifies the general order for analysing qualitative data which is also applied in this study,

followed by a detailed account on the process of analyzing data in the latter sections.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Data is collected and converted into text (e.g. field notes, │
│                  transcripts, etc.)                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Codes are analytically developed or inductively identified in │
│    the data and affixed to sets of notes or transcript pages  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Codes are transformed into categorical labels or themes     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Materials are sorted by those categories, identifying similar │
│    phrases, patterns, relationships, and commonalties or      │
│                       disparities                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful       │
│                  patterns and processes              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Identified patterns are considered in light of previous      │
│  research and theories, and a small set of generalization is   │
│                       established                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Diagram 3-1: Steps in data analysis

Source: Adapted from Berg (2004)

3.5.1 Stage 1 - Familiarisation

A total of 25 formal and informal semi-structured interviews were conducted within this study. Interview notes were first prepared in Chinese and later translated into English.   After finishing the respective interviews, data was constantly theorized and examined by keeping track of emerging themes, reading through transcripts or observation notes and developing concepts and prepositions so as to interpret the data correctly. In the context of this study, types of socio-economic benefits and costs were coded and later categorised.   Accordingly, qualitative data is rich in detail but unyielding and intertwined in content (Spencer, Ritchie, & O'Conner, 2003).   Therefore the data required sorting and reducing to make it more manageable at the beginning of the analytical process (Spencer et al., 2003).

A set of themes and concepts were labelled, sorted and synthesised after acquiring first hand data.   Familiarity of the data set is identified as very important at this point (Denscombe, 2007; Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006), so it became the main focus at this stage.   By reading and re-reading the data, the candidate was able to recognise patterns within the data set which included keeping track of hunches, interpretation and ideas, constantly looking for emerging themes and developing concepts and theoretical prepositions.

3.5.2 Stage 2 – Coding, Conceptualisation and Ordering

After the data familiarisation stage, coding of data was employed at the beginning of data management.   Coding refers to a way of developing and

refining interpretation of data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Generally speaking, qualitative researchers have provided certain coding processes: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Draucker, Martsolf, Ross, & Rusk, 2007; Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006; Schwandt, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Initially, the line-by-line and word-by-word examination of data for the purpose of developing provisional concepts was employed. From the data management stage of generating a set of themes and concepts, further use of synthesised data was prepared with the axial coding method. This is a stage of analysis which specifically focuses on an emerging category. Selective coding refers to the examination of data for the purpose of unearthing the core category and achieving integration of the theoretical framework.

According to Spencer et al. (2003), detection, categorisation and classification are the three key steps involved in such a descriptive analysis. Preparation of descriptive accounts detected and identified key dimensions and also mapped out the range and diversity of each phenomenon. The actual words and substantive content of the interviewee's accounts were reviewed and captured so as to understand the fineness of detail within different perspectives or descriptions (Spencer et al., 2003). Data coding was also cross checked and verified by involving another third party and hence enhanced the credibility of this study.

3.5.3 Stage 3 – Enfolding Literature

Last but not least, in order to develop data explanations, the synthesised data was studied carefully following leads discovered from the two stages above. This stage yielded a number of themes, concepts and relationships that lead to comparison of the extant literature. Accordingly, the ability to explain or to build explanations lies at the heart of qualitative research, while the researcher will need to find patterns of association within the data and to account for why those patterns occur (Spencer et al., 2003). By doing so, the data was studied time and time again to reveal the emergent explanations. The purpose is to further understand the causes or influences for the occurrence of a phenomenon. Therefore, the context of this study is to understand if local residents equally share the socio-economic benefits as brought about from the opening of the railway.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Findings

Qualitative methods are always criticised because of their lack of creditability (Decrop, 1999). Four precise criteria for qualitative research have been developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) which are parallel to quantitative terminology. Trustworthiness of the findings within this study has been achieved from four aspects which are outlined in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6: Trustworthiness of the findings

Conformability	- Method triangulation was achieved by employing semi-structured in-depth interviews and field observations on the site - Data triangulation was achieved by cross-checking of interview notes between the candidate and the Tibetan student assistant
Dependability	- Recruitment of a Tibetan university student who accompanied the candidate during the formal interviews - Both the candidate and the Tibetan student took notes during the interviews and reviewed the interview transcripts immediately after completion of the respective interviews
Credibility	- Careful coding and indexing at the data analysis stage - Cross checked codes by involving a third party from the same institute as the candidate
Transferability	- Applicability of the research design to other spatial locations

3.7 Limitations

Despite the trustworthiness listing, certain limitations of the existing study could be noted. The limitations relate much to the timing of when this study took place. As mentioned in previous sections, the 3/14 incident has mainly affected the data collection process particularly in the aspect of interview acceptance rates. Details of the study limitations are elaborated as follows:

3.7.1 The March 14th Incident (3/14 Incident) – A Background

On March 14th, 2008, two weeks before the traditional Tibetan New Year, violent protests erupted in Lhasa and resulted in a sudden slump in its tourist industry. As quoted from newspapers in the United Kingdom and United States, unrest began with demonstrations on March 10th, 2008. It was the 49th anniversary of the failed uprising in 1959 of Tibet against the Chinese Central Government's rule (FlorCruz, 2009). The protests turned violent when 300 monks demanded the release of colleagues who had been detained since the previous autumn (Watts, 2008).

To control the unstable political situation after the riots, the regional government stopped issuing entry permits between March 16th and June 24th, 2008, not only for international tourists but journalists also (Choi, 2008). The regional tourism bureau of Tibet also recommended that Chinese travel

organizations postpone their tour plans for travel to Tibet. After May 1st 2008, tourists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were allowed entrance to Tibet without any travel restrictions, but for tourism purposes only (Agence France-Presse, 2008).

Protests were also reported in other areas of Tibet being the Chinese provinces of 'Greater' or 'Historic Tibet (Dreyer, 2003).   Rioting, burning, looting and killing began in Lhasa on March 14th 2008.   As reported by a Hong Kong based English newspaper, rioters rampaged through the commercial heart of Lhasa.   Most of the rioters were found to be low income young Tibetans who had been left behind by the vast influx of Lhasa investments (J. Ma, 2008).   However, Han and Muslim business shoppers, even wealthy Tibetans who had benefited from economic growth and worked with the government, were the target of riot attacks (J. Ma, 2008). A summary of media coverage contrasting Chinese and Western perspectives is extracted as in Appendix 5.   It clearly shows that there are differences of opinion in regard to what happened that day.

The 3/14 incident has aroused international attention although debates are often politicised and framed in binaries.   Xinhua, the official 'voice' of the Chinese Central Government, claimed that the incident was not an ethnic issue but a political one.   The incident was not an isolated or accidental case, but part of the *'Tibetan People's Uprising Movement'* which had been masterminded by the Dalai Lama (Xinhua News Agency, 2008).

Chinese Central Government regarded the 3/14 incident as solely political in nature.   They suggested it was the 14th Dalai Lama who had 'organized,

premeditated and masterminded' the series of violence in order to protest against the Chinese Central Government's rule. The rioters, termed 'mobs' in the Chinese newspapers, attacked everyone including women and children. It was claimed to be *'an incident made by a small number of lawless people and perpetrated and organized by the Dalai clique, which wants to destroy the national unity of Tibet'*. Although the Dalai Lama denied any link to the violence, he claimed that he was seeking only autonomy for Tibet (Xinhua News Agency, 2008). Figures from the Chinese Central Government showed that the 'mobs' killed 18 civilians and a police officer. They attacked schools, banks, hospitals, shops and government offices. Damage was estimated at more than RMB 244 million (USD 34.4 million).

The western media, however, claimed that the incident was a protest against the Chinese Central Government's rule. Many argued that the cause of the incident was mainly attributed to unresolved historical questions as well as economic factors (J. Ma, 2009). From the western media's point of view, the 3/14 incident was a manifestation of *'an imbalanced share of benefits inherited from the past two-decades' socio-economic evolution in Lhasa'* (Reuters et al., 2008). The demonstration was a result of the influx of Han Chinese into Lhasa as from 1984, who were opening new shops and taking better-paid jobs (Reuters et al., 2008). However, no convincing or impartial evidence has been provided so far to prove the cause of the incident and the debate continues.

3.7.1.1 Poor Response Rate

As a result of political instability, a tense atmosphere resulted, not just in Lhasa but also within the host community. Tension affected not only the fast growing tourist industry after the opening of the railway, but also the research process of this study. People who were contacted for interviews tended to reserved in their participation in the study mainly because of the 'unique political status' as possessed by Tibet. The participation rate was even worsened by the 3/14 incident. The tense political environment further limited the response and participation of local residents within this study.

Because of the scarcity of networks (Chinese terms as '*guanxi*') and contacts available, identification and contact of the local population was made prior to carrying out the two field visits. Table 3-7 gives an outline of the public and private population targeted. It details their organization, position held, contact methods and feedback to the interview requests. By December, 2007, the respective population as listed in Table 3-7, were contacted either through mail or email with a letter attached, as shown in Appendix 6. Early in June 2007, prior to the first field visit, direct phone calls were also made to respective parties where contact numbers were available. Efforts were made to increase the response rate from the public sector as this would help provide an overview to one side of the investigated topic.

Table 3-7: Target participants approached before the second field study commenced

Organization	Designation	Contacted Method	Result
Tibetan Government In-Exile, India	General Secretary	Mail	No Reply
TAR Tourism Bureau	Deputy Director	Email	No Reply
Lhasa City Government	Mayor	Email	No Reply
Lhasa City Planning Bureau	Director	Phone	Rejected
China National Tourist Association, Tibet	Head	Email	No reply
Tibet Windhorse Travel Agent	*Project Manager*	*Face-to-Face*	*Accepted*
Lhasa River Side Guest House	*Owner*	*Face-to-Face*	*Accepted*
Dunya Restaurant and Bar	Manager	Email	No reply
CITS, Tsdang	Manager	Email / Phone	Email bounced back while phone numbers were not existent
Tibet University	*Dean*	*Face-to-Face*	*Accepted*
Tibet Traditions and Cultural Association	*Director*	*Phone*	*Accepted*
United Nation Development Program	Community Tourism Developer	Email	Rejected

As the response rates were so extremely low, additional efforts were made to improve within this area by obtaining a government document to prove the

intention of the study.   As attached in Appendix 7, in August 2007, a letter was sent to the Liaison Office of the Central Government in the HKSAR, requesting their assistance in this matter. As already identified, their role was to serve as a bridge of communication between HKSAR and China.   A request for their help with this study was made to facilitate the acceptance rates of interview requests to local residents as well as government officials. Unfortunately, the request was officially refused by the department by telephone in February, 2008, claiming they were not responsible for such an affair of this nature.   Despite efforts, only four participants, as highlighted in Table 3-7, agreed to participate in the study.

Returning to Hong Kong from the first field visit, the candidate continued to contact potential government officials by both email and direct phone calls. Phone calls were made to the TAR government office but they were either not picked up or not connected.   The TAR Development and Planning Bureau was also contacted, but the candidate was redirected to the Lhasa City Development and Planning Bureau.   The latter claimed that relevant data had already been published on-line and they were unable to provide anything further.   The Chinese National Tourism Association were sent emails and contacted by phone to request assistance with the project by providing the latest planning projects in Tibet, but responses were never received.

Table 3-8: The public sector approached during the second field visit

Government Organizations / Other Organizations	Result
Tibet Windhose Travel Agent	Replied to the questions through email
Lhasa River Side Guest House	Replied to the questions through email
Tibet University	Face-to-face interviews
Tibet Traditions and Cultural Association	Could not be reached through the provided address and telephone
Lhasa City Tourism Bureau	Supported with related documents
Lhasa City Urban Planning Bureau	Supported with related documents
Lhasa City Land & Resources Planning Bureau	Supported with short informal interviews
Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau	Supported with related documents
Lhasa City Government	Rejected
Lhasa City Development and Planning Bureau	Rejected
Residential Community of the Barkhor Street	Rejected
TAR Traditions and Cultural Community Organization	Rejected
Potala Palace Management Office	Rejected
Jorkhang Temple Management Office	Rejected
Lhasa City Cultural Bureau	Rejected
Tibet Autonomous Region Development and Planning Bureau	Rejected
Tibet Autonomous Region Railway Bureau	Rejected

Occurrence of the 3/14 incident complicated and worsened the identified participants' responses to this study. Because of the 3/14 incident, the candidate had no choice but to delay the project launch and primary data collection process. Tibet was re-opened to Hong Kong residents in May 2008, therefore allowing the data collection process to continue.

