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Case study of a county town in Yunnan

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ABSTRACTS

In contrast with China's coastal regions, where rural urbanisation has largely been a result of industrialisation, urbanisation in the once predominantly rural towns of the interior is sometimes driven by local government policies. This article focuses on a case study of Zhongdian (Shangri-la), where urbanisation has mainly been driven by tourism. It shows that while the problem of land seizures has been generally less violent in this sparsely populated area of the interior, the urbanisation of this ethnically diverse area of northern Yunnan has generated a distinct set of problems. While local officials have strong incentives to pursue policies that promote urbanisation, they have few incentives to pursue policies that promote equal access to the new economic opportunities that accompany urbanisation.

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Keywords: education, employment, ethnic minorities, inequality., rural China, Tibet, urbanisation

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