Spatialization of Happiness in Chongqing Watershed.

A critical analysis of the mechanisms of urban space production in relation to the current local management of the waterscape

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Abstract

Despite the vast research on the recent urban development of Chinese coastal cities, little has been written on the current process of urban metamorphosis taking place in south-west China. Literature is predominantly focused on tracking down the changes in local urban planning through the explanation of zoning and gentrification patterns that are often depicted as a mere copycat of some "Western" megacities. Furthermore, the landscape is rarely considered as an active participant of the changing phase, being rather seen as the background on which human agency imposes itself: Despite offering a much more holistic vision of the problem, the relation between water and land management in urban areas is often underestimated in the field of Chinese studies.

The area of research is located along the Yangzi River Basin, in the sector of the Chongqing Municipality, which is situated between the river and its local major tributary, the Jialing River. The watershed ecosystem created by the hills that surround the city, includes the aforementioned rivers as well as other tributary rivers, ditches, natural and artificial lakes, hot springs and underground water flows. This thesis investigates current practices of re-styling the image of the city of Chongqing through an analysis of urban and sub-urban district distribution of *spaces of exclusion*, i.e. gated communities, as a particular phenomenon entangled in new "comprehensive urban-rural planning" logics. Specifically, it is analyzed how the local administration makes use of the lakes, the main river shores, and the hot springs to carry out the urbanization process based on a pattern of gentrification and zoning. In fact, the watershed plays a fundamental role in determining the monetary value of an estate as well as its potential in suggesting an "atmosphere of happiness". Therefore, in this thesis the relational mechanisms that favor the production of urban space for the elite and the mass consumption through the overall commodification of the environment are unraveled. The main questions it addresses are: How is Chinese institutional transition affecting the relationships of man-nature and natural resources-economy? How does "ideology-based governance" work at the urban level to benefit a particular developmental strategy based on land monetization? What kind of discourses are structured to enforce the local government territorial vision? Are there any forms of resistance to the phenomena of zoning and gentrification?

Rhetorics inspired by a sense of modernist renaissance and Chinese classic tradition (made tangible through propaganda posters and advertising), the technocratic blueprint in water/land management, and the spatial achievements of the upscale real estate sector as supported by the law, have been the three fields of inquiry. The eleven-month period of fieldwork between September 2014 and July 2015 in Chongqing was based on participant observation, photographic monitoring and archival research. Discourse and visual analysis following semiotics have been the methods employed to examine the data. This was combined with a social media analysis of unofficial data, and space analysis.

The overarching argument of the dissertation is that because of its peculiar characteristics, the Chongqing watershed has been strategically absorbed into an ideological experiment of urban planning where nature as representation is performed in fetishized manners. The waterscape as imagined space is extremely loaded with ideological power, favoring the acceptance of those individualist living behaviors that have deteriorated the sense of responsibility toward the equal management of natural resources, compromising those local social practices based on a previous set of values no longer shared by the elite. The socio-political request for environmental protection is linked to discourses that emphasizing wealth, hygiene, and security, should constitute the fundamental of material and spiritual happiness.

The significance of this study is that it informs our theoretical understanding of contemporary urban planning in south-west China by introducing a focus on the relational structure of water and land

management hitherto lacking, as well as on mass media influence in the process of creation of new urban spaces. It also informs our empirical understanding of the Chinese state-building practice in the terms of a recursive pattern seeking to prove historical continuity through a selective knowledge of tradition and culture, whose outcomes are institutionalized at the urban level to legitimize the local politics and make sense of the spatial changes.

Zusammenfassung

Trotz der umfassenden Forschung über Stadtentwicklungsprozesse in chinesischen Küstenstädten ist bisher wenig über den aktuellen urbanen Wandel in den Städten des chinesischen Südwestens publiziert worden. Die Literatur konzentriert sich hauptsächlich auf die Analyse der Veränderungen in der lokalen Stadtplanung; dabei wird der Wandel als Muster sozialer Segregation und Gentrifizierung erklärt, das jedoch oft als bloße Nachahmung der Entwicklung in einigen „westlichen" Megastädten dargestellt wird. Darüber hinaus wird die materielle Landschaft (engl. *landscape*) selten als aktiver Teilnehmer des Wandels verstanden, sondern vielmehr als Hintergrundfolie, vor der sich menschliche Handlungen (engl. *agency*) abspielen. Trotz einer ganzheitlichen Sichtweise auf das Problem wird der Zusammenhang zwischen Wasser- und Landmanagement im städtischen Gefüge in den chinesischen Studien regelmäßig unterschätzt.

Die Untersuchungsregion dieser Arbeit befindet sich im Flusseinzugsgebiet des Yangtze, im Bereich der Gemeinde Chongqing, die zwischen dem Yangtze und seinem größten lokalen Nebenfluss, dem Jialing, liegt. Das Ökosystem des Wassereinzugsgebietes, das von den Chongqing umgebenden Bergen umrahmt wird, beinhaltet neben den bereits genannten Flüssen auch weitere Nebenflüsse, Gräben, natürliche und künstliche Seen, heiße Quellen sowie unterirdische Wasserströme. Diese Arbeit befasst sich mit gegenwärtigen Praktiken der Imageneugestaltung der Stadt Chongqing. Als besonderes Phänomen wird dabei die Verbreitung urbaner und suburbaner *spaces of exclusion*, d.h. der *gated communities*, die in die Logiken der neuen „einheitlichen Stadt-Land-Planung" eingebettet sind, untersucht. Dabei geht es vor allem darum, wie die lokale Verwaltung die Seen, die Flussufer und die heißen Quellen nutzt, um auf Gentrifizierung und sozialer Segregation gründende Urbanisierungsprozesse voranzutreiben. Ausgehend von der Planung spielen der Wassereinzugsbereich und alle wassernahen Gebiete (engl. *watershed*) eine grundlegende Rolle für den Grundstückswert sowie seines Potenzials, eine „glückliche Atmosphäre" zu schaffen. Im Fokus stehen insbesondere die relationalen Mechanismen, die die Erzeugung von Stadtraum für die Elite und den Massenkonsum durch die Kommodifizierung der Umwelt fördern. Die zentralen Fragen lauten: Wie wirkt sich der institutionelle Wandel in China auf die Beziehungen zwischen Mensch und Natur sowie zwischen Wirtschaft und Ressourcen aus? Wie wirkt sich die urbane „ideologiebasierte Governance" auf eine bestimmte Entwicklungsstrategie aus, die auf der Monetarisierung von Land basiert? Welche Art von Diskursen wird entworfen, um die territoriale Vision der lokalen Regierung durchzusetzen? Gibt es Formen des Widerstands gegen soziale Segregation und Gentrifizierung?

Als drei Untersuchungsfelder fungierten hier die durch die modernistische Renaissance und klassische, chinesische Traditionen (z.B. Propagandaplakate und Werbung) inspirierte Rhetorik, die technokratische Planung im Wasser- und Landmanagement sowie die Formen gesetzlicher Unterstützung von räumlichen „Errungenschaften" des Luxus-Immobiliensektors. Die elfmonatige Feldforschung zwischen September 2014 und Juli 2015 in Chongqing beruhte auf teilnehmender Beobachtung, photographischer Dokumentation und Archivrecherchen. In methodischer Hinsicht wurden die Daten mittels diskursanalytischer und semiotisch-visueller Verfahren untersucht. Ergänzend wurden ferner soziale Medienanalysen inoffizieller Daten und Raumanalysen damit kombiniert.

Das zentrale Argument der Dissertation ist, dass das Wassereinzugsgebiet von Chongqing aufgrund seiner besonderen Merkmale strategisch in ein ideologisches Experiment der Stadtplanung einbezogen wird, bei dem Natur in fetischisierter Weise repräsentiert wird. Dabei ist die *waterscape* als imaginierter Raum ideologisch stark aufgeladen. Begünstigt werden dabei vor allem jene individualistischen

Lebensweisen, die das Verantwortungsbewusstsein gegenüber einem gleichberechtigten Management der natürlichen Ressourcen verschlechtert haben. Die gesellschaftspolitische Forderung nach Umweltschutz ist zudem mit Diskursen verbunden, in denen Wohlstand, Hygiene und Sicherheit als Grundvoraussetzung für materielles und spirituelles Glück hervorgehoben werden.

Ein zentrales Alleinstellungsmerkmal dieser Studie ist, dass sie das theoretische Verständnis der gegenwärtigen Stadtplanung in Südwestchina durch den bisher fehlenden Fokus auf die relationale Struktur des Wasser- und Landmanagements sowie den Einfluss der Massenmedien bei der Schaffung neuer städtischer Räume ergänzt. Ebenfalls wird in dieser Studie ein empirischer Einblick in das Verständnis der chinesischen Staatsbildungspraxis gegeben und es kann aufgezeigt werden, dass dabei versucht wird, eine historische Kontinuität durch selektiertes Wissen von Tradition und Kultur zu konstruieren. Dabei wird das selektierte Wissen institutionalisiert und legitimiert schließlich lokale Politiken, die entsprechende städtische Veränderungen sinnvoll erscheinen lassen.

Publications

Some ideas discussed in this work have also been the subject of following publications:

Bonato, M. (2013). Structural Reasons of Current Upgrading: Urban and Industrial Images of the Chinese City Chongqing from 1949 until 1980. *Scientific Annals of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, University of Iasi - Geography series*, 59(2).

Bonato, M. (2015). Cartography and Visual Correspondences. Thought and Reality of Modernism in Europe and China. *European Journal of Geography* 6(2), 35-50.

Bonato, M. (2018). The beginning of the 2000s as the 'Chinese Century' through the analysis of Chongqing urban and political development. In H. Gebhardt (Ed.), *Urban Governance, Spatial Planning and Economic Development in the 21th Century China* (pp. 123-157). Berlin: Lit Verlag.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank	NYDT	New-York Daily Tribune
Adv.	Advertising	PPP, P3	Private Public Partnership
CBD	Central Business District	PRC	People's Republic of China
CCP, CPC	Chinese Communist Party, Communist Party of China (*gongchandang*)	RMB	Renminbi (yuan)
		ROC	Republic of China (since 1949 in Taiwan)
CGVL	Chongqing Green Volunteer League	SEZ	Special Economic Zone
		SOE	State Owned Enterprise
CQ	Chongqing city proper	sq.m/sq.km	Square metre/square kilometre
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
IBD	International Business District	TVE	Township & Village Enterprise
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	UN	United Nations
IoT	Internet of Things	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management		
KMT	Kuomintang (*guomindang*), Chinese Nationalist Party	WTO	World Trade Organization

Foreword

 In this thesis the word "China" has been used interchangeably with "PRC". Therefore, "China" does not include the territories belonging to what is called "Greater China", viz. Taiwan and South-China Sea islands.

The author has done her best to express concepts avoiding gender discrimination, keeping however in mind the necessity to make fluid discourses. She apologizes for the barely sufficient attempt to avoid gender antinomies.

This thesis is largely based on the visual analysis of advertisement posters and online images. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and obtain permission to reproduce this material. Please do get in touch with any enquiries or any information relating to an image or the rights holder. The author has referred to the principle of "fair use" for academic purposes in the use of them.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are of the author.

to the "eaters of human flesh"

将来容不得吃人的人，站起来吧

1. Introduction

The straight line is a pure abstraction of the spirit [...]
In the depths of the heavens, the sun, the satellites,
comets, swirl in huge circles [...]
Wherever a movement occurs, [...] this movement
is accomplished in a curvilinear direction.
Elisée Reclus, *The History of a Stream* (1869)

It is only the concept of the totality
which enables us to think of identity as relational.
Hawkes (1996: 11)

(1) Mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grassland,
unreclaimed land, beaches, and other natural resources are owned
by the state, that is, by the whole people, with the exception of the
forests, mountains, grassland, unreclaimed land, and beaches that
are owned by collectives in accordance with the law.
(2) The state ensures the rational use of natural resources and
protects rare animals and plants. The appropriation or damage of
natural resources by any organization or individual by
whatever means is prohibited.
The Constitution Law of People's Republic of China, Art. 9

The mainstream word I have heard during my period of field studies in Chongqing has been *mingan*, which means "sensitive". It happened all the time I tried to start an argument with my colleagues at university, directly investigate the subject or make interviews with experts – mostly denied in the end. A sense of helplessness made finally space to the idea of analyzing the topic of urban privatization in relation to the process of land gentrification from a different perspective, i.e. researching what official propaganda, mass media, netizens, and market actors could reveal on the phenomenon through the analysis of visual material and discourses promoted to legitimize a capitalist line of management of the natural resources.

Looking at the practice of massive privatization of natural lakes and artificial water reservoirs in Chongqing, I could confront myself with the hypothesis of being in front of a real small-scale "hydraulic society", one established upon an intricate system of values and practices closely linked to the idea people have of the place, its representations, and the past ways of management of the resources. Apart from that, I could also start questioning which position is covering China globally in relation to environmental issues, water management, and other problematics such as the more and more unequal distribution of resources and social fragmentation. My point is that Chongqing represents a particular case within the Chinese geography of water resources, and therefore the municipality does not really constitute a paradigm reproducible in other areas. Nevertheless, the local government attitudes towards the use of soil and water still reflect the position of the central government, whose main interest is to increase the land *exchange value* for real estate use, no matter what price is needed in terms of equal sharing of resources and social cohesion. The primordial value of natural resource (its "richness"), can be understood as its function, i.e. the amount of goods that it produces in a regime of subsistence economy: A soil used for agriculture in terms of harvest, a lake in terms of fishing, etc. (*use value*). It means that when caught into the production system, its monetization is based on intrinsic qualities within a determined set of standards imposed by market economy and the possible fluctuations arising therefrom. When nature is converted in a cultural by-product of the market system, there exists the possibility to modify its "grade of richness" by making use of ideological tools. This implies the

tightening of the economic relations underlying the process of commodity fetishism. In fact, thanks to cultural and emotional values the landscape is thus manipulated in its entirety, and can be traded in the market as an object, whose price is fixed in relation to other commodities: "The logic peculiar to exchange value, is a logic of equivalence" (Baudrillard, 1981: 130). In order to conceive how much money a developer is willing to spend to (temporarily) acquire a plot of land in China, it is fundamental to look at the narratives carried out by the local government to convince the buyer of the soundness of the deal on the basis of the forecast of earnings derived from the property sales (earning potential). Real estate brokers act as promoters of a lifestyle quantifiable in a certain amount of money, thus spreading the perception of housing needs. In Chongqing this speculative process takes advantage of the copiousness of natural resources: The landscape (villa plus lake/riverbank) as human artifact is monetized thanks to its harmonious synthesis. From a costumer perspective, the eyesight is trained to capture the *symbolic value* of a reconstructed *beauty* thanks to specific tools (posters, mass media information, advertising), that operate to constitute a solid source of signification. This is ultimately what certain people *want* to believe to be necessary to reach a proper state of happiness: "All instincts are rationalized, finalized and objectified in needs – hence symbolically cancelled [...] When needs erect themselves more and more into an abstract system, regulated by a principal of equivalence [...], then certainly the same fetishism is in play. For this system [use value system] is not only homologous to that of exchange value and the commodity; it expresses the latter in all its depth and perfection" (*ibid*.: 135). In the advanced phase of capitalism, ideological construction of "needs" is more and more visible and aggressive towards the social relation between man and object, so that the *process of satisfaction* of a need resembles the alienating process of commodity production, i.e. the individual conceptualizes himself as "the historical concept of a social being who, in the rupture of symbolic exchange, autonomizes himself and rationalizes his desire, his relation to others and to objects, in terms of needs, utility, satisfaction and use value" (*ibid*.: 136).

In this scenario it is important to

> "[...] replace the fixed idea of 'values' with an understanding of 'processes of valuation.' Once we come to appreciate how such processes operate, we can also better understand how and why certain kinds of 'permanence' get construed in particular places and times so as to form dominant social values to which most people willingly subscribe [...] The process of money valuation is [...] simultaneously a process of defining space, time, environment, and place [...]" (Harvey, 1996: 11).

The cultural system currently approved by the party-state is based on a *re-union with nature*, and has a great resonance to all social strata. The "neoliberal" mechanisms, despite being in contradiction with the orthodox line of state socialism, are actually aligned with state propaganda, whose purposes are to make people acknowledge the efforts made by the party in terms of material wealth, and drive the population to dream about *the future China*. Chongqing local government operates by enhancing the expectations of "the masses", and to be successful in that, it does not hesitate in rewriting pieces of history to give an idea of *continuity* in territorial management, so as to ensure a source of legitimacy for what is instead a rather speculative practice. Extreme commodification of nature is visible in the urban planning according to which specific areas, chosen based on certain criteria among which the beauty of the landscape stands out (in particular the presence of water), are becoming the nucleus of environmental gentrification. "Inhabiting" these spaces, architecture is itself the constitutive basis of the process of *reflexivity* that the upper-middle class goes through in order to add meaning to its identity. The resulting phenomenon of social fragmentation paves the way for a new *spatialization of happiness*, in which the division of the population according to census creates a sort of urban bubble (the enclaves) where the

upper-middle class can see its aesthetic ideals materialized in the proposed housing module. Furthermore, the gathering together of these persons sharing the same financial well-being enables the affirmation of their beliefs through self-reflection in the neighborhoods' behaviors. "Happiness" means here the ideological transposition of a state of elitist wellness from a material level to a "spiritual" one, where money is the determining means to be happy, and landscape is the agent that triggers the process of feeling spiritually happy. Recently, the party-state has been using media, internet, and poster campaigns to spread this thought and enable its legitimation in order to advance in the process of commodification of urban land, and to secure the support of the upper-middle class. This space of happiness is also reproduced through the use of billboards that occupy the "public space", and advertising in the internet, thus invading the "free space" of the web with a pre-packed ideology. The alignment of interests among the party-state, the local high-ranking officials, and the market stakeholders becomes then visible in the urban sphere.

One example are the two images in Figs. 1.1, 1.2 that show two aspects of the gentrification process: 1) The closing of a water reservoir to host a new environment made of enclaves – whilst the construction site is still open, the local people enjoy that place performing common activities such as fishing and bathing, and 2) one of the mechanisms of creation of signification for this specific historic juncture is provided by advertisement posted online on the real estate broker websites. Advertising is the last link in the neoliberal policies chain (socialism 4.0), and despite happening in contradiction with the orthodox line of economic rigor spread among the masses by the party propaganda (the so-called New Normal), it actually subtends a deep connection with the land market strategies of the political regime. The consumer eye is also temporarily satisfied by the pleasure gained through the sight of this image, although being conscious that it is the result of a manipulation of the real.

For what concerns the photo, I have taken it in July 2015 during a field trip to the construction site of a gated community located in what was at that time the countryside of New Beibei. I had discovered this site through a billboard I saw in Beibei near the entrance of the highway, and then I found its right location checking the address on *Google Maps*. Departed from Beibei South-West University after a 40' bus ride and a 15' walk, I could reach the entrance of the gated community, where the sales manager welcomed me. Being aware of what could signify revealing the nature of my visit, I have played the "Western young lady" game and acted as a possible purchaser of a house. It may sound ethically reprehensible but at that moment, being along without the support of the university department I was affiliated to, I found it the only way to handle the situation without appearing meddlesome. In this way I could ask questions freely without arousing suspicion and embarrassing the interlocutor. Furthermore, I could walk among the buildings (some of them already sold and occupied) and in the park along the shores of the lake. From my standpoint I finally saw the view taken in the picture. This is when I realized that on the other side of the lake local people had actually opened a breach in the containment wall that normally surrounds a construction site (in the enclaves it is later replaced by a proper wall), so to enter that *space in transition* and enjoy in activities connected with water for the time remained available before its final closure. I regret not having taken more pictures with the digital camera (a film taken using the analogic camera has gone lost during the photo development process), because what is missing here is a clear perspective of the impact of the architectural intrusion in a green environment, and the disruption of a common sense of the place (there were many more persons in the waters than those visible in the shot). By putting together these two contrasting pictures, my attempt is to contextualize how I move critically within the field of investigation, i.e. trying to "dislocate visual knowledge" rather than fix a meaning through the objectification of the images (Crang, 2009: 13).

Figure 1.1. Leisure activities at the Menghu [Dream Lake] gated community in Beibei District before the completion of the construction works. From this angle the enclave is located on the right, and is not visible in the picture (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 1.2. Rendering of the Menghu [Dream Lake] enclave project in Beibei District (© Cq.focus.cn, URL: https://timgsa.baidu.com/timg?image&quality=80&size=b9999_10000&sec=1556821308520&di=8b897382319968229d6ab2ac48 96deb7&imgtype=0&src=http%3A%2F%2Ft1.focus-img.cn%2Fsh01sh%2Fxf%2Fzxc%2Fda61f0237bbaebc010b3d4aa9f3348af.jpg)

1.1   Research objectives and key questions

The objectives of this thesis are to find out the sources of signification, domination, and legitimation that operate synchronously at the urban level in order to allow the political regime to adjust the content of its campaigns, refocus to the "correct" target of development, and ultimately maintain a certain social stability (status quo). The *man-environment* and *natural resources-economy* relations are at the centre of this work, with particular attention to 1) the intersections between capital-driven urbanization processes, the reconstruction of a fragmented social fabric with a clear delineation of the upper-middle class spaces of fruition, and those global patterns entering the national discourses to provoke resistance or alignment to the system, and 2) the networks of meaning and practices related to water, the landscape as representation, the value-system based on tradition and history, the living-style in Chongqing, and the recursive operation of state-building in China.

An overall representation of the subject is visible in the following scheme (Tab. 1.1):[1]

Table 1.1. Overall representation of the research subject

IDEOLOGY-BASED GOVERNANCE	
ECOLOGY	water and land management
POLITICS	law and rhetoric/propaganda
ECONOMY	global liberal market – housing market, Adv.
POWER in — SPACE	aesthetics: architecture control: integrated urban-rural planning
POWER in — TIME	continuity in reproduction
HERMENEUTICS	synthesis of self-reflection in the achievement of utopian happiness

According to the scheme, there are diverse aspects of the social and economic way of living in Chongqing that provide the staging of a specific political management, i.e. the "ideology-based governance". As explained below (par. 1.2), the nature of this scheme is to represent the components I have identified in the process, however, there might be other ones that I have not taken into account. Therefore, this is not an "exhaustive system" in itself, but it reflects the fields of study that I analyze in this work. The fields mainly concern three points:

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[1] Please note that in this thesis the term "system" does not indicate a closed structure entailing a finite absolute significance. According to a hermeneutical approach, there is a continuous reinterpretation of every form of thought, so a certain "truth" – residing in a language - is recognizable through its *historic* and *dialogic* features (Sansonetti, 1988: 1-19).

- The visual propaganda on a certain idea of waterscape and lifestyle;
- The land market procedures in the scope of privatization, zoning, and gentrification;
- The elitist mechanisms of water management as inscribed in a complex governance system.

Specifically, this study aims to demonstrate how specific behaviors and global trends concerning the realms of ecology, politics, economy, time and space, and hermeneutics (how to interpret the reality), are approached by Chongqing local government with the approval of the central party, and re-elaborated to implement a strategy of development of the local resources according to the specificities of the place. At the urban level, it means that the significance of the watershed is readjusted to respond/create needs related to the commodification of the environment. The rebuilding of Chongqing as *megacity*, goes through the interactions between the stakeholders and society using mechanisms of consent and/or resistance: This aims to reveal the composite nature of the networks of power and, furthermore, how the local government is entitled to generate spaces of exception by cutting out portions of territory from places traditionally used by the local community. Housing market, architectural aesthetics, urban planning, and the recursive use made of historic architectural facts, are thus analyzed to highlight the mechanisms of power emplacement in relation to the reconstruction of Chongqing *image*.

The main empirical finding of this thesis is the practical visualization of Chongqing watershed as an ideological experiment of metamorphosis where water and land from being natural common goods are transformed into an acculturated form of profit production through the creation of a fetishized waterscape. The massive development of gated communities (*fengbi zhuqu*) along the shores of the many natural lakes in Chongqing, with the following exclusion of the non-rich part of the population from the free enjoyment of these spaces for their leisure activities (bathe, fishing), not to mention the reduction in water supply for agriculture with the consequent decrease of agricultural land within the urban area, constitutes a paradigm of exploitation of water resources that does not find another term of comparison in China given the vastness of the phenomenon. The geomorphological peculiarity of Chongqing is an intrinsic factor for the development of this type of exploitation carried on by the local elite and international agents. At the same time, the tertiary sector working on the mass expansion of tourism in Chongqing, takes also advantage from the ideological transformation of the natural lakes into water reservoirs (*shuiku*). It seems therefore that from this holistic management of the watershed, all society should derive a benefit in terms of economic profit and cultural civilization.

Beyond this, this dissertation offers three main contributions to the study of water policies and urban planning, of Chinese aesthetic sensibility towards the landscape, and of the role of mass media in setting up people's mind. The first point deals with the understanding of *water in Chinese context*, while at the same time there is exposed a critique on the way of conceiving and managing water on a global scale. Since the end of the 1980s a trend on privatizing water has been spread worldwide and could take root here and there by stressing the assumption that a distribution of the resources linked to adequate prices would have led to a more sustainable pattern of exploitation of the environment. In fact, what the World Bank appointed as one of the main causes for China dispelling its water, there was the extremely low price paid for the service (Xie Jian et al., 2009).

By emphasizing the cultural weight assigned to water and its significances in Chongqing context, my purpose is to unveil which discourses have been "exhumed" from the oblivion they had been forced during the Maoist period, and which role they play in building up the ideological system on which the party-state is currently posing its legitimation to rule the country. Talking about continuity for what

concerns the management of water resources in Chongqing, the local government is actually looking back to the beginning of the twentieth century when Chongqing became the provisional capital, and the city could catch the attention of the world powers. My analysis of the discourses concerning "modernism, scientificity, technocracy, globalism" during the Republican Chongqing is precisely aimed to put light on some so far neglected aspects of Chongqing urban history and the role played by some eminent figures in determining major changes in Chongqing watershed. Without them, the prevailing process of imposing an ideological consumption of the natural resources would have been different (cf. Molle, 2008: 4).

The second contribution is a *reflection on the power dynamics and their spatiality* in Chongqing, unveiling which characteristics do they detain, which features are symptoms of the "globalization", and which peculiarities are due to the local environment. I also analyze Chinese institutions and their ability – obtained through the involvement of an aligned technocracy at their service for the production of "scientific significance" – to deploy local cultural beliefs and aesthetics to maintain the status quo whilst completely modifying the natural environment. Finally, I have also seen how the socialist ideological anthem corroborates the market logics, how these two antithetical positions are assembled together and to which geographical understandings of the territory do they lead to.

The third point deals with the role played by *the mass-media in China*, being them directly ruled by the party-state or indirectly subjected to the censorship imposed by the government. In this sense, the forms of visual advertising (Adv.) carried on by the private companies in China, are also normally called to participate in the propaganda campaigns favored by the party at that moment. By analyzing the particular geographies produced and reproduced through advertising, and what sort of spaces they create, I also try to figure out if globally-configured enterprises assimilate the directives of the CCP whilst producing their market advertisements, or if they rather prefer a softer approach by embracing a nuanced language more comfortable with the topics in vogue at the "global level".

The complex ideological system I present in this work is therefore made of multifarious components being each other in dialogue and not necessarily all indigenous of a place (Appadurai, 1988). The result is thus a mixture of ideological elements *heterogeneous in principle* that are wisely combined together creating new codes of significance thanks to the hegemonic force of the elite, of which the party is "the glue".

Thus, this thesis addresses a set of questions concerning political geography, urban ecology and environmental justice, trying to overcome the space-time dichotomy in the analysis of the manifestations of power in the territory:

- Water, resource management, continuity: *In the long-term process of Chinese civilization as understood by state authorities, nowadays the environmental issues cover a prominent role in the construction of knowledge. In which ways the globally dominant scientific know-how regarding the holistic management of natural resources is affecting Chongqing watershed as space of practice and mental reproduction? How is this vision integrated with the national formula of "urban-rural comprehensive planning"? How and why does the local propaganda stress on the idea of continuity in the management of the territory?*

- Economy: *Looking at the global neoliberal paradigm and the logics of consumerism, how is China production-based economic system reform being deconstructed to adjust to this historical juncture? How do the regulatory system (the law) and the internal growth enable discourses that legitimize the opening of Chongqing land market to*

the luxury real estate sector? How does the current orthodox ideology take advantage of the landscape, the architectural legacy and the urban planning stratifications?

-   Power and urban space: *Considering the institutional system of China as one where power might coincide with the idea of good despotism, and the maintenance of a solid structure (the party-state) is considered as paramount to the achievement of a higher well-being (material and spiritual happiness), how does the local government react to/interpret/influence the guidelines approved at the national level in matter of economy, urban development and environmental protection? How are these directives adjusted to fit the particular context of a partially urbanized watershed?*

-   Media, state building, and society: *Which media channels are ideologically employed to add a deeper and positive significance to certain urban facts such as displacement, closure and privatization of public spaces, land gentrification and zoning? How do these media work in Chongqing particular locale, i.e. what kind of understanding of the territory is produced/reproduced through images and words? How Chinese culture and traditional aesthetics by being conveyed through the advertising, help in modifying the perception of a place? How strong is the alignment between commercial advertising and the state directives/propaganda in the matters of people's civilization? In this phase of social disruption, how do these ideological tools help specific social classes to determine their identity through space reproduction and reflexivity? What forms of resistance arise from the local population?*

1.2   Ontology, methods, and sources

For what concerns the question about which knowledge I am conveying to the reader and on which premises, I have based my analysis on the critique brought on by Habermas (1987) to Marx's materialism and his presupposition that both consciousness and self-reflection are entailed into the framework of the scientific determination of social labor, thus cutting out the possibility for man to know and/or imagine other spaces of knowledge. This means that no creativity is left to man with the exception of what can be conceptualized within the cognitive space already given a priori (in most cases, we speak of neoliberal capitalist contexts and hierarchical systems of power). In geography, this way of thinking has enabled the application of the *systems theory* to the study of the social phenomena, since "environmental systems are assumed to be so complex that they can only be realistically modelled by and controlled through the strategies made available by systems theory" (Gregory, 1980: 340). According to Anderberg (2005: 80-81), "systems thinking offers an approach with a process, concepts and models that make it possible to address complex situations [...], the approach is holistic [...] It is mainly a tool for systematizing data, observations, information, knowledge, theories and models." This premise is to clarify my position whilst recreating the *systems thinking* in the realization of Table 1.1 explicating the research issues. In fact, my scheme represents an assemblage of relationships that feeds the networks of power recreated at the local level, but these relationships are not simply understood as *functional* to "the system" to create technical control (as it would be intended in systems theory), but rather as *constitutive* of and *participatory* in it. The main difference lies in the fact that I recognize the human agency as subject in the process, therefore pointing out the problems of social responsibility resulting therefrom. However, since the CCP

itself propagandizes its politics through the spreading of systems that, because of their ideological nature disguised as science, appear to be finite and righteous ("true"), I find it important to implement here the same processual tool to highlight which sort of "system" has been created for the specific situation of Chongqing, in order to underline which are the mechanisms that make possible its perception within the local society, and therefore legitimate its "true" existence. According to Gregory (1980: 341), "systems theory as ideological is that its failure is *strategic*: it allows for the uncontested mobilization of its discursive elements *to secure the reproduction of specific structures of domination*." This means that no actual critical change is possible in a society trained to think in a certain way about various aspects of life, from material production to spiritual growth, where control is identified with "self-regulation" (self-censorship!), and human purposiveness responds to mechanisms of "self-consciousness or *reflexivity*" (Gregory, 1980: 335). These concepts are summarized in Giddens' *theory of structuration* (Fig. 1.3):
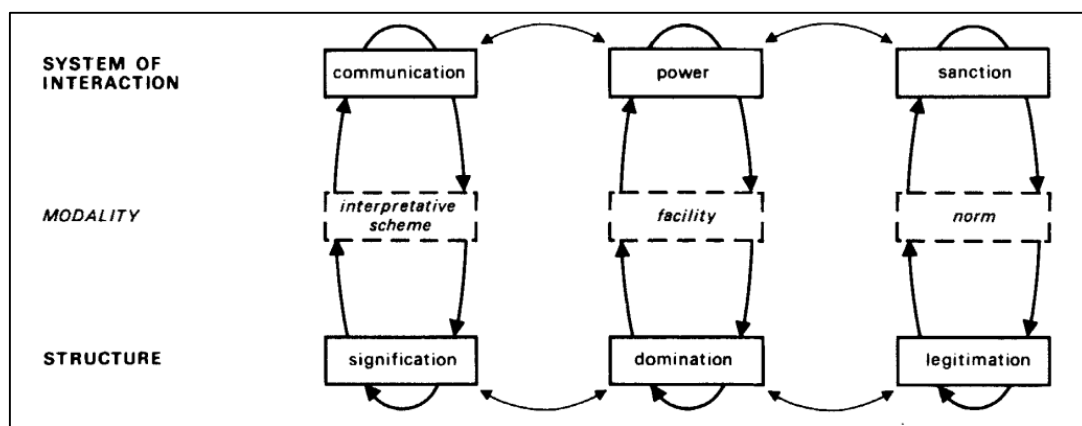
Figure 1.3. The theory of structuration (after Giddens) as retrieved in Gregory (1980: 336)

The system of interaction is given by the *practices* that are 1) recursively produced in social life, and 2) supportive/productive of the *structure* at the same time through a dialectical mechanism where *modality* is the representation lying in between (Giddens, 1984: xxxi). In the geographical analysis of the relation man-nature, it implies that "human beings exist in a contradictory relation to nature" (being substantially part of nature, and simultaneously set-off against nature), and "that this contradictory relation is translated, through a series of historically-specific social mediation, into the moments of structural contradiction" (Gregory, 1980: 336). This model suggests that the "recursive motion of social life" (*ibid.*: 337) is the product of/reproduces those forms institutionalized in society as rules and sources. Following Löw's interpretation of this theory, "spatial structures, like temporal structures, are forms of societal structures" (Löw, 2008: 38), therefore the study of a phenomenon and its narrative of legitimation should imply the historical analysis of its components. As Gadamer said, "the meaning of a statement can be revealed only when we refer to the history of its motivation" (Gadamer, 1980: 45; cf. also Sansonetti, 1988).

In my work I try to offer a more nuanced picture of the situation concerning the management of the amphibious territory in Chongqing. Together with the use made of the *language* and the *history*, I also consider the *images* as a means of knowledge used by the Chinese party-state in its project of ideological construction of the urban, since "the visual disrupts and challenges any attempt to define culture in purely linguistic terms" (Mirzoeff, 1999: 7). The expressions of mass culture have been often demonized as the product of "second-class" art, however, seen the varieties and the complexity of the significance

traced by culture in general, visual culture as branch of study is important because it overcomes that definition. In China, popular culture not only provides means of resistance to the party hegemony, in fact, it is itself a tool used by the propaganda to initiate determined discourses related to patriotism, sense of the place, identity, and loyalty to the party. Furthermore, the commodification of the "classic elitist culture" is a process that does not exacerbate the class conflict within society but rather constitutes a key to unify the people (cf. Latham, 2007; Müller & Pollacchi, 2005).