From 14th June until 13th July, 2008, the candidate made her second field visit to Lhasa in order to collect first hand data from on-site and was accompanied by the Tibetan university student helper. As listed in Table 3-8, visits were made to the potential population of study during this second stay in Lhasa. Unfortunately, the arrival of the Olympic torch in Lhasa on June 21st 2008 created an even more rigid atmosphere at various levels in the region. There was a strong feeling that the identified population were not willing to participate in the study, mainly because of the political sensitivity to the topic under investigation. Interview requests received either rejection or non-responses even though they had been assured that data collected would only be used for academic purposes with their names remaining anonymous.

Government officials were reluctant to take part in this study mainly because they had been requested not to participate in any interviews during such a sensitive time. Even though the reason for the visit was to explain the purpose of the study, responses from various government departments were all very similar. It followed that a copy of the study's related verification letter and question list was requested, so as to refer it to their bureau head to allow consideration of their participation in the study. A second visit by both the candidate and the student helper to the respective bureaus followed a week later, but again proved unsuccessful. The candidate was later told by one of the officials from the Lhasa City Development and Planning Bureau that they could not participate at this time owing to the sensitivity of the 3/14 incident.

Local residents, particularly Tibetans, were also suspicious of the candidate's identity, whom is Hong Kong based but of Han Chinese origin, therefore making them sceptic of the intention. When finally agreeing to talk to the candidate, they were found reluctant to discuss the issues in depth and also reluctant to be tape recorded. This may have been due to the sensitivity of the research topic as well as the research timing.

3.7.1.2 Interviewee Bias

Other than the difficulty in inviting targeted public sector to participate, it was also hard to gain the trust of local Tibetan residents, even though a local Tibetan student accompanied the candidate. In a similar manner, ordinary Tibetans aged 25 to 60 were approached during the two field visits, but they refused to take part in the interviews claiming they had no knowledge of the topic. After failing to obtain permission from the residential committee of Barkhor Street to interview residents, the student was asked by the candidate if his parents could be interviewed instead. Unfortunately the reply was again negative. The student later told the candidate that his parents, such as all other ordinary Tibetans, were afraid of getting into any political trouble, especially under such a tense atmosphere as when the Olympic torch was arriving in Lhasa.

In addition, although a total of 25 formal and informal interviews were successfully conducted, information provided by the interviewees tended to be more positive than negative, which may constitute interviewee bias. In the context of this study, interviewee bias occurred since the participants tended to provide more positive comments. This may largely due to the tense political situation at the time of research.

3.8 Summary of Research Methods

This chapter has outlined five main aspects of research methodology employed in this study: the overall research process, the research perspective, methods and instruments adopted for selecting participants, collection of data and strategies for analysing data.

The overall research process was previously explained and from there, the adopted research perspective was elaborated upon. The rationale and justification for adopting a qualitative research perspective and a descriptive approach to this study were explained in Section 3.2.

Methods employed in selection of participants were outlined in Section 3.3. Collection of both primary and secondary data for this study is further explained in Section 3.4. The former Section provides an overview of the selection process while the latter explains data collection methods. Both secondary and primary data were collected by the candidate, the latter by means

of semi-structured in-depth interviews and observations conducted on site within the study area.

A descriptive method of data analysis was provided in Section 3.5. Upon completion of data collection, information was sorted, categorised, analysed and interpreted by using the qualitative content analysis to address the main research questions and objectives as outlined in Chapter 1. Last but not least, the trustworthiness and limitations of the study findings are elaborated upon in detail in Section 3.6 and 3.7 respectively.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter first gives an account of the candidate's experience and observations from the two field visits to Lhasa.   It then presents and discusses the findings relating to the socio-economic impact of tourism as revealed by local residents.   Evidence is drawn from primary data collected during the two field visits supplemented by secondary data and observations where appropriate, from which a conceptual framework is presented and elaborated upon.

4.1 The Train Journey

As previously noted, during the period of 31st May to 11th June, 2007, the candidate underwent the first of her field work visits to Lhasa by travelling on the Qinghai-Tibet railway.   Having no prior experience of lengthy rail travel or of the destination - Lhasa, the experience was one of excitement and enthusiasm.   Many guidebooks say that Tibet is the closest place to heaven. For the candidate, Tibet represents the notion of peace, tranquillity and a utopian sense of harmony which are in contrast to those of the candidate's parents, who were born and educated in mainland China.   From the parents' perspective, Tibet represents a backward, barbaric and remote highland with little fresh air, with Tibetans seen as uncivilized and brutal barbarians.

However, the 'medieval' image and the richness of Tibetan culture have long enticed the candidate's fascination of this 'mythical' land.

The procedure to enter Tibet is easy. Unlike westerners, no visas are required for Hong Kong Chinese residents, so the candidate was able to prepare for the trip by booking the train ticket a month in advance from China Travel Services in Hong Kong. However, the train ticket was only confirmed a week before the departure date. The explanation from the travel agent was that they had experienced difficulty in confirming the ticket availability as demand in China was high. According to documents collected from the Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau (2008), the railway has transported 5.95-million tourists as from 1st July, 2006 to 31st December, 2007. This accounted for 43% of the total number of tourists entering Tibet. Most of these came from other Chinese provinces along with international countries and regions such as America, Japan, Germany and Hong Kong (Lhasa Tourism Bureau, 2007). The Qinghai-Tibet railway opening boosted tremendous tourism growth in Tibet during 2007. As shown in Photo 4-1, a large amount of tourist coaches and many tourists could be seen daily in Lhasa.

Photo 4-1: Streets in Lhasa as in early July 2007

Photo 4-2: Qinghai-Tibet railway running from Guangzhou to Lhasa

From Hong Kong to Guangdong Province, the candidate arrived in Guangzhou East Station, which is one of the seven railway routes to Lhasa.   The brand new and comfortable setting of the train compartment was very impressive, as shown in Photo 4-2.   The modern train had ten or eleven carriages including one dining carriage.   Regular hard seating compartments were at the front of the train followed by the dining car, three soft sleepers and lastly three hard sleeper compartments. When walking through the train compartments, it was observed that all train attendants were Han Chinese, who said that they did not speak the Tibetan language.   The train ticket was written in Chinese and Chinese 'pinyin' with hardly any Tibetan or English language found.   The Chinese Central Government claims that the railway has been built for the benefit of Tibetans, but, from these observations the question of respect for Tibetan culture and whom the train is truly built for has to be raised.   If it was built for the Tibetans, their culture should surely be respected.

These observations were clearly disappointing.   No wonder Lustgarten's (2008) book stated *'China's Great Train: Beijing's Drive West and the Campaign to Remake Tibet'* suggest that local Tibetans are not benefiting from the building of the railway.   They were either not participating in the building of the railway or taking only the lowly positioned and paid jobs.   This also prompted the question as to whether the railway had brought a new age to Tibet or if the Tibetans were benefiting from the railway at all.

The train left Guangzhou East Station at 13:10, with much excitement on board.

The carriages were crowded mainly with Chinese passengers from all walks of life. They were observed standing by the windows, afraid of missing any passing scenery and confirmed their pride in having the railway. On the second day of the train journey, the geography changed dramatically. The views of mountains, lakes and yaks were beautiful to see, the geographical change amazing passengers and candidate alike. To build a railway along such a route is never an easy task, but here, Chinese engineers have proven their talent and ability to the rest of the world. Just as Lustagarten (2008, p.62) described:

'Completing the impossible railway to Tibet became a similar symbol of pride,

an irrationally large symbol of China's ability to preserve and succeed

technologically where the world said it would not'

As far as could be observed, the train served as a tunnel which showcased the different pace of development from east to west China, resulting in an imbalance of regional development by a rapid pace of economic development and modernisation. Although an 'open-door' policy was adopted in 1978, not all provinces benefited at the same rate (Demurger, Sachs, Woo, Bao, & Chang, 2002). From 1978 to 2000 it was estimated that the average growth rate across China would be in the region of 10% per annum (Tisdell & Chai, 1997). However, this aggregate figure obscured large inter-provincial disparities in the growth that actually occurred over this time period. Coastal regions enjoyed average growth rates of up to 14%, while inland provinces in the west had growth rates of as little as 6.9% over the same period.

Enquiries showed that passengers were going to Lhasa not only for tourism purposes, but for personal reasons also. For instance, a mother with a young child explained that she went to Tibet to visit her husband who was driving a taxi in Lhasa. However, the few passengers travelling from South East Asia, Taiwan and Hong Kong said that they were going to Tibet for tourism purposes. Despite the variation of travel purpose, they all admitted that the railway opening had advanced their trip to Tibet. The reason for this was because it was comparatively cheaper and a more comfortable transport mode. Saying this, the candidate still suffered from altitude sickness when the train climbed to its highest point of 5,068 meters at the Tangula Mountain! Documents provided by the Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau (2008), suggest the railway has acted as an agent to promote tourism development, therefore resulting in an expansion of the tourist industry in Lhasa.

4.1.1 The City

4.1.1.1 Arriving in Lhasa

Approaching Lhasa station, train broadcasts could finally be heard introducing the characteristics of the station as well as those of the destination. As shown in Photo 4-3, the modern design of Lhasa rail station was unfortunately unable to tell the candidate that she had arrived in Lhasa after the 57-hour train journey. In addition, the train platform was packed with passengers who spoke the language understood by the candidate – Mandarin. However, as shown in

Photo 4-3, the unfamiliar Tibetan language found at the top of the Chinese characters saying 'Lhasa Station' and the banner saying 'To celebrate the successful operation of the Qinghai-Tibet railway', did give the candidate a clue that she had arrived in this mythical land after 57 hours of travel.

Photo 4-3: Lhasa rail station

Photos 4-4 and 4-5 show how the city appears to have two separate identities. Whilst strolling along the study area, which is also the heritage belt that circles the Potala Palace, Jorkhang Temple and the Norbulinka Palace, pilgrims were seen whole-heartedly indulging in their world of worshipping Buddhist gods. As it had always been imagined, Photo 4-4 was found to portray the tranquil and spiritual sensation of Tibet. It has such a religious atmosphere, long enticing religious interest, including that of the candidate.

Photo 4-4:   The candidate's mental image of Lhasa before arriving in the city

By taking another look around the city, observations proved that fast-paced development had taken place.   As shown in Photo 4-5, the well-paved streets, modern cars, traffic light systems and shopping stores selling internationally branded items, show that Lhasa is no different to other fast expanding cities in China.   As described by Lopez (1998), people who have been to Tibet were found to be disillusioned and found that Tibet was no longer the place that they had dreamed.   Yet, Tibet is still circulating in a system of fantastic opposition since people tend to deny Tibet its history, to exclude it from a real world of which it has always been a part, and to deny Tibetans their agency in the creation of a contested quotidian reality (Lopez, 1998).

Photo 4-5: Modern images of Lhasa

In fact, Lhasa is now modern and dynamic. It has already emerged as a surprisingly sprawling city which has been muddled by administrative blocks stationed by the People's Liberation Army. Also, in recent years, restaurants selling Sichuanese cuisine, karaoke bars operated by Taiwanese entrepreneurs and department stores selling modern fashions and groceries have also appeared. A new Lhasa has been 'produced' since the Chinese Central Government has taken its de facto control of Tibet since 1965, for better or worse, depending on the perspective taken. There was a feeling of disappointment in the realism that the destination was not what was expected regarding its history. On the

whole, the first field visit enabled a preliminary understanding of the destination - Lhasa, which was a far cry from the candidate's imagination.

4.1.1.2 Lhasa after the 3/14 Incident

The second field visit to Lhasa was made during mid-June, the year that followed the 3/14 incident. Because of this incident, tourism activities were banned until 1st of May, 2008 to tourists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. International tourists could only have access into Tibet after 24th June 2008, which was just three days after the Olympic torch passed through Lhasa. At the beginning of this trip, it was not surprising to see that the tense and still political situation was having a negative impact on the tourism industry of Lhasa.