Inspired by the model in Fig. 1.3, I have outlined a conceptual framework (Tab. 1.2). In this framework, the reconstruction of the urban space as visual domination happens through the implementation of strategies operating symbiotically through the different institutional levels – from the locale to the national scale – and influenced by the global trends. The visual outcomes are the standards in the field of architecture, urban planning, water market, etc., that are aimed to standardize social relations (control) and, once set in practice, support the differentiation into social classes. In the Chinese context, the process of signification of reality is strictly linked with the work done by the state propaganda apparatus, where "ways of thinking" are developed and spread, and inputs coming from the society are modified, standardized or censured. Seeking to reach a full coverage of the needs/expectations of the different strata of the population, this huge mass media project albeit sounding utopic, is index of the state pervasiveness into the lives of the Chinese. The interpretative scheme is supported by cultural beliefs, history and contingencies of the moment, and is propagandized through visual and textual media along the streets and on the internet. The question of the legitimation has been slowly changing since the end of 1970s, when the party was still able to legitimize its decisions by making appeal to its proper essence of "liberation party". The declared use of martial law at the end of the 1980s has definitively closed that chapter, at least on the surface of the state-society relationship. In fact, the rule of law is still accompanied by the party internal auditing practices. Among the global tendencies that have been landing in China, there are the neoliberal practices related to the WTO entrance, the entrepreneurial character of the local governments "hunting" for funds as private corporations, the introduction of the gated community as an urban housing typology that satisfies the "need" to commercialize the land, and the scientific knowledge related to the management of the resources, in particular the "integrated water basin" approach as dominant practice. Legitimation (sanctions/positive recognition) is provided through specific discourses related to everyday events from which the individuals find it difficult to detach themselves so to have a critical understanding of facts. Regarding Chongqing watershed, these discourses follow the logics of environmental protection and risk management. For what concerns the welfare expectations, they follow the logics of material and spiritual happiness as something that can ultimately be achieved only thanks to the party-state. It is thus clear that "legitimation" and "legality" are collapsing into a unique semantic meaning, so that the ethical-political discourse coincides with the scientific discourse (Baggio, 2010: 5). The dialectical approach means here the recognizing of the networks and flows of meaning among the parts, and their constitutive and functional nature in relation to the "whole" structure. In the lower part of the framework I have pointed out which methods I use to analyze each section (cf. the next paragraph for the methods, and Ch. 2 for the theoretical framework).

Tab. 1.2. Conceptual framework

SANCTION/ POSITIVE RECOGNITION: Logics of environmental protection and risk control; Logics of material and spiritual happiness

Rule of law; CCP internal practices of control; Flow of global patterns

LEGITIMATION: Selective consciousness (instrumental reason) in defining man-nature relationship

POWER (STANDARDS): Architecture; Urban planning; Water market; Watershed privatization

National economic strategies and politico-institutional arrangements; Autochthonous governance practices

DOMINATION: Reconstruction of the urban space

COMMUNICATION: State propaganda

Propaganda posters; Mass media information; Political language

SIGNIFICATION: Reflexivity in the understanding of the real; Values re-evaluation; Reprocessing of the cultural ideology and history

METHODS

Institutional and discourse analysis based on Gramsci hegemony approach

Discourse analysis based on a post-Marxist political economy approach

Semiotics; Visual and discourse analysis based on Žižek fetishism in practice approach

Research phases and approach to the sources

In order to answer the above mentioned questions, in my thesis I analyze data from

- the "pre-modern" period: Chinese canonical books on classic philosophy, science and technology, advancements in the archeological field and in the studies concerning water-management, Wittfogel hydraulic society theory
- the republican period: local gazettes, scientific books, governmental reports, foreign newspapers
- Chongqing Municipality: governmental reports, newspapers, satellite images, national and local statistics, ethnographic research.

The process of data collection and analysis has been as follows (Tab. 1.3):

Table 1.3. Research phases and analysis

	1) field research: data collection and categorization	2) process: data analysis based on methodological framework	3) assessment: reading the results based on the theory	4) verification: crossing the results to visualize the structure	5) finalizing: statement
data	participant observation, photography	visual analysis and discourse analysis of state posters and advertising	identification of the methods and contents of the party-state legitimation sources: dream, happiness, desire	combining of the economic situation ("socialism 4.0") with the dynamics of the welfare expectations spread within society	identifying the political legitimation procedures in contemporary Chongqing and the resonance on the territory
	archival research, secondary sources, official/unofficial textual and visual material, social media analysis (*blogging/Weixin*)	visual/discourse analysis to trace the determinants of the narratives on "historical continuity" and "man-nature relation"	biased application of the rule of law; environmental imbalances; zoning; global influences	statistics on construction, real estate development, use of the natural resources, actual state of green distribution	placing the "integrated water resources management" within a broader system of valuation of the natural resources
	preliminary spatial analysis of the area through the reading of satellite images (*Google Earth*)	conceptualization of the urban planning as discipline of control and creation of new spaces (real and imagined ones)	localization of the recently established centres of power in the form of elitist enclaves; distribution parameters of the housing modules	spatial analysis to track the location of the gated communities (*Baidu ditu*) combined with data retrieved from the online real estate broker advertisements	asserting the extension of the phenomenon of land privatization, and the ratio between the urban development per se and the increasing of the zoning process

As clearly observable from Tab. 1.3, I rely on what has been labeled the "hybridization" of the methodological procedures, i.e. the selection and combination of more methods according to research pragmatic (Flick, 2005: n.p.). Despite the difficulties encountered during my eleven-month field research in Chongqing, participant observation has covered an important role for the contextualization of the problem and the attestation of the phenomenon of the environmental gentrification as a widespread reality. I sympathize with Liang Hongling (2016) when writing about the necessity to apply ethnographic

approaches, which provide a particular sensitivity to the place, i.e. being conscious of the circumstances and "de-westernalizing" the interpretations of the outcomes (cf. Ansari & Nas, 1983; Geertz, 1973; Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995). A good example to me has been the work done by the anthropologist/sinologist Pia (2015) when investigating the state-local officials and local people's networks and behaviors regarding water provisions in a countryside area of Yunnan Province.

I have made large use of photography to track the process of investigation, a "way of looking with intention" (Sanders as cited in Hall, 2009: 4; cf. Sanders, 2007; Sidaway, 2002), but also to unravel a narrative concerning the reconstruction of a *sense of place* and the annexed *human desire for happiness*. In this sense, photographs are "as prisms that refract what can be seen in quite particular ways" (Rose, 2008: 2), i.e. they act as *representation*. One way is to use the descriptive capacity of a photo as *evocation*:

> "They [some geographers] acknowledge that photos are indeed riddled with representation but that they can still nevertheless carry a powerful descriptive charge. Using this paradoxical approach to photos turns photography into a creative resource for geographical work" (*ibid.*: 6).

This is for example the use I have done of Fig. 1.1. A second way is to unravel *the meaning* as in those, for instance, presented in chapter two and retrieved from Chongqing National Library historical archives. Here the description of what is seen is accompanied by the disclosure of the meaning that a certain image has probably evoked at the time of the shot. It is therefore necessary to have some knowledge of the historical context and the cultural values of that moment to fully appreciate what a photograph "hides" to the sight (cf. Ballerini, 2004; Hall, 2009: 4). Another way – not excluding the others – is considering the *production of material culture* given through the display and circulation of the picture itself (Rose, 2008: 4-8). In this sense, the visual does not act as "representation", but rather as *connective and performative* where the spreading of iconic images suggests us "ideas of touch" rather than the "sight", thus enabling later the performance of the "reconstruction of an atmosphere or a feeling" (Crang, 2009: 14-16). This is the case of the propaganda posters and advertising materials that I have photographed and later analyzed in chapter seven. These could be also the product of graphic design, anyway the approach to the visual culture is basically the same (Rose, 2016; Walks, 2009), following the definition given by Mirzoeff: "Visual culture is concerned with visual elements in which information, meaning, or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology. By visual technology, I mean any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil painting to television and the Internet" (Mirzoeff, 1999: 3).

To further support the hypothesis of the massive implementation of the gentrification process particularly targeted to certain areas of Chongqing, I have later developed a list of the enclaves supported by the presence of water – lake, pond, or river bank – through the systematic analysis of some prominent Chinese real estate broker websites: *Cq.fang.lianjia.com/loupan*, *cq.loupan.com*, *cq.focus.cn/loupan*, and *cq.leju.com* are the main ones. Through these online-retrieved textual and visual data I could notice that since July 2015 (the time I left China) the phenomenon has been growing so much as to affect other areas of the municipality far from the city centre where the main sites of power are located. To establish the exact position of the gated communities so to create the Annex II, I have verified the truthfulness of the online information checking the satellite images on *Baidu Ditu* (in this case, *Google Earth* has revealed to be an unreliable tool since the data are not updated, most of the locations and their Chinese names are incorrect, and some areas are censured). The use of programs such as *Google Earth* to better understand some spatial dynamics, is attested e.g. by Patterson (2007).

The second step has been the research of historical official and academic literature concerning Chongqing development in the fields of water management, urban planning, and urban modernism with main interest in the republican period (1920s-1946). Some of the statistics concerning Chongqing economic development and architecture in the period 1960s-1990s were already in my possession since my previous field study conducted in 2011. All these documents were archived at Chongqing National Library (local chronicles section, statistics section). The more recent statistics on Chongqing Municipality (after 1997) have been retrieved online.

These data represent the starting point of my analysis around the significance of recreating the urban space following an ideological pattern, where old and revisited narratives of historical events and feelings are borrowed from the past to participate in the process of legitimation of the contemporary practices of land and water management. I feel necessary, in fact, to get rid of what Eliade called "*the terror towards history*" (Eliade, 1949: 177 ff.), so to maintain alive the knowledge about the past, following Benedetto Croce's appeal for an informed historiographic work able to unveil the logics behind the present – even if not embracing his extremist view regarding "historic absolutism" (Croce, 2002: 270-271). Having collected also more recent official data on the internet, I have analyzed files concerning law and constitution, local directives on water and land management practices, urban planning, local-central strategies, and state-global issues for a total of 1.33 gigabytes, including the above mentioned annual statistics on the major topics involved in the discussion (real estate, construction, natural resources, etc.).

The "unofficial" discourses come from the Chinese local literature and the local mass media reports (e.g. local newspapers, video interviews published online, etc.), and are investigated according to the idea that these two sources should also be equally considered in a thesis concerning the geography of a region, since the literary works can represent at best the inner spirit of a people and their relationship with the environment: "The vision of an imagined landscape is shaped through the language of the writer" (Watson, 1983: 14). For what concerns the economic field, I have collected marketing reports, visual material, and statements published online by various stakeholders operating in Chongqing.

In China the *social media* as "media [that] are fundamentally defined by their sociality, [...] operating on a networked, many-to-many rather than a broadcast, one-to-many basis; [...] demotic rather than elite" (Bruns, 2015: 1) cover a controversial position in the spectrum of the state-society relationships. The role of the netizens in arising social issues to a national level, so to convince the central government to act proactively in certain social scandals, has been seen by some sinologists as the "sprouts" of a *Chinese civil society* (e.g. Cavalieri & Franceschini, 2010). As some social media analysts point out (e.g. Bruns, 2015; Lovink, 2008: ix-xxviii), it is fundamental to understand the daily use of mass media to catch if they are processed by users as social media, in order "to study culture and society *with the Internet*" (Rogers 2009 as cited in Bruns, 2015: 2; emphasis in original). Due to lack of time in relation to the scope of the project, in my work I have only briefly touched this field through the reading of *blogging* discourses, and the content uploaded in the *Weixin-WeChat* platform concerning the use of resources in Chongqing, particularly in Beibei District.[2] Having myself an account in *Weixin*, I have had access to these resources freely. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, I have avoided to put snapshots of the groups directly in this work, so to assure a certain anonymity to the chat. I have instead opted for the translation of the content into English.

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[2] *Weixin* has become the main multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment application used in China since its delivery to the market in 2011.

In general, discourse analysis in this work is used as "a tool for uncovering certain hegemonic ways of thinking and talking about how things should be done that serve certain vested interests" (Lees, 2004: 102; cf. Gramsci in the next chapter). In fact, by connecting and incorporating official and unofficial discourses into a unique analytical framework, I am moved by the will to untangle the logics of their narratives, but also to individuate the points of disruption or ambiguity in the purposes of their formulation. This highlights the necessity within the local government to continually strengthen the networks of knowledge and the alignment of privileges among the diverse stakeholders in order to co-exist and flourish in a country ruled by the party-state. However, in the process of determining the fundamentals of Chongqing image-reconstruction (and also China state-building), I recognize that *some* discourses – in particular those formulated during the republican period – *might* entail some power in themselves once extrapolated from the "original" historical context, and repositioned within a new rhetoric. The power of their significance is linked to their capacity of *mythical evocation* that entails a strong persuasive accent to the population. In this sense, the deconstruction of the discourse is somehow post-modern as in Foucault (Foucault, 1983, 2001; Daldal, 2014; Laursen, 2003; Lees, 2004; Livingstone, 1995: 6-7; Sangren, 1995). Of course, mixing the two approaches is risking (cf. Said, 1978), as explained also by Gregory when talking about the importance to make "political, intellectual, ethical choices" whilst "thinking and working in the spaces *between* different theoretical systems" (Gregory, 1998: 76; emphasis in original). Therefore, I conclude going back to the initial statement, i.e. in my understanding a human agency is needed to start the process, i.e. to spread a certain discourse in virtue of its potential. I say this to underline that I do not believe in the autonomy of power, or power flows that through networks activate the objects (human bodies) transforming them in temporary subjects able to express the power through particular devices. In my opinion, this interpretation opens the field to the de-responsibility of the individual towards the surrounding reality.

1.3   Research background

This introduction goes on now with specific sections related to the use of language in China, the reasons behind my choice to explore "the urbanities" in Chongqing, and the contingent need to recognize the significance given to the idea of "continuity" in the particular context of the party-state hegemonic governance of the country. I consider these points as somehow necessary to understand the further development of my work and to have a wider vision of the complex structure on which ideologies take root in China. In particular, the language is fundamental in discourse and visual analysis; some knowledge on Chongqing gives the basis to proceed in the understanding of the production of urban space; the idea of continuity represents a passe-partout to untangle the mechanisms and the logics behind the particular system of governance implemented in China.

Chinese language is a political language

Without knowing the force of words,
it is impossible to know men.
Confucius, *Analects* XX: 3[3]

The grammatical relations of communication,
once distorted by force, exert force themselves.
Habermas on Marx (1987: 58)

Already the antiques had understood the importance of balancing words in order to keep a safe position with regards to the rest of society. In order to admonish the prince's behavior and to lead him to become a sage, there is written in the Book of Odes: "[...] be cautious of what you say; be reverently careful of your outward demeanour; in all things be mild and correct. *A flaw in a mace of white jade may be ground away, but for a flaw in speech, nothing can be done*" (*Shijing*, Yi: 5; emphasis added).[4] The spoken language is irreversible once given, and it constitutes an interesting source to understand individuals and the way in which they represent themselves within the social system. In fact, how the language is chosen to convey a message is never the product of a completely random process since its function is fundamental to open up new space horizons:

> "We speak and put pictures in people's heads because we want to make things happen in the world. We want to do things and not just say them. And in order to do these things we engage in yet another sort of building, what we might call 'world building.' We build (or destroy, for that matter) not grammatical things, but things out in the world" (Gee, 2014: 79).

The conception of new geographical spaces is based on a first founding linguistic gesture that constitutes the staging of a thought. In this thesis it is pointed out how the formulation of specific linguistic formulas is aimed to provide the masses with a renewed knowledge concerning the man-environment relationship, and to reaffirm some Confucian principles of material well-being and social practices that had been forbidden during the Maoist period. As the linguist Beccaria (2007: 153) said,

> "Culture is a mental reality, and language is a mental representation of reality, a system of classification and communication of experiences."

In Chinese language the connotative significance is bonded to the components shaping its linguistics, and to those cultural and ideological reminiscences that words in every language underlie on the base of their historical evolution. Chinese characters build by themselves a language of symbols, where the meaning is given through a process of mental abstraction from the visible content depicted in the sign. As A. F. Wright said, "[the character] possesses a set of meanings accumulated in the long history of the language, to which one could add a still wider range of allusive undertones derived from rich literary traditions, and finally, still greater flexibility depending on the context of the noun (...)" (as cited in Needham, 1970: 84). Notwithstanding, this lexicographic tradition has been enriched with new terms very slowly (*ibid.*: 83-97). In fact, the coining of new characters could mean moving away from tradition and orthodoxy, thus fostering the destabilization of a status quo: Being itself a tool to centralize the power, in these terms, Chinese written language represents a source for understanding a certain cultural homogeneity.[5] Whilst it could seem just a matter of wording, as explained above the choice of the

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[3] Translated by J. Legge, URL: https://ctext.org/analects/yao-yue.
[4] Translated by J. Legge, URL: https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/decade-of-dang.
[5] Cf. Xu Shen on the six categories of Chinese characters in http://ctext.org/shuo-wen-jie-zi. Cf. also Li Zehou (2004: 37-49).

language has actually deep implications for the argumentations of legitimacy propelled by the party within Chinese society (cf. Weber, 1978: 1419). For instance, the content of the political language (*tifa*) is annually modified (mostly during the plenary session of the CPC central committee) to systematize the changes happening in the society, and to indicate the orthodox line of the party towards certain issues (cf. Bourdieu, 2013: 170).

In chapter two I explain how I use semiotics to unravel the "system" that identifies the governance (*zhili*) of Chongqing watershed. In chapter three I analyze the linguistic factor in relation to the process of state-building, while in chapter seven I pick up some linguistic examples to demonstrate how Chinese words are extremely empowered by the party to reshape people's expectations and desires or fulfill their need for fetishist consumer practices by introducing new linguistic images into the urban landscape through the use of propaganda posters and advertising billboards (Oswald, 2010a; Puppin, 2014). This corroborates Spirn's thought that "a landscape embodies grammar and language" (Spirn, 1998: 168). In chapter seven the propaganda outlining the "new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics (socialism 4.0)", is also followed by the analysis of the terms used to describe the economic situation of the country. The terminology turns around the concepts of "dream", "long-term strategy", "civilization based on harmony and beauty", and then "marvel – miracle". The last two terms give an idea of the eschatological level reached by the party, and the profound subjugation of language to the orthodox rhetoric of the party-state (Bandurski, 2010; De Giorgi, 1999; Lu Xing, 1999; Schoenhals, 1992: 1-21).

What's in a city: Chongqing as a space in flux

> Urbanization is very much a process
> of socio-metabolic transformations.
> [It] produces distinct
> socio-environmental assemblages.
> Heynen at al. (2006: 3, 6)

 The choice of Chongqing urban space as case study derives from the strong captivation that the city has exercised on me since my first visit in 2011. During the landing I remember that my impression looking downwards had been of *a waste land* covered only with sporadic shrubs dried by one of the hottest summers experienced in recent decades. And indeed there was not so much to see around the airport in 2011: The city did not yet entirely cover its administrative boundaries with buildings and infrastructures, so that I sat ruminating about that early sense of vacuum and unplanned. Approaching Chongqing city centre where I had decided to reside during my one-month field research for the completion of my master thesis, I realized that from the point where the city actually *began to be*, there was a succession of construction sites and works in progress. There was almost no angle in the urban area that had not been affected by the devouring machine of destruction and rebuilding, and the few structures still intact had already been marked by the inexorable character *chai* (demolition), which exposed the destiny of the building and that of its occupants. What I got to understand during my peregrinations along the urban perimeter was that I was a spectator of an unprecedented *show of power*, and this awareness made me restless. The rapidity and scale of change were leaving indelible marks on the geometries and the imagined spaces of the natural environment, and with them, a new pre-packaged vision of which role natural resources should cover in a place monopolized by men, was taking hold in the population's way of thinking.

 Hu Xiaoxia (2009) wrote an interesting article on how the concept of *harmonious Chongqing* should be promoted and applied on the territory, analyzing also the ecological progress carried on by the local

government during the first sixty years after the foundation of New China in 1949. In particular, she explained how the directive no. 3/2009 about Chongqing "comprehensive planning of urban and rural development" had given a great boost to the understanding of nature as a source of economic profit. Turning the environment from a "passive absorber" of economic resources to a "benefit producer" is in fact the key to give significance to the ideas of "sustainable development" and "environmental protection" (World Bank, 2013: 217-270; Yu Yongding, 2009). As a matter of fact, the common perception is that "in Chinese urban planning and USGM [Urban Spatial Growth Management] system, economic growth is always prioritized, with little consideration to sustainable development in legislation and political instruments" (Yu Cheng & Huang, 2012: 4):

> "[...] what the Chongqing experiment is doing is to shift the emphasis of development from simple GDP growth to social development. [It] might be characterized as a kind of 'planned formalization', not in the sense of a return to an over-bureaucratized system, but of new ways to provide public services and benefits. A main method is to fund those new programs through market-appreciated values of government-developed assets" (Huang Philip, 2010b: 35).

Despite what Cui Zhiyuan (2010: 5) had to say about Chongqing:

> "With a population of about 33 million people, of which 70%-80% are farmers, practically Chongqing can represent China in miniature, and Chongqing experience can work as a mirror of the development of the whole country."[6]

The actual understanding of the territory by its citizens is rather ambiguous, sometimes even leading to declare that "Chongqing is the biggest countryside worldwide" (*Chongqing shi shijie shang zuida de nongcun*)[7] as a way to make fun of the current narrative that describes the city as *the biggest megalopolis* in the world (Brown, 2009). For the rearrangement of Chongqing urban planning to suit the central government's desire to create a "megacity" in the guise of a new peculiar form of land management, other places have been taken as example. In particular, Shanghai represents in the imaginary of Chongqing people the agonized goal of a stable global recognition as a powerful city capable of influencing the flows of both financial and human capitals. The greed for "going global" and "finally surpassing Shanghai" has been a constant in Chongqing city life since 1920s. In chapters five and seven I give some examples of this intellectual malaise that has become a source for policy legitimation. Nevertheless, the two cities imaginary *coincidence of the spaces* and their uses cannot find a tangible expression in the urban practices of development, whose patterns are rather diverse because of historical and environmental differences (e.g. Bergére, 1981; Wasserstrom, 2008; Wu Fulong 2000a, 2000b):

> "Despite the appearance of such familiar urban elements as high-rise buildings, malls, gated communities and migrant enclaves, the Chinese city is not really converging to any particular pre-conceived model of urban development. The forms (visible as well the intangible) and processes of city formation are different in different cities, and each city must be understood from its own global, national and local contexts" (Wu Fulong & Ma, 2006: 196).

In Chongqing the local authorities are indeed experimenting multifarious landscape aesthetic systems by taking advantage of the several plots of pristine green land within the urban administrative borders. Outstanding examples are the fabrication of "Italian styles vacation zones" reproducing the Sienese

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[6] The actual number of non-farmer population as for 2015 has reached 14 million people out of 33 million inhabitants, i.e. a ratio of 42.4% (Chongqing Statistical Yearbook, 2016).
[7] Personal information from a Chongqing resident (November 2014).

countryside in Yubei District, and "slow food villages and gated communities" in Shapingba District. In my thesis I will mainly focus on the disposition of those housing compounds recently built, under construction or planned in Chongqing in order to make visible what I have renamed as "spatialization of happiness", whose scientific and material basis are explained in chapter six.

Chongqing Municipality after all represents in its essence the hegemonic power of the central government, being its administration derived by a decision taken by the Politburo and implemented in 1997 (Zheng Degao, 2007). Despite the strong cultural identity of its people – partly shared with Chengdu being both located in what is called the Sichuan Basin, Chongqing as a political entity can therefore be seen as an artificial product of the machinations made by the party-state in order to find out *the best practices* to once again hold control over the territory and the population. Chongqing is born as a wrap of excellences after a story of submission to Sichuan Province; it has been planned to attract investments in its secure harbors, and in the meanwhile to stabilize and reduce as much as possible the migratory flows to the coast. While solving a problem of social stability on a national scale, the municipality has been called to face problems whose population was not yet completely willing to understand and accept as part of the process – such as the massive demolition of entire neighborhoods, the displacement with the consequent loss of the community ties, etc. Therefore, the local government has necessarily pushed on the spreading of ideological messages that could corroborate the actions promoted by the local administration. In chapters six and seven I have analyzed the connotative messages behind some of the propaganda posters I had access to during my field research in Chongqing.

Being a new-born reality in the context of Chinese contemporary urban spaces, Chongqing had to create its image in order to attract investors by stressing on its cultural heritage, its regulatory advantages, its strategic position, the richness in resources and the abilities of its inhabitants. The central government loans and a good dose of hazard have done the rest. Chongqing has already shifted to the stage of *power consolidation and enlargement*. Despite the desire to "become *like* the other global cities", the spread of "cultural uniformity among cities appealing to investors, professionals and consumers" (Harvey, 1989b) has nevertheless been a matter of concern during the planning of a solid long-term urban strategy. What has been vigorously avoided has been the risk for Chongqing to be transformed into a "common city" – a so-called *putong chengshi*, where this appellative describes a place without a soul.

During the long transition phase from being a provincial-level city in Sichuan to become "the door to South-West China", Chongqing has run the risk to embrace rather simplistic methods to dismantle entire neighborhoods and build up a more business friendly environment. In fact, "besides policy stimulants, a better business environment often means a better-looking city that provides good infrastructure. This may provide the rationale behind the massive urban development in Chinese cities" (Xu Jiang & Yeh, 2005: 288; cf. Koolhaas, 2006). There is therefore an ideological commitment behind the recent greening campaigns taking place in the central districts, a strategy more connected to the desire of comply with (foreign) investors' requests for aesthetics rather than a serious shot against the environmental problematics affecting the daily life of Chinese civil society. This topic is analyzed in chapters four and five, where I explain the connotative meanings of some state actions such as the establishment of the "Yangzi ecological belt" (Xinhua, 2017b). Besides helping in "getting international recognition quickly" (Xu Jiang & Yeh, 2005: 296), the urban re-planning and the new architecture designed by globally famous (mainly male) architects, are read as symbols of "rebirth" while supporting the incessant process of self-satisfaction that the local elite needs to perform in order to fulfill an ephemeral desire for grandeur (cf. Rose, 1995).

While seeking for recognition, through the *cultural and geographical flattening* – the hills in the city centre have become mostly unrecognizable – the place designed for "a quick entertainment of its guests during their business trips" was actually becoming an uncomfortable place to live in or even to visit. In 2011 while staying one month in the city centre I could talk with many young Chinese tourists and collect their impressions about Chongqing.[8] The common behavior was that they could not stand the city and normally spent only two days there, mumbling about how boring was the place and not very enjoyable (*mei shenme hao waner*). This early ethnographical knowledge is basically the reason why in this work I also give a look into the gears of the huge "mass tourism machine": My intention is to highlight which is the rhetoric that has allowed the transformation of what was considered an "ugly place not worth of paying a visit to" into a new place that has attracted millions of tourists in 2017 (Hollinshead & Chun, 2012; Wang Yanni, 2012a, 2012c; Xinhua shi, 2017; Zhang Yingling 2012b). I will point out how fundamental is the role covered by natural resources – water primarily – in pushing this *positive change of image*. In fact, it is all spinning around the necessity of inflating a new inspirational leitmotif to what has become an obsolete image of the place in order to face the current competition proper of consumer society. In particular, "competition has to be about the differences in image", where "difference" must be understood in terms of *qualities* rooted in cultural tradition (reconstructed or invented ad hoc in anticipation of a business), that are therefore used to carry on a strategy. In this sense, "difference in the urban" has little to share with the knowledge of "difference" coming out from the flow of urban and economic patterns between the global and the local as predicted by Appadurai (1990). This is the reason why Chongqing local government has been striving to enforce what are *perceived* as basic characteristics of the city, in particular its *shanshui* essence – "mounts and waters", and the "added-value" composed of cultural-historic peculiarities: Ba reign, Buddhist tradition in Dazu, ancient migratory flows to/out of Chongqing which should support the idea of an open and friendly population willing to interact globally, the Nationalist era, and "red" heritage. Interesting to note, in a compendium held in 2007 by Chinese experts on South-West urban planning and history, there was pointed out how the actual path of urban development embraced by the party-state, was transforming the Chinese cities into "cities struck with amnesia" – *shiyi zhi cheng*, where historic neighborhoods were turned into simple "neutral building lots" – *zhongxing de dipi* (XJSDJY, 2007: 25). The only way to "save" urban heritage from oblivion seemed to be the transformation of memories into a commodified object ready to be used for consumer fetishist practices.

Historical legacies and space-diachronic continuity

 The ideological continuity propelled by the state propaganda, i.e. the affirmation of a continuous repetition of the historical events and the self-reflection of the past in the future practices, does not appear in a single and homogeneous shape within the spatial system created in a specific territory.[9] In fact, as explained by Pinchemel (1996: 154-155),

> "What really surprises of the spatial systems is their strong *inertia* [...] The integration of the forms
> within a spatial system somehow gives the sum of their inertia. The resistance forces mutually

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[8] I refer to young people (twenty to thirty-five years old) travelling alone or with friends, and organizing their trip on a short schedule. The group-travelling organized by Chinese travel agencies in 2011, according to my personal experience, mainly consisted in performances of "red tourism" and "cruises to the Three Gorges and Big Dam".

[9] Cf. Gregory (1998: 15-22) on "absolutizing time and space" in a Eurocentric context, a process that facilitated the legitimation of practices of exploitation of "the others" in name of a superiority based on geographical categorization.

support each other since the intervention on single structures, land parcels, streets or on the soil use, has repercussions on the other forms of the spatial system" (emphasis added).

In the Chinese process of state-building and its reflection in the urbanity, this means that despite the desire to erase certain urban spaces from the collective memory, or to preserve them for future scopes, it is difficult to determine if a space and its meaning can actually be destroyed or maintained as such. The development of a spatial system does not follow an *isotropic pattern*, but it happens instead to be driven by various forces whose interests create strengths within the structure. The local government's current desire to express a visual continuity between two epochs (the republican period and the municipality after 1997), represents the ideological prerequisite to recreate *a fictive juxtaposition* of diverse spatial systems when most of the pre-1949 architectural legacy has actually gone destroyed or is in need of a massive intrusive restoration (ARS Projects SpA, n.d.; Chongqing ribao, 2017b; Sanyanyiyu, 2014; Zhou Kang, 2012; Kuang Zhou, 2012b). In fact, what Chongqing urban districts have mainly undergone after the foundation of New China, is understandable in terms of a violent super-imposition of Socialist aesthetics, whilst the "new" spatial system remained partly compliant with that envisioned by Chinese tradition (Bray, 2005). In Chongqing the narrative around a "historical continuity in the management of the territory" enables the local government to carry on some practices that are actually close to the alienation of the past. It has therefore become acceptable to extol some behaviors of the Nationalist Party during 1920s-30s, or the imperialists' benefits for the territory in terms of modernization and sanitation, not to mention the interest on architectural legacy, whose preservation should not constitute a contradiction in the process of historical reconstruction, despite the simultaneous "battle" made at the national/municipal level to obtain recognition, and some agonized apologies, of the abuses committed by foreigners against Chinese people before 1949 (China Daily, 2014; Chongqing Daily, 2011; Xinhua, 2012b, 2015a). It seems that the long history of the city – with its architectural, scientific and aesthetic legacies – has been channeled through the mass diffusion using mythological parameters.

This premise is useful to clarify why in my thesis I will insist in remarking the *sense of continuity* and the ideological entanglements residing within the concept (Dirlik, 2012: 283; Gaubatz, 1999). Given the non-static definition of "continuity" in the vocabulary of the party-state since the departure of Mao Zedong, my thesis contributes in proposing a reading of the current hegemonic management by pointing out which discourses have been and still are radicalized in propaganda narratives through the implementation of the "continuity logic". In chapter three I also observe which legacy Chinese classic philosophy has left to posterity, and why it is so important to clarify where the roots of CCP's hegemonic power do lie on. Social consent is also gained through the implementation of practices that 1) rely on principles praised by classic philosophers, and 2) resemble attitudes described by the ancients as manifestations of *good governance*. If necessary the party-state itself taps into the terminology of classic philosophy or into the huge set of historic annals to find out examples that could prove its benevolent attitude, gaining legitimacy through the reproduction of *revivals* and the narration of *heroic deeds*.

There has been indeed a certain continuity since 1949 in the management of the territory: According to Wu Fulong (2002: 1090), for instance, China urban governance is more conceivable in terms of "continuity rather than of total disruption from the past". Although there has been a visible change of shape and scope in planning Chinese cities, the party-state and local governments still maintain a privileged position from which they direct the works. The ability to change within the system, and embrace popular issues to held social stability whilst turning those problematics into a business matter, that is what makes the CCP able to lead the country after all, together with a good dose of power, financial manipulation, and coercion. For what concerns the overall evolution of the urban *public space*,

the earlier "Western" interpretation of a passage "from state control to disengagement" has turned out to be a rather optimistic view mainly derived from the assumption that opening up the market and developing capitalism should also inherently bring in a consistent dose of intellectual freedom, which is actually far away from the Chinese reality of management of public spaces (Yang Zhen & Xu, 2008). Despite the higher perception of freedom in the choice of the material goods and of movement – however curbed now by the monetary possibility – the flows of people and goods are still under the party-state hegemony. In fact, the rising use of the normative power to decide what is admissible and what is illicit, assembled together with the growing experimentation of the Internet of Things (IoT), new technological devices and personal data informatization, is providing the means to the central government to sew up a new "network of control" within the civil society (cf. Human Rights Watch, 2017-2018; Rajagopalan, 2017). The current economic stage called "New Normal" and the abolishment of presidential term limits in March 2018 (BBC, 2018) are clear signs of the opening of a new scenario in line with the despotic behavior of the leadership.

It is remarkable how much the Chinese party-state is pushing to give a semblance of unity at a national level but also globally. This has also affected the Chinese environmental history, prompting a vision of continuity in the use of the resources, as explained by Bao Maohong (in McNeill, 2010: 87 ff.). The business behavior in the reform era has been analyzed e.g. by Faure and Fang (2008). Other examples of the recursive themes of continuity and integrity are traceable in the discourses of the CCP neoconservative wing: Pan Wei, Wang Zheng and other contemporary philosophers, in fact, prompt the need to save Chinese culture from a complete Westernization as part of the current "Chinese Renaissance" movement (Bandurski, 2013; Barmé, 2013; Bell, 2008; Cheung K. Chi-Kin, 2012; Leonard, 2012; Global Times, 2012; Moses, 2013; Ramo, 2004: 31-35; Wang Zheng, 2013), strengthening the idea that despite the party's internal feuds, there should be at least unanimous *consensus* on *the structure*, i.e. the party itself as the only conceivable means to rule the country (Cornelian, 2011; Zhang Qianfan, 2013; Zhang Li, 2015; Zhang Zhiming, 2011).[10] This unity is ideologically described as pure and uncorrupted, and in need for preservation – the same vocabulary implemented to describe the contingent state of the Chinese environment, Chongqing watershed included: There finally emerges the consciousness of the *patriarchal behavior* of the party-state towards the Chinese and the management of the territory (Nesossi, 2013; Weber, 1978).

1.4   Thesis outline

 In chapter two I discuss the theoretical framework based on a network of discourses concerning urban governance, cultural beliefs, and visual aesthetics, all in relation to the re-modelling of the urban space so to fulfill market dynamics in this specific economic phase.

In chapter three I start from Gramsci's hegemonic approach to evaluate the geography of Chinese water management, with focus on Chongqing area as a peculiar environment in the Chinese context of water scarcity. I include an historic excursus of what has been described as "hydraulic society": The analysis aims to deconstruct the theory of the supportive role of water in maintaining a despotic power alive, while embracing the idea of a particular role played by water in the shaping of Chinese society, and in the

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[10] In chapter two I have analyzed the meaning of "structure" in Chinese tradition, and the possibility of considering a despotic behavior in positive terms. The current "China Dream" rhetoric is explained in chapter five.

people's conducts towards the central government. This chapter addresses the questions: How was water ideologically represented over time in Chinese power narratives? Which logics stand behind the shaping of "continuity" in Chinese water management from the republican period onwards? To respond to this question, the practices of leisure activities and elitist knowledge performed during the 1920s-1940s and concerning local water management, are also object of analysis.

In chapters four and five I discuss the progress in Chongqing urban planning as a comprehensive monitoring and manipulation of the territory, housing forms and aesthetics, and current governmental practices concerning the sharing of land value. The purpose of this section is to highlight the ideological significance embedded in the personal and class "research for happiness" in times of ecological struggles, paving the way for the comprehension of new urban patterns such as the rapidly diffused gated communities in China, and specifically in Chongqing.

Chapter six explains the territorial deployment of gated communities to build up a structure of power. Within the context of Chongqing watershed, there are clarified the parameters on which a particular waterscape is chosen in order to be transformed into a privileged space of exclusion. Chongqing "hydro-ideology" is understood as the organic exploitation of the local water resources, where the entire amphibious territory is part of a process of "mobilization" to stay in line with orthodox directives issued by the central government. There is also briefly exposed the performative willingness of civil society, and the favorite ways used nowadays by citizens/netizens to replicate to the abuses of power in a totalitarian regime whilst trying to avoid censorship. I provide some examples on how WeChat can be used to convey messages of resistance and social awareness against the consumption of territory in the less urbanized districts of Chongqing. Social communities devoted to specific hobbies have also been spreading online by bringing together netizens sharing common interests. This tool enables a certain sense of brotherhood and solidarity among its members.