Travel agents in Hong Kong showed no interest whatsoever in helping book tickets to Tibet. Because of the relay of the Olympic torch, the China Travel Services in Hong Kong were no longer helping visitors to reserve railway tickets, while air tickets were sold at KHD 3,000[3] (USD 389) plus tax per single trip. Therefore, the candidate had no alternative but to fly from Guangzhou to Lhasa. In order to attract more tourists, travel agents in China offered many 'discounted' tickets to domestic travellers wishing to go to Tibet. The flight ticket only cost HKD 1,200 (USD 156) per single trip which was half

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[3] USD and HKD is exchanged using the approximate rate of 1USD = 7.8RMB

the price for the same period the previous year and cheaper than a railway ticket of the same period. Yet, the flight schedule from Guangzhou to Lhasa was also reduced to one flight per alternate day whereas it had been one flight per day during the previous year.

Arriving in Lhasa for the second time, the difference in atmosphere was clear to see. It was so obvious that the dynamics of Lhasa were gone with the 3/14 Incident. What was left was a shadow of fear and tension. Gonggar Airport was empty and only a few tourists could be found. During a taxi journey, the Han Chinese taxi driver told of how the 3/14 incident had affected his business and that I was the first guest of the day for him. However, when asked if he knew why the riots started, he hesitated and stopped talking, suggesting that it may be a taboo topic of discussion. As expected, he smiled embarrassingly and said he knew very little, but emphasized that Lhasa had been different since the 3/14 incident.

He avoided talking any and advised me not to ask too many questions openly in the city as 'plain-clothes' policeman could be anywhere and everywhere. Prior to 3/14 Lhasa had been a thriving city, but since the incident streets along the study area were nearly empty while most shops were closed, even though it was the middle of the day. Burned buildings could still be seen along streets of the city centre. Whilst workers were working hard to refurbish the burned or damaged building blocks, the ruins of the 3/14 incident could easily be spotted in the main tourist attraction zone. As shown in Photo 4-6, the burnt-out remains of buildings and smashed windows could still be clearly seen

when walking along the Beijing East Road, where the riot started. Moreover, the garrison of the People's Liberation Army, armed with guns, batons and riot shields, were seen in every alley of the city claiming to protect and ensure the safety of city tourists.

Photo 4-6: Burnt-out buildings along the Beijing East Road, Lhasa

In particular, the 3/14 incident had a big impact on the tourism industry of Lhasa. Tourist arrivals for the region were recorded at a 69% slump in 2008 compared to figures produced in 2007. Shops found along Barkhor Street (Photo 4-7), one of the busiest and most popular tourist attractions of Lhasa selling mainly Tibetan handicrafts, closed as early as at 6pm, whereas they would have previously closed at 9pm. This was confirmed by one of the shop retailers.

Photo 4-7: Barkhor Street, Lhasa

Complaints about the negative impact of the incident were easily heard, not only from taxi drivers but also hotel owners, food stalls and retail outlets. The business sector, whether it was Tibetan or Han Chinese, hated the rioters as they had destroyed their 'golden opportunity' to make profit from the booming economy. Businesses in the city had been badly hit by political instability since March 2008 and to the candidate's surprise, Tibetans from these businesses were also unhappy with the current situation. Some even showed their impatience to the political upheaval and even blamed Tibetans from other provinces.

Hearing these complaints from the Tibetans sparked a reference to the sculpture located 100 meters' from the Potala Palace, 'Treasures of the Highland' as shown in Photo 4-8, which shows two yaks looking in different directions.   As told by a Han Chinese civil servant:

'This sculpture was designed by a Han Chinese and sent as a gift to the Tibetan government in 1990.   It depicts the complex psychology of the Tibetans. The yak on the right is looking northward to Beijing while the other on the left, is looking downward to India, where the 14th Dalai Lama lives!' (Han 1).

The sculpture and explanation depicted the ironic psychology of the Tibetans. At this point, their complaints could be understood.   Businessmen in Lhasa had lost their 'golden opportunity' during the last year, to earn from the increasing influx of both domestic and international tourists being largely due to the opening of the railway in 2006.

Photo 4-8: Treasures of the Highland Sculpture

Some Tibetans were indeed found enjoying the status quo under the Chinese Central Government's rule. Obviously, they are the groups that have benefited. Some Tibetans were found to be proud of being civil servants involved in political activities, while some were proud to have their businesses operating in other Chinese provinces. The Tibetan restaurant manager interviewed for the study was proud to say that his restaurant had a branch operating in Beijing and Kuming, China. He also explained that not only westerners but also Han Chinese were fascinated by Tibetan culture.

As a result of the opening of the railway, it had encouraged the exchange of various cultures creating easier and more comfortable access to Tibet. Moreover, younger generations were seen wearing fashionable clothes and communicating with each other in Mandarin in opposition to their long term culture. Putting this cultural question to the Tibetan student helper his response was, *'why would there be a problem?'* This suggests that there is a new generation in Tibet who appears unwilling to be alienated by the modernization process. Yet, is it the full story? On one occasion, the student helper said he was preparing for the civil servants' examination reinforcing the fact that the examination was to be written and answered in Chinese. He looked quite worried and appeared to have no confidence, but when asked if the examination was fair to him, he smiled without further response. The conversation was then brought to a sudden end.

4.1.1.3 Olympic Torch Relay

The arrival of the Olympic torch has unfortunately worsened the atmosphere in Lhasa. A week before the arrival of the Olympic torch on 21st June, 2009, decorations and banners were frequently seen telling the people to be united in celebrating the coming of the Olympic torch. The extent of sensitivity within the city was realised when banners and decorations celebrating the arrival could be found in most Lhasa streets.

In front of Potala Palace, the candidate was particularly attracted by one particular banner which read: 'Be one nation and one mind for the Olympics' which is shown in Photo 4-9. The banner seemed to remind local residents that no matter which ethnicity they were, everyone should do their best to ensure the successful operation of the Olympics.

Photo 4-9: Potala Palace before the arrival of the Olympic torch

Yet, only a few days before this, the city had felt very tense indeed. Just a few days before the relay and whilst walking near the Jokhang Temple in the centre of the old Lhasa district, a soldier was seen shouting and pointing his fingers toward a passing rickshaw. Initially there was panic, but then realisation that the soldier's attention was drawn to the Chinese couple sitting in the rickshaw.

The soldier took them to one side and asked if they had taken pictures of soldiers stationing the city. He checked every picture taken on the camera deleting some of them accordingly. The couple were released afterwards being 'advised' to behave like tourists and not as spies. Photo 4-10 depicts the atmosphere on the day the Olympic torch arrived. The photo on the left was taken two days before the arrival of the Olympic torch. Immediately after taking the picture, the candidate saw a plain-clothes policeman standing at the roof top looking in the other direction. The two photos on the right were taken when military cars were seen transporting soldiers out of the city. This was after the curfew had been lifted and when the ceremony had ended that morning.

Photo 4-10: Lhasa on the day of the Olympic torch relay

The city was filled with tension well before the Olympic torch relay. Rumours regarding the declaration of martial law on that day were spreading rapidly. Temporary martial law was to be imposed from 11pm the night before 21[st] June until 11am when the ceremony ended that morning. This had been verified by someone working in the government unit. Two days before, restaurant managers were instructed to close their restaurants on the day of the relay. One hostel owner also confirmed that he was instructed not to go onto the streets until after 11am. A deadlocked city with empty streets was the result. More ironically, it was later revealed that those found celebrating in the streets were actually civil servants from different government departments and not local residents of Lhasa.

4.1.2 Tourism and Socio-economic Benefits

After giving an account of experiences and observations during the two field visits, this section provides an overview of local residents' viewpoints regarding associated socio-economic changes that tourism development has brought to them. Only a minimal number of local residents could be contacted because this study was set in such a politically sensitive period. As mentioned in Chapter 3, support from various government departments was expected when generating this study at the initial stage. Unfortunately, their feedback for support was either negative or non-responsive. Maybe such responses were

general tactics used to deceive by the Chinese Central Government, in suggesting there is no such thing as the 'Tibetan Question'.

Fortunately, the study was able to continue with assistance from a passenger met on the plane journey to Lhasa. This fortunate introduction snow-balled, making the candidate able to interview their friends and other residents living in Lhasa. From these interviews, it was found that the railway had acted as a catalyst for tourism development in Lhasa although other related issues are to be discussed in the sections that follow. With media attention focusing on the opening of the railway, it had, in return, helped promote Lhasa to tourists around the globe. The respondents were generally positive about the opening of the railway.

4.1.2.1 Attracts Investments

Similar to findings elaborated upon in previous studies, tourism development has generally acted as a catalyst for economic growth. In Lhasa, the respective tourism sectors grew at a steady rate as can be observed from the increase in the number of travel operators, hotels, guest houses and tourists coaches which are outlined in Table 4-1. In particular, the number of tourist coaches increased by 50% in 2007 when compared to figures of 2006. Unfortunately there is a lack of respective figures for 2008.

Table 4-1:   Statistics of respective tourism sectors in Lhasa

Tourism Sectors	Number (2006)	Number (2007)	Level of Increase
Travel operators	47	56	16%
Hotels / Guest Houses	193	239	19%
Rooms	10,369	12,556	17%
Beds	20,588	24,284	15%
Tourist coaches	1,157	2,400	52%

Source: Lhasa City Tourism Bureau (2007)

Business investment within the city also increased after the opening of the railway.   According to statistics from the Lhasa City Tourism Bureau (2007), 33 projects attracted investment in the tourism industry after the opening of the railway.   A number of hotel projects were also favourably considered because of the rapid development of tourism and therefore accommodation requirements. During 2007, as confirmed by Lhasa City Tourism Bureau, there was an increase of 32 hotels rated at 3-star or above. These investments included a recently rated 4-star hotel – Four Point Sheraton and the first internationally branded luxury hotel – St. Regis Hotel. Both these hotels made the decision to delay their grand opening until August 2010 because of the negative impact brought about by the 3/14 incident.

Photo 4-11: Construction site of the St. Regis Hotel, Lhasa

Expansion of the tourism industry also provides an opportunity for development of family hotels in Lhasa. One of the faculty deans from Tibet University, who was born and raised in Lhasa, confirmed that family hotels only flourished after the opening of the railway. According to statistics from the Lhasa City Tourism Bureau (2008), there were 117 registered family hotels which accounted for almost half of all the 239 hotels registered in Lhasa. The owner of a guest house with 28 rooms on Barkhor Street confirmed that the existing family hotel was opened because of his vision for tourist accommodation needs.

'I decided to open this family hotel as the railway opened in 2006 as I saw a

need for the existence of family hotels as tourists may require cheaper

accommodation. Most importantly, tourists may want to experience the local

culture by living with local people' (Tibetan 4).

'Our business was going very well especially last year. Our rooms were fully

booked for the same month last year. Incoming tourists were very amazed at the

way we decorated our house and found it very interesting to live with the local

residents' (Tibetan 4).

Interviewees also conveyed that development and expansion of the tourism
industry attracts investment within the local economy and hence accelerates the
growth of other business sectors.   For instance, as a result of the increasing
interest in local Tibetan culture, investors were attracted to set up
manufacturing companies producing Tibetan arts and handicrafts.

'It (tourism) helps other business sectors flourish, for example, carpet and

incense factories have been developed to show-case tourists the Tibetan culture

and customs. It not only provides local residents with extra job opportunities,

but also preserves their traditional culture' (Han 4).

Tourism development has also facilitated regional cooperation which coincides
with findings of previous studies.   The opening of the railway has intensified
the process of regional cooperation in terms of tourism development. For
example, Tibet and Qinghai have reached an agreement to develop their tourism
jointly while Tibet, Sichuan and Yunnan are also allying with each other to

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form a 'Big Ecological Shangri-La' (Zong, 2007). Such cooperative schemes seek to transform the region into an eco-tourism area. Several other developments have also been planned such as the extension of the railway line from Lhasa to Shigatse along with Ningchi and Nepal by 2010. Additionally, a scheme to develop areas along the railways route into top quality tourist regions is also planned between 2006 and 2020.

4.1.2.2 Increases Business Level

Businesses either involved or not in the tourism industry, were found to benefit from tourism growth in 2007. Before the 3/14 incident, respondents involved in the tourism industry admitted that revenue from their businesses increased after the opening of the railway. This increase resulted from the influx of tourists which was facilitated by the improved transportation network.