Chapter seven is dedicated to a figurative analysis of the geographical imaginary developed around the enclaves and their water specificities, based on semiotic and discursive methods. There is also argued that images such as those ones produced/reproduced for commercial purposes (advertisement), actually play a great role in manipulating the reception of nature as an object.

Finally, chapter eight summarizes the findings. Local society and administration, in harmony with the regulations promulgated by the central government, are the main agents in the chessboard of power, playing for balances and adjustment of benefits. The ideological scenario of Chongqing waterscape emerges as a useful example to investigate power dynamics within the state management system of natural resources, even if seen the peculiarities of the local watershed, it does not constitute a paradigm for the entire Chinese territory.

2. Theoretical framework: narratives of institutional change, structural continuity, urban governance, social consumerism, and fetishism

The task before us is to liberate ourselves
from the fetishism and phantom objectivity
with which society obscures itself [...]
The "natural" appearance of such things has to be exposed
as a social product that can itself determine reality;
thus, society may become master of its self-victimization.
Michael T. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism…* (2010: 16)

We have a greed with which we have agreed
You think you have to want more than you need
until you have it all you won't be free.
Eddie Vedder, *Society* (2007)

In this chapter I explain the theoretical framework on which I will develop the analysis on the management of the natural resources in Chongqing.

To unravel the mechanisms that allow the *performance* of a sort of *spatialization of happiness* as hegemonic strategy, these elements should be taken into account: The idea of historical continuity, water as the protagonist, the party-state recursive affirmation as despotic arbitrator in the arena of the urban redevelopment, and the question of identity in relation to social disruption. "Spatialization" in Collins English Dictionary is defined as "the process of causing something to occupy space or assume some of the properties of space" (HarperCollins online, n.d.). As Lefebvre pointed out (1991), the production of social space reflects the ideological plot of a state of hegemony – the given space is both *fixed* in sites and regions (temporarily), and *continually in change* due to the fact that its significance is related to the people's performances within these spatial orders. Since it supplies the place with *emotions and feelings*, spatialization is important for achieving a successful governance, even if it could also constitute a source for discourses of resistance. In China the architecture, the overall urban planning, but also the advertising and the propaganda posters help in making a virtual social spatialization material, therefore real and ready for the person/customer to be embodied as ideological fact. The emotional aspect of this "social engineering" project carried on by the party-state at the local level through the local governments' knowledge of the territory and the local communities, covers a wide range of feelings, especially patriotism-nationalism in those occasions when the country must be shown as a cohesive unit in opposition to "the other". At the local level, it is the everyday life of the Chinese to be scrutinized by the party: In a climate of political-ideological disenchantment the narratives focusing on holding significance and legitimacy, have started to turn around more "simple", sympathetic (albeit utopian) patterns such as *happiness*, despite the high grade of sophistication of the media employed to reach the purpose. The ambivalence of the mechanism lies in the fact that while establishing an order among the things through differentiation, it also influences the perception of the self, being people called to rethink their identities and their relation with the surrounding environment.

2.1 Performing the practice of knowledge in view of an "open" totality[1]: structure and creativity for the formation of a spatial imaginary

The theoretical framework of this work is built on the need to overcome the dichotomy existing between ideas and matter, therefore envisioning a dialectical movement at the basis of every discourse. Departing from a fixed imposition of one realm upon the other one, i.e. embracing neither idealism nor empiricism-materialism, I follow a dialectical approach to the "division" of spheres of interest, a systemic and inclusive vision of things and ideas which need to be combined together to have a deeper and perhaps truer view of the *totality of the meaning* lying behind the surface. This has been the starting point for many Marxist and post-Marxist scholars in their analysis of society, e.g. the aforementioned Lefebvre (1991) in theorizing the phenomenon of *spatialization*. By the overcoming of a static binary approach, the holistic view of a totality resembles in many aspects the Taoist view of the Dao which all encompasses, but is incommunicable in itself (Graham, 1989; Zhuangzi, 2008). Chinese philosophical tradition rests itself on the assumption of a dialogue between earth and heaven where the mankind placed in the middle acts as an intermediary between the two.[2] If focused on a balance of the tensions, this process could lead to *harmony*: Mencius, for instance, explains *agency* acting along the *exigency of circumstances* as an ability to assess phenomena avoiding those prejudices that are determined by a sort of immobility (in Ivanhoe & Van Norden, 2005: 60; cf. also Confucius, Analects: IV, 10, and XVIII, 8).[3] As Hawkes synthesizes, "the most we can do to avoid this pitfall is to remember always that our knowledge emanates from our perspective: it is inextricably situated in time and space, and we must try to resist the temptation to view our own ideas as though they were absolute or eternal" (Hawkes, 1996: 67).

A dialectic movement rests also within the Chinese concepts of *li* – structural pattern – and *qi* – creative potential – as a binary complementarity whose fusion leads to the Dao, and therefore is itself the Dao. *Li* as structure and structural pattern holds both the ideal and the material, hence it would be redundant to make a complete comparison between the Chinese and the Western lines of this epistemology. Nevertheless, the concept of structure as omnipresent net of meaning and producer of meanings, and the dialectical process necessary for the apprehension of reality, are both in common (Rošker, 2010: 281-282).[4] In the realm of Chinese ethics, structure and creativity provide a new perspective on social and individual life. As Rošker (*ibid.*: 284-285) points out,

> "The mutual interaction between both antipoles of existence imparted a *dynamics of awareness* into the former static framework of completely fixed values and virtues. Without a doubt, this awareness is also structured – otherwise, it could not be possible. The property of creativeness, however, is the very potential which can also actuate the limited and transitory system of human mental processes" (emphasis added).

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[1] Here "totality" is understood as a critical category, therefore open to discussion and interpretations. It does not lead to an absolute reason (Adorno in Sansonetti, 1988: 31).

[2] The character standing for "heaven", *tian*, encompasses the character "man", *ren*, while "earth" is given by a character showing a sprout growing upwards, *tu*. The idea behind these signs is that while the realm of things finds its origin in the earth, the sensitive sphere, men should look for inner significance while stretching upwards (a movement, in fact "man" is represented as two moving legs). This is the scope of the Way of Heaven, *tiandao* (Scarpari, 2002). On the meaning of the vertical position for the perception of space, cf. Tuan Yi-fu (1979: 393-395).

[3] Mengzi 7A26, in *Jinxin I* ("Full Realization of One's Heart"): http://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i. In Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2005: 153), *quan* ("exigency of circumstances") is given by *discretion*.

[4] Cf. Also Zhuangzi XVII, *Qiu Shui* ("Floods of Autumn"; J. Legge, Trans.), http://ctext.org/zhuangzi/floods-of-autumn. On the Neo-Confucian ethics and the theories on human nature as influenced by Buddhism, cf. Ivanhoe (2002: 37-58).

To apply this holistic structural approach while studying the geography of a phenomenon, means to deconstruct it in order to recognize which are its components and how they are assembled together to temporarily produce a logic. As clarified by Tuan Yi-fu (1979: 387), a place "is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspective of the people who have given it meaning". Along with this definition, he distinguishes a *cultural space*, namely a human-social construct, and an *original space* that "possesses *structure and orientation* by virtue of the presence of the human body" (*ibid.*: 389; emphasis added). This is where the Chinese concept of structure, *li*, finds a proper feedback. Even if the Chinese tradition puts emphasis on the harmonic coexistence of all things in name of a supreme structure derived by Heaven itself, however, (Chinese) human beings seem to occupy a privileged position within it. In fact, according to Tuan, Chinese image of the place is imbued with *egocentrism*, turning into a feeling of race superiority when upgraded to a community-social level (*ibid.*: 394-408). Between human direct experience and mental abstraction of reality – well synthesized in the Euclidean geometrical patterns (cf. Ch. 3 on mapping as performance of a spatial imaginary), the mythical-conceptual space is shaped as practical *representation* that for the perpetration of a social stability in the community, is claimed to be true and immutable, i.e. ideology.[5] A preliminary fundamental to further conceive more complex ideological spatial patterns, is the necessity of thinking "space" by focusing on the centre (the place of men), and parceling it into a system of cardinal directions (Wheatley, 1971; Tuan Yi-fu, *ibid.*: 405). The subsequent divisions in space are the mental response to a social fragmentation based on functionality.

Following Giddens' *structuration theory* explained in the introduction, I have drawn a model in Tab. 2.1 to show how a dialectical approach might work in the unraveling of the issue in this thesis: Within three different spheres standing for three different aspects of the human intellect (ideas, representations, and deeds), the process of temporary amalgam of the three – which is actioned by human agency – gives three outcomes that are mutually functional and constitutive of the "open system" here analyzed. The ultimate visible result of land and water management in Chongqing is the reshaping of the watershed through the construction of gated communities based on exclusion criteria. The other two outcomes are equally important for the functioning of the structure, even if they tend to be more volatile since they operate on the conceptual and the representational levels.

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[5] Tuan Yi-fu does not directly apply the concepts of "representation" and "ideology" to his discourse, defining "mythical space" as "a product of the mind answering the needs of the communal group". However, affirming that the conceptual spatial structures appear as disengaged from the individual and even from the culture, and resemble a "product of nature", Tuan Yi-fu is describing exactly the false autonomy of representation. In fact, Tuan Yi-fu acknowledges that in depicting ego- and ethnocentric organizations of space, "increasing cartographic sophistication [was] *at the service* of persistent self-centred viewpoints" (Tuan Yi-fu, 1979: 407; emphasis added).

Table 2.1. Explaining the three-part dialectics

outcomes: comprehensive planning of the social infrastructure based on selective knowledge of culture, history, traditions

mythical-conceptual space: ideas of authority; state-building; hegemony; despotism; compromise, resistance

outcomes: reinventing the waterscape as paradigm of beauty, wealth, health

representation: signs in language and images for a spatialization of happiness

practices: normative power (rule of law); technocracy (science); pseudo-liberal market economy (advanced capitalism, accumulation by reterritorialisation, natural resources as exchange value)

outcomes: watershed reshaped to conform to elitist needs and expectations: (temporary) privatization, gentrification, exclusion

2.2 Ideological state-building: instrumental reason in consumption society, and critical resistance. Empowering the tradition of "social consciousness" in China

As stated above, the sphere of representation mediates between ideas and practices, and allows the human being to experience the world through a process of signification. Since representation holds a strong *creative power*, the effects of its (actual or perceived) detachment from the reality with the consequent misconception of its *autonomy*, have been early recognized as fundamental for a successful state-building process, for instance in Machiavelli's *Dialogues*:

> "He who desires or wants to reform the State of a City, and wishes that it may be accepted and capable of maintaining itself to everyone's *satisfaction*, it is necessary for him at least to retain the shadow of ancient forms, so that it does not appear to the people that the institutions have been changed, even though in fact the new institutions should be entirely different from the past ones: for the general mass of men are satisfied with *appearances*, as if it exists, and many times are moved by the things which appear to be rather than by the *things that are*" (as cited in Hawkes, 1996: 25; emphasis added).

Machiavelli enlightens on three aspects of ideology: The coming to be through fetishism, the false perception of representations as autonomous and real, and the appeal to the human feelings. In the Marxist tradition human alienation is derived from the objectification of man through labor, a process due to the transition to a capitalist economy where human labor-power, represented by money, becomes

a commodity to be sold. Human beings allow money to regulate, manage, and control their lives, thus performing an act of "secular idolatry" (Marx, 1974: 67 ff.; Hawkes, 1996: 98). The representative imbalance lies in the fact that an object is not regarded for its value-of-use but rather for its exchange value, therefore gaining a real power upon the object with the consequent *objectification of the subject*. The independent self as *subject* able of an ethical judgement is in contradiction with the capitalist environment and the progress of instrumental reason, i.e. *reason* intended as technological rationality and misused as an instrument of oppression. When reality is reified, i.e. the ideal symbols of commodity (their representative value) are psychologically transformed into an object that people choose to believe having an intrinsic real value, it is possible to speak about *commodity fetishism* (Boer, 2010). "Fetish" derives from Latin *facticius* (artificial) and *facere* (to make), and refers to a human-made object believed to have power over others. The suffix –*ism* implies a cult and a ritual through which a community is supposed to find significance, i.e. to recursively establish cultural beliefs and personal identity in relation to the other members of society. In this context, man has the semblance to be the subject while producing value, and at the same time is more or less willing to be objectified because of desire while covering the role of consumer, being subject and object one the *reflex* of the other (Hawkes, 1996: 166). According to Adorno, the capitalist-consumer society has degraded the subject in the form of the object, "creating" a new fake "objectified subject" as product of the exchange value that causes a *flattening* of human personality in physical and psychological ("spiritual") terms (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). In this way, men can indulge in the intriguing joy of bourgeois conformism (Adorno, 2004: 344 ff.). Žižek concludes that in the contemporary industrialized societies ideology as thought and practice, appears then to be *embodied* in those who accept the compromise:

> "[...] 'ideological' is not the 'false consciousness' of a social being but this being in so far as it is supported by 'false consciousness'" (Žižek, 1989: 21).

Fluttering between their own dreams and reality, human beings behave "as if an illusion were true" (Hawkes, 1996: 178), i.e. although they are aware of what the "autonomy of representation" implies for the society – namely that money is only the representation of a certain amount of human labor – they still perform in their material lives as if money were a-thing-in-itself. According to Žižek, men are *fetishist in practice*, but not in theory, proceeding in living a lie that is "objectively true, but ontologically false, and ethically reprehensible" (*ibid.*: 179). It means that the daily practice of self-censorship is both supportive to the system and to the individual, who has the perception of acting in conformity to the social rules, thus benefiting at the level of identity-building through the process of reflexivity.

Within this framework, society appears to be atomized and dispersed in lonely individuals who can still perform *resistance* once being aware of the entanglements lying behind the institutional matrix supporting ideology. Resistance, in fact, emerges at first sight as a singular provocative act of freedom.[6] On the other side if human beings – consciously or not – decide to remain within the system, they are given the chance to choose which parts of their daily life they desire to fetishize.[7] Fig. 2.1. summarizes these

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[6] Freedom as *free choice* is the power that men have after being freed from desires, i.e. the freedom of the will to act according to a *liberum arbitrium* – being men arbiters of their own will and actions. The term "arbiter" implies a sense of *impartiality* which is due to the representative judgement, i.e. a capacity to judge by thinking of the *plurality* (Arendt, 2006: 100-101, 104-110).

[7] Cf. also Creeber (2006) on the use of the ideological narratives to media analysis, and Santangelo (1998) on the interrelation between dream and reality in Ming and Qing narratives. The temporary dichotomies love-death, desire-fear, illusion-reality are solved thanks to the Taoist *complementarity of opposites*: The dreamers gain a stronger self-consciousness and learn their duties as social entities. Confucian ethics is not questioned as a source of veracity and meaning, and has the literary role of giving explanations and reassurance to the readers (*ibid.*: 202-224). Ideology works in a constitutive manner, legitimizing the "ephemeral" sphere of dreaming for its "creative aspects" (*ibid.*: 213).

insights and highlights that to raise a social critical resistance, it is necessary to work within the framework of the instrumental reason spread in the society itself, otherwise the single act of resistance will remain confined and useless. In the particular context of the Chinese state-building as it is structured nowadays, this "return movement" is officially denied and strongly regulated through the state mechanisms of control and censorship in order to keep the risk of "counter-reactionary practices" low and manageable. The reaction rate of the population to social issues is slowed down because of the interference in the dissemination of the information, occasionally giving the time to the government to re-address these sprouts of civil movements so to make them work for the interest of the CCP. In the last twenty years this mechanism of tacit consent and severe punishment that the politburo has also redefined in terms of "*shi shi qiu shi (to seek truth from facts)*" in a purged neo-Maoist wave (2014-15), has helped the flourishing of the country as the second greatest economic power in the world. However, it represents a clear point of disruption from what Mao Zedong envisioned as the process of construction of the Chinese socialist country. The tradition of social consciousness as reinterpreted by the contemporary politicians, is less related to Maoism and more to the ancestral definition of functionality, according to which each person covers a precise role in the determinate social space, and should behave in the respect of the norms to do not upset "the order". In fact, based on Destutt de Tracy (the promoter of "ideology" as neologism), Mao embraced the idea of a sort of constant skepticism that could practically only take place in the shape of a strong social instability (Hawkes, 1996: 54-57), radicalized during the Cultural Revolution (formally 1966-1976) and partly attributable to Mao's search for pragmatism repeatedly emphasized through his use of the expression "*shi shi qiu shi*".[8] In practice, Mao saw the scientific research as ultimate method of discernment,[9] although it might be inappropriate to label Mao's Marxism as a totalizing form of materialism. In fact, his formula for a revolutionary practice was still linked to the necessity of molding a *revolutionary consciousness*, i.e. the self as agent able to mobilize society for a common purpose (Dirlik, 1983: 195).[10] In line with Gramsci's theoretical thinking, Mao appears to have understood the role that a local culture might play in favor/against the revolution, i.e. Mao saw a dialectical process of *mediation* between the consciousness and material reality (*ibid.*: 189). Interesting to note, "ideology" in Chinese is given by both the characters *sixiang* (lit. "thought") and *sixiang yishi* (lit. "consciousness of thought"), thus underlining the participative role of ideas in its formulation. Nowadays, the supporters of this line of thought in China are suspected by the authorities at all level of society (from politicians to students and farmers, the so-called "neo-Marxists"): The orthodox political line, in fact, does not contemplate Mao's request for a critical consciousness. This means that only the political elite holds the right to standardize the path towards a complete construction of the socialist country.

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[8] This way of saying (*chengyu*) is actually traceable back to the Book of Han (36-111 CE), where it described an attitude toward the study and research of the ancient books and schools of thought. In Book of Han, Chapter on the Emperor Jing (*Han Shu*); Chinese text here: http://ctext.org/han-shu/jing-shi-san-wang-zhuan/ens. The expression is still in vogue and part of the Maoist-Dengist political orthodoxy. On the misuse of this speech in ideological terms, cf. The Australian Communist (1970s, pp. 6-9), and Foley (2002: 8). For Mao Zedong's biography, please refer e.g. to Chang and Halliday (2005), and Spence (2004).

[9] In 1956 the Hundred Flowers Campaign promoted by Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, that allowed a "healthy" criticism of politics, ended into the persecutions of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, proving once again the difficulty of openly promoting skepticism while managing authority and political legitimacy (Spence, 1990: 539-43). On Marxist orthodoxy, cf. Knight (1986).

[10] Mao's view of Marxism as a *theory of conflict*, favored the analysis of Chinese social classes and their relations to *power, hierarchy, and exploitation*, where peasants represented the materialization of a genuine Chinese consciousness (cf. the "up to the mountains and down to the villages" movement, in Landsberger: https://chineseposters.net/themes/up-to-the-mountains.php). Deriving knowledge from the empirical world was not only a kind of scientific approach introduced in China in the 18th century by the Western thinkers. In fact, already at the beginning of the Qing dynasty there were Chinese philosophers embracing this perspective to analyze reality (cf. Gu Yanwu 1613-1682 in Sabattini & Santangelo, 2005: 516).
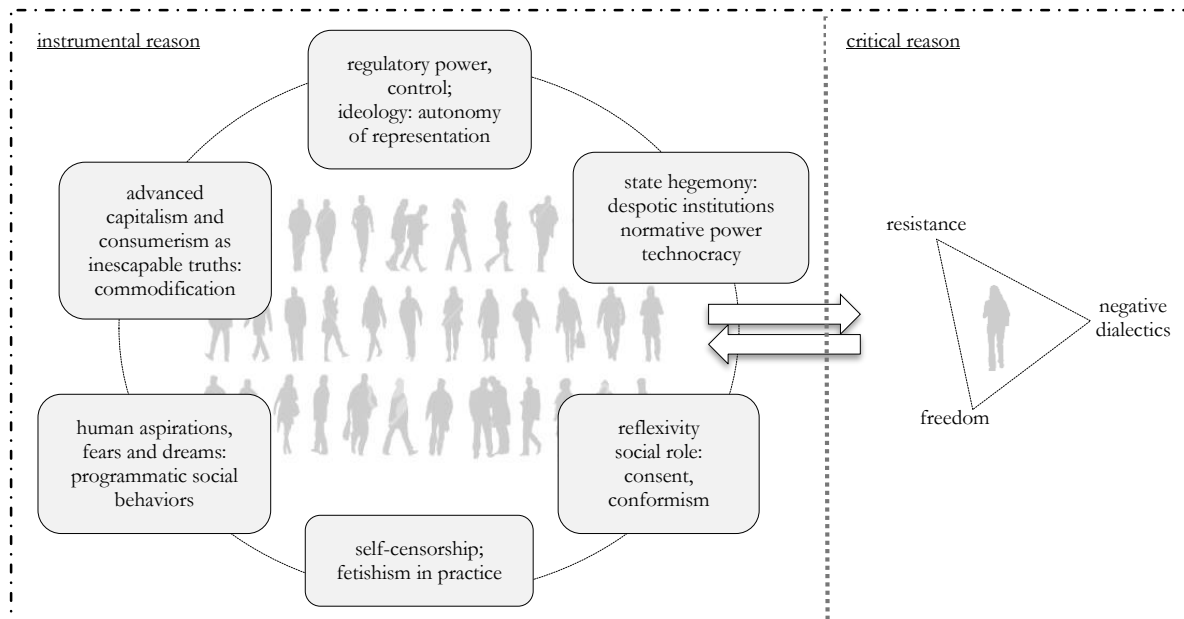
2.3   Urban governance

I have decided not to touch the problem of water usage from the perspective of irrigation and tap water, but rather to address the question of water management in Chongqing from a different angle, i.e. trying to unravel the mechanisms that are at the basis of the particular tendency to allocate big portions of the watershed to a precise objective dominated by market logics. This objective is *the necessity felt by the local government to increase the exchange value of the territory.* The practices used to reach this goal are mainly three: The building of gated communities, the strengthening of mass tourism, and recently also the economic incentives for reforestation and forestry are becoming part of the strategy. These are planned in order to comprise the fetishist desires of both the rich local elite – expats' community included – and the rest of the population. To study this project in a comprehensive manner, I find it useful to look at the practices of governance implemented locally.

The term "governance" can indicate manifold things. To start with, Offe (2009) points out how the intrinsic nature of this word is a product of the dominant capitalist ideology. In fact, whilst talking about "governance", it is easy to forget about a subject/object difference, the role of the agent gets lost, and therefore no one can be claimed to be responsible for the outcomes: The term was discursively constructed by the World Bank in 1989 as "curiously subject-less processes that [...] rather follow the logic of price formation in markets" (Offe, 2009: 550), especially aimed to label those episodes of "good governance" in a context of development policy (*ibid.*: 556). Although applying the term to indicate a set of networks and processes happening in Chongqing beyond the hierarchical top-down structure of government, in this work I remain aware of the precondition inherent in the term, even more because in China non-hierarchical forms of collaboration within society (e.g. commercial guilds, water management groups, clan forms of solidarity and mutual control) have been existing for centuries at the local level, being also reinstated after 1949 as expression of the CCP (e.g. the street offices). Furthermore, these

governance practices have always been intertwined with politics through a complex mechanism of bottom-up flowing of information.

As explained by d'Orville (2019: 36), "in its most abstract sense, governance is a theoretical concept referring to the actions and processes by which stable practices and organizations arise and persist. These actions and processes may operate in formal and informal organizations of any size; and they may function for any purpose, good or evil, for profit or not". Public governance, in particular, happens through networks of public-private partnership (PPP), through the use of market mechanisms under the aegis of government regulation, and through top-down methods involving government and state bureaucracy (*ibid.*). Politics, market and society are the three actors seeking for a balanced coordination on the path of national development:

> "In China, governance refers to the action, manner and power of government for which a good political system and good political order are needed. China's understanding of national governance not only reflects the traditional Chinese political concept that integrates society and politics, but also combines temporary international political concepts and practices, which include multi-subject and polycentric management of public affairs. The modernization of the governance system for the *rejuvenation* of the Chinese nation is the 'fifth modernization' that the country has embarked upon, coming after the *comprehensive* modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology" (Prof. Chu Songyan, Chinese Academy of Governance in China Daily-European Weekly, July 8-14, 2016: 13. Retrieved at d'Orville, 2019: 34; emphasis added).

As clearly stated, public governance in China is based on the fundamental of the party-state as arbitrator and ultimate decision-maker, being also enough empowered to channel the good of a strategy to the strengthening of its image within the country and abroad. Through the market companies indirectly owned by the CCP, the party-state has also a certain economic independence from the contingencies of the internal market, thus assuring the stability of its finances by making use of controversial methods, e.g. offshore accounts. Imbued with the ideological message of the Chinese "renaissance" (*fuxing*), Prof. Chu's explanation of "governance" is about the idea of an integrated, comprehensive planning for the management of all resources, based on the misconception that all the land, waters, rare materials, etc., as well as the human beings, must be at the service of the party ruling project. In this perspective, to carry on determinate issues the emerging stakeholders such as private corporations, NGOs, etc., must be aligned with the party to join a certain space of discussion with the party itself, i.e. they must practically show a certain grade of loyalty and assimilation of the orthodoxy of the moment. Despite sounding in contrast with the opposite phenomenon developed in other regions of the world (e.g. in Europe) in the wake of neo-liberalism and the transition to an entrepreneurial phase of local governmental elites (Healey, 2006), the dose of *free creativity* necessary to maintain alive or revitalize a place, is still distilled in China through the "ampoules" of the party's science, i.e. as Mao teaches, good ideas coming from below should be systematized in order to gain the right to be spread in society (cf. par. 2.2, Ch. 3). Following Giddens' structuration theory, the levels of legitimation and signification are reached only when these creative episodes "find resonances with cultural assumptions", i.e. they must become "institutionalized processes" (Healey, 2006: 306). State-private experiments of partnership in China have recently started to cover also those sectors considered "sensitive" and until now a prerogative only of the public, e.g. water management and housing. At the micro-level, the urban represents a favored spot from where to analyze the phenomenon of governance practices during institutional changes.

2.3.1   The nature of space

Space and place are two mutually producing forces within the main narrative of this work, i.e. the environment is considered as an active agent rather than a mere landscape subjected to human modification. The analysis of the ecological issues taking place in Chongqing, their intrinsic logics, and the local architectural forms in the so-called "pre-modern" era, all share the understanding of the importance of the place and its characteristics to the production of specific discourses framed by a particular spatial imaginary and living space. This paragraph responds to the questions: "How do space and time interact out of the domain of causality?", "how is space structured?", "how do spaces influence the living being's actions?"

Although being clearly not inclined towards a complete materiality of thinking, I find it interesting what Thrift said about the connection between "space" and "time" that allows to go over the idea of linearity and determinism in the understanding of "history". Opening the scenario to new ways of conceiving "the material", according to Thrift "the world is made up of all kinds of things brought in to relation with one another by this universe of spaces through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter and the often violent training that the encounter forces" (Thrift, 2006: 139). The production of material culture happens in a temporal process of collision of spaces, where *potentiality* (cf. the Chinese concept of *shi* in Ch. 3) allows that a reproduction is entailing also *difference*, making an event being other than the ones that have originated it (cf. Thrift & Williams, 1987: 13-19). To understand every-thing as a process, and not as a constant in the space-time domain, it is important to track the sources that have originated the dynamic move. In this way, it is also possible to grasp the fact that for what concerns this study, the *idea of continuity* in the history of the CCP and at the local level, in the ways water has been managed through the times, is a matter of ideology given by appointing more importance to the representation rather than the event as it appears within its particular space-time, thus denying the potentiality as a factor of change.

According to Lefebvre (1991), the production of space is a pure social construct deriving from dialectics of power and resistance; whilst produced, space is made productive through the performance of social practices. There is a multiplicity of spaces according to the opportunities for meeting/confrontation among the diverse social classes, where the hegemonic elite understands the space produced as a means of control and expression of its power. Livingstone explains that "although physical space may seem to be relatively constant, social space is a human construction. This is simply because spaces are *produced* as well as *occupied*" (Livingstone, 1995: 11; emphasis in original). Starting from Lefebvre formulation of space as both "structuring form and structured form" to understand space beyond a state-capitalistic logic, Löw applies Giddens' structuration theory. She argues that a Marxist-materialist reading of space – comprehensible only through actions – places "too much emphasis on the capitalist dimension of spatial structure to the exclusion of any experience of the *emotional qualities of space*" (Löw, 2008: 30; emphasis added). Löw proposes a "duality of space" as conceptual approach: In the simultaneity of a performing-space and the agent's capacity of action, the power of space can be conceptualized as "atmospheres, which can provoke moods in people, in extreme cases even against their will" (*ibid.*: 46):

> "In contrast to the opportunities for access to spaces secured by resources, atmospheres veil the processes of access and exclusion. Atmospheres have to be sensed, and avoidance behaviour experienced as self-exclusion is the frequent consequence of a spatial atmosphere perceived as unpleasant. Atmospheres secure consent to inclusion and exclusion" (*ibid.*).

The atmosphere is integral part of the creation of space by virtue of its representative quality (the symbolic), based on the fact that social goods have a *scenic function*, an aesthetics, which can be perceived through all the senses (cf. par. 2.4). However, atmospheres are not universally experienced, depending their fruition from common signifiers proper of a culture, class, or gender (*ibid.*).

Fundamental to this approach is the notion of *positioning*: "People are positioned by the actions of others, and they also actively position themselves [...] Space can be seen as a *relational ordering of living entities and social goods*" (*ibid.*: 35; emphasis in original). Therefore, human identity is also explicable in relational terms, and this has implications for the understanding of the local-global as mutually constituted, the place-space nonexistent dichotomy, and the relation between social responsibility and personal affects dictated by proximity as a social construct (Katz, 2003; Massey, 2004).[11] This last point highlights how "rethinking a politics of place, or nation, is an emotionally charged issue" (Massey, 2004: 6), and explains why the CCP at both the national and the local level, tries to leverage positive emotions in the population through the media in order to trigger a process of acceptance towards controversial development policies. Going back to the structural bi-dimension of spatiality, the *spacing* part is constituted by positioning, as well as symbolic markings and building construction; the other process is called of *synthesis*, i.e. "goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perception, ideation, or recall" (Löw, 2008: 35). The repetitive nature of spatial construction (a man's routine) and the generalizability of spaces are referred by Löw as the *institutionalization of spaces*, viz. "spaces are institutionalized if their ordering remains effective beyond the action of the agent and entails normative synthesizing and spacing", i.e. if they act "objectively" as a rule (*ibid.*: 37; Bray, 2005; cf. par. 2.5).

2.3.2 Measuring space and the urban question: the city between scaling patterns and networks in the moment of globalization

Moving from space structuration to a concrete, albeit sectorial understanding of space in relation to *state planning in accordance with natural and intangible resources*, the conceptualized space can be of many "kinds", e.g. it can be derived through a process of *scaling* (Thrift, 2006). Brenner affirms that "scale necessarily presupposes the hierarchical structuration of sociospatial relations", and also that "scale exists because social processes are scaled" (Brenner, 2009: 9). However, the spatialities of scale go beyond the hierarchical model, being it complemented by horizontally extended social relations, i.e. flows of "networks of connectivity" (*ibid.*; cf. Castells, 2008, and par. 2.3.6). It is clear that "scales" do not own a proper existence: They are only conceivable in relational terms to one another, as a way to classify and give meaning to certain operations recursively happening in different structures of signification. The peculiar spatialities present at every scale – from the locale to the national and the global, enable/construct the performance of certain social dynamics (e.g. land gentrification at the urban level), or the creation of "polycentric city regions" that provide physical order and a conceptual solution to the constant economic remodeling demanded by the market (Soja, 2003: 279). Capitalist restructures appear as "scalar configurations [...] understood as produced, contested and therefore malleable arenas and products of political-economic relations" (Brenner, 2009: 3), thus justifying the appellative "glocalization" adopted e.g. by Swyngedouw in the early nineties and indicating the coexistence of both global and local tendencies in economy, culture, politics, etc. According to Swyngedouw, the global and the locale are

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[11] Confucius proposed a scalar differentiation of the human feelings of sympathy and solidarity in relation to the individuals' physical distance, institutionalizing the place (here) and space (there) dichotomy (Confucius, 2006).

manipulated in ideological terms, so "to silence the sociospatial struggle derived by the practices of de-territorialization and reterritorialization" thanks to narratives of global rhetoric that seem to enable "the emergence of more authoritarian or at least autocratic forms of governance" (Swyngedouw, 2000, 2004, 2005). The Chinese government's deliberate use of global issues related to environmental protection, to nurture expectations of environmental justice on a national and even global scale whilst implementing contradictory politics of exploitation of the resources in the locale, is part of the hegemonic governance described above. Being identity relational, the individuals contribute to that understanding but are also partly re-shaping their identity while behaving in new structures. The phenomena derived by globalization(s) are not a linear homogenized expansion of territorial practices. The *scalar flux* given through the performance of "time-space distancing and compression", is envisioned by Jessop as a dynamic process of identity reshaping between the national scale and other scales, from the urban to the global and vice versa, in order to adjust to the risks and maximize the profit derived by global capitalism (Jessop, 2000: 340). For this study, scaling is a useful tool to describe the shifts in power and cooperation appearing across the "previous" orthodox hierarchical order of space, and to understand the internal and external forces that have recently brought the centralized power to plan new spaces in order to comply with the global market rules and act as an economic superpower (e.g. the establishment of municipalities, natural reserves, high-tech clusters, free-trade zones, etc.). However, scaling is strongly limited by the current economic-geopolitical structure, i.e. its conceptualization somehow suffices the logics of capitalism itself. Therefore, as already stated above, a more exhaustive spatiality poses the question of the making of a sense of place considering space horizontally, i.e. looking at the space trajectories that enable the compression of time (e.g. the internet) and the stretching of place through a "routinized action at a distance [...] through new communication networks [blogging, instant messaging platforms as *Wechat*], the influence of globally orchestrated actor networks or organizational spaces [multinational corporations], the growth of new global ideologies and movements such as neoliberalism, green politics, etc." (Amin, 2002: 386, 392). Social place cannot be further considered as "context or setting" but rather as the *placement of practices*, i.e. the embodiment of virtual and immanent forces (*ibid.*: 391).

From my point of view, scaling and networks are mutually constitutive of a spatiality, and if considered in relational terms they become useful to overcome the ideological impasse caused by the attempt to *fix* one of the two ontologies as true and immutable (cf. Tuan Yi-fu in the introduction). The scaling approach, being used by governments to explicate phenomena rising internally their countries or to implement certain politics, is ideologically real in Žižek terms. The actor-network approach can also be ideologically engaged to read the historical moment in purely a-causal terms, i.e. not depending on past input values. It could therefore be difficult to assign responsibility for certain events, and in last analysis, everything could be justifiable beyond any ethics.

 Both as a material place and as a concept, *the city* is considered by Lefebvre as a privileged area for a cognitive momentum where the implementation of practices ensures the creation of new spaces and new significances. In the last century the dramatic increase of the "urbanized" land percentage on the total, has become index of the potential control on the territory and the population that derives from the practice. The importance of the city for Soja is traceable in the "*stimulus of urban agglomeration*" that determines the "*spatial specificity of urbanism* – the real and the imagined, material and symbolic, geographies or spatialities of urban life" (Soja, 2003: 274; emphasis in original). Soja describes this stimulus as an economic necessity to clustering and circulating resources so to produce a profit, whilst density and cultural heterogeneity are considered as the "primary triggers" of the urban spatial specificity

(*ibid.*: 276), even if they tend to "break down rigid social structures and to produce increased mobility, instability, and insecurity" (Wirth, 1939: 1). According to Wirth, the modern city exerts a great influence, far beyond its institutionalized physical borders and population density: The economic, political, and cultural life of this epoch has origin in it. The "urbanity" implies the understanding of "cumulative practices distinctive of the mode of life associated with the growth of cities, in particular through the means of communication and transportation". The mechanisms of solidarity among the individuals need to be reshaped to adapt to new social circumstances (*ibid.*: 2, 6).