'I only made 50-100 RMB a day but now my business makes, at most, 500 RMB

a day' (Han 9).

'I did business of 1000 RMB a day since the opening of the railway simply

because there are more tourists. Last year, during the peak season between

May and August, I occasionally did business of 5,000 RMB a day' (Han 6).

Respondents not involved in the tourism industry also showed their positive attitudes toward the economic contribution of tourism development. It was

surprising that Tibetans were also positive about the economic contribution of tourism development. They were confident that tourism possesses the ability to increase locals' incomes.

'The more tourists the better - why not? Although most of my customers are not tourists, whenever there are people, there is still a chance for me to make money' (Han 6).

'I personally welcome tourism. No matter who the tourists are, they will need a taxi for transportation and therefore there is a chance for me to make money' (Han 8).

'It is always good to have more tourists; tourism is good because it would be good for my business' (Han 10).

4.1.2.3 Creates Job Opportunities

By attracting investment in manufacturing and the tourism industry, more job opportunities have been created in Lhasa. Before the 3/14 incident, the tourism industry was expanding at a rapid pace. According to documents collected from the TAR Tourism Bureau (2008), the tourism industry provided both direct and indirect job opportunities to 28,400 and 142,200 local residents within Tibet. The provision of job opportunities increased as the tourism industry expanded.

'There are jobs offered by the (tourism) industry... entrepreneurs such as hotels,

restaurants or travel agents are setting up their businesses in Lhasa. Tourism

development provides local people with more job opportunities' (Han 1).

'The carpet and incense factories developed...providing the local people with

job opportunities' (Han 4).

Photo 4-12: Tibetan workers in a local factory

Local residents have found to benefit from the expanding tourist industry. Those entrepreneurs, such as hotels, restaurants or travel agents are setting up their businesses in Lhasa and hence provide local people with more job opportunities. Fortunately, the candidate had the chance to visit a manufacturing factory which showcased and produced Tibetan traditional

incense and Tanka etc.   Although the factory was owned and invested in by a Sichuanese, it had recruited around 200 employees with almost 80% of them being Tibetans.   The locals were considered a priority for employment, as they possess the necessary skills to make cultural arts and handicraft products - Tibetan incense and Tankas (Tibetan drawings) as shown in Photo 4-12.

4.1.2.4 Improves Living Standards

The respondents confirmed that tourism development had contributed to the continual socio-economic evolution of Lhasa.   The rapidly developing economy, facilitated by the opening of the railway, also improved the residents' living standards.   These improvements were through the provision of more consumable goods, local infrastructure and facilities etc.   Interviews also confirmed that the improved transportation network had lowered transportation costs and hence resulted in the flow of more perishable items such as vegetables and fruits etc.

'It has brought in more household and grocery items…I can now buy those things not only in my hometown but also here in Lhasa' (Han 2).

'There are more items for me to buy from the supermarket; I can now find many items that I could once only buy in my hometown' (Han 4).

Not only tourists, but also local residents enjoy the benefits from development and improvement of local infrastructure and facilities. One respondent claimed that *'...more highways, leisure parks and paved roads are now very common in Lhasa' (Tibetan 12).* The booming economy also helps development of local infrastructure and facilities. The family hotel owner said: *'Other than providing guest rooms, we are also a restaurant...the rationale for providing various services is to attract various types of customers no matter if they are tourists or locals' (Tibetan 4).* During weekends, crowds of local residents visit the leisure parks located at the back of Potala Palace which was built and expanded after the opening of the railway.

The increases in consumable goods also benefit incoming tourists. According to a Public Relations Manager of a 4-star hotel, *'After the opening of this railway, the variety of food items like fruits have increased, so our customers can have more choices' (Han 5).* With the provision of more consumable goods, local residents and tourists can share the benefits as induced by the opening of the railway. One of the travel operators, an expatriate of Lhasa concluded that:

'In some ways the standard of living has increased, there are many new goods, fruits and vegetables in the shops, more consumer goods are available etc.'

(Expatriate)

Photo 4-13: Leisure park in Lhasa

4.1.2.5 Increases Opportunities for Cultural Exchange

'Before the construction of the railway, most Tibetans did not know what a railway was, but they know it now. They can even ride on the railway to see the outside world…it will expand the horizon of the Tibetans…a ticket from Beijing to Lhasa costs about 300RMB (44 USD) which is far cheaper than a flight ticket. Tibetans now find it more affordable to travel in and out Tibet'

(Tibetan 1).

Respondents welcome tourism development as they have more opportunities for cultural exchange. According to figures provided by the Tibet Transport Authority, officials claimed that in 100 days, from July 1st, 2006, 1,212,000 people travelled out of Tibet but only 65,000 went in (Xinhua News Agency, 2007b). Unfortunately there was a lack of further figures to indicate whether Tibetans or other ethnic groups travelled outwards by taking the train. With improved accessibility, movement in and out of Tibet is now easier and more comfortable than in the past which increases the opportunity for cultural exchange.

While the railway opens the door for further tourism development and cultural interaction for Tibetans living in Lhasa, awareness of protecting the unique Tibetan culture is reinforced.

'The huge increase in tourists has stimulated the local government to protect the indigenous culture of Tibet. The local government is now more aware of protecting Tibetan traditions like its indigenous food and plays, as they are fully aware of the fact that every incoming tourist wants to experience the typical Tibetan culture' (Tibetan 2).

Another interviewee echoes this by saying:

'The government is putting more effort into protecting attractions here in Lhasa; they are doing more maintenance and renovation for preservation purposes' (Tibetan 1).

Indeed, according to a White Paper released recently by the Central Government of China, large scale refurbishment work, costing RMB 330 million (USD 47 million) was apportioned to repair Potala Palace and the Norbulingka (Xinhua News Agency, 2009b). They also announced that 5.7 billion RMB is to be spent on maintaining and revitalising the cultural sites and temples in the TAR (K. Yang, 2008).

This describes the positive socio-economic impact of tourism development. Table 4-2 presents an overview of the positive aspects of socio-economic benefits resulting from tourism development as found in Lhasa. Similar to previous available literature, tourism development is found to bring about positive socio-economic changes to local residents. Followed by a rapid pace of tourism development, investment projects were attracted and the local population benefited from more employment opportunities. At business level, the improved accessibility has also brought about more consumable goods while the better infrastructure and facilities have improved the standard of living for local residents. Given these findings, the opening of the railway, followed by a rapid pace of tourism development, is not necessarily negative, as claimed by most western media.

Table 4-2: Summary of the positive socio-economic aspect of tourism development in the

main tourist attraction zone

Aspects of the Impact	Socio-economic Impacts of Tourism	Consequence of the Impact
Economic growth	- Tourism encourages investments - Tourism stimulates the growth of family hotels	Tourism is positive for economic development in a destination
Standard of living	- Tourism creates job opportunities - Tourism increases income - Tourism brings in more consumable goods - Tourism improves the local infrastructure and facilities	Tourism improves the residents' overall standard of living
Cultural exchange	- Tourism brings more opportunities for the host to know more of the outside world	Tourism creates more opportunities for cultural interaction
Cultural protection	- Tourism protects tangible and intangible Tibetan cultural assets	Tourism helps protect tangible and intangible culture in a destination

Source: Author

4.1.3 Tourism and the Socio-economic Issues

The first half of these findings reveals that tourism development has accelerated the socio-economic evolution in Lhasa. While it is interesting to find that Tibetans or Han Chinese, whether in the tourism industry or not, envisaged the positive socio-economic aspect of tourism development, the question remains

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as to whom those socio-economic benefits go?   Can the incurred benefits be filtered down to its local population?   What is the consequence of an uneven share of benefits between local residents?   The following information gained from both interviews and secondary sources explain the final findings of this study.

4.1.3.1 Business Ownership

Photo 4-14: Shops in Beijing East Street

The tourism industry in Lhasa has a high level of economic leakage as a result of heavy reliance on investment from Han Chinese entrepreneurs.   As shown in Photo 4-14, in the Beijing East Street, restaurants, bakery shops, salons,

clothing stores etc. mainly had investment by entrepreneurs from other provinces of China. Personal communication with a travel agent based in Sichuan, revealed that most travel agents were operated by Sichuanese, while hostels and restaurants were operated by settlers who were once independent travellers from Chinese provinces such as Beijing, and Shangdong etc. Investment from Hong Kong and Taiwan were also seen as an increasing trend.

Heavy dependence upon the Chinese Central Government is also that of the Tibetan economy. According to statistics, in close to 40 years since the TAR was founded, of Tibet's 87,586 billion RMB (11,228 billion USD) of financial expenditure, 94.9% came from Chinese Central Government subsidies (China Daily, 2008). Since the early 1980's, when tourism started to flourish in Tibet, the Central and Local Government spent more than 700 million RMB (90 million USD) to preserve around 1,400 historical and cultural relics of Tibet (China Daily, 2008). In addition, the Chinese Central Government has just announced that 5.7 billion RMB (83 million USD) is to be spent on maintaining and revitalising the cultural sites and temples in the TAR (K. Yang, 2008).

4.1.3.2 Increases Living Costs

While the local economy was growing at a rapid rate after the opening of the railway, living costs for the local population were growing at the same time. There is no denial that the tourism industry has attracted more investment

within the city and hence increased employment opportunities in general, yet, interviewed respondents complained about the increasing level of property prices. They were convinced that the direct link between the increase in price levels and the opening of the railway was the cause. One complained that *'the property price has increased gradually to 300,000-400,000 RMB (38,000 USD) for a 70-80 meter-square flat' (Han 1).* A civil servant designated a free living unit, admitted that the existing property prices were no longer affordable for everyone in the city. *'We are earning 3000-4000 RMB (450 USD) a month and we have already found it difficult to afford buying property here, so what about local Tibetans who usually earn 700 RMB (103 USD) a month?' (Han 1).*

Prices for certain consumer goods are still comparatively high. Because of inaccessibility to Tibet, availability of certain consumer goods before the opening of the railway was rare, if not high in price, because of the costs of importation. However, with improved accessibility, more consumable goods are now available in Lhasa. Ironically, some of them are found to be double or even triple the price of those found in other cities of China, so the interviewees opted to buy similar items in their home town rather than in Lhasa.

4.1.3.3 Encourages the Use of Non- Local Language

Mandarin has become the major business language in Lhasa. Since Tibet has become an autonomous region of China, learning Mandarin has been made mandatory. While further tourism development brings travellers mainly from China, Mandarin has become a common language, particularly in business sectors.

'Many businesses only operate in Mandarin, many Chinese guides cannot even speak Tibetan…Mandarin is being pushed by local government in offices, schools etc. Many older Tibetans are now marginalized by their lack of Mandarin' (Expatriate).

Another respondent also admitted that it would be easier to get a job if one was able to speak Mandarin. He said it was common among the Tibetans to *'learn Mandarin for the sake of finding jobs in Lhasa, as their chance of getting admitted to that position will be higher…English learning is also on the rise, so as to cope with the increasing number of international tourists' (Tibetan 2).* In addition to the use of Mandarin, English learning among local residents is also a trend in order to cope with the increasing number of international tourists: *'People here have to also learn English so as to cope with the increasing international tourists' (Han 3).*

4.1.3.4 Intensifies the Existence of Social Problems

The opening of the railway has brought in more tourists and hence intensified the existence of certain social problems in the study area. Certain social problems such as the use of drugs, prostitution and fighting etc were reported.

'We are seeing a large increase of gangs in Lhasa...many outsiders bring their own problems with them, such as southern Chinese fighting with the Sichuan Chinese etc.' (Expatriate).

The Tibetan guide also advised not to walk alone in Barkhor Street when night falls. This explained why the police were found stationing the area after 11pm at night. The opening of the railway, to some extent, has even worried local residents, as people with different backgrounds can now have easier and cheaper access to enter Tibet.

'It has hugely increased the number of low end mass tourism; this has led to massive overcrowding at tourism sites' (Expatriate).

Lhasa received four million tourists in 2007 due to the opening of the railway, creating inevitable crowding issues at certain tourist attractions. Other than the crowding issue, increasing rates of traffic accidents was also reported. This again can be explained by the rapid increase in numbers of tourists and tourist coaches found in Lhasa.