The emergence of the modern urban planning can be thought as a "turning point in the development of modern forms of political power and techniques for governance" thanks to the *disciplinary quality* intrinsic in the nature of space as promoter of social relations, namely the urban planning can be used to stage a certain socio-spatial ordering through the fulfillment of the aesthetic desire (Rabinov 2003: 352 in Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). The first urbanistic plans implemented e.g. in the French colonies in Africa between 1900-1930s, were clearly conceived as tangible "aesthetic and social laboratories" where to experiment on urban structures so to outline a possible winning model for the control of individuals that – as *universal model* – could be adopted by other nations. These new spaces propagated also a sense of legitimacy to the very act of colonization, thus sanctioning racial superiority through the distribution of performative spaces (*ibid.*). When approaching the Western urban modernism (cf. Ch. 3.4), it is fundamental to keep in mind its value as a "self-conscious scientific discipline" based on medical studies (e.g. the idea of sanitation and class division), statistics, and sociology (*ibid.*). Howard (1898) and LeCorbusier (2009) in the early twenties are two important figures of the modernist revolution. Whilst Howard in theorizing the garden-city as urban autarky model in harmony with nature, was moved by a socialist inspiration to solve some major problems derived by the urban industrialization and overcrowding, LeCorbusier focused on a more comprehensive experience of the urban in the machine epoch, designing "spaces on a human scale". The radical turn is manifested through a simplification of the conceptual space, where borders (e.g. tree-lined avenues, an emptiness *de facto*) separate the districts that are posited within the urban structure according to their function. The ultimate scope is a complete manipulation of the individual routine through pre-established movements. The green is artificially designed following modernist aesthetics, and nature as "cultural by-product" is reflected in the modern "urban park" as space of civilization. The *organic architecture* theorized by Frank Lloyd Wright in the late thirties – where built and natural environment should create a new harmonious living space – was also inspired by the garden city movement (Tafuri & Dal Co, 2003); some Chinese thinkers also underline how the organic architecture was the direct reproduction of the Chinese landscaping tradition (e.g. Li Xiankui, 1991: 41-42; Yu Zhuoqun, 1990). These modern features have been used in the re-construction of Chongqing in 1920s, and even recently after the establishment of the municipality in 1997 (cf. Ch. 5).

The environmental sociology of the Chicago School has been the first academic group to study the connections between urban planning and social behaviors in ethnographic terms. Even if exalting the human response to the environmental factor in deterministic terms, the concentric urban model theorized by Burgess has opened the scenario to the conceptualization of the modern urban space (cf. Ch. 5). The disruption of this idealistic evolutionary model for the distribution of the place functions and the population in urban circles, has come through its dichotomy, i.e. the reading of some "post-modern" urban phenomena (such as the American gated communities) as the result of the implosion of the city centre as political and administrative power, the disintegration of the relational union between place function and class division, and the accentuation of fear for "the other" like in the analysis of Los Angeles done by Davis (2006).

On the wave of the semiotic analysis, Calvino in 1970s published "The invisible cities", a sort of manifesto for the clearance of the manifestation/theorization/negation of multiple cities, where infinite possibilities find their proper performative space, typically denied by the modernist urban order and later also by the postmodern nihilist acceptance of a chaos governed by economic interests. The critics go beyond this dualism to think of the city as a fluid manifestation of relational networks, where praxis and emotions co-habit and alter the urban structure as much as the environment actively influences the existence of the city itself (Calvino, 2011). In this direction, Lynch has conducted an interesting study of the city of Boston (Lynch, 1960); Friedmann remembers us that the urban economic development should be just "a means to a more transcendent end, which is a vibrant civil life [...] Whereas we will always have to live with material inequalities, what we must never tolerate is a contemptuous disregard for the qualities of social and political life, which is the sphere of freedom" (2000: 469; cf. also "Utopia" by More, 2011).

In conclusion, being aware of the limits given by fixing the urban spatiality within a pre-packed structure, in this work I will point out how Chongqing owns *a specific urban planning* because of the manifolds inputs through which the local social relations are positioned, presenting complementary patterns of development that are derivatives of the "pre-modern", the modernist, the Maoist, and the postmodern. The historical and cultural construction of the Chinese city, the philosophical tradition on state-building and land/water management, as well as the Chinese *vision of space* and the *human position in respect to the environment*, are presented in chapter three. This premise is useful to better understand certain processual dynamics between state and society as "embedded" in the cultural system of the country, which influence emerges in the diffuse sense of acceptance of the local government's directives concerning the management of the resources, and a discrete proliferation of consensus towards the good intentions and the common benefits deriving by their implementation.

2.3.3   Functionality, aesthetics, and power of urban architecture

In the urban spatiality, "architecture [...] assumes major importance because the settings that architectural arrangements, with their more or less efficient boundary markers, effect determine specific types of co-presence" (Goffman in Livingstone, 1995: 10). Being "setting-dependent" implies the active role of nature in the social construction of a solid landscape useful for the performance of certain social relations. As Wirth points out,

> "Density, land values, rentals, accessibility, healthfulness, prestige, aesthetic consideration, absence of nuisances such as noise, smoke, and dirt determine the desirability of various areas of the city as places of settlement for different sections of the population. Place and nature of work, income, racial and ethnic characteristics, social status, custom, habit, taste, preference, and prejudice are among the significant factors in accordance with which the urban population is selected and distributed into more or less distinct settlements" (Wirth, 1939: 15).

When diverse social classes are co-habiting in the same compact settlement, their contradictory lifestyles are taken under control through more or less visible forms of segregation (*ibid.*). In the Chinese moment of institutional change and new market strategies, the lack of certain spaces dedicated to the emerging upper-middle class would have created a negative atmosphere, and maybe a partial failure in the realization of a materialist state of well-being. As Lefebvre pointed out (1991), a revolution is destined to fail if it is not able to think and start the performance of new specific spaces, and so of new relational

practices. Even if the central government has described the shift to the (pseudo) neo-liberal capitalism in terms of "reforms", it is clear that the outcomes have been revolutionary for both the civil society and the nation as new global leader.

Within this scenario, the architecture is living a period of enthusiastic emancipation from the Maoist request of space sharing, simplification, economy of materials, denial of traditional architectonic facts, and absolute refusal of architectonic elements of "Western" matrix. The only exception in the period 1949-78, was for the "Soviet style" bureaucratic buildings, not ignoring the fact that the statuary elevation of these structures instilling a sense of profound austerity and rigor, is mainly conveyed through the assimilation of elements of the modernist "international style", in particular the slightly splayed columns of classical derivation in combination with industrial materials such as concrete, and glass (Hua Lanhong, 2006; Tafuri & Dal Co, 2003). Since the nineties new discourses about the "Westernization" of the architectonic style have reopened the debate concerning the supposed existence of a "proper Chinese aesthetics" that cannot be exhausted by the contemplation of an artifact as epitome of alien values, now associated with capitalism and neo-liberal practice. The contemporary reconstruction of some sectors of Beijing and Shanghai have first legitimized a process of land gentrification with the building of Western-style enclaves, as well as skyscrapers dominating the new urban CBDs (central business districts). These largely contradict the idea of the aesthetic "purity of a typically Chinese form" used in all arts (from architecture to painting), and based on the empty/full complementary alternation, the yin/yang manifestations, and the vital breath, *qi* (Cheng François, 2016: 29). Therefore, Koolhaas' manifesto for the Asiatic resurgence of the urban structure should not sound pretentious or even dangerous for the traditional local ecosystem, based on the notion that the percentage of "traditional/old architecture in some Asian capitals is still higher than in some Western counterparts" (Koolhaas in Ratti, 2003: 51). In fact, some traditional architectonic patterns continue to be implemented as symbol of the institutionalized culture (Wu Jin, 1991; cf. Ch. 5).

The functional role of architecture in the reflexive construction of the individual identity, has been studied e.g. by Marcus (1997) in relation to "the house as mirror of the self", where the formal shape of the house, the interior design, the position in respect to the other houses and the external environment (with the consequent representational power of re-imagining the natural environment as part of a social landscape imbued with cultural symbolism), are all complementary elements of the "domestic space". The spatiality of the domestic sign system answers to specific necessities related to the personal social status: "Home" is not only a treasure chest where to keep the most personal items and affections away from society (keeping them invisible to "the others"), but also a showcase reflecting the intentions of its inhabitants through the aesthetics, and consolidating the legitimacy of the re-produced space through mutual recognition (Williams, 1987). The "atmosphere" lived through the sensorial and cognitive experience reassures the individual, instilling in him a sense of security and temporary happiness due to the satisfaction felt by obtaining the object desired (cf. par. 2.4).

2.3.4 Territorialization and gentrification: landscapes of exclusion, spaces of exception

A territory is conceivable as both "a relation and outcome of the process of territoriality" (Bassett & Gautier, 2014), where *territoriality* indicates those human strategies designed to implement a certain control over the social relations and the environment of an area: "Territorialization refers to specific territorial projects in which various actors deploy territorial strategies (*territoriality*) to produce bounded

and controlled spaces (*territory*) to achieve certain effects (Scott 1998 in Bassett & Gautier, 2014: 2; Chiasson & Nterizembo, 2012). The mechanisms of state control over the resources are just one of the reasons behind territorialization. In the case of Chongqing, the construction of enclaves around the lakes with the consequent closure of the public space, mountain slopes included, is often conveyed by the upper-middle class to the rest of the local population through discourses that describe the phenomenon as *an act of solidarity*, being the elite supposed to know better how to deal with the necessity to preserve the environment. The real estate agencies through the billboards, the developers in their public statements, but also the designers of the enclaves (the explanation of the projects in ideological terms is often posted publicly outside the enclave gates), all of them exploit and at the same time construct this misunderstanding as part of a broader project of territorialization explicated as a performance of "coercive conservation" of the environment. Walks (2006) puts together the construction of specific aesthetics and sensory tangible atmospheres with the production of an exclusionary space (e.g. the idea of purified communities): As already seen in par. 2.3.1, the relational-reflexive nature of human identity causes the re-adjustment to the new space in virtue of the social relations established through/thanks to the given space, whilst the institutionalization of that space allows the recursive performance of standardized norms and cultural behaviors. According to Harvey, "to perpetrate capitalism, the residential groupings obtain representational power in virtue of their consumeristic practices" (Harvey, 1989b: 118; cf. Tomba, 2004).

There are many tools leading to the performance of artificial *landscapes of exclusion*: A comprehensive process of territorialization is not only signed by the construction of enclaves, but also through the application of tolls to enter the highways, and the building of particular business centres that attract only a certain clientele, thus performing selection through census (Logan & Bian, 1993; Miao Pu, 2003; Pow Choon-Piew & Kong, 2007). In some cases, when the land becomes inaccessible because enveloped in a tangle of highways equipped with checkpoints as in Palestine, it appears in the guise of ethnic and/or religious discrimination mixed with economic instances of territorial possession to avoid a real estate crisis and geopolitical expansion of a country (Hanafi, 2013; Petti, 2007). In China this phenomenon does not cease to be experienced in border areas, e.g. Tibet and Xinjiang Provinces. In the south-eastern part of Chongqing Municipality there are also living some ethnic minorities (e.g. Miao and Tujia ethnicities): here exclusion is often connected to the control of the natural resources by Han people for the development of state sectors considered of significant importance (e.g. mining).

Along with the urban question, as Smith (1979: 163) points out, to understand specific phenomena such as *gentrification* (the process through which the upper-middle class happens to "colonize" a specific area within the urban-suburban perimeter for reasons of habitability), it is more useful to consider the *sphere of circulation* of social goods rather than only production or consumption, since the circulation process "is a strong regulatory force" of the two. It is rather simplistic to assume that the "demand" for these specific spaces is the key to understand the phenomenon, since it does not take into account the necessity to produce surplus value to allow the advanced capitalist structure to reproduce itself recursively:

> Money capital loaned under most mortgage agreements is individually consumed in the purchase
> of a house. So long as it serves to purchase rather than improve or produce the commodity, it
> circulates as commodity capital. Mortgages and loans for the purpose of gentrifying property
> generally exceed the initial cost of the house. As capital, such a mortgage is productively
> consumed, entering a different circuit as it leaves the financier's hands (*ibid.*: 164).

Seen the peculiar configuration of Chongqing urban structure, the process of gentrification rarely passes through the "re-habilitation of housing structures", also because the previous housing system was based

on the socialist method of the *danwei* (cf. Ch. 5; Logan & Bian, 1993). The circulation of financial capital is initiated by the local government through the disposition of "urban" lots destined to housing construction – pristine land or neighborhoods evaluated as aesthetically degraded *and* strategic for the strengthening of the positive image of the city, rather than by private investors eager to raise the rents of their properties. Gentrification is "mediated" through the financial institutions that transfer the capital and organize also its distribution, thus deciding the patterns of production of the built environment. These organizations at the end of the circle obtain the accumulation of more capital, therefore enforcing the capitalist system. Smith also highlights how the phenomenon from being only "a sporadic and local anomaly in the housing markets of some *command-center cities*" has been spread worldwide as "an urban strategy that takes over from liberal policy" (Smith, 2002: 427; emphasis in original).

For what concerns previous studies on the development of a gentrified pattern in Chinese urban planning, Laurence Ma has contributed to the subject by writing on the global-local flux necessary to the structural change in transitional China after 1978. The Chinese urban restructuring and spatial order when compared to some Western cities in advanced capitalist countries, have been more "revolutionary than evolutionary", causing huge demolitions, diffuse displacement and spatial/social changes due to the de-industrialization and tertiarization of the economy (Ma, 2004: 241; Ma, 2006; cf. also Lu Hanlong et al., 2009; Wu Fulong, 2007; Yang Zhen & Xu, 2008). From the institutional perspective, however, Wu Fulong has found a visible path of continuity in the party-state management of the resources and policy-making tools despite the neo-liberal tendency (Wu, 2002). From a sociological perspective, Chen Xiangming and Sun (2006) have summarized the main issues emerging from the transition to a more capitalistic economic structure: Networks and new social stratifications, forms of resilience in newly defined urban communities, new residential landscapes and consumption practices. Seen the peculiar nature of Chongqing, viz. being a political product established as a socio-economic experiment, these analytical points are also part of this work.[12]

2.3.5 Economy in place: advanced capitalism, local reinvestment, insularity, and general interest

As seen in the previous paragraph, the process of *capital circulation* is a good point to start investigating the rising of the gentrification attitudes in large metropolis but also in smaller contexts. It is also a good idea to question where the capital comes from, when not clearly generated locally. In fact, considering the market economy as the only conceivable way towards a "progress", has led to the globalized problematic performance of capital displacement. According to Harvey, the latest "imperialistic" wave driven by certain nation-states, finds its resources in a form of capitalism based on dispossession. Whilst at the national level the capital accumulation can better perform if supported by "institutional structures of law, private property, contract, and security of the money form [...]", i.e. those mechanisms of "state formation and bourgeois constitutionality" (Harvey, 2003: 89-90), the dislocation of capital outside the original circuit of production is equally vital for the recursive neo-liberal practices (*ibid.*: 109-110; cf. Mann, 2013). The "spatio-temporal fix" acts in terms of temporal displacement (e.g. investments in

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[12] On commodified housing in major Chinese cities, cf. Gaubatz (1998, 1999), Wu Fulong (1999, 2000a, 2000b), Wu Fulong and Ma (2006); on sub-urbanization, cf. Zhou Yixing and Ma (2000), and Wu Fulong (2010, 2015); on the role played by foreigners in the import of the "enclave model", see Wu Fulong and Webber (2004). These studies mainly concern the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Relatively little has been written on urban remodeling in Chongqing (e.g. Hong Lijian, 1999, 2004; cf. Chs. 4, 5).

long-term projects such as real estate, or social expenditures, e.g. education and research), and spatial displacement (opening of new markets, etc.). For Harvey, "fix" indicates both the temporary physical shape in which the capital is embedded, e.g. in building construction, or as social expenditures tied to a regionalized process of development. The term has both a literal and metaphorical meaning (*ibid.*: 115, 122-124). In the case of China, the market saturation that has happened in the coastal regions since the end-nineties, has triggered the spiral of capital displacement towards some (state selected) internal regions, Chongqing included.

Intermediary mechanisms and institutions help in the reterritorialization of financial capital: In China, these play in both formal and informal manners, e.g. implementing *guanxi* networks through the diaspora community in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore (Smart, 1999; Smart & Hsu, 2007). The replication of corporate practices in different environments is supported by global organizations like WTO, and financial institutions such as the World Bank, which implement themselves development assistance projects together with the local governments. These platforms assure the accelerated performance of capital transfers and re-investment, producing lucrative effects on the long term which often do not reflect a durable and equal state of development of a country/region (cf. Chs. 4, 5).

Dispossession happens not only in the peripheries of the world but also in all those places temporarily targeted by the capital holders: Even though the local reinvestment of capital might provide short-term benefits, on the long run it provokes social crises when the lower classes find their sources of income being dismantled, e.g. through the confiscation of agricultural land and the privatization of state assets with the consequent cost cutting maneuvers. Capital accumulation happens both through expanded reproduction and dispossession, the two being "dialectically intertwined" in the process of local predation (Harvey, 2003: 127-132, 176).

Following Lefebvre assumption that space is a social construct given by relations of acceptance/resistance within the capitalist order; that being "materialized", space is also able to shape those relations; and on the recognition of the urban as a space of excellence where to experiment and study those mechanisms (cf. pars. 2.3.1, 2.3.2), some scholars have pointed out how neo-liberal practices contribute in representing the space itself in its ideal and material shape as a commodity that can be exchanged with capital (Harvey, 1989b, 2004; Jessop, 2000; Smith, 2002; Soja, 2003). The urban soil becomes then an object of the financial speculative game, absorbing the excess capital and labor, and generating surplus value. The real estate sector when focused in building upscale communities, is one of the sources for the subsistence of an uneven geographical development which has become fundamental for the perpetuation of the capitalist mode of production on a global scale. Being embedded in a particular location, real estate is considered "scarce and valuable" due to its specificity (Weber, 2002: 521); however, as part of a temporary scheme of capital accumulation, it is also subject to devaluation that must be hindered through a periodic investment in the updates of the building functions and aesthetics, or in the complete redevelopment of the residential area (*ibid.*). This opens the path to episodes of large urban renewal, massive displacement of those inhabitants unable to cope with the rent increase or as in China, the direct expropriation of the land by the local governments to grant it to the investors through auction or public tender.

Returning to the initial idea of a new "imperialistic" wave speculated by Harvey through phenomena of spatio-temporal fix and accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), it is noteworthy that Goldstein and Rapkin (1991) pointed out how the chance for a single nation-state to truly hold hegemonic power at the global level, is correlated to its capacity to reproduce a geographical state of *insularity* within the geopolitical space. In practical terms, "insularity" indicates the capacity to potentiate the maritime trade

and naval predominance; as a metaphor, to condense material and soft power in a precise order so to reproduce chain effects on a large scale, therefore affecting multiple actors simultaneously in the geopolitical chessboard (cf. the Chinese attempt with the "New Silk Road(s)"). Furthermore, "the meaning and importance of insularity have been shaped continuously by changes in the technologies of transportation, communication and destruction" (*ibid*.: 936). In fact, these three points receive constant attention in the process of investment of surplus capital, i.e. ports, airports, transport system, telecommunication, and the armaments industry (Harvey, 2004). Therefore, the mutual constitution of a country as both an economic superpower and a global political leader is closely related to its capacity to stem its vulnerabilities through economic, political and cultural projects aimed at consolidating its centrality in the narratives carried on internally in the other states. In this sense, Arrighi develops Harvey's theory, explaining that when indicating leadership in an international context "to designate the fact that a dominant state leads the *system* of states in a desired direction" (Arrighi, 2005a: 33; emphasis in original), it is appropriate to consider the "distributive" and "collective" aspects of power in relation to a "general interest":

> "Distributive aspects of power refer to a zero-sum-game relationship, whereby an agency can gain power only if others lose some. Collective aspects of power, in contrast, refer to a positive-sum-game relationship, whereby cooperation among distinct agencies increases their power over third parties, or over nature. Thus while the general interest of a system of states cannot be defined in terms of changes in the distribution of power among them, it can be defined in terms of an increase in the collective power of the entire system's dominant groups over third parties or nature" (*ibid*.).

The Chinese success in incrementing its representational value on a global scale, has strong repercussions also on the internal stability of the country, providing the party-state with a solid base of legitimation coming from other global political entities, that can be re-addressed towards the internal management for the proceeding of specific economic and social schemes. For instance, the environmental protection campaigns and the annexed spiral of socio-economic changes, have been embraced by parts of the Chinese population as sign of a personal/class involvement in a global movement, being at the same time selectively allowed by the CCP for economic reasons related to the industrial restructuring (smart energy production) and the emerging internal market demand of secure and healthy products as well as green pristine spaces (cf. Ch. 7).

2.3.6   Other spaces: the cyberspace and new frontiers of resistance

When reasoning on the flow of networks, we are forced to reshape power geometries also at the level of *the virtual* (cf. Massey, 1999). Time-space compressions given by "global" practices, are causing unceasing qualitative differences in performing spatiality and mobility. For instance, the transportation systems (highways, tolls, etc.) open diverse circuits that become *signs* of a new power geometry. To call the cyberspace as "virtual", it seems that it should be conceived as "less real" than the spaces of proximity detectable at the local level. Amin (2002) among others, points out how the cyberspace is actually in a stretching motion and creates new spatial connections, therefore promoting the shaping of new networks and alliances through personal agency and telematics tools. However, being "embedded" within the legislative practices of the national borders, the cyberspace is also schematized by the institutions through a scaling process, in order to control the operative capacity of its users/performers.

The term "other" used in the title, does not imply a dualism as in the "dual space" theorized by Castells (where the space of proximity, the locale, is destined to succumb to the incessant pressure of network flows, in the real as in the virtual. Castells, 2008). The idea behind "other" is that of a new spatial structure, one of the many that occur in equal "measure" to structure the space as system.

Since the internet has become affordable to Chinese consumers and therefore subject to mass distribution in the last ten years, the Chinese government has strongly questioned the legitimacy of the cyberspace "in China" as a free and democratic space of sharing and networking. This statement sounds at least half contradictory because the cyberspace stretches far beyond the physical national borders, even if its existence needs physical supports located on the territory. Through the means of technological tools and legislative actions, the Great Firewall of China regulates the internet domestically, blocking access to certain foreign websites and slowing down cross-border communications. The technical part is supported by algorithms designed to block the content based on certain "keywords" or "sources"; the human part is made of employees paid to read and visualize hundreds of thousands of articles, making sure that all potential threats conveyed through language and images, are tagged. This is easily applied to the "formal" internet solution, i.e. the Web, since the client-server architectonic model is filtered upstream by the state infrastructure. With the spreading of "informal" online spaces like blogging platforms and instant message services such as *WeChat/Weixin* mobile application (privately run by Tencent), the cyberspace governability has become complicated. WeChat in particular, can be considered as a proper "ecosystem" through which a client can not only communicate with other people, but also interact in his work environment, play games, or pay bills. With such a complex infrastructure, it is clear that some *control margins* have been left uncovered, thus allowing the creation of networks of resistance until the party-state is not able to regain that missing "territory" (e.g. Barmé, 2012a, 2012b). As a news conveyor, WeChat is also responsible for the spreading of news/fake news to a greater audience than that reached by traditional media (Li Shuang Mia, 2018). The recent cybersecurity law issued by the Chinese central government is a good example of the current tightening on the media control: As other companies operating in China, Tencent is obliged to share information of private customers with the government. Since the *end-to-end encryption* is not used by the company, the amount of personal data collected by Tencent and available to state scrutiny, is huge and includes private conversations, messages, and web search terms (Mukherjee, 2017).

The cyberspace and the living space appear more than ever interlaced in their recursive practices and institutionalized structures. The national borders can determine the limits in the theoretical freedom of usage professed by the virtual, and in turn, the cyberspace operates modifications in terms of social consciousness, knowledge and sense of place, challenging the social norms that are binding to the everyday life of the individuals.

2.3.7 Environmental practices in a commodified space

This section is dedicated to the understanding of environmental practices within the structure of significance, regulation and legitimation supplied by the rules and resources typical of advanced capitalism. In line with a geopolitical-ecological perspective of the urban space, the "processes of socio-environmental change are never socially or ecologically neutral. This results in conditions under which particular trajectories of socio-environmental change undermine the stability or coherence of some social groups or places, while the sustainability of social groups and places elsewhere might be enhanced"

(Swyngedouw, Kaïka & Castro, 2002: 125). The instrumental reason proper of this moment lets the circulation of scientific strategies that should be applied in order to make the "necessary" grade of economic development conform to the instances of environmental protection. As explained also below in relation to water issues (par. 2.3.8), when a coordinated mass of scientific knowledge becomes a dominant voice and constitutes part of the cultural institutions of an ideological system, discrepancies emerge between the functions of a practice and their representations as symbolic relation between the human beings and the natural environment as agent. The technocratic power of the ruling elite is expressed through laws and regulations, global affirmative discourses related to risk management and clean energy production, and the appropriation of cultural symbols to enable the reconstruction of the man-environment relationship through the spatially and temporary emerging configuration of new signs (e.g. Baghel, 2013 on the dam engineering apparatus in India). Considering the capitalist tendency to generate crises through the labor process, Benton (1996: 179) has aligned the ecological crisis with the process of accumulation and circulation of capital, summarized as follows: 1) crisis of "disproportion" between the raw natural material and labor processes such as extraction and eco-regulation; 2) recognition of certain industrial production (agriculture, forestry, extractive industry) as based on nature as economic locus; 3) through these practices, the capitalist request for value maximization and overproduction emerges in contradiction with the sustainability of the ecosystem. Looking at the secondary and tertiary sector, the construction companies taking raw materials from primary industries to build residential and commercial building, and the real estate services such as advertising, private security and gardening, have a close relation with the advancing of the ecological crisis.[13] In this case study, the real estate is radically transforming the ecological circle of the territory, modifying the watershed flow and the functions assigned to it. Forestry, tourism and new forms of agriculture are also identified as promoters of a comprehensive commodification of the environment.

At the basis of the idea of environmental justice, there are environmental problems. According to Bird,

> "Environmental problems are not the result of a mistaken understanding of nature. Rather they are the result of mis/taken (unfortunate or ill-chosen) negotiations with and constructions of nature in the shaping of new socio-ecological orderings of reality. They result from morally and politically mis/taken social practices. Environmental problems represent situations in which some segments of society engage in practices that adversely affect other members of society and have the potential to injure the future quality and survivability of the planet. Moreover, those problems usually arise without a democratic participation in choices that may drastically affect our lives" (Bird, 1987: 261).

In China the state-building recursive adjustments in the government-society relation and in the mechanisms of economic production, have been adjusted to the request coming from several layers of the population for the national ecological turn for the future of the next generations. One outcome is the launching of the national *integrated rural-urban planning* campaign at the end of 2000s, which has produced locally various practices often related to the spreading of ecological tourism, biological agriculture (niche and exotic products), fishing and forestry as mass economic practices (cf. Chs. 5, 7). The consumerist pattern remains the driving force of this social revolution, whilst the environmental problems as such (e.g. water and air pollution) are still addressed with a sort of "palliative care" that has little impact on the overall fetishist management of the natural resources. As Sandbach (1984: 195)

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[13] From the environment-demography historical relation, cf. Bao Maohong (2010). Qu Geping and Li (1994) have analyzed the environmental trends considering the population growth, the unregulated industrial sector, the low levels of science and technology applied to agriculture, and coal dependency as main factors affecting the sustainability of Chinese development.

pointed out, without an effective control over the forces of production, a real change in the current tendency of exploitation of the natural environment is unlikely. Escobar (1996: 56-57) defines as "postmodern form of ecological capital" the appropriation of local culture by the "scientific knowledge" in order to drive it into a new utilitarian circuit where "nature and local people themselves are seen as the source and creators of value". In Chongqing the objectification of local traditions, stories, myths and historicized practices concerning the surrounding nature, is connected with the desire to prompt consumerism on several fronts.

The correlation between pollution and demographics is explained by Banzhaf (2012: 3-7) using six political-economic categories: 1) "pure discrimination" (firms prefer to shelter white people [upper-middle class] from pollution); 2) "coming to the nuisance" (wherever a firm locates, if the rich are annoyed by pollution they will relocate causing a fall in housing prices and the consequent moving in of poorer households); 3) negotiation and compensatory payments might go to a community affected by pollution as result of negotiations between firms and local stakeholders; 4) firms might look for sites with weaker political resistance to their pollution activities; 5) firms might be attracted to other spatially distributed factors such as low wages, low land prices, access to transportation corridors, proximity to suppliers or other related firms; 6) government failure to equally enforce environmental standards on the territory, where the local administrations might concur in targeting the weaker communities, forcing them to accept the consequences of pollution with less danger of retaliation towards the firm. In light of Chongqing economic development, the sixth category is fundamental to understand the phenomenon of the light industry relocation from the shores of the Jialing and Yangzi Rivers to the suburban areas as a maneuver imposed by the local government to make space for elite communities, enhancing the land value and ameliorating the waterfront. Gandy (2015) identifies this "ecological urbanism" carried on through urban politics as an ambiguous practice coming to terms with neo-liberalism (cf. Heynen, Kaïka & Swyngedouw, 2006). In fact, despite the opening of the market to neo-liberal practices, the state is still the arbitrator and major contributor in the process of future urban planning, directing the phenomenon of environmental gentrification through the confiscation of agricultural land, lakes and community green to be encapsulated within the gates of the newly built enclaves. Banzhaf and McCormick (in Banzhaf, 2012: 30-34) point out how the demand for certain elitist spaces with high environmental qualities is related to the way "people 'sort' themselves into neighborhoods with others with a similar willingness to pay for public goods [amenities like better schools, parks, etc.]" (*ibid*.: 30).[14] The privatization of the landscape brings this discourse a step further, i.e. it forces to connect social relations and class division with the economic geography of a space considered public and later cut into private sections, creating new micro-environments that are separated from the urban fabric but also intertwined with each other to reassemble a new urban structure. The process of cleaning-up polluted neighborhoods can also harm the local population, later forced to move out because of the rent increase (*ibid*.: 36). In China, the political regime is able to enforce coercive relocations of entire neighborhoods if located in an area considered strategic, both in material as well as in immaterial terms (e.g. concerning the archeological preservation of a site, or the institution of a natural reserve, etc.; cf. Ch. 4). The potential for a permanent stigma on a former industrial site transformed into a residential district, can also be subject of concern among the developers, justifying the large amount of funding going to the advertising of a place as clean and safe from pollutants after the industrial relocation and the clean-up process (*ibid*.: 38).

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[14] In the economic jargon, "willingness" indicates not only a personal taste, but also the possibility to pay for certain services based on the income (Banzhaf & McCormick in Banzhaf, 2012: 30).

2.3.8   Water issues and historical landscape

The flowing of water within the urban space of the modern city represents a source for the study of the social tensions in the urban, and between man and nature in a certain environment (Gandy, 2014: 1). Sieber already in the nineties pointed out how the upper-middle class had taken possession of the urban waterfront as a recreational and leisure resource: In fact, luxury apartment, offices, bike paths and restaurants are of difficult access to the rest of the population because inconveniently located with respect to their space of everyday experience. This phenomenon was explained in terms of aesthetic visualization, i.e. "visual consumption" (Sieber 1993 in Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). Based on what has been said so far, I see this practice as going beyond the dynamics of the visual, since all the sense organs are involved in the making of the "atmosphere", and these spaces as institutionalized concepts enable the individuals to reshape their identity and social relations (cf. par. 2.4).

The phenomena of landscape privatization/lake privatization in Europe and global *water grabbing* have worked as inspiration to me to dive into the topic. In the recent years some episodes of lake privatization have occurred in Austria (Müller, 2014) and in Germany (Kirbach, 2011; Matern, 2013). In Switzerland the data are disturbing, with only 30% of the lakes accessible to the public, even if recently it has emerged a greater level of awareness and activism on the front of the citizens' rights (Selle, 2016). In Italy the situation has been controversial for many years: Apart from the liberal politics of the 1960s-1970s that had no cue on environmental protection, there is the problem of mafia infiltration in state procurement contracts (e.g. De Nicola, 2012: 53 ff.). In Lombardy region, the lakes belonging to the water complex of Lake Maggiore are partly privatized (Varese tourism, n.d.), with celebrities and nobles owning their portion of landscape (Borromeo family bought the Isola Madre in 1501), and the same applies to Veneto region, especially in the Venetian lagoon. Another question concerns the possibility for farmers to buy the lakes in order to ensure the water supply to the fields nearby – they dispute with the newly founded local association of amateur fishermen and some forward-looking mayors, who claim that the lakes should remain public (Della Giustina, 2011). Near China, Fernando (2008) has written on the privatization of lakes in Bangalore, India, in relation to the luxury real estate development. For what concerns *water grabbing*, Mehta, Veldwisch, and Franco (2012) point out how the fluid characteristic of water often obscures the phenomenon and the systemic damages it causes to the environment and the local communities. Strang (2009) has linked this practice with the anthropological study of the Australian natives, highlighting also how it has become difficult for them to perform certain behavioral rituals *in* the environment when water is actually missing because diverted to other places. The construction of dams on the Lancang River (Mekong) in Yunnan, China, and in Cambodia, is causing severe damages in other countries, from Laos to Vietnam (CNBC, 2018; Tiezzi, 2016); Myanmar is also struggling against a possible water shortage since China has no intention to abandon the project of building a dam system along the upper course of the Salween River (Deetes & Harris, 2019). Luxury elitist tourism is also a cause for lake and land privatization. For example, the UK-headquartered Prestige Property Group that "for over 20 years has been successfully connecting discerning buyers and sellers of premium real estate in the most desirable locations in the world", has a special window on its website dedicated to *fishing properties* in England, Scotland, and particularly in the French countryside, where the buyer will own an "exclusive stretch of chalk stream" or the "own private lake" (Prestige Property Group website, n.d.).

The antithesis between the concepts of "water as common good" and "water as a commodity provided through a paid service" is the dialogic key to understand the neoliberal drift undertaken by governments all over the world (starting with the US and Great Britain in 1980s), in the wake of the disintegration of

the social state as a model of development capable of ensuring economic well-being, financial vitality, competition at the trans-national level and technological sophistication. Abandoning the idea of a community-based water supply and sharing of the resources, and social welfarism as the ultimate aim of any state intervention to the market, Ward (2003) points out how the sense of social responsibility and solidarity even in relation to the most basic of the human rights such as water, is fading away from the scheme of national politics, causing a deeper gap among social classes. Swyngedouw, Kaïka, and Castro (2002) have also been active in tracing the problematics derived by this narrative where the nation-states seem to behave to optimize corporate profitability rather than social justice. In relation to a more efficient achievement of some sort of urban sustainability, "a pivotal criterion here is to achieve an equitable distribution of social power, and transparent and democratic decision-making procedures", and also "it requires a more *comprehensive and integrated approach* in which supply of water is integrated with health and sanitation policy, ecological considerations, socio-economic processes, and urban planning and governance systems" (*ibid*.: 134). Despite the difficulties in implementing this holistic practice in the era of sectoralisation, the idea of an integrated approach is already at the basis of the formulation of the *integrated water resources management* (IWRM), i.e. a strategic technological-neoliberal tool for a greater control of the waterways. According to Grigg, "IWRM is a framework for planning, organizing and operating water systems to unify and balance the relevant views and goals of the stakeholders" (in Nickum, 2010: 542; cf. also GWP & INBO, 2009; Mollinga, Hong & Bhatia, 2005). The alignment of interests among corporate organizations and policymakers has become solid also in China where a fragmented and decentralized apparatus working at the local level, is supported by a centralized mechanism of "superstructures" with powers on specific areas (river basin authorities) under the direct control of the State Council (Liu & Speed, 2009). However, IWRM is more than merely related to the economic factor: As Mollinga points out, "it should be considered a 'boundary concept' and the amalgamation of sometimes contradictory elements and perspectives is exactly what creates the potential for engaging different constituencies in a single conversation" (Mollinga, 2010: 513). As a "global concept", IWRM allows the implementation of diverse practices of water exploitation, and provides a conceptual and symbolic background that is spread through the mass media and advertising campaigns. It has also been juxtaposed to Wittfogel's *hydraulic despotism* for it should give a multi-dimensional vision on how water should be managed, conceptualized and represented, thus re-modeling also social relations (Molle, 2006, 2008; Molle, Mollinga & Wester, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2009). In this sense, it is an ideological tool that concentrates a community resource into the hands of a small elite.