4.1.3.5 Intensifies Tension within the Host Community

Two million people live in Tibet, of which 622,316 live in Lhasa. It is the most highly populated city in Tibet. There are 464,736 registered residents and 157,580 temporary residents (Lhasa Government, 2009).   While it cannot be denied that the provision of job opportunities was found to be increasing because of the opening of the railway, the question lies as to whom those job opportunities go or what type of jobs they are.   However, many respondents, whether they are Han Chinese or Tibetans, still dared not talk in-depth about it. When asked if the Han Chinese benefitted their society, Tibetans were reluctant to share their thoughts.   Yet, the expatriate said:

'…Overall, the majority of benefits goe to Han Chinese migrants who then take their money and go home after 3-5 years. Very few migrants actually stay in Tibet long term' (Expatriate).

From the candidate's own observation, many Tibetans are in fact finding it hard to survive in such a fast paced evolutionary destination.   During the first field visit, a job advertisement posted in a Chinese style restaurant as shown in Photo 4-15, said: *'Han Chinese waiter/waitress wanted'*.   While this restaurant sells mainly Sichuanese dishes, it employs no local Tibetans. Although their customers are mainly Han Chinese, occasionally Tibetan customers can also be found.   Therefore the Han Chinese waiter/waitress could solve the language problem.

Photo 4-15:   A restaurant job advertisement

The socio-economic benefits brought about by tourism development are not shared evenly within the host population.   Although the former State Council premier Zhu Rongji proclaimed, *'the purpose of such a train was economic well-being and equality for the Tibetan people,'* (Lustgarten's book, p.24), the fact is that very little of promised benefits of the new railroad filtered down to Tibetans.   On the contrary, the opening of the railway has even accelerated competition of jobs between local Tibetans and incoming migrants, Han Chinese.

'Competition for a job is becoming more severe; there are more immigrants from the mainland who would like to share the benefits during this rapid economic development stage' (Tibetan 5).

Although the respondent basically agreed that tourism brings job opportunities to Lhasa, the question was whether job opportunities were given to local Tibetans. Tibetans are out-competed by incoming Han Chinese who posess higher education and skills levels. One respondent stated, *'Local Tibetans can only take up low ranking positions like waiter, waitress or room cleaner, as they are not educated enough' (Han 1).*

Therefore, the host relationship is affected by the imbalanced share of incurred benefits from tourism development. As a result, it widened not only the socio-economic disparities but also created tension within the host community, particularly between local Tibetans and Han Chinese migrants.

'Many Tibetans feel that they are being abused by the Han Chinese business people…outside businesses and guides are just using the Tibetan culture to make money and they do not care at all about the long term environmental and cultural preservation' (Expatriate).

However, some of the respondents claimed that Tibetans are not educated and possess no skills as required for higher job positions. The Public Relations Manager of a four-star hotel confirmed he had doubts regarding local Tibetans, as to whether they were educated or possessed certain work skills.

From their 70 additional employed staff, 70% of them were mainly recruited from other Chinese provinces and assigned mostly managerial positions, while 30% of them are local Tibetans who mainly occupied housekeeping and security jobs, etc. The department dean of Tibet University admitted that the

general education level of Tibetans was an issue: *'The tourism industry even requires people with not very high education, such as those with secondary or even primary education qualifications' (Tibetan 2).*

Given that the Tibetan population has by far the lowest level of education in China, there is also an important misfit in Tibet between employment demands of growth and actual skills levels of local Tibetans.   Han migrant workers fill the shortfall in local semi-skilled and skilled labour and even squeeze into the lower skilled areas where Tibetans might be able to integrate into the urban economy.   The much higher education levels of migrants in general allow them to easily out-compete local Tibetans in job markets.

Several other factors also give migrants a competitive edge.   Tibetans, however, even with a university degree, can only be involved with front line tour guide jobs and can find it hard to obtain a tour guide permit as confirmed by one of the Tibetan tour guides.   The Chinese Central Government started to recruit tourist guides from other provinces in China in 2003 in order to cope with the shortage of qualified tourist guides in Tibet.   The tourist guide as shown in Photo 4-15 was selected through a recruitment interview held in her hometown, Shanxi.   A fear of replacing Tibetan tour guides with Han Chinese from other provinces was also a concern among local Tibetans.

Photo 4-16: A Han Chinese tourist guide in Tibetan costume

On April 15th, 2003, a group of 100 Chinese tour guides were sent to Tibet for the first time before the peak season started.

'To publicize the beautiful mountains and rivers of the Motherland' but also to 'enable domestic and foreign tourists to gain a more comprehensive and objective understanding of Tibet's yesterday, today and tomorrow and resolutely struggle against all words and deeds that distort facts with an attempt to split the Motherland' (Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2003).

The practice of importing Han Chinese tour guides during the peak season will happen every year in the next ten years because the Han Chinese tour guides employed in Tibet are all fluent in Mandarin to better serve Chinese tourists. However, from the candidate's own experience, the fact is that Tibetan tour guides can also communicate well in fluent Mandarin.   During the discussion, the tour guide complained secretly that his tour guide licence was still being processed after 3-4 months, so his official tour guide permit was still not approved.   Obviously, Tibetans have no special status, even in their homeland. Table 4-3 provides a summary of the negative socio-economic impact of tourism development found within the main tourist attraction zone in Lhasa.

Table 4-3: Summary of the negative aspects of tourism development in the main tourist

attraction zone

Aspects of the impact	Residents' perceived socio-economic impacts of tourism	Consequence of the impact
Economic development	- Tourism increases economic dependency	Heavy dependency on the Central Government's subsidy and investments from other provinces creates the issue of economic leakage
Prices	- Tourism increases costs of living in Lhasa	Residents suffered from the overall price increase
Language	- Tourism encourages the use of other languages such as Chinese and English	Residents have no choice but to learn other languages for the sake of business use and are hence grasped with the right to use their own language
Host-tourist relationship	- Tourism creates even more social issues, such as overcrowding in certain local facilities, congested traffic, road accidents and fighting, etc.	Tourism negatively affects the host-tourist relationship
Host/community relationship	- Tourism intensifies labour burden in Lhasa	Tourism brings in more non-local workers who are far better paid. This intensifies competition between Tibetans and immigrants and affects the harmonious development of a host/community relationship

Source: Author

4.1.4 Contextual Factors and Tourism Impacts

Photo 4-17: Potala Palace

As this study evolved, it revealed that the political and economic background of the destination had been the dominating factor in affecting the socio-economic evolution of Lhasa rather than the tourism industry itself. The socio-economic evolution of Lhasa was driven not only through tourism but mainly by the Chinese Central Government. Potala Palace (Photo 4-17) is the former political administrative centre and symbolic icon of Tibet. The Chinese flag flying in front of the Palace seems to transmit the message that it is an inalienable part of China. The socio-economic impact of tourism was affected by political and economic dominance of the Chinese Central Government. Diagram 4-1 illustrates how tourism impact is affected by the wider political

and economic context of the destination.   Details are explained in the sections
followed.
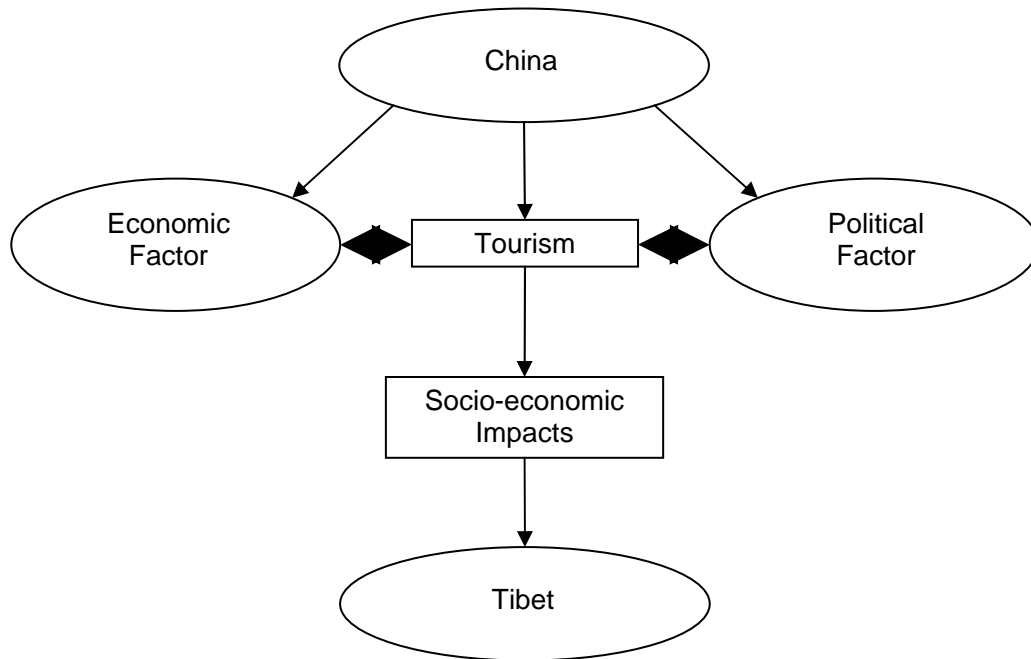
Diagram 4-1: Contextual factor and tourism impacts

4.1.4.1 Re-define the Role of Tourism

While this study finds tourism has, to a certain extent, contributed to
socio-economic evolution, particularly after the opening of the railway, a
significant socio-economic improvement in Tibet has actually been generated
by the broader contextual background of Lhasa.   As revealed by some
interviewees, a substantial rate of socio-economic improvements in Lhasa has
been observed since the adoption of economic reform in 1978 as well as the
Go-West campaign in 1999.

'Since 2003 there have been huge changes in Lhasa.   There is massive

development, new roads, new hotels, new restaurants and, many new

businesses opening up.   Many outsiders have been coming into the city and

setting up business in Lhasa' (Expatriate).

'Lhasa has changed by 90% compared to the day I first came here 13 years ago.

Like the area in front of this stall, it was a mud land; roads were not even

paved in the past' (Han 6.)

The local population also explained that Tibet had actually undergone a period of socio-economic evolution since the early 1990's, well before the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway in the year 2006.   It is suggested that a significant socio-economic improvement in Tibet had been generated since the adoption of economic reform in 1978 (Xinhua News Agency, 2009a).

The Chinese Central Government has continuously proven that the Tibetans' overall living standard has been improved to a great extent during the past 50 years as indicated in Chapter 2.   Among the policies, the 'Go-West' campaign is one that drives the socio-economic development of Tibet.   With such a policy, the Chinese Central Government aims to attract more foreign and national investments to western China, such as TAR, Qinghai, Yunan and the Sichuan provinces.   Officially, the campaign was initiated in 1999 and consolidated in 2001 under the 10[th] Five-year Plan (2001-2005).   It is used as a means to alleviate the economic disparity between eastern and western areas of China, consisting of 12 provinces, regions and municipalities, where more than

80% of ethnic minorities live. In other words, the Chinese state's special subsidization over the past decades for development in terms of capital, technology and personnel, should not be undermined.

Yet, few benefits have filtered down widely through the local population. In addition, inflow of Han Chinese investors in the tourism industry was started subsequently to the implementation of a series of preferential policies. Those policies included low land usage fees with tax exemptions of three to eight years. These were offered to any investment in tourism businesses and facility construction. This has stimulated a significant flow of Han workers into the minority area in pursuit of economic opportunities (L. Yang et al., 2008). The imbalanced share of incurred benefits has resulted in Han-Tibetan conflict and tension. Lustgarten (2008, p.145) writes in his book:

'On February 29, 2001, Chinese president Jiang Zemin had signed into law an amendment to the bulwark 1984 Regional National Autonomy Law. In the wake of Jiang's new amendment, laws were passed requiring that the examinations for guides' licenses, business licenses, and drivers' licenses be taken annually and be taken in Chinese – a sweeping change that affected the ability of any non-Chinese-speaking person to find work in the tourism, construction and transport industries – the components of the local economy that Beijing has identified as Tibet's pillars'.

With the preferential treatment of Han Chinese investors, the policy of a transferring population has had an adverse effect upon local Tibetans. Such a

policy was adopted in the 1980's (Dreyer, 2003). The Chinese have claimed that it is one of the measures to encourage Han Chinese to migrate into Tibet and contribute their skills to its development. The incoming migrants – Han Chinese, in return, received preferential treatment in hiring and promotion. Such a policy has been criticized for creating an undesirable effect on Tibetans. It has also created a two-tier wage scale by marginalizing local Tibetans. In other words, Chinese migration into Tibet is critical in terms of its exclusionary impact on economic opportunities outside agriculture. This marginalizes the average Tibetan from dynamic areas of modern development in Tibet, which are mostly concentrated in cities and towns. The local Tibetans have found it hard to survive in this fast-paced modernization process. Their vulnerability was further intensified with the influx of migrants.

Local Tibetans were found to be minority business owners or low-paid employees in the tourist industry of Lhasa. These finding are found parallel to Lustgarten's, in that:

> *'The railway has brought a new age for Tibet, but some things have not*
>
> *changed at all' (Lustgarten, 2009, p, 251.)*

The influx of Han immigrants is indeed posing a dilemma for the socio-economic development in Lhasa. During 1984, Han Chinese from other provinces started to migrate to Lhasa seeking their chance to create a better life, which was encouraged by the Chinese government. As this research reveals, amidst the fast pace of development, Tibetans are not enjoying the benefits as

promised. They are further marginalized not only because of their education and skills' level, but by political and economic dominance of the Chinese Central Government. Tibetan labour thus confronts a striking disadvantage even in their homeland as a result of the Chinese hegemony as summarised in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4: Hegemonic nature of Chinese governance over Tibet

Hegemony	Context	Outcome	Expressions	In tourism
Economic	Inflow of private capital from other Chinese provinces	Private owned entrepreneurship	Providing incentives to attract Chinese entrepreneurs	Tax exemption, high wages and benefits
Political	Setting of government organizations	Chinese dominated governance	Setting policies and regulations	Migration of Han Chinese into Tibet

Source: Author

Inevitably, while tourism keeps growing, the Han Chinese will still be migrating into Tibet either of their own free will or to make a living through the incentive provided by the Chinese Central Government. Despite government encouragement, the inflow of migrants from other parts of China would also like to take advantage of the heavily subsidized economic boom in Tibet. The Chinese Central Government has counter-argued that the Tibetan workforce has gradually become more educated and skilled, thus naturally being able to fulfil the roles currently occupied by migrants. Nonetheless, in light of labour

market segmentation and exclusion, this assumption cannot simply be taken for granted.

Certainly for some Tibetans, life under the current regime is acceptable, and some even express certain contentment with it.   One may also assume that Tibetans would benefit from tourism development, especially after the opening of the railway.   Nevertheless, the majority of travel agencies, hotels and shops in Lhasa belong to Han Chinese, thus denying Tibetans much of the benefits brought about by tourism.   Such a dependent relationship is largely due to the fact that the much higher education levels of Han Chinese migrants have allowed them to easily out-compete local Tibetans in the local job markets.   In addition, the policies and favourable investment terms adopted by the Chinese Central Government, gives migrants a competitive edge.

Within the apparently prosperous surface of Lhasa, a certain degree of tension can be observed between local people.   The tension was seemingly created by socio-economic policies adopted by the Chinese Central Government.   As a result of these findings, the phenomenon of Chinese hegemony has been found to be a dominant factor to the socio-economic changes in Lhasa, both in the past and for the future.   The economic and political dominance of China is found to be influential in distributing socio-economic benefits of tourism found within the study area of Lhasa.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter first summarizes the findings by presenting propositions in relation to the three research objectives: (1) the socio-economic impact of tourism development; (2) the imbalanced share of incurred benefits across Han Chinese and Tibetans and (3) the role of tourism in the process of development in Lhasa. The second section is followed by stating the implications of this study to both academia and at the practical level. The chapter re-states the limitations and significance of the findings generated from this study. Last but not least, suggestions for future research are addressed at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Conclusion

5.1.1 Research Objectives Revisited

In this section, research questions are revisited while propositions are derived based on the findings generated. This study provides an overview of tourism impact as perceived by the local population of the study area. Similar to previous studies, both socio-economic benefits and costs have been generated as a result of tourism development. From the field visits and interviews, a substantial desire from the local population for further tourism development could be comprehended. The Chinese Central Government is positive that the railway will continue to act as a catalyst favouring further development and expansion of the tourism industry in Lhasa and Tibet as a whole.

Surveyed respondents indicated that the impact of the railway is not necessarily negative because of socio-economic benefits generated from tourism development in the study area. The respondents, being Tibetans and Han Chinese, also envisaged that the railway would bring further opportunities for tourism development through improved accessibility.

Economic growth, as induced by tourism development in Tibet, was substantial before the 3/14 incident. Tourism development is found to be boosting further economic growth by attracting more investment within the local economy as well as certain tourism sectors. Tourism has also improved the residents' standard of living by exposing them to more job opportunities, business levels and consumable goods. Improved infrastructure and facilities have brought convenience to the daily lives of residents. From a cultural perspective, tourism promotes cultural interaction and protection of tangible and intangible Tibetan cultural assets.

However, certain negative socio-economic aspects of tourism development are also found in the context of the study area. Business ownership is mostly found resting in the hands of Han Chinese who have migrated from other Chinese provinces. This is largely due to investment coming mainly from other Chinese provinces as well as the Chinese Central Government. Because of tourism development, living costs in Tibet have increased and the use of non-local languages has also become the norm in the business setting of Lhasa. Social issues such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, road accidents and fighting have also increased because of tourism development.

Most importantly, socio-economic benefits, as inherited from tourism development, have not filtered down to local Tibetans. As a result of the imbalanced share of incurred socio-economic benefits, a tense relationship between Han Chinese and Tibetans was further intensified. While tourism development is bringing certain socio-economic benefits to local residents living in the main tourist attraction zone, the imbalanced share of incurred benefits is found to be further intensifying tension within the host community. Incoming migrants are posing a dilemma as they are tightening the relationship, particularly between Tibetans and Han Chinese. Table 5-1 provides an overview of results generated from this study.

Table 5-1: A summary of positive and negative socio-economic impacts of tourism

Aspect of the impacts	Positive Socio-economic aspects of tourism development	Negative Socio-economic aspects of tourism development
Economic Aspects – Economic Development	- Tourism attracts investments - Tourism stimulates the development of hotel facilities	- Tourism creates economic dependency and hence economic leakage
Economic Aspects - Livelihood	- Tourism creates more job opportunities - Tourism increases household revenue - Tourism brings more consumable goods - Tourism improves local infrastructure and facilities	- Tourism intensifies labour burden - Tourism increases cost of living
Socio-cultural Aspects – Host-tourist relationship	- Tourism brings more opportunities for cultural exchange	- Tourism creates more social issues such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, road accidents and fighting - Tourism encourages the use of other languages
Socio-cultural Aspects – Host/Community relationship	- Tourism protects tangible and intangible Tibetan cultural assets	- Tourism intensifies competition between the host or members within a community - Conflicts may result if the incurred socio-economic benefits of tourism development are not shared evenly

Source: Author

In conclusion, tourism development in Lhasa has created a development paradox. It has, on one hand, been found as a tool that generates more economic growth in the context of Tibet. This has led to increased job opportunities, increased income, increased consumable goods which hence increased living standards for the local population. Yet, the question found in the study area remains. If those benefits are distributed evenly in the host population then its local inhabitants could inherit the particular socio-economic benefits resulting from tourism development. To this end, the first proposition is as follows:

Tourism development is not necessarily positive but widens the socio-economic disparity within a host community.

Tourism development in the study area also faces the challenge of bringing conflict between Han Chinese and Tibetans. As stated in previous sections, the imbalanced share of incurred socio-economic benefits of tourism development has not been newly found. Yet, unlike previous studies, this study uncovers a likely pattern that if various ethnic groups of a host community are not inheriting a balanced share of incurred benefits of tourism development; a tense relationship will result and even evolve into conflict. This therefore leads to the formation of the following proposition:

A widened socio-economic disparity could result in a tense relationship within a host community.

As this study evolved, various limitations became evident. Yet, it also becomes clear that socio-economic changes occurring within the study area are not solely due to tourism development, but in the broader context that tourism development is taking place. It found that tourism does not play a central role in shaping the socio-economic evolution within the study area, but is affected by the broader political and economic context of the destination. In short, this study could be compared to others from main-stream tourism impact studies decrying the socio-economic impact of tourism on a local community. However, while previous studies have found that tourism development is an important tool to generate further socio-economic development within a destination, a broader contextual background should also be considered. The pattern of destination development is affected very much by the broader context within the destination. To this end, findings and discussions lead to the subsequent propositions:

Tourism development is not the sole agent to bring about socio-economic changes to a host community, so the wider context of a destination should be considered.

In short, the above sections have addressed the three research objectives as provided in Chapter 1. Based upon the results, implications of the study are further suggested so as to facilitate the decision makers in better planning and development of tourism within Lhasa.

5.2 Implications of the Findings

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

5.2.1.1 A Contextual Approach

This study has adopted a holistic approach to investigate the socio-economic impact that tourism development has brought to local residents of Lhasa. It indicates the importance of a broader contextual background in influencing the socio-economic development of a destination and shows that tourism development contributes only a small part in the process of socio-economic evolution within a destination. Results generated from this study also coincide with findings from Ryan and Gu (2008). Results generated from this study echoes Ryan and Gu's findings which imply also a failure of previous tourism impact studies in the link of tourism to the wider socio-economic changes that might also be occurring in the destinations under investigation. The industry focused model is useful heuristically to prompt thought regarding tourism effect on attitudes, but it could distort interpretations if attention is not also paid to other influences such as history, socio-economic, cultural and political backgrounds of a destination (Horn & Simmons, 2002). Tourism is shaped by site-specific conditions under which tourists and hosts interact (Tosun, 2002). As a result, the need for more studies in investigating and examining the role of tourism development by considering the broader contextual background of a destination is postulated.

5.2.1.2 Role of Tourism

In most main-stream tourism studies, tourism has long been regarded as an important tool to accelerate economic development particularly in developing destinations. Similar to previous studies, the Chinese Central Government encourages and regards tourism development as an important tool to accelerate socio-economic evolution in Tibet. As found in this study, residents' responses supporting tourism development are largely due to the associated economic benefits.

However, the benefits as brought about by tourism development in Lhasa have not filtered down to the Tibetans. As indicated by (Timothy & Tosun, 2003), tourism is not only a continuation of politics but an integral part of the world's political economy. Tourism development can be used not only for economic, but also for political means. As a result, more appropriate tourism planning within a community is essential (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). The phenomenon of economic leakage is obvious because incoming Han Chinese migrants take most of the benefits from local Tibetans. As this study demonstrates, residents' reactions to tourism development in Lhasa are suggestive of a dependent relationship or 'internal colonialism', so called by Britton (1982).

Instead of creating an environment for self-reliance, tourism development has created an imbalanced power relationship between Han Chinese and Tibetans. Communities characterized by an external focus of control are vulnerable to dependency. Local Tibetans are therefore further marginalized, even with the

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growth of its own tourist industry. While tourism is recognized widely as bringing economic benefits, it has created an even more dependent relationship by placing local Tibetans under the hegemony of the Han Chinese. The implicit political nature of tourism development is hence worth further future investigation.

5.2.2 Recommendations to the Industry

5.2.2.1 Policy Adjustments

Within the context of the tourist industry in Tibet, an immense influence of the Chinese Central Government was observed. In order to address the dependent nature of tourism development, there is the need for policy adjustment and development. Tourism policies aiming to encourage more sustainable tourism development should be formulated. By definition, sustainable tourism development calls for the management of resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems can also be maintained (Gee, Makens, & Choy, 1997).

Tourism policies should be developed encouraging a more sustainable tourism development within the destination. As previous research shows, the most important purpose of tourism policy is to integrate the economic, political, cultural, intellectual and economic benefits of tourism cohesively with people,

destinations and countries in order to improve the global quality of life and provide a foundation for peace and prosperity (Timothy & Tosun, 2003).

Although development of a railway connecting Tibet and other parts of China is regarded by both the Chinese Central Government and study respondents as a catalyst for socio-economic evolution in Lhasa, findings indicate that the incurred benefits as associated with tourism development have not filtered down to those of local residents.