Moved by different ideological impulses in the historical circumstance of the pre-1949 global rise of Chongqing, water management in 1920s-40s was indeed a peculiar and interesting process. The historical-geographical approach allows me to introduce a story of Chongqing water management before the formulation of the actual liberal concept of "integrated water management", so to highlight the subtle but close connection among the choices locally and globally developed in the past – in particular during the republican period (1912-1949), and the discourses implied nowadays in the building-up of an ideological scheme where water is conceived as a commodity. For this reason, I have spent several months doing historiographic research at Chongqing National Library. Some scholars have served as inspiration during this phase: Hou Renzhi (2015: 93 ff.) as eminent scholar in the field of historical geography and as an intellectual aligned with the party, shows how ancient geographical literature can be altered and introduced in a different sign system. By making use of geographical knowledge not only to rebuild a geography of "China" but also to justify the political system in 1980s, Hou actively reconstructs a social identity of "the country as a whole" in the perspective of a Chinese "Renaissance". Wu Jin (1993)

applies an evolutionary pattern to the study of the historical cityscape, formulating four phases (walled city, 770 BCE-906 CE; open city, 618-1840; colonial city, 1840-1949; socialist city, 1949-1985) that with their "distinct characteristics and different town building philosophies, reflect the nature of national political and cultural development" (Wu Jin, 1999: 20). In fact, according to Wu Jin, the centralized state and the strong bureaucratic apparatus have been the main sources of influence in the historical development of Chinese cities (*ibid*.: 51). Ma and Noble (1979) write about the close relationship between geographical studies and economic development. In fact, since the foundation of New China in 1949 this academic discipline (particularly physical geography) has been used to support policies and provide sensible data; human geography has been related to the socialist territorial planning. March (1974: 7-22, 68-95) informs us on the risks of an ideological strengthening if the geographical scientific knowledge of the moment and the geographical imaginary traceable in the literature are subjected to state domination. Que Weimin (1995) has written on the cultural background at the basis of the foundation of the discipline in China. Williams (1989, 1994) analyzes the concept of landscape in the work of Darby, "the most important founder and pioneering researcher of modern British historical geography" (Hou Renzhi, 2015: viii). According to Darby, "[the landscape] was not merely an artifact but an expression of human ideas, attitudes and aesthetics" (Williams, 1989: 95), "thus every landscape is 'coded' and needs to be deciphered" (*ibid*.: 101). Cosgrove has later expanded the theme of the historical landscape as a form of "cultural production", i.e. looking at it as a representation of power and ideology in time (Cosgrove, 1998; Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988). When investigating current environmental problems, the role of the scientific knowledge *a priori* should not be underestimated. In fact, Birds explains that the production of science is not a truthful representation of nature but rather "a socially constructed interpretation" (Bird, 1987: 255). It means that when writing on environmental history, the first step should be "the social analysis of scientific knowledge construction". Between nature and science, under precise historical circumstances and within a sign system, happens a dialectical process of "negotiating reality", a new reality (*ibid*.: 255-258).

2.4 Immersive aesthetics and nature: perceptive sensations, the sublime, and symbolic power

In line with a postmodern understanding of "significance" as partly given by the active participation of the viewer, the production of the visual entails both representational and performative characteristics (cf. par. 2.2), opening the stage to the assumption that knowledge derives at the same time from distance (the sight) and proximity (the touch). While the first one allows the perception of a distinct, objective and therefore "naturally true" reality apart from us, the second one activates a mechanism of partial, continuous, processual understanding of the object, being pictures "moments of imaginative contact [...] The basis for reminiscence and recall" (Crang, 2009: 14-16).

The atmosphere is therefore partially and temporarily apprehensible only through the aesthetics: It is the *sublime*, a feeling of pleasure and sadness. Kant had already appointed the sense of *pleasure* as a subjective but still universally experienced category gained through the *faculty of aesthetic judgment*, and pursued through the contemplation of a "desired, elusive object". Experiencing the *sublime* means the performance of a desire which is unappeasable in the material world. This raises an ethical problem since

there are *devices* able to activate the "undesirable desires".[15] In particular, there are *images* capable of instill idolatry (i.e. ideologies), turning man's active position into a state of passivity (in Hawkes, 1996: 68-73). In Kant understanding, the spectator must be at a distance – only the sight seems to trigger the mechanism of aesthetic feeling, and man becomes the object of the experience of sublime. Being this idea challenged through the postmodern thinking, scholars such as Lyotard have opened the scenario to the *sublime* not only as representation of the unknown, but also as a chance to produce new significance through the experience. The enthusiasm (the idea of the good + feeling) moves the attention to *the use* done of the "product", i.e. how instrumental reason can manipulate the outcome (Lyotard, 1982; cf. also Baggio, 2010: 4-7; Mirzoeff, 1999: 16-17; Troilo, 2016: 40-46). In the case of the images displayed in Chongqing, they are an attempt to *visualize a specific idea of happiness*: Having no correspondence in the natural world, "the experience of the sublime feeling demands a sensitivity to Ideas that is not natural but acquired through culture" (Lyotard as cited in Mirzoeff, 1999: 16).

For what concerns the history of Chinese aesthetic critics, it is the Taoist tradition of "emptiness" that has mostly influenced it. "Emptiness" indicates 1) a quality of the Tao from which all things originate through interaction with the "breaths", and 2) an inner realization or state of mind made of simplicity, quietude, patience, and restraint. The painter after a careful observation of the subject, is seen as using the brush with immediate energy and economy of the sign (delimited by and constructed through the "emptiness"). Going beyond the realm of representation, the painter uncovers for the viewer a moment of the real aspect of the environment. For this reason, painting is considered a "sacred" art, and the artistic product is understood as an image of the real rather than a human artifact (Cheng, 2016: 30-60). Thus, the experience of the sublime can take place thanks to the cultural assimilation of the Taoist philosophy. This partly explains why the Chinese contemporary advertising system has been focusing on a visual practice based on the *classic* pictorial tradition,[16] whilst the consumer reacts positively to this choice of images because of patriotic instances and sense of identity based on the representational power to explicate the spirit of a country (cf. Ch. 7).

The iconic images when spread to the audience to fulfill a determinate agenda (e.g. tourism, real estate purchases, politics, etc.), catch also a broader spectrum of people rather than the original target, thus expanding the scope of interactions and meanings. The spreading everywhere of these images is called "immersion", a term that implies

> "that one is drawn into an intimate and embodied relationship with a virtual and physical architecture, whether this immersive affect is generated by a VR [virtual reality] system, the cinema, a panorama or another medium [...] The 'dream' of total immersion can be seen as an ongoing quest to create an artificial environment that is absolutely embracing and engaging for the participant-viewer on sensory, emotional and psychological levels. [...] immersive aesthetics, especially in relation to immersive art, does not simply facilitate pure escapism into a hyper-real

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[15] "Undesirable" according to a *common sense* of what *is* right or wrong. In Marxist terms, objects might achieve the role of subjective agency and subjugate men, through what Simmel expresses as "the desire of the subject for the object". Desire is not understood as a completely subjective category, since value could be promoted by external factors; however, it is the "former" subject that inspires a value to things, starting the entire process of annihilation (Appadurai, 1988: 3 ff.; Hawkes, 1996: 103). Žižek borrows the Lacanian concept of fantasy, i.e. a human mental device that "organizes how we see and understand reality", to explain how a desire is created (Storey, 2006: 83). Fantasy "stages a scene that realizes the desire as such [...] Desire is not something given in advance, but something that has to be constructed [...] It is only through fantasy that the subject is constituted as desiring: through fantasy, we learn how to desire" (Žižek, 1989: 370).

[16] During Tang dynasty (VII-IX CE) there are the first examples of the passage from a "realistic" painting to a more "spiritual" form, thanks to artists like Wang Wei and Wu Daozi who focused on the philosophical concept of "emptiness". This pictorial current had its climax during the Song and Yuan dynasties (X-XV CE; Cheng, 2016: 55).

environment. Immersive artworks often generate self-conscious and self-reflexive forms of perception and interaction as participant-viewers engage with the work" (Bartlem, 2005: n.p.).

In Chongqing, it is the landscape of greenery and pure harmonious beauty combined with the somehow contrasting, painful memory of a glorious "modern" past made of scientific progress and urbanization (the republican period), that illuminates the emotional path in the imaginary space of the advertisement and propaganda posters. Even if needs and desires can be manipulated and reshaped for mere commercial gain, the other purpose of that manipulation is the support of the sources of *symbolic power*, i.e. the capacity based on the personal position within a social hierarchical order to determine how reality should be known and experienced: "[Symbolic power] is a major dimension of political power" (Bourdieu, 2013: 165). Bourdieu outlines how "mimetic representation helps to produce in the agents temporary reactions [...], or even lasting dispositions [...] attuned to the objective processes expected from the ritual action - helps, in other words, to make the world conform to the myth" (*ibid.*: 167).

In fact, the CCP explains its behavior towards society as *a duty* to show the correct way towards a balance in the man-nature relationship, so to lead the country to a greater development. This behavior is defined by Bourdieu as "the sincere fiction of a disinterested exchange" (*ibid.*: 171). The images as those shown in chapter seven, consolidate a "selective consciousness" empowered by the scientific discourses integrated in the establishment.[17]

2.4.1 Representations, simulacra, and signs. Nature and enclaves as bourgeois shelter: a retreat from everyday reality?

The symbolic capital differentiated according to the social classes composing a society, allows a place to support diverse structures of signification at the same time, as long as they are authorized by the ruling system. If these signs are monopolized by the elite, they become effective in representing a distorted reality, proposing symbolic images that could be accepted as *the reality*.

Being a latest expression of material wealth, the construction of enclaves surrounded by a lush natural landscape ("natural" is the idea of nature, when the landscape is object of human intervention) constitutes a visible proof of a new spatiality related to needs such as environmental protection, personal health, recognition of class identity, and ultimately spiritual happiness.

The discourse on the *reunion with nature* contains a whole apparatus of meanings related to diverse cultural legacies, one of which is the millennial meeting/confrontation between the city and the countryside, and the modern idea of the urban as a trap for human beings. This particular idea was spread during the European Enlightenment e.g. by Rousseau (late XVIII century), who mystified private property as the foundation of all inequalities, throwing man in an opposite dimension to a hypothetical "state of nature". Later the romantic quest for "disconnection" from the civil society to reach a higher self, was also assimilated to the concept of the noble savage, i.e. "the other uncorrupted by civilization" (cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1993). During the imperialist phase the idea of the "primitive goodness" was eventually abandoned to embrace the European scientific achievements as a clear sign of progress.

The other source of significance lies in the Platonic understanding of the men-politics relation, according to which a real maturation of the self is achievable only through the active involvement in political debates happening in the urban milieu. The best exemplification of this idea is traceable in *Arcadia* by

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[17] Cf. *infra*, par. 2.5 on Gramsci and hegemony.

Sannazaro (1485), the first bucolic poem written in Europe that describes dreamy atmospheres set in a natural lush archetypical place of myth (the Greek region of Arcadia was probably a dry and arid land). After waking up from a nightmare, the protagonist freely abandons the primordial languor to return to the city and actively take part in political discussions. This work has mostly influenced the Western imaginary on "dreaming the other" in time and space, and entails ideological implications for the propagation of a reverse structure of representation of this desire linked to the seizure of power by bourgeoisie. In fact, the "arcadia" has been turned into a bourgeois space, a quick getaway to a natural reality of superior essence where the toil of urban life ceases to annihilate man (cf. Wittkower, 1983).[18] This attitude towards politics dominating the first industrial capitalistic period – and nowadays rather exacerbated – is empowered and legitimized by discourses praising individualism and self-acculturation predominantly in material terms. In this sense Chongqing visual and artistic representations, as much as the housing modules, are designed to remember everyone the (fictitious) beauty of a peaceful and silent space, free of the violence contained in direct political involvement.

The third point is the natural landscape-dream association, for the enclaves allow their inhabitants to *embody* a state of dreamy happiness according to precise standards related e.g. to the expression of class status, aesthetic tastes, and knowledge of global environmental issues, which are accepted in the dialogical orthodoxy of the party.

One of the founding reasons of the success of the gated communities in Chongqing is strictly related to the narrative built upon the diffusion of a particular iconography and use of the language as sign. The ideological necessity of "living a dream", i.e. what the protagonist of *Arcadia* finally refuses to pursue, is instead described in nowadays Chinese discourses as the ultimate scope of the human experience in this world. In order to de-politicize what is rightly considered as an extremely politicized way of living, it is essential to rebuild a harmonious balance between the urban lifestyle and the natural environment. Since this distorted vision of the reality is prompted by the official state propaganda, there is clearly a *negative epistemology* behind this narrative. In fact, the idea that living in an enclave in China means to escape from the practices of a politicized life, is an ideological anthem for at least two reasons:

1) The gated community is a desirable but also imperative product of contemporary economic policies, namely its space is politicized because institutionalized by the local government
2) Within a gated community human behaviors are *actually* depoliticized as the result of a fetishist embodiment of standardized class behaviors due to a reflexive form of identity construction

The second point can be better explained by saying that the "desire for freedom" is overturned by the hegemonic power of the local elites (local government + upper-middle class), which happen to lose their capacity of resistance to the political power, a skill identifiable as a *real freedom* obtained by making compromises with the establishment through an active participation.

Following this logic, Chongqing opening-up of touristic sites along the same lakes interested by the gated communities is also part of *a territorial strategy* implemented by the local elite within the administrative borders of the municipality. Rinsed off from its romantic glaze thanks to which it is still described rhetorically as "a once-in-a-lifetime experience", the social practice of tourism as a mass

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[18] The name "Arcadia" in its variant "Acadia" is frequently used in the real estate upscale market as enclave appellative, e.g., in Chongqing Yuzhong District (no. 2 in Appendix I). Its Asian counterpart is "Shangri-La", which also happens to be used for Chinese gated communities as in Chongqing Shapingba District, "Junfeng Shangri-La" (URL: https://xianggelilajf.fang.com/?sf_source=pc_xf_baiduald_exact_head; this enclave is not built near water).

phenomenon exposes its outcomes as proper of the heavy industry rather than a simple vocation boosted by human curiosity (D'Eramo, 2017; Hollinshead & Chun, 2015).

Considering the practice of *immersion in the "wild" nature* as a tonic to the ills of urbanity, the upper-middle class is willing to purchase spaces of exception and exclusion (the gated communities) based also on the presence of (a fabricated) nature. Owning a terrific resemblance with theme parks, Chongqing waterscape becomes then the *simulacrum* (a counterfeit representation of the original image experienced e.g. through the posters and advertising) where a hegemonic message is transferred to, reshaped, and embodied by the consumer. The accumulation of expectations, desires and fears is temporarily lightened in the individual thanks to a defined elitist space of reassurance and hope. At the same time, the cultural value of the waterscape is partially maintained at the disposal of society through the performance of mass tourism in specific areas, sometimes adjacent to the enclaves.

 Informed by the poststructuralist theory of signs (semiotics) derived by de Saussure's linguistic theory, in this thesis semiotics and iconography are equally applied to deconstruct the figurative arts involved in the establishment and maintenance of the hegemonic power.[19] Media and advertisement analysis follows Barthes' idea of a complex interrelation between the phrase carrying a denotative message, and the sign system carrying a connotative message (Barthes, 1964). The rhetorical message helps the rooting of a particular ideology subjected to adjustments from time to time, leveraging on the most intimate feelings and fears. In the particular moment of the realization of a Chinese consumer society, it is also useful to consider Baudrillard's political economy of sign, or *sign value*, i.e. the transposition of commodity fetishism to the conceptual-symbolic sphere, taking advantage of cultural legacies and material heritage to enforce determinate economic policies at the local level. Baudrillard explains that while "men are not equal with respect to goods taken as exchange value, they would be equal as regards goods taken as use value. One may dispose of them or not, according to one's class, income, or disposition; but the *potentiality* for availing oneself of them nevertheless exists for all. Everyone is equally rich in *possibilities* for happiness and satisfaction [...] Thus use value, reflected back to the anthropological sphere, reconciles in the universal those who are divided socially by exchange value" (Baudrillard, 1981: 137; cf. also Sturken & Cartwright, 2001: 238-239). Following this view, the media apparatus and the mainstream political discourses become useful in the representative process of social rebalancing, opening new imaginative spaces for the less affluent social classes.

As explained in Table 2.2, the practices of gentrification and mass tourism are part of the hegemonic system deployed in contemporary Chongqing to enhance the exchange value of the land, using symbols especially connected with the use of the natural resources in relation to the expansion of the luxury real estate market and mass tourism. One purpose of this work is to track down the main *sense components* belonging to various *fields* of this system (from micro to macro-level, called "S1" in Tab. 2.2), which are used to spread a sense of consciousness on how happiness can and should be spatialized. Semiotics validates a structural interpretation of these signs which are heterogeneous in substance and homogeneous in their temporality.

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[19] The theory of semiotics (signifier-signified→process of significance: sign), even if based on a infinitive series of networks of meanings, does not provide all the tools to understand visual arts as iconography (or iconology) does, as explained in Van Straten (2009: 36-37). The problematic of ambiguity of meaning in complex systems, raised by Barthes, is resolved with a dispersive appeal on Jakobson's view of a "leadership" between two signs, where the sign carrying a "zero degree of signification or not marked" comes first so that the rhetorical message inclines towards the direction of a sign rather than of the other one (Barthes, 1964: 124-126). This does not explain why an image carrying a connotative significance is "read" by the observer in one way and not in the opposite one. The iconographic analysis helps in tracing back the historical and cultural reasons for a symbol, but it still provides a partial understanding if the analysis is not accompanied by a psychoanalytic support, i.e. if we do not consider the human sense of aesthetics, and the ability of synthesis and abstraction.

Table 2.2. Rhetoric and ideology inscribed in Chongqing organic system of hegemony

S1

| "gated community advertising" & "media information" | "Chongqing water management" | "territorial revaluation based on market technicalities" | "maintenance of local power, stability" | "coordination with the central government leadership" |

S2

| ideological propaganda | narrative of necessities and desires: citizen as victim of nature, citizen's active role as consumer → objectification of the human beings and the territory | narrative of economic development and modernization (tourism & acculturated nature); narrative of freedom from a politicized society: "fetishism in practice" | gentrification, exploitation and uneven distribution of resources; "carrot and stick" politics → self-censure to enjoy privileges | hegemonic system based on a complex and organic network of institutions, practices and beliefs, and implemented by a restricted elite towards the masses which are unaware/aware, unwilling or unable to *place* themselves against it |

inscribed in
phrase – denotative message (S1: signifier →metalanguage, rhetoric)
sign system – connotative message (S2: signified →content, ideology)

2.5   Power and institutions: hegemony, (infra)structure, and governmental ethics

In Chinese language there are many words to explain power in slightly different configurations: *Liliang* means physical strength and material force, *shili* indicates power in terms of "capacity to influence others", and *quanli*, associated to the jurisdictional rights, is therefore translated as "authority". It indicates people's agency in regards to governmental issues and state power (*guojia quanli*). The combination of *quan+shi* means "power and influence". This last concept explains at best the idea of hegemony, even if "hegemony" is actually given through the term *baquan*, a word borrowed from the past "feudal times". Despite being this word strongly historicized and connected to a period of Chinese history that the Communists have demonized for a long time, I put forward the idea of rejoining the term with the one positive acceptation it actually owns thanks to the philosopher Xunzi, considered a precursor of legalism. I do so in order to widen the understanding on Chinese ruling "system", and to outline which ideological value has been drawn over the rule of law in the attempt to make it work to support and legitimate the state politics. As stated by President Xi Jinping in January 2013, it is fundamental to "[...] keep power restricted in a cage of regulations" (in Barmé & Goldkorn, 2013: xxi-xxii). As long as the regulations are designed to benefit the status quo, it means that the decision-making power will be handled by a small elitist group of politicians.

According to Gramsci (1891-1937) hegemony means "a form of praxis to maintain power, based on material and ideological instruments" (as cited in Hawkes, 1996: 117); it is "a *condition in progress* in which a dominant class in alliance with other classes or class fractions, does not merely *rule* a society but *leads* it through the exercise of 'moral and intellectual leadership" (Storey, 2006: 63). *Resistance and incorporation* are the two dialectical movements through which hegemony is imposed, and then maintained by dominant groups and classes, negotiating and making concessions to subordinate groups; the peaceful compromise is only interrupted in times of crisis, when the "repressive state apparatus" applies its coercive power through the army, the police, and the prison system (Storey, 2006: 64-65). Furthermore, hegemony is "organized" by "organic intellectuals", scholars whose thoughts legitimize the authorities and inspire their political maneuvers. Gramsci does not see ideology as false consciousness, but rather as *pure consciousness*, i.e. the ideal explication necessary to understand reality: "All systems have an historical validity, and are necessary". This statement will later pave the way for Foucault's formulation of *discourses* (Hawkes, 1996: 118). The "historically organic ideologies", i.e. those thoughts, ideas and customs performed by the ruling class in a certain historical moment to legitimize its power, are accepted by Gramsci as a necessity. In this sense, ideology has a positive meaning because it becomes the key to read history: The *hegemonic blocs* (historical segments enlightened by the same ideology), could then be useful *a posteriori* to understand a particular historical juncture (Gramsci, 2012; Daldal, 2014: 154-155).[20]

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[20] The role of education in shaping human consciousness is well acknowledged by Gramsci, who underlines how civil institutions undermine the free thoughts of individuals through the instillation of ideology. It is through this "praxis" that the state power, and so the power of the dominant groups, is revealed. In the construction of geographical knowledge, the anarchist geographers Reclus and Kropotkin at the end of the 19th century tried to spread "the construction of a critical and secular education accessible to all" (Ferretti, 2011: 222). Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (± 95 CE) is only one example of a work dedicated to the educational process. The Chinese counterparts are also manifolds, e.g. Ban Zhao's "Lessons for Women" (Ban Zhao, 2011). Chinese novels like *Mudan ting* (The Peony Pavilion) by Tang Xianzu are also structured as a discovery of the importance of behaving ethically (Santangelo, 1998: 203-210). Confucian tradition lasted over time thanks also to the educative model spread by Confucian Classics, e.g. Xunzi, Gaozi, and Confucius (Analects, XII, 8), emphasized the cultural role of education (*xue*) to enhance the human nature to a greater level of moral virtue (*de*), transforming men into *fictive but fully ethical personalities* – what Xunzi called an "acquired nature" (*wei*. Cf. Scarpari, 2002: 44). This view contrasts with Mencius' hypothesis that the morals are an innate quality (*xing*). Personal introspection (*si*) was considered vital to accomplish

Even if ideology might be a key to comprehending certain events, I believe that considering it as the true matter of facts is the final purpose of ideology self, i.e. what man is inclined to see as true after mistaking a representation for the object-in-itself.[21] However, the concept of hegemony is useful in this thesis to understand the party-state prolonged and successful way to manage the natural resources, and its approach to society. In particular, institutions as material vehicles of power are shaped as the *state's exoskeleton*, and might also survive in the shift from one typology of state to another: The hierarchical structure in which the institutional organs are divided, and the territoriality of the institutional network have been – and still are – fundamental factors enabling a continuity in the value system and in the infrastructure (Mann, 1984).[22] The main institutional reforms that happened in "pre-modern" China and after 1949, are also identifiable with some important ideological shifts (Bruun, 2003; Sabattini & Santangelo, 2005).[23] In fact, within this scenario the bureaucratic state emerges as the arbiter and moderator between the different social forces, although being also the final prosecutor of hegemonic practices to hold power through a constant rebalancing that underlies the maintenance of the status quo (He Wenkai, 2015; Li Choying, 2012; Rowe, 1985). What is relevant is that both the Imperial China and the New China under the CCP, seen as two totalizing systems struggling to create the "perfect ruling infrastructure", highlight the ideological fight for *a continuous cultural unity*, while the historical vicissitudes demonstrate the inconsistency of this hegemonic practice perpetuated to convince of the need for homogeneity on both a social and a geographical level. The Chinese traditional imaginary on the social structure (*li*) as determined by the "decree of Heaven" (*tianming*), presents diverse, antithetic but somehow complementary forms of representing the good governance in the figure of the sovereign (*wang*; cf. Rošker, 2012). Mencius identifies two opposite figures who might detain the ruling power:

- *Wang* governs in a "humanitarian" manner through the implementation of the moral virtues (*yi de xing ren zhe*)
- *Ba*, the despot, *pretends* to govern in a "humanitarian" manner by the use of the brute force (*yi li jia ren zhe*)[24]

Despotic power is here understood as a deviation from the realization of the pure essence intrinsic in human nature, i.e. its goodness, through the "worn out" of the heart due to the indolence in limiting desires and their excesses (Scarpari, 2002: 20-24). "To pretend" is the key to reconnect the discourses on representation and ideological re-writing of history, a technique explicitly condemned also by Xunzi (Xunzi Ch. IX, as cited in Tillman, 1981: 23).

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the inner growth, as cited in Guanzi Ch. 26 ("Admonitions"): "Being erudite but not inclined to introspection, it necessarily leads to something nefarious". Full text here: http://ctext.org/guanzi/jie. Cf. also Graham on Guanzi (1999: 131-138).

[21] Taussig (2010) implements Gramsci's view of ideology as a constituent of meaning, providing the examples of some South American farmers' communities living the process of change towards a capitalist society. The transposition of values in two different social systems is read as a means to produce significance for the passage itself. Old ideology might "help" local people accepting or resisting the new form of ideology.

[22] Criticizing Lenin's approach to the Oriental Question, Wittfogel (1957: 398-400) reports on Lenin's insecurity about the new USRR regime, and the fear it could de facto become a new Asiatic restoration based on the bureaucratic power.

[23] On the contemporary Chinese institutions, cf. Lawrence (2013) and *News of the Communist Party of China*, "The departments and institutions under the CPC Central Committee" (http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/206981/8223996.html). The "Organization Chart of the 18th CPC Central Leadership" is at http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/207121/index.html.

[24] It should be noted how *ba* ("despot") assumes a negative acceptation only during the Warring States period (403–221 BCE), i.e. when Mencius was in life. *Ba* originally indicated the moment of the first glows of the crescent moonlight, signifying the beginning of a new month in the Chinese calendar (precisely the third day). The appearance of the moon in its shape and brightness meant also the "substantial" existence of its hidden soul (cf. *ba* in Baidu Baike: http://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%9C%B8/2299510?fr=aladdin). As allegory, it positively expressed an irresistible force, i.e. hegemony under the dictation of the heavenly will. Cf. Tillman (1981: 21-22).

However, the analysis made by Xunzi about the tensions between motivations and socio-political ethics goes further to make a distinction between the *historical ba* (the above described one) and the *ideal ba*, i.e. a "realistic and reasonable ruler" that, although inferior to a *wang* because "unable to gain the sincere submission of the people's hearts", nevertheless could apply the law and demonstrate love for the people (*ibid.*). Mencius' accuse of factitious goodness is overtaken by Xunzi through the recognition of the utilitarian benefit provided to many:

> "He opens up new lands, provides usable instruments, and fills the granaries and storehouses. He carefully recruits and selects his officers from among men of skill and ability [...] *He protects the weak and restrains the oppressive.* Yet he has no territorial ambition [...]" (Xunzi 5: 7ab in *ibid.*)
>
> "He who pacifies the world must use *tao*. Thus, as for rulers, if one establishes integrity and social justice, one can be a true king; if one establishes public confidence, one can be a *pa*; but if expediency of schemes and power is established, the ruler will meet ruin" (Xunzi 7: lb-5b, 11: 23a in *ibid.*)

Through the implementation of *cheng* (honesty, moral authenticity) and *xin* (public confidence), a despot can be considered an acceptable, even desirable ruler that represents a balanced compromise between the two extremes of an ideal *wang* and a despot ruling by might and only devoted to achieve his personal interests. Thus, following Xunzi it becomes possible to think about episodes of good government in terms of *good despotism*.[25]

Xunzi conclusions embrace Machiavelli's explanation of ideology and its power to radiate social rules while making people mislead them as natural principles (cf. par. 2.1).[26] Laws and punishments are then invested with *affirmative powers*.[27]

In the context of Chongqing land parceling, apart from the emotional geography reproduced through the advertisement and the official propaganda, both of them labeled by discourses based on "dreaming" and "material happiness", there are then all those practices which are derived by the application of the normative power and have become intrinsic to the ruling system of the PRC, despite the fact that the state-building power still revolves around the figures of a few members of the elite. Based on the rule of law of European matrix (Wong Richard, 2015), the party new identity owns a semblance of legitimacy by showing a willingness to stick on constitutionalism (cf. Tab. 7.1b).

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[25] On the art of government and public confidence, cf. Confucius' Analects, XII, 7 (2006: 136-137). On the application of pre-Qin thoughts in the contemporary "school" of international relations, cf. Cunningham-Cross (2012).

[26] Cf. Yan Xuetong (2011: Chs. 2, 3) on the use of traditional culture as a source of "internationally appreciable" values.

[27] As explained by Zhang Jinfan (2014: 532 ff.), in the 19th century the Chinese law was included in a narrative of binary oppositions, where the two antagonistic poles of domain were "the ruling of man" – *ren zhi* – and "the ruling of law" – *fa zhi*. Law was firstly appointed as the main vehicle of liberty and equity by the exponents of jusnaturalism (18th cent.), a European way of thinking later imported to China. Yan Fu (1854-1921) was one of those Chinese scholars to embrace the determinants of this doctrine, emphasizing also the necessity of coordinating laws with other aspects of life such as education and lifestyle. Both European and Chinese discourses are marked by the willingness to subvert the current state of affairs: Aristocracy vs bourgeoisie in Europe, feudal system vs modernity driven by a democratic bourgeoisie in China. Paraphrasing Xunzi, in fact, Zhang affirms that "in his proposal of 'stressing both "Li" (the rites)' and law, 'Ren Zhi' (the ruling of man) and 'Fa Zhi' (the ruling of law) had already been integrated as *one organic whole*" (*ibid.*: 536; emphasis added).

2.6   Society as a conflictual space: disruption, risk assessment, and conformism

<div align="right">

Crisis is a necessary condition
for a questioning of doxa but
is not in itself a sufficient condition
for the production of a critical discourse.
Bourdieu (2013: 169)

</div>

Ideas are institutionalized and shaped into matter within the civil society, which is conceived as the battlefield where ideology perpetuates its influence but also where the individual can exercise practices of *resistance*. In China the mutual coexistence of state power and autonomous organizations is traceable back to the imperial period, a fact that deconstructs the implicit Western-built narrative about the Oriental Despotism as an all-encompassing centralized power. The role of the bureaucratic state has mainly been that of arbitrator and "weaver" of networks of power, so that it is also improper to depict the civil society as an autonomous body (cf. Brooks & Frolic, 1997: 43). In this sense, the recursive process of social disruption, i.e. an alteration, dysfunction or breakdown of social life in a community (Bauman, 2005), happens in China under the constant influence of controversial political directives.

Societies world-wide are going through a sort of metamorphosis due to the internet and the smarter flow of information, leading to the creation of new "postmodern" individuals unable to stick to already given habits and customs (Brooks & Frolic, 1997: 15), and to the promotion of self-satisfying IoT-addicted individuals incapable of true feelings but also reluctant to accept orders coming from above. To cope with this, the Chinese central government has clearly reformulated its fields of action and strategies of attack against the dissolution of the idea of a cultural unity. At the same time, the Chinese public spheres are still conceivable as "intermediate arenas in which open, public initiatives are undertaken by both officials and the populace" as in the "pre-modern" period (Rankin, 1993: 160). The state presence is thus necessary to *configure a public space as legitimate* to be used by the citizens, and this ideological impasse allows the local governments to manipulate the space and superimpose benefit-driven policies to a place even to the detriment of the common interest (Ding, 1994; Lu Hanlong et al., 2009). As Xu Jiang and Yeh wrote on the appropriation of land for speculative uses,

> "Inter-city competition might be an excuse for construction and the enhancement of property values, rather than the amelioration of the conditions of the city. Competitiveness building primarily involves two *elite groups* in Chinese cities: the local government and commercial interests" (Xu Jiang & Yeh, 2005: 303; emphasis added).

It is also worth noting the ideological loophole that has provided the party with the possibility of introducing the idea of a changing social order that formally keeps a façade of continuity. Jiang Zemin's attack against the dogma of class struggle, "the nostalgic residue of a 'specific' moment of history now long past" (Foley, 2002: 9), served in fact the scope. Avoiding class struggles and blessing the workforce exploitation in the name of the beginning of a new socialist phase, has been the keystone that enabled the "masses" to accept the misunderstanding of social contradictions in the perspective of a material enrichment (Brook & Frolic, 1997: 44, 144 ff.; Gerth, 2011; Griffiths et al., 2010; Zhao Bin, 1997; Zhao Xin & Belk, 2008). Indeed, the process of economic reforms which has amplified the rebuilding of the urban spaces could not take place if a systematic organic re-planning of the social behaviors were not supportive of it. The new governance is reshaping the Chinese urban space as "a complicated social engineering project" (Wu Fulong, 2002: 302), where the final scope promoted by the "glocal" consumer society, is to spread the idea that the party-state provides the individuals with all the means to get rich,

and it is only a question of personal skills if one has success or fails in the social climbing, as theorized by Bauer (in Dorn, 2002: 363).

The ideological process in China was activated through the gradual abandonment of the appellation "comrade" *tongzhi* – only recently come back in vogue in the attempt to restore a veil of equality among the party members (BBC, 2014 and Hornby, 2016) – as a sign of the change in the imagined social grid. In fact, the use of "we" in the official dispatches and the emphasis on collective and egalitarian efforts, have been replaced by the addressing of the individuals – *me, you* – and their personal ability to change their social status. The management of people's free-time has been revoked from the party's responsibilities previously staged e.g. through political study sessions, thus allowing the intensification of leisure activities able to satisfy the individual's personal tastes along with the capacity of generating new needs in the population (Latham, 2007; Rolandsen, 2011; Tomba, 2004; Wang Shaoguang, 2005). Labor value has been therefore encoded in a "new" narrative of fulfillment of personal desires and *producing-to-consume* pattern, where the *Maoist working masses* have gradually undergone a social revolution, turning into the *consumer masses* advocated by Deng Xiaoping (Davis, 2000: 1-22; Lange & Meier, 2009; Perry & Selden, 2010). Nevertheless, the rhetoric used by the party still aims to gather all under the unifying definition of the *Socialist body*, providing the masses with linguistic forms and media images capable of reinvigorating the spirits at least in terms of patriotism and nationalism (Foley, 2002: 7-8). The upper middle-class runs in a faster preferential lane, being moved towards more "Westernized" *family-centered* behaviors. This is particularly evident in the advertising campaigns of the real estate market that also promote the importance of parental model in the education of the kid(s), being the father called to assume a new attitude which for many traditionalists might resemble a fall in feminine roles (cf. Ch. 7). The choice to put pressure on the affections in order to systematize the transmission of market practices to the masses, is a highly winning strategy because it brings into the discussion not only the personal attitudes of the individuals (in the case of the abovementioned advertising, the direct experience is performed through the view of a scene describing a kind of man-nature interaction, with the subsequent emerging of questions related to fatherhood) – but also, and even more dramatically, it brings to light the problematics inherent to social divisions, and the aesthetic appearances necessary to feel the belonging to a closed and atrophied class system. This leads to the necessity to "save the face" in front of society: A certain propensity for *conformism in social practices* is hence revealed. As a matter of fact, Tuan Yi-fu (1979) already highlighted the connection between social places and affections to reveal how human weaknesses can be easily object of manipulation (cf. Allovio, 1999: 25-27, 111 ff.).

The recursive identity-building process goes along with the capacity to identify and discuss the social problems rising from the change: This means that often what in Western society is publicly acclaimed as a deplorable behavior to the majority of the people, thus calling for public attention and discussion, there might not find a parallel in China. Douglas (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982) has explained this behavior as implanted in the different *cultural evaluation of the risk* on the basis of a social grid-group model that puts in relation the regulation of social activities (social control) with social cohesion (loyalty to a community). In the Chinese context, the CCP tends to act as a complementarity tool between the grid-group discrepancies due to the economic development and the cultural differences within the nation itself. Therefore, despite a strong institutional grid (hierarchy), the high sense of communal belonging is still a fundamental to take into consideration whilst approaching the study of phenomena related to the man-nature relation. Striving to maintain a sort of social cohesion internal to the country, the party-state adopts ambivalent structures that could work as a source of signification at different social levels (cf. Ch. 7, Tab. 7.1a). As for the enclosure of public spaces (lakes, river shores, parks, mounts) to build gated

communities, the social response is certainly related to the ruling system, i.e. what is felt to be the "safe" grade of self-censorship while living with the fear to be punished (the laws concerning state security and the disclosure of secret internal affairs are more rigid since 2015). On the other side, it is worth noting that the civilians themselves may not detect a problem or do not evaluate it as such. This is due to 1) the cultural grounding, 2) the grade of knowledge of globally-framed problematics and so the grade of instruction and access to Western media, 3) the perception of the party-state goodness and rightness, 4) a sense of powerlessness in countering the phenomenon, and 5) the awareness of a scale of values and criticality, which imposes to give the precedence to certain social issues rather than others (Xu Jiang & Yeh, 2005: 303). This to explain why the phenomenon of the lake privatization in Chongqing is happening as an under-the-table kind of thing, and very few dare to talk about the problem on a single lake, not to mention the entire policy of land gentrification as a structured organic re-planning of the territory (cf. chapter six for some examples of resistance taken from *Weixin* and the internet).

 To conclude, the process of identification within a hegemonic environment, is far from being a passive encounter with the society where the individual gets out defeated from the battle: In fact, as explained by Žižek, the *fetishism in practice* is driven by human will. The individual, who decides to objectify himself and find a proper representation into a social category, could feel himself as de facto lightened by the weight of *responsibility* (Arendt, 2006; Massey, 2004). The ethical problem is dissolved by pouring the blame on *the other-objectified* or rather on that set of institutions and practices that have being raised to play as subjects, thus denying their intrinsic constitution which is made of human beings *in relation* to each other. The human being as a *critical subject* can reprocess the phenomena by dismantling them into the net of signs that give them significance, including the personal background as a source for further meaning and/or contestation. The re-appropriation of this consciousness should determine the shape for a personal representation of reality. If no dialectics takes place within the human mind, the individual traps himself into a vicious circle of self-objectification because of material benefits, short-term convenience, and cultural beliefs interiorized as the real nature rather than as products of social differentiation.

2.7   Conclusions: breakthroughs in the approach

The composite theoretical framework of this work puts together the analysis of the space practices embedded in the urban, the value of cultural signs, the economic practices and the media as discourse and representation. By combining together "poetics and politics, fiction and facts" (Gregory, 1995: 10), this thesis promotes a point of view where the ideal sphere – constructed of emotions and knowledge – plays a big role in shaping a vision of the materiality that surrounds us. In other terms, not all our learning derives by an empirical experience. Out of the key study that this thesis analyzes and deconstructs as a particular phenomenon embedded within a cultural system of values, the other main concern of this work is to underline the necessity to embrace a wider vision of the reality as a continuous dynamic of events. Maintaining this perspective, the long tradition of Chinese studies on ethics and good government seemed to be a good starting point to question why land privatization, elitist mechanisms of water management, and a fruitful system of visual propaganda on a particular idea of waterscape are so successfully taking place in Chongqing, therefore reproducing a detailed *tangible* version of the ideological statement on which the PRC has been built on, i.e. the supremacy of the party over a society nowadays re-represented as an inhomogeneous mass grouping.

3. The Chinese state-building process: water management and ruling power, water spaces and archetypes, modernist legacy, and memory reconstruction

This chapter is focused on certain aspects of Chinese history and mythological fabric related to water management, urbanization, modernist legacy and memory reconstruction.

The structure of this chapter follows this sequence: 1) "pre-modern" phase and Maoist incursions; 2) republican period; 3) contemporaneity. Being the first part more theoretical, it focuses on China in general, whilst the parts two and three starting from paragraph 3.5, are dedicated to Chongqing. The first part is further subdivided in a) theory and philological discourses, and water spaces; b) representations, i.e. the archetypes concerning power centralization, space construction and urbanization; c) practices of water management. Part two deals with the modernist inputs to local economy and society, and their politicized legacy, whilst the third part is on memory reconstruction in relation to the environment.

3.1   Hydraulic society and philological fundamentals of the Chinese state-building process

Reasoning on what water actually is – its pure materiality which has nothing to share with the "scientific reconceptualization of water as H_2O" (Strang, 2009: 218), and what are its significances to human beings, it seems appropriate to consider water as a "total social fact" (Orlove & Caton, 2010) since its fundamental functions have such a deep impact on men's life that eventually it tends to shape human behaviors in unpredictable ways. Therefore, *the politics of water* represent an aspect of the management of the territory which normative side can reveal the shifts in the holding of power among the state actors (Tvedt & Jakobsson, 2006; Tvedt, 2010), and can also be a reflection of a hegemonic attitude.

As underlined by Blackbourn (2006), the formation of a central government – or a nation in modern terms – able to hold a strong constitutive power, derives also from a "wise" hegemonic ability to decline the natural forces to the purpose, water systems included. Different theories on historical developmental process/progress, all converge in sustaining the necessity of water to the flourishing of ancient societies, from agriculture and disaster management up to more complex entanglements derived by the state monopoly on water and land resources (Mays, 2010). In order to understand the intricate net of impulses that have converged to shape a Chinese historical heritage and a shared culture, this chapter firstly deals with the "hydraulic society" theory elaborated by Wittfogel in the late 1950s. Despite the limits of this theory that are connected with both analytical and historical circumstances, some of its patterns on water management are still a valid instrument to understand how Chinese state and society have been shaping each other for centuries and how these actors are performing nowadays in relation to water.

Wittfogel's Oriental despotism[1] was designed on a *bureaucratic hydraulic management system* implementable in various "pre-modern" periods on diverse geographical areas, provided that a society had to handle with a large mass of water (hydraulic agriculture) rather than a simple "hydroagricolture" characterized by pluvial husbandry.[2] The new nomenclature introduced by Wittfogel was not widely accepted either by the Western academic sphere or by the so-called *semi-Asiatic* social sphere (i.e. USSR).[3] Some remarks were addressed by virtue of the political vision subtended in his book "Oriental Despotism", which covers itself the author's ideological parable from a Communist belief to anti-Communism. His work could be considered as a review of Marx's theories after being convinced that the Asiatic system was based on *hydraulic totalitarianism* (Mattick, 1958).[4] The binary opposition between state power and local powers (e.g. Manning, 2013), not mentioned in Wittfogel due to the belief in a ubiquitous presence of the central power at the local level, has fixed the theory as a precise product of its times, thus eclipsing the innovative aspects of the approach (Ulmen, 1978). However, by reviewing the theory through a postmodern lens, it becomes possible to apply it to the different levels of society – the Chinese one in our case – by following a diacronic pattern, according with the idea that the meaning is always in process, therefore incomplete and unstable, malleable by the user towards a process that Derrida (1995) called of *supplementarity*. For it is finally possible to extrapolate three constants from the "hydraulic society" theory without stumbling in the contingent obstacles created by the context (*ibid.*):

1) The persistence of a strong bureaucratic apparatus (technocracy);
2) The main role played by water for both power acquisition and welfare improvement;
3) The social status and population's grade of acceptability of local politics.

Considering the level of intricacy of Chinese networks and people's behaviors, the Wittfogelian idea based on a primacy of water management in the focus of the bureaucratic efforts, appears to be somewhat biased. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the control over the hydraulic forces still represents a crucial point in Chinese government discourses over legitimacy, and an inexhaustible source of coercion. In this sense the "hydraulic society" theory reveals the strong connection between the uses of water made by the central government – and hence the political maneuvers stipulated locally – and how the modification of the waterscape not only influences local society, but also shapes certain needs as a mixture of local traditions, economic expectations, and grandiose dreams of supremacy. In detail, the Chongqing paradigm catches all these prerogatives and, moreover, it imbues them with a spirit of historical continuity that is itself a contingent product of the local bureaucracy's narratives on legitimacy and land/water reclamation practices. Becoming part of the orthodox political structure, these

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[1] It is worth noting that Marx initially delimited the *Oriental question* to the area of Constantinople, Romania and Moldova whilst under the clutches of Russian expansion (Marx, 1857). Cf. Marx (1951) for a miscellanea of Marx's articles concerning China; a collection of Marx's articles published in the NYDT is available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/newspapers/new-york-tribune.htm. On the Western narratives over the Orient and "Orientalism", cf. March (1987: 23-45) and Said (1978).
[2] Wittfogel appointed *hydroagricolture* as typical of Western Europe. He considered this phenomenon as the reason for the lack of Western theories on how to massively use and control water (Wittfogel, 1957: 17 ff.).
[3] In view of the lessons derived from the two classic economists R. Jones and J. S. Mill on the *Asiatic society*, and Marx's upgrade to the "Asiatic mode of production" later supported by Engels, Lenin extrapolated that concept and applied it to the Tsarist Russia, which he intended as a "semi-Asiatic" and therefore despotic society. Later the Russian theorist will reject this idea because of Stalin's re-editing of Marx's essays on the Asiatic mode of production (Wittfogel, 1959: 5-10, 369-411).
[4] Ward (1997: 57) has also underlined how Wittfogel's ideas about water management have been ideologically overturned by some liberal scholars and statesmen to conclude that hydric matters can only been dealt through a sophisticated civil engineering technology and huge international contracts made available by central governments, free circulation of capital, and supranational organisms. Liberal societies have implemented a sort of hydraulic despotism that Wittfogel had instead explained as an "Asiatic" archaic peculiarity typical also of the USSR (cf. the TVA approach further in this chapter).

discourses might also have placebo effects over the popular reception of local politics that clearly bring benefit only to a certain segment of the population. Questioning which role is covered by local people with regards to Chongqing water management, it is necessary to look at the Chinese state-building process as handed down through its narratives. As mentioned by Allouche (2010),

> "the accumulation of power by the state is primarily through the state's capacity to monitor, circumscribe and control resources and people within its territory. This is usually undertaken with the setting up of an *administration at all levels* (from the local to the national) to guarantee the state's power. Two key components of state-building are the process of *centralization* and the creation of *legal rules over ownership* and property right" (emphasis added).

Placing the Chinese scenario into this framework, it emerges that from the "pre-modern" era[5] onwards the state has been assuming control over water through the mingling of religious and political practices: The sequence of dynasties is characterized by the common figure of the Emperor who acts like a divinity and symbiotically understands the will of the major deity, i.e. the Yellow River. After the revolution in 1911, those social practices and rituals that were connected to the "decadent feudal society", were still put in practice – mostly in the countryside – and actually helped the Communist vanguard in securing the farmers' support, and in consolidating the power of Mao Zedong who was later glorified as a deity (Landsberger, 1996).[6] In fact, water has always been not only a key point in the state-building process, but also a source for a positive social response. Water management on a big scale was and is still possible only on a centralized level, and when the state applies its power to improve the living conditions of the citizens, this mechanism of social benefit helps the state in ensuring more stability to its *infrastructure* (Allouche, 2010; Lucas, 1998; Mann, 1984).

Looking at the process of state-building in Chinese "pre-modern" times, earlier than the Zhou dynasty the territory and its resources were under the domain of a central power hold by a religious class as evidenced by a large production of bronze vases used for divination (Pulleyblank, 2000: 23; cf. Allan, 2007), a practice that will become a paramount source of social cohesion at the time of Confucius (VI-V century BCE) through the widespread mobilization of an intelligentsia and the consolidation of a central reign where local powers found self-representation and a source of emulation.[7] The fact that a large

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[5] The Economic History Association has dated "pre-modern" China from 221 BCE to ca. 1800 CE. Cf. Deng Kent (2004).

[6] The importance of religion in ancient Chinese state building is endorsed through the diverse archeological findings scattered throughout China and connected with sacrificial rituals and practices of divination such as *pyromancy*, or the proofs of other rituals that show the bond between people and nature and where the sovereign acted as intermediary (Granet, 1951, 1982), e.g. during the feasts connected with seasonal changes, spring especially (cf. Lewis, 2006: 134 ff.). For what concerns water, apart from the ancient chants that praise Chinese rivers and subtend other contents through metaphors (i.e. love, loyalty to the sovereign, etc.), there are also foundation myths concerning rivers as proper deities. Han ethnicity derives its name from the Han River, while the Yellow River was the symbol of the emperor. The Grand Canal or *dayunhe* is itself a sign of the infrastructural power of the imperial state, but it also assumes significance in connection with the Mandate of Heaven, *tianming*, according to which Heaven granted the sovereign and his dynasty the right to rule as long as he could exert his power with wisdom and benevolence. The holy power of the Yellow River that like a dragon flows through the North China Plane, has been impressively underlined in 1988 by the TV miniseries "River Elegy" (*heshang*), a documentary shown on CCTV which portrayed the decay of traditional China and the wish for a social and cultural renewal (Barmé, 1993; Cai Shenshen, 2016; Chen Zu-Yan, 1993; Moser, 2011; Zarrow, 1990). On water as a religious tool and the aquatic symbolism, cf. Eliade (1948). Other symbolic combinations are traceable e.g. in a Mao Zedong's writing which purpose was to explicate the ability of the Communist ruling class to identify itself with the people: "the Communist Party acts like the fish, people as water. In water there could be no fish, but fish cannot live apart from water" – *gongchandang shi yu, laobaixing shi shui; shui li keyi meiyou yu, yu keshi yongyuan ye libukai shui* (Negri & Tamburello, 2007: 42). On the relationship between the development of large-scale water infrastructures and the *euhemerisation* of religious deities, cf. Strang (2014).

[7] The Zhou dynasty firstly covered the territory of the Shaanxi-Shanxi highland (proto-Zhou period), and later could extend its influence up to the actual provinces of Shandong, Liaoning, Hubei and Anhui. It is inappropriate to talk about a unitary state at that time; the idea of a political unity was created later by Han historiography in order to insert the dynasty in a

amount of water is needed in vase production to implement the metallurgic process, makes it also plausible to link this knowledge to the creation of a sophisticated water supply system (cf. e.g. Wikander, 2000: 127-149).[8]

 Fundamental in the Chinese state-building process there has been the philosophical thought of Legalism that was behind the unification of the Empire in 221 BCE. Legalist thinkers like Han Feizi promoted authoritarism through the means of *fa* (law code), *shu* (political téchne), and *xingming* ("shapes and names", i.e. the title or denomination of a function, and the ways in which that function is put into practice).[9] All these characteristics are necessary to the sovrain in order to maintain control, but they cannot work apart from *shi*, a momentum, power or particular circumstance. According to Jullien (1992), *shi* is involved in the formation of a unified empire mainly through its application in three fields: Military strategy, politics, and "logic of manipulation" (as cited in Raphals, 1998: 171; cf. Cheng, 2000; Saussy, 1996). The legalist thought enabled de facto the unification of the various states under the Qin king (*wang*) who renamed himself as imperator (*di*). The power of *di* resides in his very presence: As a Taoist saint, the sovereign has no need to show his power because he practices the *wuwei*, a "non action" that incorporates an absolute efficacy (Cheng, 2000: 247; Han Feizi, VIII).[10]

The political thoughts offered by legalism paved the way for the unification of the central states into a single territorial entity ruled by one person through the voice of his ministers and bureaucrats. This need had been previously addressed by Mozi (479-376 BCE) who ascribed the cause of crisis and disorder of his historical period to the absence of a ruler able to spread a sense of justice (*yi*) uniform for everyone.[11] The holistic philosophical thought developed during the Han dynasty had then the purpose of creating a *cosmological and ethical basis for the continuity* of the empire as a "structure entitled to govern over a cultural unity". As appointed by Jinfan Zhang (2014: 110), by the period of Song dynasty (960-1279 CE) the rule by force as championed by the legalists was merged with the Confucian principle of benevolence (*ren*) and their combination forged the foundations of the ruling system in "pre-modern" China.[12]

Chinese historical continuity in terms of ethnicity and social structure, has been the focus of the historical reconstruction of the Chinese social evolution made by the "Communist Program" (*Il programma comunista*, 1957-58). The Communist line is based on the assumption that China went through a huge class struggle many centuries before Western countries did, and precisely, it was the unification of

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context of historical continuity and legitimacy. However, the increasing cultural cohesion linked to the complex ritual system of the Zhou court, has indeed paved the way for an intense integration on cultural, political, and economic terms among the populations of the Yellow River Basin and the Yangzi Basin (Sabattini & Santangelo, 2005: 53 ff.). On the emulative power as source for cultural integration, see e.g. Burke (1998, Chs. IV and V), and Esherick (2006: 229 ff.).

[8] The productions of pottery, silk, salt and wine are also sectors that need a large amount of water. On the ancient drainage systems designed in China, cf. Zheng Xiaoyun (2015).

[9] Cf. Han Feizi Ch. VIII ("Wielding the Sceptre", par. 3), available at http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=1918.

[10] Cf. Han Feizi, *ibid.* (par. 1; W. K. Liao, Trans., 1939),
http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=xwomen/texts/hanfei.xml&style=xwomen/xsl/dynaxml.xsl&chunk.id=d2.8&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d2.20&doc.lang=bilingual; and *ibid.* Ch. V ("The Tao of the Sovereign"),
http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/saxon/servlet/SaxonServlet?source=xwomen/texts/hanfei.xml&style=xwomen/xsl/dynaxml.xsl&chunk.id=d2.5&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d2.20&doc.lang=bilingual.
Water is often cited by Laozi as a metaphor of the *dao*, the Way, e.g. *Daodejing*, Ch. VIII (http://ctext.org/dao-de-jing; cf. also Allan, 1997: 138). Laozi applies the Taoist concept of *wuwei* as life principle. On the contrary, the Taoist pattern in Han Feizi is achieved through an acting process, i.e. the act of governing. In fact, legalist thinkers were mainly focused on the discipline of government based on the ruler supremacy, rather than building a philosophical basis for their politics. The only thinker going beyond realism in search for philosophical explanations, has been Han Feizi (Cheng, 2000; Pines, 2014).

[11] Mozi, Book III ("Identification with the Superior", par. 1-2), http://ctext.org/mozi/book-3 (W. P. Mei, Trans.). Cf. also Mozi, Book I ("On the necessity of Standards"), http://ctext.org/mozi/on-the-necessity-of-standards; *ibid.*, Book IV ("Universal Love"), http://ctext.org/mozi/book-4. Cf. Cheng (2000: 79-96, 132-137), and Graham (1989, Ch. II).

[12] On a Confucian holistic philosophy and its role in modern knowledge, cf. e.g. Rošker (2009, 2014) and Wang Hui (2008).

China under the emperor Qin Shihuang to mark the shift from the aristocratic feudalism to *state feudalism*, a process that took place in Europe only after the Middle Ages. According to this view, state feudalism as economic base and absolute monarchy as superstructure have favored a sort of Chinese historical continuity. Furthermore, in the context of a Marxist unilineal evolutionary view (cf. Steward, 1945), Chinese state feudalism was praised for prompting both intellectual progress and economic welfare, being slavery admitted only in the private, and not representing a state means of exploitation. Wittfogel (1939: 390 ff., 1957: 438 ff.) also endorsed this idea, considering the corvée system as a more appropriate way to describe the relationship between the state – represented by bureaucracy – and the people, particularly in matters of hydraulic management.[13] Interestingly, Bourdieu explains the corvée as a tacit agreement between the ruling elite and the rest of society (Bourdieu, 2013: 192).

3.2   Economic practices and social relations embedded in water spaces

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, the corvée system was primarily enforced as a practice of flood risk management apt to ensure the continuity of agricultural activities, fishing, and harvest of fluvial crops. Other means of bureaucratic control on waters was a tax collection system, since navigating internal rivers was considered more secure than the coastal navigation affected by the piracy phenomenon. It was also faster in comparison to the ground transportation, making the transport less expensive through the exploitation of the water currents. Thirdly, water management opened to the possibility to regulate the movement of goods within the territory controlled by the emperor thanks to toll systems that could ensure the safety of the state monopoly on certain assets (e.g. salt; cf. par. 3.4). These three points not only characterized the political economy of certain areas in "pre-modern" China, but also created peculiar water-related spaces where institutionalized social practices could recursively happen, forging the specificities of a local culture (cf. Brook, 2013; Winchester, 1996).

The institutional tributary system (*zongfan*) taking place from Ming dynasty to the end of Qing dynasty, is the expression of a strong centripetal power driving from the peripheries to the centre, to balance the opposite centrifugal force, i.e. what Mann saw as a "territorially federal [society]" (Mann, 1984: 205). It reflected a domestic order based on Confucian moral principles, thus representing a proper system of tributary rituals (i.e. taxes) that local people were subjected to as an act of mutual awareness of the respective duties (Smith, 1996, 2013; Song Nianshen, 2012).[14] The delivery of the annual tribut was entrusted to a water transport system: The "tribute grain" practice, in fact, was called "*caoyun*", which indicates the transport of grain by water to the capital (Worcester, 1971: 320-323; Wu Jingrong & Cheng, 2007: 147-148). Wittfogel also supported this vision of a central authority freely entitled by a group of

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[13] In 132 BCE the Yellow River broke its banks and overflowed: It flooded sixteen districts, and the river banks were repaired only twenty-three years later, when Emperor Wu-Ti decided to personally coordinate the works (Pasquarelli, 1983). Similar episodes appeared repeatedly along all Chinese history, and every time the central power alone could properly reorganize such large-scale hydraulic systems, being it able to manage the necessary capital and labor. In this sense, Pasquarelli identifies the central power as a capitalist and despotic one. On the river flood of 132 BCE see also Dillon (2013); on the literary commitment of Emperor Wu-Ti, especially on water topics, cf. Knechtges (2015).

[14] Smith (2013) mentions the "tribute grain" system (*caoyun* or *caoyuan*) as an internal state-managed mechanism affecting the population, but a formalized presentation of tributes was also considered a necessary step for foreign delegations in order to be accepted at court. While many Asian reigns had recognized the superiority of Chinese civilization on the basis of their sophisticated rituals and manners, and asked for protection – to such a point that many maps realized during Qing dynasty represent the surrounding countries as part of China, the so called "Greater China" or "Tianxia", misunderstandings and resentments arose in the 19th century when some European delegations kept showing disinterest in the court protocol.

people to deliver services in return for a voluntary submission: In his understanding, those people were farmers requiring a leader in a context of development of a hydraulic agriculture. Relying on an institution was an *informed choice*, not a result of a passive submission to power. However, Wittfogel reached the conclusion that choosing an institutional power to cover people's needs had deprived individuals of freedom in comparison to those Western societies that elaborated different patterns of social and economic development (Wittfogel, 1957: 17-19).

The "population's desire for stability" in the "hydraulic society" theory is a discourse that finds a fundamental already in the literature of the early 16th century, when some members of the Chinese intelligentsia advocating a more equal fiscal and labour mobilization between local people and gentry in matter of water management (i.e. the corvée service), argued that the state should have enforced policies against the gentry's exemption privileges. The scholar Ling Yunyi (fl. 1540s-1580s) advanced in the discussion stating that "all landlords were happy to make financial contributions and phisically participate in hydraulic works as long as there was *good official leadership*" (Li Cho-ying, 2012: 414, emphasis added).[15] In matter of water management, in the late Ming period (ca. 1550-1644) part of the intelligentsia envisioned the coming of new force relations in the state-gentry-local communities' triangle, asking for a "new social order" where social responsibility and personal benefits could find a balance. As a successfull attempt to legitimize centralizing policies while asking for more equity and saving state finances, these measures entrusted the state with a greater capacity of shaping and coordinating local communities's activities while forcing local elites to be actively involved in public works in terms of payments and withdrawal of exemption's benefits (*ibid.*). In this context, Mann's view of a "pre-modern" state unable to fulfill the duties of an infrastructural state (Mann, 1984: 205), does not match the historiographic data (Elvin, 1975; He Wenkai, 2015; Li Cho-ying, 2012).

The ideas of *informed choice and benefit sharing* come close also to the discourse over the "collective power" postulated by Arrighi, a type of successful *hegemonic power* reached through a "non-zero-sum game in which all parties benefit" (in Harvey, 2003: 37). It is precisely the spirit of cooperation between central government and local authorities which should enable a kind of bond concocted as a sort of *mutuality*, where the central government should "demonstrate compassion for the people (*shi tixi*)" (Rowe, 1988: 373-374). He Wenkai (2015) evaluates this mechanism as an attempt of the central power to strengthen its *legitimacy* locally through a financial support to the benefit of the public. Apart from human benevolence, there were also the economic implications derived by water disasters on agriculture, commercial navigation, and land reclamation, three management areas under the direction of the central government and through which the main revenues used to come. Allocating state funds on smaller water projects, could have helped in the maintenance of a *status quo* not only in the annual state budget but also in terms of social stability.

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[15] This narrative is part of a broader strategy that between 15th and 16th centuries aimed at fixing standards on the involvement in small water management projects. It was based on the "making-profit" principle, *deli*, i.e. the (agricultural) benefit derived by the realization of a hydraulic project. The government is depicted as an active protagonist in providing solutions for a balanced compromise among state finances, common people, and gentry-landlords (Li Cho-ying, 2012).

3.3 Archetypes to convey a knowledge: representative models to explicate the man-nature relation, power centralization, and the making of the urban

Some aspects of the contemporary Chinese *Weltanschauung* find their origin back to that set of myths and beliefs that are a major component of the culture of a people. Following the definition given by Geertz (2000: 89), culture is

> "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

Symbols are signs conveying a knowledge which is temporally transferred but could also be subject of modifications in accordance with the spectrum of meanings that the recipient has acquired and is able himself to reproduce. Culture as the domain of a people, must be shared and undestood in its practices. The Chinese "pre-modern" belief in the supremacy of space over place, and the tendency to "order space" following abstract procedures, have brought to the building of both physical and mental infrastructures that formally tend to a cosmic perfection: The "visual grid" that the same Duke of Zhou tried to apply on his domains as a device to reach a perfect administration of them (Tuan Yi-Fu, 2003: 33), is also recognizable in the so-called *Yujitu* map of the 12ᵗʰ century that represents Chinese coastlines and main rivers using a grid of 5,000 squares with each line corresponding to a *li* (± 0,5 km).[16] Visual supports as part of those entanglements necessary for the reinforcement of a ruling power, are then accepted as *representations of the truth* by a community sharing a culture. The idea of a world represented through a "grid system", is therefore not to be conceived as an imposition from above but rather as the result of a flow of signs that arise in response to common needs (cf. Cosgrove, 1988: 254-276; Harley in Cosgrove, 1988: 277-312; Park Hyunhee, 2010).

The process of state-building in China is strictly interrelated with the idea of a central power and the vision of a harmonious community where everyone has clear his/her role in accordance with the Confucian requisites of *zhengming* ("rectification of names"; cf. Confucius, XIII, 3). The complexity of Chinese society is therefore traceable in those spatial signs that allow the performance of specific social activities. In particular, the *Chinese urban lifestyle* has always been carried out within a space enclosed by *walls*, to the extent that the imagery linked with community experience is shaped to visualize a rectangular geometric pattern. The attitude of reproducing an imagined "spatial map" in the physical process of founding a settlement and naming it with the term "city" (*chengshi*), i.e. "a market place surrounded by walls", finds its raison

Figure 3.1. The city as imagined landscape: *Wang Cheng* or the ideal capital city as drawn in *Yung-lo Ta-tien*, 1407 (in Rykwert, 2002: 215)

d'être in the tension between the ideal city as depicted e.g. in the *Kaogongji* ("Book of Diverse Crafts"), and the city as a real product of social activities and environmental conditions (Heng Chye Kiang, 1999). The

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[16] As defined in the Chinese National Geography website (2001), Chinese "pre-modern" maps were realized in *xieyihua*, i.e. "freehand drawing or painting [in traditional Chinese style]". Only during Qing dynasty, Kangxi reign (1661-1722), a map was realized after on-site surveys and explorations of land and boundaries, and called "Overview of Emperor's Lands" (*Huangyu quan lantu*). On the *Yujitu* map cf. Akin (2012), Akin and Mumford (2012). Chinese ancient planimetry as *Yujitu*, anticipated of centuries what is considered to be the passage to modernity in European urbanism, i.e. the first organic urban expansion of Ferrara in Italy based on a geometric pattern of streets and crossroads (end 15ᵗʰ cent.). The place turned to be a spatial domain delimited by walls, as explained in Chinese texts (Farinelli, 2003: 141 ff.).

distribution of spaces in the imagined map (Fig. 3.1), follows a pattern in which the centre covers a sacred role as a reproduction itself of the Chinese cosmography, where China is located at the centre of the world on a raised ground to symbolize the particular bond between the "middle kingdom" (*Zhongguo*) and Heaven. According to this narrative, moving away from the centre one would meet lands inhabited by barbarians, and the world boundaries correspond to the "four seas" (*si hai*). This *imagined Sinocentric geography* representing the world, has been strongly undermined during all the 19th century, and gradually abandoned after the fall of the last emperor to give way to a form of *racial exclusiveness* imbued with nationalistic shades (Dikötter, 1992; Stone, 1988; Harley, 1989).[17]

 As in Fig. 3.1, *the city as landscape* can be theorized as a collision point between what Hirsch defines "foreground actuality" (the place) and the "background potentiality" (the space or representation; in Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995: 4). This juxtaposition of perception and ideas promotes a process of discovery that in Western discourses might be read as the recognition of a loss in the direct contact with nature (*ibid.*: 21),[18] but in the Chinese case it seems more to represent a complementarity: What could be considered the archetype, a first model of perfection, is overturned in the graphic sign of the map. The peculiarity of "pre-modern" Chinese maps lies in the glorious combination of human artifacts built on the territory and the limits set by the natural environment. The curved lines of the hills, the rivers, and the city walls represent themselves the harmonious balance that Chinese people were supposed to have reached through a wise acceptance of the natural forces, for the disposition of the human settings should be rigorous in accordance with the vital breath (*qi*) commonly associated with the *fengshui* practice (Bruun, 2003).[19] An example of this artistic-spatial approach that further marks the distance from the Western geometric sign, is given by the map in Fig. 3.2. It was drown between 1820 and 1850 and it represents the western part of the Sichuan Plateau with Chongqing in the middle (square box) and all the area subordinated to the prefecture (dashed line). Each market location is characterized by its proximity to a river: The map itself has been realized starting from water rather than the soil, a fact that underlines the importance of the local water system as a means for communication and trades. Distances could appear inaccurate but as revealed by Brook (2016: 106-132, 171-176), Chinese cartographers used also to define trajectories and distances on the basis of boat travel time, thus creating maps that differed from

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[17] With the historical transition to the Republic in 1912 and the forced open-up of the country to imperialist powers, efforts were made to describe this shift in harmony with Confucian tradition, i.e. mapping China no more as the anachronistic centre of the world but still as the centre of Asia (Dikötter, 1992: 77-80). Giving significance to the state-building process, the pragmatic evaluation of the process of power-shaping was made in order to create new narratives cohesive with the past. On the human imaginary on "space and myth", and the positioning of man in space, cf. also Tuan Yi-fu (1979: 393-396, 404-408).
[18] Green (in Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995: 31-42) has analyzed the proximity between the rise to power of the Parisian bourgeoisie in the early 19th century, and the shaping of the concept of bucolic landscape in artistic products as part of a new cultural practice focused on "actually 'experiencing' the countryside" (*ibid.*: 35). Li Zehou (2004: 203-232) embraces the same discourse on the process of urban drift of the emergent country-gentry, and the sense of nostalgia for the abandoned country house, to explain the affirmation of the landscape painting in the Northern Song period (960-1126 CE). In particular, Li argues that the aesthetic change is closely related to the social modifications taking place, i.e. the end of a feudal period where landlords used to live in the countryside (vs the aristocratic landlords living in the city), and the passage to a new phase when the literati belonging to the landlord class, started moving to the city. The sense of nostalgia fed by the detachment from nature, might be the origin of this new art where the natural landscape evokes primordial feelings.
[19] As explained by Bruun (2003), *fengshui* practices are not just a way to harmonize mankind with the physical environment. The *fengshui* cultural implications cover both the natural and the social sphere, since *fengshui* is used to unveil the specific "position" a man should maintain in the different situations, looking at nature and cosmology. These positions could also contradict the common social rules, making *fengshui* work in antagonism to state cultural orthodoxy (*ibid.*: 3-17; Anagnost, 1987). This sort of fluidity inscribed in a pattern of continuity is in common with what expressed by Strang (1997) on the Australian Aborigines and their way of positioning themselves in the territory so as to resemble the archetypal map. This process follows a fixed pattern: The map/dream is built on the territory, but it is also subject to changes of reading depending on the circumstances, thus determining a sort of fluidity (cf. Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995: 184-209). Nowadays in China some visible traces of the ancestors can still be found locally, in particular in the toponyms (cf. Spencer, 1941).

the European ones, which were based on a so-called "Western obsession for triangles".[20] Therefore, the functionality of the map is unquestionable, and the stylistic sign is the portray of the cultural background (cf. Ch. 2 for the role of painting in delineating Chinese aesthetics).
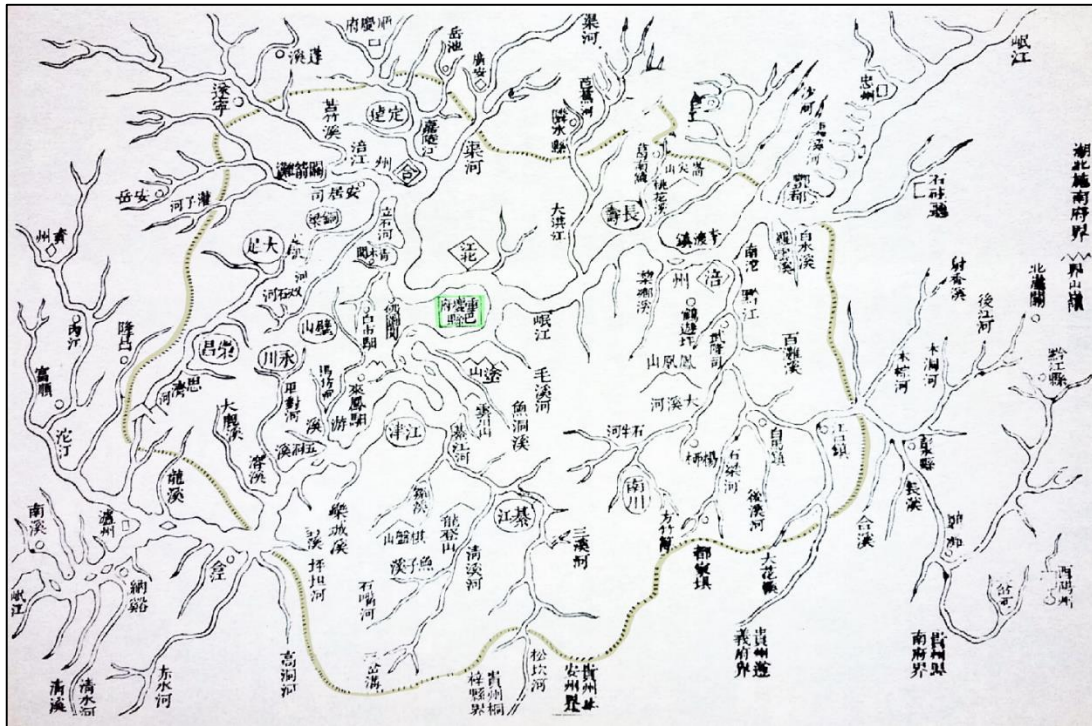
Figure 3.2. Map of the territory of Chongqing Prefecture - *Chongqing fu yu ditu* **(retrieved from Li Linfang & Lei, 2007: 7; modified by the author)**

According to Chinese tradition, controlling and modifying the environment should not be perpetuated to assert human superiority to nature; the practice should rather make more tangible the ideal harmony between men and nature (Granet: 1968). In the making of Chinese civilization among the most important foundation myths, the figure of *Yu the Great – Da Yu* covers a prominent role as he is considered the founder of the Xia dynasty, conventionally reigning between 2205 and 2147 BCE. Yu is associated with the Great Flood ("Gun-Yu myth", *Gun Yu zhishui*) that theoretically affected the Chinese Plateau during the reign of Emperor Yao (III millenium BCE). Yu is famed for having tamed the floods through the construction of artificial irrigation channels, thus abandoning the previous water control system consisting of dikes, and employed by his alleged father Gun to block the flood. Two opposite behaviors are here described, and the winning one is that which enables nature to express itself in its full potential rather than obstructing its flow (cf. Lewis, 2006: 147-148). Based on the legend, Yu's majesty lies in what could be defined a Taoist inclusive approach to nature.[21]

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[20] Thales of Miletus is regarded as a pioneer in the development of the Western thought for his attempt to measure the height of a pyramid, sublimating a three-dimensional form into a two-dimensional one: "This metamorphosis from Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 100-170 CE) on, can be considered as the foundation act of Western geography" (Farinelli, 2003: 32-37). Geometric calculations became necessary with the opening of oceanic routes in the 16th century; the Qing dynasty on the contrary embarked on a path of strengthening land borders, with little interest in maritime navigation.