Additionally, although the railway was found to be acting as a catalyst for tourism development in the study area as a whole, the question remains as to what extent such changes have benefited local residents and who is gaining advantage as a result of tourism development? If the main point of developing tourism is to re-distribute the socio-economic inequalities within the community, in light of findings from this study, tourism development has fallen short in contributing a balanced share of the socio-economic benefits, particularly between Tibetans and Han Chinese. This confirms an imbalanced share of socio-economic benefits between Tibetans and Han Chinese. In terms of job opportunities created by the tourism industry, Tibetans are found to be out-competed by the more educated and skillful Han Chinese and taking only low position jobs with lower pay. This raises the concern over migration of Han Chinese to Tibet which also implies future policy adjustments regarding the issue.

5.2.2.2 Local Management and Control

Findings from this study have implications at industry level. In dealing with the issue of socio-economic disparity, it is important for industry players to contribute their part. More job opportunities should be given priority to Tibetans instead of recruiting non-local residents from other Chinese provinces. To cope with the issue of Tibetans not possessing certain knowledge and skills, more on-job training could be provided.

In addition, the Chinese Central Government should also take the initiative in creating more small scale projects that match capabilities requiring local skills and knowledge. Without sufficient provision of secondary, vocational and adult education, Tibetans will be easily out-competed in the current rapid economic development. There is a need for affirmative employment and training policies or preferential economic strategies, allowing Tibetans to participate in the less skilled tourist sectors. Tibetans are doomed to be excluded from not only the tourism industry but other types of industry within the society. Such an issue can only be resolved if affirmative and pro-active policies are launched in support of Tibetan workers and businesses.

Residents, in spite of their ethnicities, should be made aware of the positive and negative impact of tourism. Residents argue that they should be the primary focus of internal marketing efforts as their support for successful development of tourism is critical (Easterling, 2004). Local residents should therefore be involved in the planning process so that tourism can bring benefits to a wider

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community.   Similar to previous findings, local residents are found to be marginalized or subordinated to the edge of the tourism development process (Hall, 1994; Meltzoff, Lemons, & Lichtensztajn, 2001).

With the information gathered from the residents' perspectives regarding socio-economic impacts of tourism, strategies could be adopted with the purpose of resolving conflicts and building consensus within communities for the desired future.   In doing so, dissemination of information between residents is a pre-requisite step.   Information can be disseminated through the use of bulletin boards, advertisements etc.   Campaigns such as the Ambassador Reward Scheme should be launched to generate wider involvement from varied residential groups.

5.2.2.3 Development of Tourism Products

The railway can be used as an agent for cultural education.   Having personally taken the 57-hour train journey, the candidate saw that the railway could be more fully utilized to introduce and educate passengers about the destination.

The first and foremost strategy is the fact that more Tibetan employees could be engaged to act as ambassadors on the train by introducing passengers to their unique Tibetan culture.   Also, more activities or programs for train passengers could be developed to serve as tourism or educational purposes.   Onboard broadcasts introducing cities, sightseeing spots, landscapes and also the

importance of cultural protection are considered to be potentially important by rail passengers on the train during the 24 to 57-hour train journey. More visual materials introducing tourism products from Tibet could also be displayed. A detailed route guide could be developed, explaining physical and cultural information en-route so as to brief passengers on the arrival destination.

In addition, sightseeing stops along the railway, especially in the Qinghai-Tibet section between Golmud and Lhasa, could be developed. Leaflets regarding code of ethics stating the 'dos' and 'don'ts' in Tibet could be distributed. These could also be used for alternate transport modes other than the railway, so as to raise awareness in protecting the unique culture of Tibet. Based on the above suggestions, it is postulated that not only tourists but other passengers would have another source enabling them to understand the unique cultural status of Tibet and thus be more aware of the importance in protecting this beautiful piece of 'Shangri-La' in the western part of China.

5.2.3 Contribution of Findings

As mentioned in section 1.5, this study has addressed the issues relating to tourism development in Tibet. Although Tibet has drawn international attention, most studies progress mainly around its political status. In addition, only a few studies in the English language have addressed the issue of tourism

development after the opening of the Qinghai-Tibet railway. This study has filled the research gaps and contributed to the body of knowledge available.

Moreover, comments of both Han Chinese and Tibetans are solicited by carrying out empirical studies. Although the local residents' reactions to this study were not satisfactory and provided only a general overview of the issue, this empirical study is timely. The results generated from this study may provide certain academic and tourism industry stakeholders with an insight relating to policy, planning, development and management of the tourist industry within the study area.

5.3 Limitations of Findings

The findings of this study are limited mainly because of the timing of when it took place. As mentioned in Chapter 3, occurrence of the 3/14 incident has greatly affected the data collection process. Although the candidate tried to contact potential participants both before and after the two field visits, response rates to this study were on the whole unsatisfactory.

As a result of political instability, the spread of participants and depth of information as attained in this study were therefore not ideal. While government officials were reluctant to participate due to the fact that they were reminded to be selective about interviews, local residents living in the study area were also suspicious of the candidate's identity. They expressed their

concerns over participation and admitted implicitly that they were afraid of being arrested afterwards. In addition, the respondents who did agree were also a little reserved in expressing their opinions. Although confidentiality was assured regarding their participation, the participants were still cautious about talking in-depth about the topic. This unfortunately affected the richness and depth of data obtained and hence affected the results generated as a whole.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the existing study, several future research opportunities can be identified in the context of Tibet. Firstly, as this study focused on examining the socio-economic impact of tourism as perceived by the local population, similar study design can be conducted in other communities in areas of the railway line, particularly when it is extended to other prefectures - Shigatse in the south by the end of 2008 and Ningchi to the east in 2010. Such studies will thus facilitate better planning and management of communities and destinations in a broader sense.

Secondly, studies can be further developed to examine the specific social impacts which have been discussed in this study. Several socio-economic impacts of tourism were only touched upon at surface level, but further studies could be conducted. A closer examination of the specific social impact of tourism could be analyzed, such as the tense relationship within the host

community and if tourism development has enhanced the Tibetans' quality of life etc.

Studies could also be developed to better understand the demand and supply of tourism facilities in Tibet. They could be designed to understand perceptions and experiences of tourists coming to Tibet via the rail line as well as other transportation modes. These studies are important as they will provide a ground of understanding for better planning and management of the rail line, especially when a luxurious train is to be opened solely for tourism purposes in the spring of 2010.

Last but not least, comparative studies with other great train journeys can be conducted. Although the Tibet railway was not developed for tourism purposes but rather to solve the issue of transportation bottlenecks, research studies concerning passengers' perceptions, experiences and satisfaction could still be conducted. This could be compared and analyzed in similarities and differences between the Qinghai-Tibet railway and other great train journeys around the globe, such as the Tran-Siberian, Blue Train and Canadian Rocky Mountaineer, etc. Lessons can be learned from other renowned train service providers which will further improve the future operation of the Tibet railway.

CHAPTER 6. Epilogue

6.1 Tibet from 3/14 Onwards

The final revision of this study was undertaken in December 2009 in which the tourism industry indicated that Tibet was showing signs of a positive recovery from the last year's riot.   Because of the political instability which occurred on March 14[th], 2008, Tibet had been regarded as a destination unsafe for tourism. During this time international and domestic tourists were banned from entering the city.   After the incident, Lhasa appeared to be a city full of tension, making many workers and traders from other ethnic groups of China consider leaving the city for good.   The luxurious train operating from Beijing to Lhasa delayed its opening date from September 2008 to the spring of 2010.   Another five-star hotel investment also delayed its opening date until August 2010.   The locals suffered lack of employment as its tourism industry collapsed.

However, in 2009, a year after the incident, Tibet's tourism industry appears to be recovering at a rapid rate.   According to China Daily (2009), Tibet received a record number of 4.75 million tourist arrivals in the first nine months of 2009, which was twice as many recorded in 2008.   The region also raked in almost four billion RMB (586 million USD) in tourism revenue.   These figures were achieved mainly because of the Chinese Central Government's efforts to offer discount tour package prices.   This helped the average hotel and travel ticket costs to be reduced by almost half in order to draw more tourists into the region.

In addition, the Chinese Central Government is focusing their attention on constructing several extension lines from the Qinghai-Tibet railway. To this end, they hope to develop the economy not only in Tibet but also in nearby Chinese provinces and countries.

The Chinese Central Government have recently announced that another new rail line connecting Lhasa with Chengdu is expected to be finished in eight years, putting an investment into Sichuan of nearly 54 billion RMB (7.9 billion USD) (China Daily, 2009). A year after the political turmoil, the city appears to be restoring its thriving aspect to that of when the railway was first opened in 2006. Recent contact with a local Tibetan confirms that while the city continues to grow it is still overshadowed by a suspicious atmosphere, in that the ethnic tension remains an issue waiting to be resolved.

6.2 The Ethnic Conflict in Xinjiang

Although 'peace' seems to have been restored in Tibet, ethnic politics is still a challenge faced by the Chinese Central Government. On July 5[th] 2009, a serious ethnic conflict between Han Chinese and Uyhur broke out in Urumqi, Xingjing. Urumqi was originally the homeland for Uygur, primarily a Muslim group, but now only constituting 40% of the city's population. The ethnic conflict caused at least 197 deaths and thousands of injuries (SCMP, 2009). No

one knows exactly what caused the Uygur uprising, but there were reports blaming a factory riot in Guangzhou.

The reports state that two Uygur workers were killed and suggested that the Uygur simply snapped after years of economic discrimination and cultural repression (SCMP, 2009).   In comparison, a parallel can be drawn between the treatment of Tibet and East Turkestan, the homeland of the Uygur.   It is common practice for the Chinese Central Government to accuse the 14th Dalai Lama and Rebiya Kadeer for any unrest in the respective areas. The Chinese Central Government also launched a media offensive against the two spiritual leaders of the Tibetans and Uyghur, who are both currently in exile.

The tourism industry in Xingjiang was seriously affected by the riots in that its tourist numbers reported a drop of 90% with only 300 to 600 recorded tourists arriving per day (SCMP).   This was mainly due to the fact that the city remained a tense and paranoid place.   As the majority of deaths and injuries from the riots were Han Chinese, an unofficial boycott of Uygur food and goods took place.   Although tourism in Xinjiang is back to normal by welcoming 3,000 to 6,000 tourists a day, ethnic tension has still left the city with a shadow of anxiety.

After the riots, mistrust between the ethnic groups in the respective autonomous regions became even more intensified.   However, it is hoped that harmony between the various ethnic groups can be restored and maintained.   More importantly, the concerning governmental authorities should also strive to

develop their tourism industries in the respective autonomous regions in a sustainable direction so that all parties, especially the indigenous ethnic group, can be benefited.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Historical Background of Tibet

Year	Historical Incidents
600	King Songsten Gampo formed a unified nation. Territory of Tibet was extended to XinJiang in the north Yuen Nan/Qing Hai/Gan Su in the east (which was originally Chinese' territories)
700	Tibetan King conquered and invaded Chang An, the capital city of the Tang Dynasty
1271-1368	Tibet was conquered by the Mongolians and came under the protection of the Yuan Dynasty
1720	Tibet came into the protection of Qing Dynasty. Qing ambassador was sent into Tibet
1728	Tibet's territory was cut by the Qing Dynasty
1900	Qing Dynasty's informal rule was diminishing owing to the weak Qing government
1904	British soldiers entered Lhasa who aimed to open up business opportunities in Tibet
1912	Tibet, Mongolia and XinJiang were claimed to be inseparable from the new government of the Republic of China
1913	13th Dalai Lama sent a telegram to the government and claimed that Tibet was an independent nation
1914	China was given the sovereign right over Tibet while Tibetans would have their own autonomous rule. China could also send one official and 300 soldiers into Lhasa
1949-1976	Chairman Mao Tse Tung set up 17 rules to 'liberate' Tibet and Tibetan government officials signed the contract while the 13th Dalai Lama was in India at that time
1965	Tibet Autonomous Region was set up
1980	President Hu Yao Bang announced his plans to re-develop Tibetan culture, education and science
1984	Chinese government started 42 infrastructural development projects in Tibet and a mass of Han people started to move in and work in Tibet The Xining-Golmud rail service started
1986	14th Dalai Lama started the 'International Campaign' with the purpose to claim back Tibet's sovereign right
1989	Chinese government started to use strong arm policies over Tibetan issues while focus was shifted to develop its economic status
1989 onwards	Continuous focus on economic development of the Tibet