[21] The historicity of China Great Flood and Xia dynasty might be supported by recent scientific analysis made along the Yellow River and in particular in the Jishi Gorge, Qinghai Province, where a landslide-dam caused by an earthquake around 1922 ± 28 BCE, was the cause of a prominent flood not long afterwards (Montgomery, 2016; Wu Qinglong et al., 2016).

According to the *Book of Documents*, *Book of Xia* section, the areas of Sichuan (including Chongqing), Western Hubei, Shaanxi and Southern Gansu turned to be one of the nine administrative provinces established by Yu after his rise to power, the so-called *Liang Zhou*:[22]

> "The south of (mount) Hua and the Blackwater, were (the boundaries of) Liang Zhou. The (hills) Min and Bo were made capable of *cultivation*. The Tuo and Qian *streams were conducted by their proper channels* [...] The soil of this province was greenish and light" (emphasis added).[23]

Each province was taxed on the basis of soil productive capacity, which was determined through a survey; land allocation and water management were clearly defined as fundamental means to manage the societal living in such a vast territory, and to ensure the functioning of the agricultural production system: "*The sources of the rivers were cleared; the marshes were well banked.*" [24]

To conclude, mythical episodes become a vehicle for the transmission of an ancient geographical knowledge, and at the same time they help the strenghtening of the central power as grounded in the most remote tradition. As pointed out by Li Zehou (2004: 14 ff.), Chinese mythological entanglements are derived by a process of accumulation and superimposition of new expressive elements over the existing substrate, until *humanization* and rationalization prevailed, and human heroes became the main subject. Despite the changes in shape, the apotropaic purposes of the myth remain the same, namely what Barthes called "signification", i.e. the ability of the myth to designate and notificate a meaning, make it understandable, and enforce the associated practice (Barthes, 1994: 193-199). [25] The aforementioned geographical descriptions show the importance of the language for the process of recreating the environment in representative terms. By explicating a mental image through words, the given space is fixed and becomes real, ready to be used for the recursive spatialization of the designated social practices and acts of resistance. The analysis of the imagined space helps to understand the practices and behaviors of a people in a certain environment, and cartography can be understood as being itself a sign of that imagined spatiality, and of its values and ideological beliefs.

3.4 Téchne: experimenting water control in ancient China, and its legacy for the consolidation of modern technocracy and space renewal processes

> [dredging waterways] is not the same
> as other kinds of corvée.
> Geng Ju, *Qing reformist* (in Li Choying, 2012: 429)

To establish water systems that could not be handled exclusively by the masses, the prerequisite was the formation of a technical knowledge specifically owned by a group of adepts (Baghel, 2013). However, any hydraulic performance could not take place without the huge efforts of masses of workers. Other civilizations enjoyed the benefits of creating water management systems through the employment/exploitation of the local people, such as in Egypt (Mays, 2010: 53-65). According to Wittfogel, at the local level the water management system was operated following a *hierarchy of power*, where work organization was supposedly handled by those bureaucrats that detained the know-how and

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[22] Borders as defined by Chinese Academy of Science – Nanjing Soil Research Institute (2007).
[23] In *Yu Gong* ("Tribute of Yu"), par. 9, http://ctext.org/shang-shu/tribute-of-yu/ens. (J. Legge, Trans.).
[24] *Ibid.*, par. 24 (J. Legge, Trans.).
[25] Cf. Eliade (2008: 392 ff.) on the concept of myth as "exemplary story".

jurisdictional power to enforce community actions such as the implementation of new water drainage methods. [26] Furthermore, the idea of local people employed in maintenance works suggests the implementation of a corvée system based on a process of *mutual cooperation* between state and population (cf. Brook, 2005: 63-80; Elvin, 2004: 115-124; Hassan, 1986: 483). He Wenkai (2015) also emphasizes how in Qing China (1750-1850) the state played a greater role in reframing social particular interests in favor of the public interest, pursuing a "new social order" already claimed at the end of Ming dynasty. Li Cho-ying (2012) reported several examples of water management specialists and reformists working together with the central government in order to use *state coercion and negotiation* for the purpose of rebinding the ties between local communities and gentry's landlords, with the scope of mobilizing everyone in the name of *social responsibility* and *benefit*. Local population was justified if unable to perform good results in water engineering without the financial support of the state and/or the gentry.[27]

In China an early reference of water management is given among others by the still efficient irrigation system of Dujiangyan, near Chengdu in Sichuan Province, planned by Li Bing who served as administrator of the area under the rule of the State of Qin in the 3rd century BCE (cf. Fig. 3.4; Willmott, 1989)[28]. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal is the longest artificial channel in the world, and some of its sections date back to the 5th century BCE: The completion of this majestic work took place under the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE). The jesuit Matteo Ricci describing his boat trip from Nanjing to Beijing, mentions the sophisticated system of docks regulating the flow of vessels in the two directions. Taxes were applied to each section of the channel, establishing a great state business since a good amount of products were transported by exploiting the river currents (Spence, 2010: 104 ff.; cf. also Brook, 2005; Hui Victoria Tin-bor, 2005: 105).[29] In fact, the state monopoly on water was quite visible also through the hydraulic engineering works set up along the waterways, like in Fig. 3.3. The first image is the earliest example of painting representing a water-powered pusher or reciprocator – *zhakou panche* (lit. a sluiceway flat wheel), realized by the painter Wei Xian (end Five Dynasties, beginning of Song dynasty). The machine is a water mill workshop composed by a horizontally-positioned waterwheel and an upper structure for the grinding of grain; the production of hydropower was ensured by the slope of the terrain. It started to be used in China around the 2nd century BCE. According to Needham, "while in Europe the slave- or donkey-powered 'Pompeian' mill emerged first, in China the waterwheel took precedence, and when animal-powered mills appeared in about A.D. 175, they were called 'dry water mills'" (as cited in Gies & Gies, 1994: n.p.). The second image represents the act of producing cast iron through a blast furnace alimented by a water drainage machine (*shuipai*). Also in this case, the wheel is horizontally located on the surface of the river bank. According to tradition, the engineer Tu Shi invented this

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[26] Rowe (1988: 377 ff.) explains how in Echeng County, Hubei Province, where the Fankou dam was supposed to be built in the second half of 19th century, water management was controlled by two clans belonging to the "upper gentry" (*zheng shen*) since some of its members, who passed the lower levels of the imperial exams, were occupied as local officials.

[27] Based on the assumption that local people, gentry included, had to be the primary payers of water management according to the grade of benefit, in the late Ming the jurisdiction approved a process of "having the wealthy pay the money and the poor provide the labor" – *furen chu cai, qiongren chu li* (Xue Shangzhi, ca. 1551 CE, in Li Cho-ying, 2012: 415).

[28] Clarke in his analysis of Dujiangyan water systems underlines how the entire complex is composed of small manageable engineering segments easily handled by local people without the need of an advanced scientific knowledge. This approach to the hydraulic management has been missing in the grandiose water systems planned since the 1920s, where the local social responsibility was dismissed in the name of profit (as cited in Wards, 1997: 59-60).

[29] On the role played by the Christian missionaries, in particular the Jesuits, in the flow of information between the Far East and the West, see e.g. Lach (1945) writing about Leibniz's discourse on *enlightened despotism* and the Chinese values as an ethical model, and Mungello (1971) on Leibniz's interpretation of Neo-Confucianism. Cf. also App (2010) and Ducornet (2003).

machine in 31 CE. The vertical wheel was also in use since the 3rd-4th century CE as trip-hammer, "not only in forges, but also in hulling rice and crushing ore" (*ibid.*)[30]
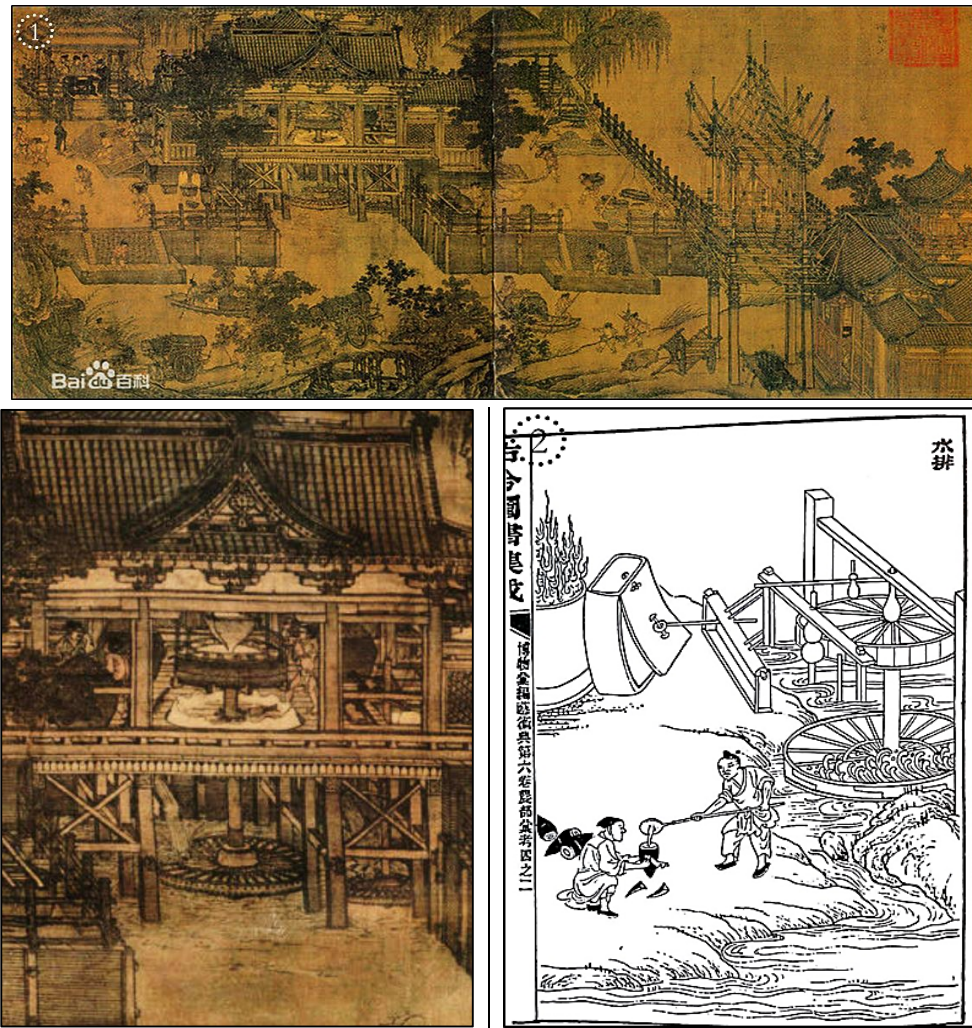
Figure 3.3. Hydraulic engineering and power. 1) On the top: *Zha Kou Pan Che Tu Chuan*, **drawing of a water-powered pusher or reciprocator by Wei Xian, ca. 965 CE, and particular in the bottom left (© Baidu, URL: https://baike.baidu.com/pic/%E9%97%B8%E5%8F%A3%E7%9B%98%E8%BD%A6%E5%9B%BE/9849312/0/7acb0a46f21fb e09624ecf7668600c338744adbb?fr=lemma&ct=single#aid=0&pic=7acb0a46f21fbe09624ecf7668600c338744adbb, https://gss0.bdstatic.com/- 4o3dSag_xI4khGkpoWK1HF6hhy/baike/c0%3Dbaike150%2C5%2C5%2C150%2C50/sign=b8147fcf76cb0a46912f836b0a0a9d41/ b17eca8065380cd725c43fd8ac44ad3459828129.jpg). 2) On the right:** *Shui Pai*, **water-powered pusher from the** *Thu Shu Chi Chhêng* **encyclopedia, 1726 CE (retrieved in Needham, 1970: 120)**

The management of flood risk was important not only for agriculture, but also for the protection of the urban settlements, thus becoming the subject of literary and philosophical debate. In Mozi (479-376 BCE), for example, it is described what to do if the enemy attacks using the inundation tactic (*beishui*):

> "The circular road inside the city walls and external to the moat should be eight steps broad, and
> to be prepared in case of inundation [by the enemy] rigidly measure the ground height all around.
> In the walls where the flat terrain leans downwards, give order to excavate the sides to reach the

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[30] Cf. Needham (1970: 113-135 on hydro-powered machines, pp. 162-166, 181-191 on water-powered steaming engines, pp. 230-233 on water clockworks, Ch. XIII on vessel control), and Marks (1998: 312-318). For further representations of Chinese technology, in particular for what concerns the supremacy of agricultural topics as drawing subject, and the relevance of the bureaucratic management of human resources in the implementation of hydraulic works, cf. Golas (2015: 166-172).

level of the lower terrain. When reached the bottom, penetrate deeply in the ground and create a leak to let water spring. Install a *cewa* [a standardized tile] in the middle of the well to measure the level of water. If the level of water outside the city reaches a depth of a *zhang* [± 3.2 metres] or more, then dig the wall to let the internal waters flow to the lateral sides."[31]

The technics here described whilst unveiling an accurate knowledge of the territory and the willingness to regulate the forces of nature, at the same time they operate in a context of understanding of nature's fundamentals. To prevent the inundation of a walled city, the sage advices on the necessity to make water free from obstacles, thus providing it a way to leak away. One of water basic principles lies in its need for movement in order to reset its destructive charge; if water is channeled, its release will cause less damages. This kind of human intervention has a double target of taming the power of nature and also of reconciling the temporary imbalance arisen between nature and mankind (Bruun, 2003). Another example of water engineering system planned to withstand flooding consists in the Ming dynasty city walls of Nanjing, which walled way is still viable. The water-bearing pipes inside the walls channel the rainwater from the top through the walls into some drains located at the foot of the wall, eventually emptying into the city's moat.

For what concerns the use of water in agriculture, and the engineering apparatus necessary for obtaining a profitable harvest, Ernst Tiessen (1871-1949) states that

> "If we could compare empires on the basis of irrigation levels in their territories, it would turn out that in any other civilized nation in the world out of China irrigation could be exploited so much, and it could provide such important services for farming and the foundations of a so developed network of water transport systems as in China" (as cited in Wittfogel, 1931: 84-85).

Wittfogel calls the phenomenon of water supply in China an "extraordinary social effect" – *außerordentliche gesellschaftliche Wirkung* (*ibid*.: 85), and indeed field irrigation has much to deal with *human agency*. According to Wittfogel in Central China no rice harvest could be possible without artificial irrigation (*ibid*.: 83-84). Being formerly located in Sichuan Province, Chongqing was grouped with the seven main rice producing provinces; the annual rainfall percentage was catalogued by Wittfogel as "low" and not equally distributed throughout the year (*ibid*.: 192-193).[32] Nowadays the local climate is classified as "Cfa" (humid subtropical), and according to the statistics the precipitations are about 1,083 mm annually. Chongqing city has therefore abundant rainfall which is, however, not equally distributed over the year, with a difference of 159 mm of precipitation between the driest and wettest months (Climate-data, n.d.). The strong intensity of the rain from April to July can also cause damage rather than be beneficial to crops. Artificial irrigation is therefore the key to improve the harvest and get two crops a year. In Fig. 3.4 there are two images of irrigation techniques applied before the modernization process: In the first image the field is irrigated using a pedal pump driven by human motive power. In the second one a farmer is opening a water gate by pulling down a pole; once released, the pulley system returns to the initial position by levering on the stone wheel stuck in the lever mechanism.

The lakes are described not only as the fulcrum of local irrigation systems but also as the "regulators" – *Regulatoren* – of water levels in the main Chinese rivers in case of drought (Wittfogel, 1931: 90). The lakes as storage reservoirs – *Staubecken* – are conceived by Wittfogel in economic terms, and his vision is

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[31] Cf. Mozi, Book XIV: *Beishui* ("Preparation against Inundation"), http://ctext.org/mozi/preparation-against-inundation?en=zh.

[32] Parker (in Wittfogel, 1931: 199) describes the engineering works used in Sichuan to pump water from rivers, channels and reservoirs up to the rice fields, as well as the system of channels and dikes to divert/block the flow of water (*ibid*.: 266-272).

supported by the frequent *reproductions of the model* on a smaller scale. Two examples of natural lakes taken as model are Poyang Lake in Jiangxi Province and Dongting Lake in Hunan Province, while a prominent example of artificial water reservoir is Houhai Lake located at the end of the Grand Canal in Beijing, that was dug in the 13th century at the behest of the Emperor Kublai Khan, the founder of the Yuan dynasty, after a great fire hit the imperial residence. Rightly, Wittfogel states that "the building of artificial water reservoirs is indeed a Chinese mainstream policy" (*ibid.*: 92).

To conclude, what Molle (2009) associates to a state behavior of the last two centuries, i.e. "the water resources development as a political strategy for controlling space, water and people and as an important part of everyday forms of state formation", should be dated back in time in China, and be related to the unquestioned capacity of the Chinese central government to act as arbitrator and investor in hydraulic projects, holding then enough power and bureaucratic personnel to monopolize the trade of certain goods through the control of river navigation. Furthermore, the attitude towards a no-negotiation with the natural environment, and the desire to exploit water resources by building i.a. artificial channels, denotes the presence in the Chinese territory of an intelligentsia able to reconfigure the environment to fulfill human interests – a state body that Molle defines as *hydrocracy* (*ibid.*).

Jumping to contemporary China, it is possible to mark some episodes of modification of aquatic spaces: Figure 3.5 presents three diverse performances of the local use of water reservoirs and hydraulic engineering nowadays. The diversion channel in Dujiangyan, Sichuan province, is still working according to its original function but it has also become a beacon for mass tourism near Chengdu; Houhai Lake in Beijing performes several functions acquired over the course of history, the last of which is its fetishist metamorphosis into a nightlife incubator; the water reservoir of Longtanzi in Chongqing, Beibei District has also had an interesting evolution. Despite its modest dimentions, it was initially shared for agricultural porposes and the discharge of industrial waters, and then supported by small locks to produce hydroelectric power (1970s-90s). Later on, part of it has become the location for a middle-class neighborhood, and another section hosts an aquatic amusement park. Fishing and bathing were forbidden since its waters had become extremely polluted: It literally turned into a plastic dump often subject to the phenomenon of eutrophication (field research and satellite images, 2015). Lately in 2015, the district administration has initiated the reclamation works to build a wetland park along its shores – one of the numerous projects planned to "restore a harmonious beauty" in the environmentally-tormented territory of Beibei (Hualong wang, 2015).

The adjustment among the demand for new economic opportunities, the aesthetic change, and the shifts in the institutionalized social relations, clearly opens the scenario to the modification of the water space intended as social product.

Figure 3.4. Irrigation techniques as depicted in the *Yuzhi Geng zhi tu – Imperially Commissioned Illustrations of Agriculture and Sericulture*, dated 1696 and commissioned by the Emperor Kangxi of Qing dynasty (retrieved in Franke, 1913)
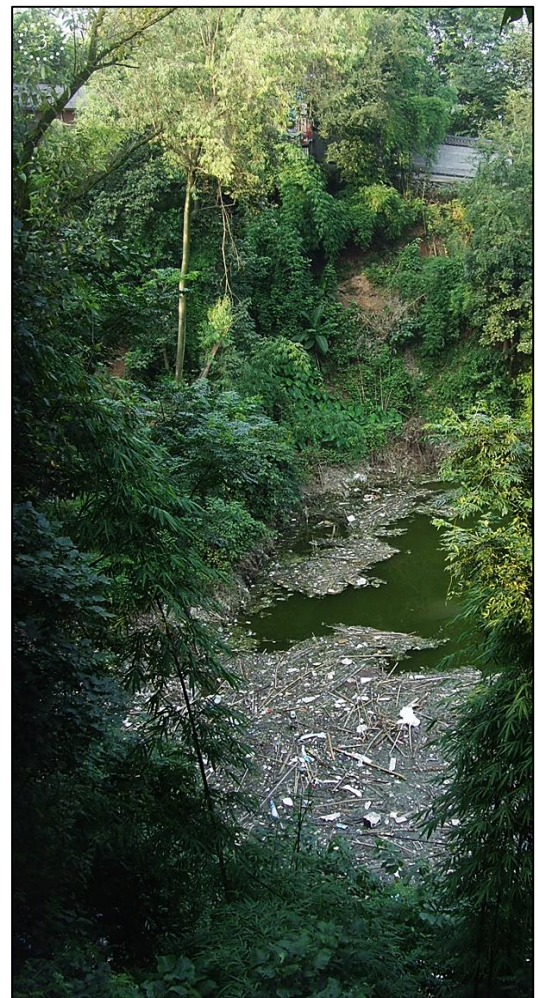

Figure 3.5. Three different facets of hydraulic engineering projects and use of the space produced by them: 1) Crowd of tourists crossing a bridge at the Yuzui Dividing Dike in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province (Bonato, 2015); 2) Nightlife around Houhai Lake, Beijing (Bonato, 2009); 3) the polluted water reservoir of Longtanzi in Chongqing, Beibei District (Bonato, 2015)

3.5   1920s-1946: stories of a modernity. Hydroelectric power production, tertiary sector, and global visions as an appreciated semi-historical heritage

[...] heritage is as much about forgetting
as remembering the past.
Ashworth & Graham (2005: 4)

Legacies constitute not only a necessary asset to understand change and continuity in everyday life, but they are also crystallized representations of what has actually been in dynamism: The human attempt to make the past tangible and reproducible through materiality (Ashworth & Graham, 2005: 3-11, 206-208; Graham, 2002; Hall, 1997). In the previous chapters I have explained how the Chinese "pre-modern" state-building process based on the concept of good despotism and state as arbitrator, was mutually shaping and shaped by the local socio-economic relations, the techniques implemented in the water management, and the myths as a model of truth. The Chinese gradual passage to modernism in the 19th century included the adjustment of the state dynamics, the introduction of new technologies, the change in social relations, and the partial abandonment of the mythical structure to embrace a scientific vision of the world. The reformist minds of the "modernist era" animated not only the main cities along the coast but also some cities along the Yangzi River where the foreign influence had spread after the opening of the treaty ports (Wei Yingtao & Zhou, 1997: 208 ff.).[33]

Since 1920s the renewed ruling class was composed of entrepreneurs and military men: Chongqing was not an isolated case of "army and administration merged in a whole" – *junzheng heyi* (Zhang Jin, 2003: 170). Nevertheless, its special environmental features allowed the city to grow faster than other places in South-West China. In particular, great attention was put on the so-called "*huangjin shuidao*", i.e. the "valuable waters" of the upper course of the Yangzi River flowing in Sichuan Province.[34]

3.5.1   Modern engineering projects, scientific knowledge, and internationalism

As seen in paragraph 3.4, the Chinese scientific expertise in "pre-modern" era has been frequently praised for its high grade of mechanical perfection and rigor: The famous *Needham question* touched precisely the problematic of a slowdown in the Chinese scientific "progress" in favor of the emergence of a "modern scientific thought" in Europe, a fact hardly explicable by the biologist-sinologist Needham (1900-1995). At the turn of the 20th century many Chinese theorists were riding the modernist wave, struggling to define science apart from the traditional moral values which had been a fundamental component of the "pre-modern" know-how, so that also in China the scientific method could "reach hegemony and impose science as a worldview" (Wang Hui, 2008: 134; cf. Rošker, 2009). Aligned to the view that the scientific approach could provide *the truth*, there was the idea of the natural predisposition of man to dominate nature.

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[33] Shulan Fu (2015) has analyzed Hangzhou urban expansion between the years 1896-1927, paying particular attention to the fusion between the traditional urban city and the new modernist structures. Although being a forerunner, the topographic features of Hangzhou made it difficult to be taken as a model by planning advisers in Chongqing. For a study on Nanjing modernist plan, cf. Cody (1996); on Shanghai, cf. inter alia Bergère (1981), Fung Ka-yu (1981), Wasserstrom (2008), and Wu Fulong (2000b). On the militarized landscape during the anti-Japanese war, cf. Muscolino (2010).

[34] From Sichuan down to Yichang, Hubei Province, the river is named *chuanjiang* (*chuan* means "river").

Chongqing local authorities formally started a massive exploitation of water resources in 1927 with the establishment of the first "Chongqing tap water company" (*Chongqing zilaishui gongsi*), under the supervision of the engineer Shui Xiheng 税西恒 (1889-1980), who had been appointed as project planner for Siemens Company in 1917 after he completed his studies at TU Berlin (Baidu baike, 2015a).[35] His projects included water towers, pump-houses, mud filtering ponds and the planning for the pipeline grounding, which in 1985 reached the main districts of Yuzhong, Jiangbei, Shapingba, Jiulongpo, Nan'An and Beibei (CCJGW, 1997: 142). In March 1932 tap water was supplied to the gentry in the centre of Yuzhong District, and reported in the chronicles of the time as "the first brilliant achievement of Chongqing City government" ("Minguo – Baxian zhi" 1939, section 11 as cited in Zhang Jin, 2003: 184).[36] In the meanwhile in the city centre the public wellheads were closed for reasons of public hygiene, and the internal channels and ponds were buried during the expansion phase of the urban area (Deng Shaoqin, 1981: 163; Zhou Yong, 2003: 865. Cf. Fig. 3.6).[37]
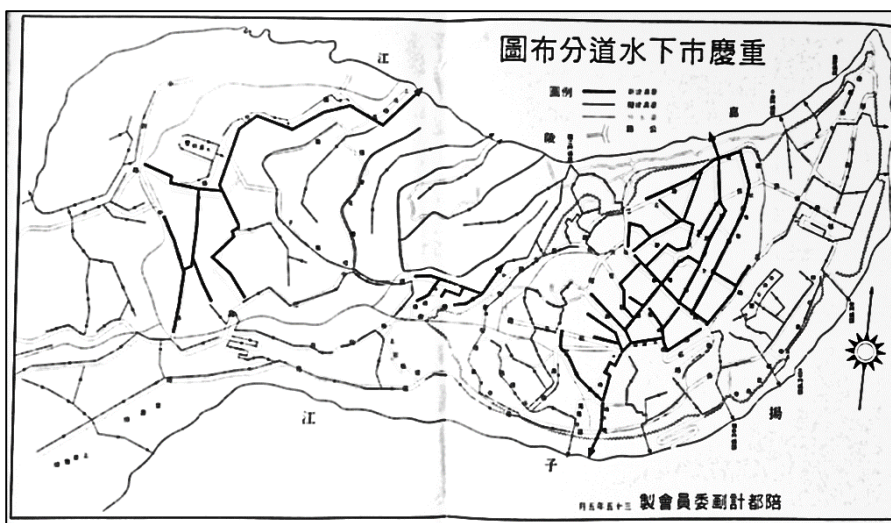

Figure 3.6. Sewage system distribution chart in Chongqing City, Yuzhong District 1946 (PJJW, 1946: n.p.). In bold: the newly built ditches; in black: ditches planned to be built; in light grey the tap water schema.
The draining and sewage system in the city centre had been firstly restored in 1935 in accordance with the previous system dating back at the beginning of Ming dynasty. In 1945 a new plan – in the chart – started being designed using modern technologies and the expertise of the American engineer, Colonel A. Morrill. The 40 km-long pipeline net was completed in 1946, making Chongqing the first city in China to own a modern sewage system (Wei Yingtao, 1991: 476-477).

The production of hydroelectric power became an obsession for the Chinese government and all those scholars driven by the spirit of modernization; the achievement of the goal in a short time could become

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[35] Shui Xiheng was born in Luzhou, Southern Sichuan. He could study in Shanghai at the "China Public School", one of the first universities founded by Chinese students who left Japan after 1911. Shui had important positions at Chongqing and Chengdu Universities, and also in the leadership of water management companies after 1949 (Baidu baike, 2015a).

[36] Cf. Danke Li (2010: 89) on the living conditions in wartime Chongqing. According to Wei Yingtao (1991: 502), in 1934 there were around two hundred water pumping companies in Chongqing.

[37] In this regard local people have handed down a rumor concerning a vast pond located in front of the prefectural Confucian temple (*fu wenmiao*) once built near the "Linjiangmen" wall gate. The temple built during the Southern Song dynasty was destroyed by the Japanese bombings, whilst the lake had been buried and transformed into a public sports field in 1932. According to the tradition, the pond was used by the local people to raise animals such as fish, shrimps, and turtles. In 1960s local people saw some turtles emerging from the public toilets located near there and called for a miracle, associating those animals with the same turtles buried together with the pond thirty years before (Tang Yeze & Feng, 2007: 47-48). According to Deng Shaoqin (1981: 163-164), the "pre-modern" citadel of Chongqing was crossed by seventeen ditches, eleven of them flowing into the Yangzi River while the other six ones were flowing into the Jialing River, thus composing "an integrated drainage system – *wanzheng de paishui xitong*". It fell into disuse with the implementation of a modern sewage planning in 1940s. The main source of water supply in Chongqing has always been the river, in fact, even during the 1940s the common people used to buy buckets of water from specific sellers called *bangbangjun* (workers carrying a bamboo pole on their shoulders). Because of Chongqing hilly topography, this particular craft is still diffuse in the city.

a testimony to the greatness of New China and a source of legitimacy for the Nationalist Party (*Guomindang*, thereafter KMT).

> "Sichuan topography is composed of mountain chains and a spiral of waters; its elevation above sea level is relevant [...] The directions of the mountain ranges and the waters overlap and intersect perpendicularly, and every place crossed by a river also assumes the shape of profound gorges and carved surfaces. Therefore, the undulating hills, the clashing and collapsing gorges, and the already steep riverbeds, summed up with the abundant rainfalls, imply that the deriving *hydraulic power*, first in the entire country, may signify *richness*!" (Shao Congshen, 1936: 55; emphasis added)

To promote the investment in a technological management of water reservoirs, Shao Congshen estimated that the upper-stream of the Yangzi River could be used to produce up to twenty million hp (horsepower). However, due to the lack of funding – most of the national savings being used to fight against Japan and also against the Liberation Army – the acquisition of technologically advanced products such as from Germany and the constant supervision of foreign experts to implement huge projects such as the Three Gorges Dam was unlikely.[38] Shao warned against the possibility of Sichuan being conquered by the enemy (the Japanese army already controlled the Yalu River in Fengtian, nowadays Shenyang, whilst the French imperialists held control of the Pudu River in Yunnan Province). In his final invocation for a prosperous future, he stated that "[...] If nowadays China desires to plan the reconstruction, *it is necessary* to put into practice the generation of hydraulic power" (Shao Congshen, 1936: 89-90; emphasis added).

The Yangzi River was considered a "natural ship channel" that had never been interested in processes of human rearrangement; therefore, the dry winter season used to compromise the usually so flourishing trades (Shao talks of forty-eight million tael – *liang*). The main dangers for the ships were constituted by sandbanks, slopes, shallow water and sudden floods: The construction of floodgates and dykes had been out of the reach of the local people. To obviate this shortcoming, at the end of 1930s the "Yangzi River water management committee – *Yangzi jiang zhengli shuidao weiyuanhui*" had already surveyed the river east of Chongqing to identify the most critical points and find solutions suitable for the "modern" era (*ibid.*: 36). The watershed west to Chongqing remained instead full of criticality, incomparable with those great international artificial waterways such as Suez and Panama Canals:

> "Just when the Suez Canal in Europe and Panama Canal in America that originally were not even rivers, [...] were dug sparing no effort for the sake of communication, my environment had a natural river bed, on which after all nobody considered to put some management to make the floodwater rule its overflowing, and to end the dry season by storing water; and it is truly a pity that when water recovers from the dry season no adjustment is made so that every opportunity to foster communications gets lost" (*ibid.*: 36-37).

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[38] Cf. Rhodes (1989) on John L. Savage, the American engineer employed at the US Bureau of Reclamation (chief designing engineer) who firstly managed the project of the Three Gorges Dam in 1944 at the invitation of Chiang Kai-shek. Savage defined the future dam as "a CLASSIC [sic]. [...] It will change China from a weak to a strong nation. The Yangtze Gorge Project should be constructed for the benefit of China and the world at large" (Rhodes, 1989: 268). In the Goulburn Evening Post (1948: 7) John L. Savage is called the "missionary of dam construction", whilst the project is said to be "a temporary victim of Chinese anarchy and civil war", and also "a great project [that] alone could well furnish the strength to lead even such a mighty nation out of medievalism and into modernity". Being the realization of the project on the hands of the US, some argued that the immense debt that China had to take on, was once again an explicit sign of submission to foreign imperialism.

Shao Congshen imputed the cause of the malfunction of Sichuan water resources to the absence of a modern managerial organization imbued with scientific spirit and the knowledge necessary to overcome the obstacles posed by nature. The lack of funds was not estimated as a major problem, since the practice of loans from foreign banking institutions and governments was already diffuse – the realization of the Three Gorges Dam as planned by Savage would have being paid this way through the proceeds derived by the production of hydroelectric energy (Rhodes, 1989: 267).[39]

Shao Congshen's manual, in fact, entails a model draft of organization chart to show the best practice on the distribution of tasks within a *modern* water management office (Shao Congshen, 1936: 14). Basic instructions were also given by Shao to avoid future environmental disasters and losses to those shipping companies pioneering in the Yangzi River and its tributaries, first of all the Minsheng Company and the Sichuan Shipping Company (*ibid.*: 37).

Soon after the publication of Shao Congshen's book on water management, the national government that had just transferred to Chongqing, launched a resolution (February 1939) to massively implement the dredging works in three major tributaries of the Yangzi River, i.e. the Wu River (乌江), the Qi River (綦河), and the Chishui River (赤水). Since the coal deposit and iron ore of Hanyang Iron and Steel Company had just been relocated to Chongqing in Dadukou District, while dredging the Qi River it became also necessary to build up a sluice gate along with a dam to increase the navigation capacity. The architect Tao Guilin (陶桂林 1903-1992), who had left Nanjing in 1938 and was already famous for his buildings in Shanghai and Nanjing, became the man in charge of the design and realization of the pound lock: It was composed of five doors and built using local material, namely, rectangular blocks of red sandstone. The Qi River's original carrying capacity (thirty tons) increased up to two hundred tons at the end of spring 1940 upon completion of the work (Hediao zhangren, 2016; cf. Fig. 3.7).

Before China could even dream about the building of the majestic Three Gorges Dam, in 1936 there started the implementation of another project in a tributary of the Yangzi River, the Longxi River (龙溪河, the "dragon river") that flows east of Chongqing city in Changshou District. Before entering the Yangzi River, the Longxi River flows down a slope of over three hundred metres (Fig. 3.8): In this section it was planned a *terraced water conservancy project* (*tiji*) along with a series of four hydroelectric power plants (*shuidianzhan*). The first dam called "Shangdong shuidianzhan" (the second one in the sequence in Fig. 3.8) was built in the period 1946-1947, but it had to be restored in 1950s after being damaged by a sudden flood happened in April 1947. Even if it was a work of modest dimensions, it represented the first water management project of its kind ever made in China. Completed in 1958, the entire area became the first and biggest terreplein dam system of New China with a total installed capacity of 104.5 megawatt (Baidu baike, 2018). This water system caused the creation of the biggest artificial lake in South-West China, Lake Changshou, that was properly named "water reservoir" since the term had been included in the new scientific terminology.