	Autonomous Region (TAR)
1990	95% of the rural areas in Tibet were connected to piped water and electrical power lines
1998	Continuous modernization and urbanization took place in Lhasa
1999	'Go-west' campaign was launched by the Chinese government to help improve the imbalance of growth between the east and west
2001	Construction of the Golmud-Lhasa railway session was started with an investment of 33.09 billion RMB
2006	The Qinghai-Tibet Railway was put into service
2007	Tourist arrival for the first time outnumbered the total population of Tibet
2008	Occurrence of the 3/14 Incident which caused a sudden drop of its tourist arrival

Source: Summary on the historical development of Tibet (Goldstein, 1997; Lhasa Government, 2009)

Appendix 2: Total Tourist Arrivals in Tibet from 1978 to 2008

Year	Total Tourist Arrival
1978	Nil
1979	Nil
1980	3,525
1981	8,624
1982	18,201
1983	37,564
1984	60,183
1985	71,980
1986	87,968
1987	127,554
1988	103,255
1989	29,833
1990	23,954
1991	117,169
1992	161,164
1993	184,262
1994	198,928
1995	206,598
1996	325,468
1997	366,610
1998	386,643
1999	448,547
2000	608,335
2001	686,116
2002	867,320
2003	928,639
2004	1,223,098
2005	1,804,133

2006	2,512,103
2007	4,030,000
2008	2,280,000

Source: Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau (2008)

Appendix 3: Train Stations and Ticket Fares of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway

Train	From/To	Kilometres	Hard Seat (Ticket Price)	Hard Sleeper (lower berth) (Ticket Price)	Soft Sleeper (lower berth) (Ticket Price)
T27/28	Beijing West - Lhasa	4064	389 HKD (50 USD)	813 HKD (104 USD)	1,262 HKD (162 USD)
T22/23/24/21	Chengdu - Lhasa	3360	331 HKD (42 USD)	712 HKD (91 USD)	1,104 HKD (142 USD)
T222/223/224/221	Chongqing - Lhasa	3654	355 HKD (46 USD)	754 HKD (97 USD)	1,168 HKD (150 USD)
T164/5	Shanghai - Lhasa	4373	406 HKD (52 USD)	845 HKD (108 USD)	1,314 HKD (168 USD)
T262	Guangzhou - Lhasa	4980	451 HKD (58 USD)	923 HKD (118 USD)	1,434 HKD (184 USD)
K917/K918	Lanzhou - Lhasa	2188	242 HKD (31 USD)	552 HKD (71 USD)	854 HKD (109 USD)
N917/N918	Xining - Lhasa	1972	226 HKD (29 USD)	523 HKD (67 USD)	810 HKD (104 USD)

Appendix 4: Interview Guides

Interview Guides (Community/Private) in Chinese

基本问题：

1． 请问您在居住了多久？
2． 那您是在什么时候开始现在相关的业务？
3． 拉萨这几年来的变化大吗？ 是些什么变化？

旅游与影响：

1． 青藏铁路在零六年开通，它为您的生活起了哪些方面的变化？

基础/设施建设	• 游客有为您享用基础/设施带来不便吗？都是哪些方面的基础/设施呢？
工作机会	• 您的工作机会增多了吗？ • 是哪一类型的工作机会呢？ • 是些长期或短暂的工作呢？
生活水平	• 您的收入增加了吗？ • 医疗设备齐全吗？ • 生活费用有被提高吗？ • 食物，货品，土地等价格有被相对的提高了吗？ • 您的总生活水平有被提高了吗？ • 市民会有更多的受教育机会吗？
文化交流	• 是哪个层面的文化交流？ • 旅游加强了您的民族意识吗？
文化保留	• 旅游加强了藏族文化的保留吗？ • 是哪一些文化的保留呢？
语言保留	• 您日常会用那种语言？
社会问题	• 旅客为您的生活带来了某些社

	会问题吗？

2· 您认为您从这些变化中受惠或损失了吗？

3· 那请问您会怎样去界定'受惠'与'损失'呢？

4· 您认为有关当局可以怎样去帮您受惠更多呢？

Interview Guides (Community/Private) in English

1. General Questions

   1) What is your current position held?
   2) When did you start your business in this area i.e., the main tourist attraction zone? (only for non-Lhasa residents)
   3) Do you see any changes in this zone from the period onwards?

2. Tourism and Socio-cultural Impacts

   1) The Qinghai-Tibet Railway was opened in July, 2006, what type of socio-economic changes has it brought to you?
   2) Do you think you benefit/do not benefit from these changes?
   3) How will you define 'benefits' and 'costs'?
   4) In your opinion, how could these changes be managed so that you can benefit more?

Infrastructure and Faculties	• Has incoming tourists created any problems for your usage of local infrastructure and facilities? • What are those local infrastructure and facilities?
Employment Opportunities	• Have there been more employment opportunities? • What types of job opportunities are they? • Are they long term or temporary opportunities?
Standard of Living / Quality of Life	• Do residents have more household income? • Has incoming tourists burdened the local hygienic facilities? • Have the overall living costs been increased? • Have the price of food, goods, land etc been increased? • How will you comment on the overall quality of life? • Are more children going to school?
Cultural Exchange	• What are those cultural exchanges? • Has it increased you local identity/pride?
Culture Preservation	• Does tourism help preserve Tibetan culture? • Which aspects of Tibetan culture have been preserved?
Language	• What language do you commonly use here in Lhasa?
Social Issues	• Has tourism worsened social issues such as drugs, prostitution and crimes etc?

Appendix 5: Media Coverage of the 3/14 Incident

Date	China Daily	South China Morning Post
15th March, 2008	Dalai-backed violence scars Lhasa	Lhasa rocked by violent protests
	Authorities demand rioters surrender, offer leniency	Sacred Lhasa sites bear witness to angry rallies
	11th Panchen Lama condemns Lhasa riot	
16th March, 2008	Lhasa riot out of conspiracy	
	10 dead, 12 gravely injured in Lhasa riot	
	Fears and tears in holy plateau city	
	Governor denies use of lethal force in Lhasa riot	
17th March, 2008	Tibetan officials refute Dalai's "rule of terror" remarks	Tourists tell of Lhasa lockdown
	Wen: Ample facts prove Dalai's role in Lhasa riot	Gansu Tibetan unrest contained: witnesses
18th March, 2008	Scholars speak out against riots	HK print, TV journalists ejected from Lhasa hotel after night raid
		Security stepped up in Chengdu
19th March, 2008		Crime involving Tibetan attacker adds to the tension in Chengdu
21st March, 2008	Lhasa riot not to challenge harmony among ethnic groups	
24th March, 2008	China 'strongly dissatisfied' with EU meeting on Tibet issue	
25th March, 2008	Dalai clique behind violence	
26th March, 2008	China rejects rumour of soldiers disguising as rioting monks	
31st March, 2008	Western media should be	

	fair	
1st April, 2008	Don't see Tibet through tainted glasses	
	Hidden motives behind 'ethnic conflict' claim of Lhasa riot	
	Book published in China to refute Western distortion of Lhasa riot	
4th April, 2008	Dalai Lama 'appeals' aim to fan unrest in Tibet	On a knife-edge
		Tibet No2 apologizes to five victims of riot blaze
		1,000 from Lhasa protests detained, city cadre says
5th April, 2008	China denies "media war" over coverage of Tibet	
6th April, 2008		High anxiety
		16 arrested for rioting near Lhasa
9th April, 2008	'Tibetan Youth Congress' is pure terrorist organization	
	CRI citizens and listeners comment on Lhasa riots	
10th April, 2008	Tibet is an inalienable part of China: Cuba's newspaper	Beijing met 20 Dalai Lama delegations, says official
17th April, 2008	Chinese journalists group urges CNN to apologize for "insulting" remarks	
20th April, 2008	Dalai Lama is spewing lies	
24th April, 2008		Fanning flames
5th June, 2008	76 people convicted over Lhasa violence	
6th June, 2008		Eye of the storm

Source: Author

Appendix 6: Letter Requesting Interviews

Letter in Chinese:

敬启者：

您好！

我是傅瑞端，现为香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院的硕士研究生。本学院目前正从事一项研究项目：青藏铁路后的拉萨。这项研究的目的是要了解及评估青藏铁路开通后对拉萨市社会发展所带来的影响， 并对拉萨市的可持续发展提出相应的对策。

我将会在九月至十二月期间到达西藏，现诚意的邀请您在那段时间内接受一个大约四十五分钟的采访。在得到您的允许后，采访的整个过程会被录音（不录像），而采访的内容包括录音仅会作为学术之用并承诺对之进行保密。

您所提供的宝贵意见将会对这项学术研究作出重大的贡献。而此次研究的结果旨在于对拉萨市的可持续发展给出建设性的意见。如果您愿意参与此次的采访，请您用以下的方式与我联络，非常感谢。

地址：　　香港红墈 理工大学 酒店及旅游管理学院

电话：　　（852）9049

　　　　　（852）3400 3148

电子邮箱：　　candace.fu@

此致

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　敬礼

副教授　　　　　　　　　　硕士研究生

Dr. Thomas Bauer　　　　　傅瑞端

Letter in English:

Dear (Title/Surname)   Date

Re: Request for Interview

I am a Master of Philosophy research student at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. My research topic is 'Lhasa after the Qinghai-Tibet Railway: An Examination on the Social Benefits of Tourism', under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Bauer and Professor Bob McKercher.

In order to collect data of the highest possible quality, I am cordially requesting a 45–minute interview with you or your nominee on the captioned topic anytime during my stay in Lhasa from September to December, 2008. The purpose of the interview is to seek your professional and insightful perspectives on the impacts of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway on Lhasa. This is a unique research study and your valuable input will contribute enormously to the sustainable development of Lhasa.

In order to facilitate data analysis, a tape recorder will be used with your consent and you can be assured that all the information obtained from the interview will be used solely for academic purpose.

An outline of interview questions can be provided for your advance reference. I would be grateful if you could participate in contributing to this research. Should you have any enquires, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your contribution to the future development of Lhasa and to academic research will be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,   Endorsed by,

Candace Fu   Thomas Bauer

Research Student (MPhil)   Assistant Professor

                                                     Chief Project Supervisor

Mailing address: School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong
                        Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hum, Hong
                        Kong SAR, China

Phone (Mobile):   (852) 9049

(Office):   (852) 3400 3148

Email: <u>candace.fu@</u>

Appendix 7: Letter Requesting Assistance from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in HKSAR

Letter in Chinese:

敬启者：

您好！

我是傅瑞端，现为香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院的硕士研究生。本学院目前正从事一项研究项目：青藏铁路后的拉萨。这项研究的目的是要了解及评估青藏铁路开通后对拉萨市社会发展所带来的影响，而此次研究的结果旨在于对拉萨市的可持续发展给出建设性的意见。

作为项目成员之一，我将会在九月至十二月期间到达西藏进行采访。现希望得到贵 办公室的支持并为我开具一封证明文件以证明此次采访的目的。采访的内容包括录音仅会作为学术之用并承诺对之进行保密。如果贵 办公室想对此项研究作更近一步的了解，请您用以下的方式与我联络，非常感谢！

地址： 香港红磡 理工大学 酒店及旅游管理学院

电话： （852）9049

（852）3400 3148

电子邮箱： candace.fu@

此致

敬礼

副教授 硕士研究生

Dr. Thomas Bauer 傅瑞端

Letter in English:

Dear (Title/Surname)   Date

Re: Request for Fieldwork Interview Assistance

I am a Master of Philosophy research student at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. My research topic is 'Lhasa after the Qinghai-Tibet Railway: An Examination on the Social Benefits of Tourism', under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Bauer and Professor Bob McKercher.

In order to collect data of the highest possible quality, fieldwork interviews with the government officials and the local residents in Lhasa are to be conducted in the period between September and December, 2008. I am therefore writing to request for your kind assistance in issuing a document, if possible, which states the motives for conducting fieldwork interviews.

The purpose of the interviews is to seek and explore the insightful perspectives from the respective parties on the social impacts of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway on Lhasa. This is a unique research study and will contribute enormously to the sustainable development of Lhasa.

I would be grateful if you could participate in contributing to this research. Should you have any enquires, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your contribution to the future development of Lhasa and to academic research will be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,   Endorsed by,

Candace Fu   Thomas Bauer

Research Student (MPhil)   Assistant Professor

                                                      Chief Project Supervisor

Enclosed

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