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[39] According to Cairns Post (1946: 9), "[A]lready, the Chinese Government has advanced 250,000 dollars, half of its cost of designing the dam. Estimated construction costs approach 1,000,000,000 dollars."
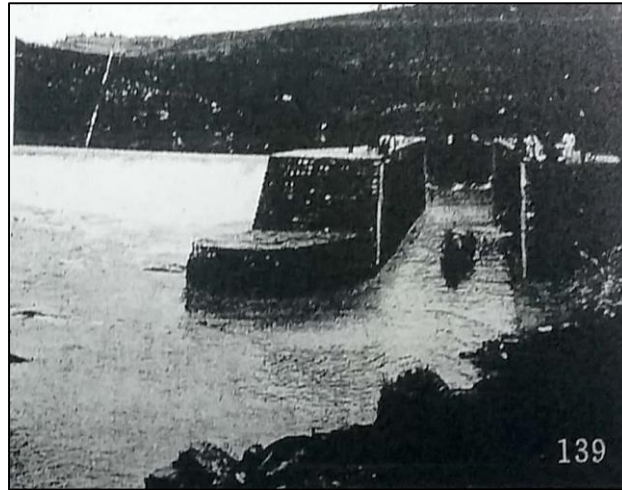
Figure 3.7. Sluice gate and dam in the Qi River designed by the architect Tao Guilin 1939-40 (CCJGW, 1997: n.p.)
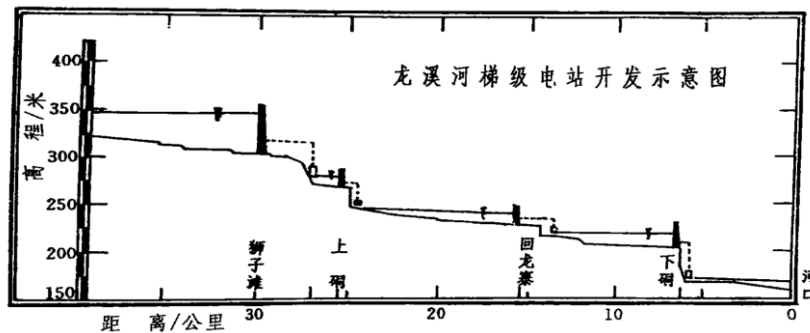

Figure 3.8. The Longxi River terraced water conservancy project in Chongqing, Changshou District (CCJGW, 1997: n.p.)

The Three Gorges Dam was the first project in China to be studied trough an organic lens, with the purpose to create a micro-environment suitable for various purposes in order to meet the needs of a civilized modernization. In fact, a report published in 1947 by the executive branch of the Chinese government showed the various benefits deriving from the realization of the project:

> "The planning of the Three Gorges Dam is a diversified planning that besides the realization of a huge quantity of hydropower energy, has also some great functions, i.e., to prevent and control floods, [to facilitate] irrigation, to supply water for ship navigation, and also *recreational purposes* (游 息 Recreation). The limits of involvement are extremely wide" (XZY, 1947: 5; emphasis added).

The planning of the entire work had to be supervised not only by the water management bureau but also by other governmental departments and offices, whilst the engineering study was carried on by John L. Savage and his team in the US. A mixture of devotion and admiration for the power shown by the US and John L. Savage's personal skills transpires from the abovementioned report and elsewhere in the chronicles of that time. As a matter of fact, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) since its establishment in 1933 had become a successful organism capable of carrying out diverse water management tasks. For this reason, and as a surrogate of imperialistic interests, the TVA itself was ready to be transplanted to other locations not only as a model, but also through the employment of its personnel as supervisor in the planning of big projects worldwide:

"A year and a half ago Vice President Henry Wallace suggested that one major postwar project should be an international Tennessee Valley Authority. Other logical dreamers became more specific, talked of a DVA for the Danube, a YVA for the Yangtze, an AVA for the Amazon. All would bring power, transport, irrigation and prosperity to industrially back ward areas" (Time, 1944).

The debate spread also to the Pacific region, for instance in Australia where the local government was trapped in a discussion concerning values and technicalities, a kind of debate that the Generalissimo (Chiang Kai-shek's nickname) could avoid by "suspending democracy" during the Civil War:[40]

[...] Inside a decade the entire United States will go the T.V.A. way over its nine natural geographic regions. Meanwhile, T.V.A. will be standing on its foot in China, in Peru, in Brazil, and quite likely in Europe, Palestine and Australia. Along the Yangtze valley in China more than 200 million people seek a livelihood within an area of 750,000 square miles [...] A region of great agricultural wealth, it also holds an abundance of ores, oil, natural gas, and the world's largest coal deposits. This is to be the venue of the greatest public works project on earth [...] It is said that the Yangtze holds also the greatest source for the development of hydroelectric potential in the world [...] Apart from power, the vast project will aid a large, land reclamation program, with reforestation and check-dams to meet the purpose. Already the entire field has been surveyed by consulting engineer, Dr. John Savage, of the United States Reclamation Bureau [...] This is *China awakening* after a long sleep. This is *civilization moving eastwards* to its future focal centre – the Pacific. This is the *T.V.A. principle* going places [...] There's too much water wasting to sea. Then let's fight and fight on to 'Keep for all time, the water in our rivers and the soil on our land!'" (Rothwell McLaren, 1947, emphasis added).

The article ends with an incitation that encompasses the spirit of the times, a statement of supremacy over nature and the understanding of water as the enemy (cf. Heynen et al., 2006: 93-109).

The process of development of modern infrastructures had been weakened also by the particular aptitude of Chongqing to be subject to *flooding and rainstorms*, as it happened to the second airport built at Shanhuba 珊瑚坝, a natural island in the Yangzi River south of Yuzhong District (near the old Nanjimen door) which still is annually flooded from May to September: When the waters of the river reach the altitude of 180 meters above sea level, the island is completely submerged (Baidu baike, 2016b). Because of its seasonal nature the airport originally set up by Liu Xiang in 1933 and used by Mingyong Hangkong Co. (lit. "civil aviation company"), was replaced by another landing strip located in Jiulongpo District, and particularly used by China Aviation Company, the state airline company that opened the route Chongqing-Shanghai in 1931 and Chongqing-Kunming in 1935 (Zhou Yong, 2003: 859).[41]

Chongqing by the end of 1920s had already become the main economic and logistic centre of South-West China. Due to its strategic position on the route to the north-west and the Russian borders, but also detached from the dangers of a Japanese invasion, the fame of the city spread worldwide also thanks to the introduction of the telegraph. In this regard it is still possible to appreciate the increasing

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[40] Cf. Zhou Yong (2003: 886-888) on the protests triggered by the constitutionalist movement in 1939, and how the KMT firstly opened to a dialogue and then definitively quelled the protest by claiming that the difficult communications during wartime were making it impossible to convoke a National Assembly (the one scheduled for November 1940 was planned to draft a constitution). Cf. Little (1910: 116-127), and Wiens (1949) on the difficulties to reach Sichuan Basin by road.

[41] The first runway had been built in 1929 in Nan'An District thanks to Liu Xiang, and precisely in an island called Guangyangba 广阳坝, 18 km north-east from Chongqing Chaotianmen harbor. The airport area was converted into an agricultural field in 1958 (Baidu baike, 2016a).

"globalizing spirit" and the shortening of geographical distances by reading the news reports published at that time in other countries: For instance, in Fig. 3.9 the Australian Queensland Times was reporting on a flood happened in 1945.

Being flood risk management a prerogative of the state, the local official gazettes were supposed to take track of the disasters, writing down the years and locations affected by the inundation of the two main rivers and their tributaries, as testified in the record compiled in 1973 concerning "hydrology", i.e., all the literature on floods, droughts and earthquakes registered from the first century CE until the end of the 19th century in the area enclosed between Chongqing and Wushan near the Three Gorges, and archived in Sichuan libraries after the foundation of PRC (CTSG, 1973, 1974).[42] The work of historical organic cataloging is a Chinese tradition: In fact, the records made in 1973-74 also draw information from publications made during the Qing dynasty and after 1912.[43] This amount of data could eventually be used to influence the public in delicate junctures, as it has happened when the Zhangfei Temple dedicated to the local hero of the Three Kingdoms (184/220–280 CE), has been moved from its original location and reassembled 32 km further south in Yunyang to avoid its loss after the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in 2002 (cf. Ch. 7). In the epic flood of 1870 the temple was almost entirely submerged by the waters of the Yangzi River, a good precedent to encourage the displacement in order to protect the sanctuary against other possible "natural" disasters (Fig. 3.10). Basic statistics on Chongqing environmental events started appearing in 1930s, as reported in Fig. 3.11. Inspired by Western graphics, the data should entail a much higher scientific appeal than the counting methods expressed through data lists.
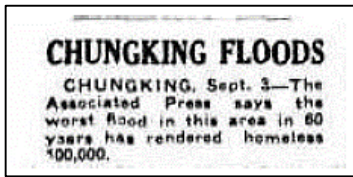

Figure 3.9. News on Chongqing Floods in 1945 from an Australian newspaper (Queensland Times 1945, Sept. 4, page 1)

Figure 3.10. Representation of waters level at Yunyang Zhangfei Temple during the flood in 1870 (CTSG, 1974: 31)
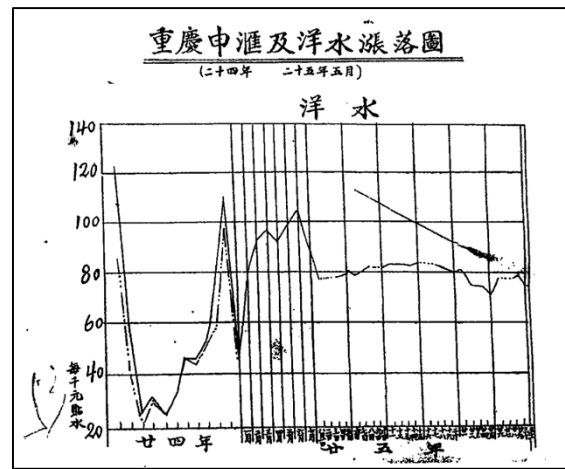
Figure 3.11. Water flow level in Chongqing 1936-37. In the first quadrant there is illustrated the river level trends in 1936, in the second the first seven months of 1937, in the third one the daily trend in August 1937. Unclear scale [increase every thousand parts] (Chongqing National Library, loose papers, n.d. Retrieved in 2015)

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[42] The record clearly shows a higher incidence of floods downstream in Fuling area in comparison to Chongqing. In May 1271 the zone of Jiangbei (Fujiang) was flooded three times by the Yangzi River, causing the fall of part of the city walls and the ruin of the watch tower (CTSG, 1973: 8). Other episodes happened in 1831, 1838 and in June 1870 when all Eastern Sichuan was struck by rain, and both the rivers flooded from Nanchong to Wushan (*ibid*.: 13-19, 30-31). This phenomenon was so devastating that it is recorded in detail also by minor gazettes; the rain caused also a huge landslide on Wushan Mount (*ibid*.: 20). The years of drought such as 1488, 1499, 1684, 1740, etc., are related to the appearance of a stone – the so-called "stone of the prosperous year" or "stone of harmony and prosperity" – that was located in front of Chaotianmen (Yuzhong) and visible only when the water level was very low (*ibid*.: 8-29).
[43] Cf. Bréard (2007), and Peng Daobin (1999) on the use of statistics in "pre-modern" China.

3.5.2 The *homo novus* and Beibei modern thermal baths

Lu Zuofu 卢作孚, a self-made man born in 1893 from a poor Sichuanese family, is the architect behind the realization of Beibei as an incubator of modernist projects or as it was actually defined, "the Beibei model – *Beibei moshi*" (Zhang Jin, 2003: 172). The new settlement along the Jialing River caused a complete re-planning of the territory in the form of a *satellite town*, expanding the market place founded during the Qing dynasty (Li Linfang & Lei, 2007: 132; Wei Yingtao, 1991: 469-471).[44] Here two evidences of that time:

> "[...] No one cared about this little town in the past, until there appeared an outstanding figure, i.e. Mr. Lu Zuofu, President of Minsheng Shipping Company, and [Beibei] gradually won people's admiration" (Zhang Yuanheng, 1939: 26).

> "[...] Beibei architecture follows a planning, it is in order and clean, the streets have a net shape with the intersection of meridian and parallel lines. It owns the distinctive style of a big city and in addition, it has a surplus of space that can be used for the development of an urban district [...] In the thirtieth year of the Republic of China [1941], the provincial government has specifically planned four county-districts (Bishan, Baxian, Hechuan and Jiangbei), while Beibei has been set up as administrative office. If every county town could have the same scope of Beibei, the political, economic, social and educative reconstruction of China would certainly see some progress!" (Huang Dashou, 1946: 32).

Two of Beibei wonders were: 1) The realization of a modernist structure to host the thermal springs already known from centuries in the area, and 2) the efficient "scientific" system of promotion of this touristic site aimed at pursuing the emancipation of the territory through the international recognition of its value. To this purpose in 1930s the North Hot Springs started being advertised using printing flyers and journals, while some foreign scholars working in Chongqing helped in spreading knowledge over the Jialing Small Gorges (the name should create a parallelism with the more famous Three Gorges of the Yangzi River) through the diffusion of academic articles explaining tourism in the "Far East".[45] The niche practice of expanding the *grand tour* to Asia was already in vogue among some pioneer travelers. At the same time, those foreigners living in Asia – mainly merchants, colonial administrators and missionaries – were more and more demanding for *spaces of hygiene* where to heal from the sometimes devastating effects of the subtropical climate on the human body (Spencer & Thomas, 1948).

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[44] Lu Zuofu was the owner of the Minsheng Shipping (People's Welfare Shipping), a ship company that opened its first route along the Jialing River in 1926, connecting Chongqing to Hechuan town (to north-west). With the support of Chongqing ruler Liu Xiang, he tried to re-win the rights of fluvial navigation from the hands of Western imperialists. In 1949 the company had over 9,000 workers and 148 ships, with a route stretching from the Yangzi River to the coastal areas of China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia and Japan. The company also had shipyards, power plants and many docks, ports and warehouses; it also invested in more than sixty industries (e.g. banking, insurance, iron and steel, machinery, textile and cement industry). According to the sources, Lu Zuofu was in favor of Minsheng Company to become a joint state-private company, as it later happened. He died in 1952 (info retrieved at Lu Zuofu Memorial Hall in Beibei District, September 2014). On the Sichuanese village fairs, cf. Spencer (1940). For a definition of satellite town in the spirit of the *garden-city* pattern, cf. Howard (1944: 27).

[45] Cf. Spencer and Thomas (1948) on the role covered by Western settlers in the diffusion of the hill stations in South-East Asia, China and Japan, and how this new economic resource was differently accepted and exploited by the local people. In China the presence of foreigners on the mountains was thwarted by resorting to the geomancy, and some settlements had been destroyed by Chinese (*ibid*.: 646). In South-West China the main hill stations were in Kunming (founded by the French), and on the Emei Mount in Sichuan. Other Western scholars located in Chongqing wrote on scientific topics, such as the renowned sinologist and scientist Needham (1943a, 1943b). Cf. also Spencer (1938, 1939).

Chongqing thermal baths became famous already at the beginning of 1900. For example, the merchant Archibald Little wrote about the Banan hot springs located on the south of Chongqing (Little, 1910: 128 on). In particular, he described how

> "two sides of the basin are formed of the natural rugged limestone rock, such as would be a fine attraction in a Shanghai garden, while on two sides are wide-cut steps, most agreeable for entering the water and standing upon. *Like everything of the kind in China, the bath is free to all*. Two or three boys and men were in the water on this evening, but there is such a large inflow of water and the bath is consequently kept so constantly changed that we had no hesitation in joining the native bathers. The water is transparent, but smells strongly of sulphur" (*ibid.*: 131; emphasis added).

Little depicted the place as "a sort of Chinese Ashinoyu", thus making a comparison with what Mrs. Little, who edited the manuscript after her husband's death, explained in a note as "the most frequented sulphur bath in Japan" (*ibid.*: 130). It is also worth noting that the place had *free access* in a time when the leisure activities had not yet become "organized structures" based on consumerist principles.

The thermal baths of Beibei present a scheme that incorporates the renovation of the Japanese century-old hot springs (a phenomenon already initiated in the mid-1800s to satisfy a native clientele, thus cherishing the spirit of harmonious fusion with the environment), together with a progressive touch given by the westernized external design of the buildings, and the dissemination of a kind of advertisement drawn on a "Gothic taste", e.g. full of mysticism, in order to tease in the viewer the curiosity for the hidden and the unknown. The research for pristine lands, as well as the other more practical reasons mentioned above (e.g. the research for spaces of sanitation and body wellness), favored the fame of these hot springs emerged thanks to the entrepreneurial talent of Lu Zuofu in embroidering a story and spreading it through a sophisticated advertising system.[46] The Figs. 3.12-3.14 are examples of advertising produced for both a Chinese and English audience. Fig. 3.12 is a fictitious reproduction of Beibei typical landscape at that time: There are depicted Jinyun Mount and the Tsin Yuen monastery on the left (where the thermal site is located), while on the Jialing River there are some traditional house-boats as well as on the front, where the moored boats probably represent Beibei harbor. The right side is ruined. Figs. 3.13, 3.14 are two photographs of the thermal baths built near the monastery, combining Western and Chinese stylistic elements that prove a double form of fetishism, one linked to the identity construction and the other to the idea of "the exotic other" through the use of the English language in the captions.

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[46] Cf. Nyíri (2006: 7-11) on the definition of famous scenic spots as cultural heritage; Hollinshead and Chun (2012) on the mechanisms of soft power over which Chinese forms of tourism are shaped. On the passage from the *grand tour* to the phenomenon of mass tourism, cf. D'Eramo (2017); on the forms of fetishism related to the *grotesque*, e.g. the aesthetization of landscape objects such as rocks, and its narrative in Tang-Song poetry, cf. Yang Xiaoshan (2003: 91-103).
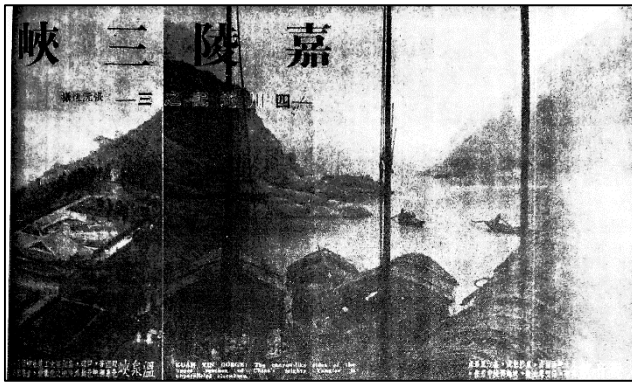
Figure 3.12. Advertising "Visiting Beibei" I: Jialing Three Gorges (Zhang Yuanheng, 1939: 26). On the bottom of the image, the text says: "The canyon-like sides of the spot's [reverbs] of China's mighty Yangtze is unparalleled anywhere"

Figure 3.14. Advertising "Visiting Beibei" II. In the captions: "Tsin Yuen Temple situated on the mountain along the Hot Spring", and "Hot Spring Swimming Pool" (Zhang Yuanheng, 1939: 27)
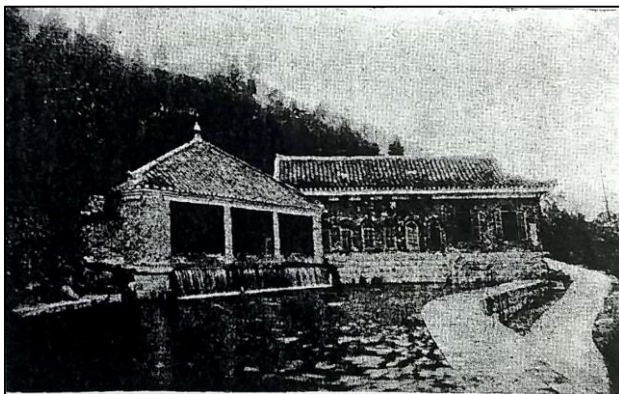

Figure 3.13. Advertising "North Hot Springs Pool" (Huang Dashou, 1946: 33). "Even if its waters are said to have less curative effects than the hot springs located south of Chongqing because of their different nature (limestone spring vs sulphur spring), Beibei pools are accessible all year since their water is around 37° C" (*ibid.*: 31)

3.5.3   Back to the present: heritage as a promoter of party legitimacy and commodity culture

Nowadays, some of the outcomes of the modernist wave have been intentionally converging in the local narrative to rebuild the understanding of "heritage", and give form to a new image of the city as legitimate locus for the municipality established in 1997. Therefore, a great amount of ideological power is embodied by specific legacies:

1) urban facts and urban representations: as colonial port sharing a destiny with Shanghai, and war-time provisional capital (*peidu* 1937-45) owning international recognition;
2) policies: water laws of 1930s-40s (sanitation, water distribution and uses, river navigation);
3) practices, i.e. the implementation of a "modern" market economy since the opening of the port in 1891, the construction of the first hydropower plants in 1927 (Zhou Yong, 2003: 142-143), and the foreign advertising of Beibei thermal baths.

All these sign systems are manipulated to be part of a larger ideological scheme that includes the Maoist vision of a unique Chinese development, historical continuity, revenge for an interrupted fate, and a sense of gratitude and emulation towards the Western countries, in particular the US on the basis of a mutual recognition (the American planning advisors stationed in Chongqing enabled a vision of glory for

the urban development of the city, whilst the American airmen called "flying tigers" fought against the Japanese aviation in 1941-42).

What could be interpreted as *counterrevolutionary*, i.e. the desire to reproduce the splendor of a period signed by colonialism, unequal treaties and the opium social plague, and when millions of civilians died to liberate the nation from Imperialism and Japanese colonization (Wasserstrom, 2008), appears instead refreshed in advertising and propaganda posters, e.g. in the *Baixiang Jie* advertising (cf. Ch. 5). This apparently idolatrous practice happens for these reasons:

- the historical moment compressed between 1920s and 1940s is ideologically connected with the modernist ideas of rationality, scientificity and sanitation;
- it allows the re-politicization of urban and suburban spaces previously slipped away from the control of the local government, thus legitimizing arbitrary acts of dispossession and land grabbing;
- it provides a *rejuvenated knowledge* of the city as "historical place out of the red tradition", which seems necessary to feed the all-devouring industry of tourism.

In fact, in certain areas of Chongqing (the historic centre, i.e. Yuzhong District, and some other places dislocated here and there among the urban perimeter and the hills of the surrounding districts) this narrative has been deployed to pursue a clear interest in enhancing the exchange value of the land confiscated from the public. Based on a *reconstructed legacy* between Chongqing at present days and its past urbanity, which finds inspiration in the oral transmission of myths, the official gazettes, the edicts, etc., the speculative game on the land market is a reflection of an interesting maneuver to *legitimize the Party before the Party*, i.e. before 1949, on the assumption of a partial reconciliation of the CCP with the previous KMT government and the "pre-modern feudal times".[47]

This represents the outcome of a strategy deeply rooted in Chongqing, and based on the partial conservation and/or reconstruction of (some) antiquities to enhance the value of the land, here intended as a commodity. One example is the original place where the Beibei thermal baths had been built in 1927: Part of the site has now become a private Spa centre managed by a Chinese company which is also operative in Yunnan Province, while the other historic buildings that have been occupied by the local people since 1960s, were not renovated, and lie in poor conditions. The North Springs Scenic Spot is advertised as a place of public interest (4A scenic spot), despite the fact that it is officially privately run. At the entrance the info board says:

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[47] The history of Chongqing and part of Eastern Sichuan after 1912 is not marked by a strong presence of the KMT. On the contrary, since 1926 and until the arrival of Chiang Kai-shek in Chongqing, the area was ruled by a powerful military commander named Liu Xiang 劉湘, while the rest of Sichuan was divided among other warlords. Liu had been civil and military governor of Sichuan Province in alternate periods from 1921-25, his uncle from 1929 to 1934 (Ammentorp, 2000). With the promise of fighting against the Liberation Army, Liu could alley with the Generalissimo and became the General Commander of the Twenty-First Division (1926). He died in 1938, maybe poisoned by Chiang Kai-shek in person. Thereafter in order to break down the power of the warlords and their militias, the central government made use of the martial law, and strengthened its physical presence on the territory. As reported by Wei Yingtao (1991: 428), the KMT bureaucratic staff in 1937 was composed of 9,116 persons (1.92% of Chongqing population), whilst at the end of the anti-Japanese war in 1945 it amounted to 36,332 persons (7.68% of total population). Even if Liu Xiang took power of Chongqing by force, his far-sighted mind and his marked patriotism made him a ruler much more similar to the figure of a *wise despot* than a tyrant (cf. the concept of *ba* explained in Ch. 1). Cf. also Danke Li (2010: 12 ff.), and Reinhardt (2008). Chongqing urban and rural areas also proliferated of clandestine "secret societies" belonging to all social strata, and spreading their influence to other provinces (Wei Yingtao, 1991: 426-428). From July 1926 to July 1935 the highest office in Chongqing was "government office supervisor" – *gongshu duban* – covered by Pan Wenhua at the behest of Liu Xiang. The KMT replaced him with Zhang Biguo with the new title of "city mayor" (Zhou Yong, 2003: 844-848).

"North Hot Spring is the *boutique* of tourism in Chongqing. It is small but elegant with unique nice view [...] The Sail Overlooking House, Bo Lin Building, Nong House [...] constructed in 1920s and 1930s are well preserved [...] Many political VIPs of KMT & CPC, such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and many foreign famous people, such as George Bush used to come to stay here and left many treasured calligraphy [...]

The introduction of the Brilliant SPA & Hot Spring, a brand with *international standard*, upgrades North Hot Spring to a much more wonderful place [...] The Brilliant sparkplugs a fire-new lifestyle for health and holiday, which combines the SPA culture together with leisure, vacation, and health. It respects nature and *returns to nature*, thus *harmonizing* people, structures and nature, and it brings a kind of healthy mind-cultivated Zen life to the people" (author's field research, July 2015; emphasis added).

As a plaque in front of the Nong House ("farm house") explains, when Prime Minister Li Peng visited the site he left inscribed that the springs were meant "for the benefit of the people". However, the buildings around the thermal baths were actually built to serve as guesthouses, in particular the Bolin Building (Berlin Building/Pavilion in Fig. 3.15) that was built in 1935 at the behest of Lu Zuofu, and became also the seat of the China Travel Agency during the anti-Japanese war.

Inside the park there still lies the Tsin Yuen Temple (Fig. 3.8), but the thermal area is accessible only upon the entrance fee payment (300 yuan/one entrance according to piao.ctrip.com, 2018). On WeChat the Brilliant Resort owns a page called Chongqing Bolian Jiudian (where "bolian" might be homophone of "brilliant"): The advertising is focused on promoting the special location surrounded by nature, the historical relevance of the site, and its international ecological spirit as the recent restoration work was carried out by the London-based award-winning architect John Heah, also cited for his sentence "architecture should honor nature". The poetic language is followed by gorgeous images of the pools, the green, and the high class service of the hotel (WeChat Chongqing Bolian Jiudian, 2016).[48]

Alongside the thermal area, the mount has been cleaned to make space for gated communities, particularly appreciated for the characteristic of being equipped with private thermal water pools. The motto reproduced in Fig. 3.16, celebrates the "ancient" times in a semi-mythical manner, pointing out the beauty of living immersed in the natural environment.

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[48] Located on a slope of Yunwu Mount (云雾山) and overhanging a cliff on the Jialing River, this thermal site has been recently advertised as the oldest thermal bath in the world (Jiang Kan, 2016). The first forms of urban settlement are indeed remote in time: According to an info board in the North Springs Park, the first temple was built in 423 CE during the Southern Dynasties, and later bestowed as Chongsheng Temple by the imperial court until 1912. In 1927 the entrepreneur Lu Zuofu could establish the thermal park, probably taking advantage of the decline of the monastery due to the lack of funding. The particular landscape made of ruins and *sacrality* is actually the strength of the Brilliant Resort that aims to compete with other international resorts and SPAs recently built further upstream along a tributary of the Jialing River. In fact, the hill has been monopolized by gated communities, elitist holiday resorts, a high-class "cultural centre", the Easprings (Chongqing Tourism Bureau, 2016c), and Banyan Tree Spa, an international company leader in the sector. The public thermal pools are also located nearby (35 yuan/one entrance; author's field research, July 2015). In 2012 the ambitious process to make Chongqing "the world capital of hot springs" was initiated by promoting fifty projects presented by Brilliant Hot Spring and assigning them the title of "municipal key projects" (Deng Jun, 2012c; Kuang Zhou, 2012).

Figure 3.15. Façade of the Bolin Building. On the top floor the laundry is laid out to dry in the sun (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 3.16. Advertising the holiday enclave Ziyun Yuanfu in Beibei, Hot Springs Area. "*Guan shan ting yu, yihu yiquan, huigui shanju suiyue* – Observe the mountains and listen to the rain; each family its own spring; go back to the time when people used to live in the mountains" (Bonato, 2015)

3.6 The paradox of remembering the mythical times: exaggerations along the path towards a civilized state of happiness

The scientific approach is clearly embraced by the party-state as the correct way to build a reasonable state of happiness within society. However, the power of feelings to arouse appropriate emotions in relation to the inhabited environment, is nevertheless not denied.

Within the propaganda institution, local newspapers play an important role since through their pages there is the possibility to *rewrite* the stories of the local people and their emotional relationships with the environment. In fact, the fictional structure of these articles allows the reader to enter the dreamy atmosphere of people's most intimate memories, opening the stage to distorted reconstructions of the past history of a place. The persons interviewed become also promoters of this fetishist practice, since through the recollection of local social activities through personal memory, their description of the locale does not conform to a detached vision of the man-nature relation, and also it does not picture the actual living conditions in that past period. My intention here is not to stigmatize the practice of memory per se, but rather to highlight the dangerous derailments that can cause the use of these memories as "sources of legitimacy" in the politicized context of everyday life in China. When "individual memories", i.e. related to the inner self and spatialized in a subjective time (Assmann, 2008: 109), happen to be spread within the members of a community, there could be an escalation of shared sympathy at the social level, thus laying the foundation for the staging of what Assmann calls "communicative memory" (*ibid*.: 109-111). In particular, this collective-communicative memory

> is not institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and it is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions; it is not formalized and stabilized by any forms of material symbolization; it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no further back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations (*ibid*.: 111).

It is important to remember that in a regime of autocratic memory, a strict selection of what can/has to be handed down to posterity and what could only be whispered in secret, is constantly at work to ensure that no "bad" social habit proliferates among the diverse social classes. This means that also a typical

grandparent-nephew transmission of knowledge happens to be filtered and object to self-censure, while the perception of specific social facts can also change according to the institutional needs. Therefore, communicative memory finds its space in a limbo between the emotional aspect of a group of members and the state social engineering activities. This tension becomes visible when oral memories are written down in words and conveyed to a larger audience with the intention of recreating an emotion that perhaps never existed in those readers, marking the shift towards the construction of a "cultural memory". In the context of Chongqing environmental management, this means that the natural landscape and the memory of a past beauty – conveyed through images of "the sublime" – are the new formalized "material symbols" of the coming ideological sign system.

Figure 3.17. "Memories: Men used to bathe in the river and catch fish, women to stay on the banks making laundry. Note: 'we all have deep in our hearts a dream made of a waterside village." Excerpt from Chongqing Shangbao 2017 (© Chongqing Shangbao, 2017 August 3, page 3)

Media commonly make leverage on established stereotypes derived from the tradition (e.g. the *shanshui* ideal) and the Maoist period, e.g. discourses on the "purity of the countryside versus the degenerate spirit of the city", and the idea that daily practices supporting a strong contact with nature are somehow "truer" than the contemporary practice of "bourgeois environmental immersion", because they are historically uncontestable (e.g. agriculture).

Such stereotypes are the key to inaugurate discourses imbued with nostalgia for ahistorical *golden age* when mankind was more honest towards nature. One example is given by Fig. 3.17, where the article "when 'green' becomes 'gold' – Liangping circular economy invests in 'green power'" contains a panegyric on the remote brilliance of waters in the ditches, in particular in the Xinsheng River, a tributary of the Jialing River. The article summarizes the green effort made by Xinsheng town in Liangping District, where circular economy and a more rigid control system implemented through the figure of a "river supervisor" (*hezhang*), have allowed the local administration to better fight environmental pollution.[49] Therefore, Liangping should become a "model" of management. A final note written by the journalists remember the readers that "We all have deep in our hearts a dream made of a waterside village" (Li Xili & Luo, 2017).

The Xinsheng River has become a simulacrum that embodies the ideology, and provides a space for new social activities in dialogue with a reconstructed collective-idealized memory. No discrepancy is implied based on the fact that in the common imaginary washing clothes in a river can be associated with poverty and backwardness, not to mention the clear patriarchal system depicted through the memories of the forty-nine-year-old woman interviewed, when she describes how only men and little boys could swim in the river while women stayed outside making laundry along the river bank. From this perspective the article gives voice to a sort of re-evocation of phenomena that highlight the difficulties of the local government not only in promoting gender equality, but also in providing for the basic necessities such as tap water (being the woman born in 1968, her memories are likely to be datable to the seventies). The spreading of these "memories" would have been considered "counterrevolutionary" only

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[49] The idea of a "river supervisor or river chief" chosen among the inhabitants of every village and town located along the watershed involved in the project, clearly resembles the traditional system of mutual control and assistance (*baojia*) still effective in rural areas during the early period of PRC (Heng Chye Kiang, 1999). The promotion of circular economy in China is supported by a law passed in 2008.

ten years ago, and be banned because reviving a past history of social conflicts, family pain, economic deprivation, and regional imbalances.

3.7   Conclusions

In this chapter a selection of historiographic data and material cultural evidences from diverse historical moments have been brought together in the analysis of the specific aspect of the state-building process *in relation* to water. Firstly, I have put attention on the "hydraulic society" theory and some literature related to the management of water resources, from which it has emerged that the prosperity of agriculture was, and still is linked to the necessity of assuring access to water, which was conceived mainly as a common good. The practices of water conservancy (*shuili*), had in fact to be implemented by most of the social classes with a clear decrease of "feudal privileges" since the end of Ming dynasty (ca. 1550 CE). The Chinese "pre-modern state" is in all respects discernable through its infrastructural pattern, since the bureaucratic hierarchy developed not only on a top-down level, but it could also enforce horizontal systems of "mutual control and cooperation" among families and clans. As seen also in chapter one, despotism should not be associated with a simplistic definition of a "hegemonic state authority based on the enslavement of its population". Based on hierarchies and rituals legitimized by ideology, the implementation of state power in China saw the central government as the main mediator and arbitrator among contrasting social forces, thus paving the way to a form of governance based on many stakeholders sharing power and alliances. The republican phase and the modernist wave entering the space and the imaginary of Chongqing city during 1920s-40s, have left behind a copious heritage that is constantly object of selection for the legitimacy of the current local politics in matter of land and water management. The "pre-modern" and republican legacies rather than being washed away after the revolution of 1949, have been converging into a substratum that is indeed the expression of a sort of *continuity in the ethical view* concerning the management of local resources, and society in general. Due to Chongqing geospatial peculiarities, local governance during the republican period and official politics implemented since the establishment of the municipality in 1997, are also considered suitable for the construction of "historical parallelism" in the ideological context of *historical continuity*.

Secondly, myths and religious practices have promoted the legitimacy of a hierarchical system of water management, and the need for technicians to cover leading roles in hydraulic works. Myths are also part of a set of fundamental beliefs that shape the popular confidence in a centralized power necessary to maintain territorial and cultural unity. Water spaces and other archetypical spaces related to the process of urbanization and the spatiality of human relations, provide insights on the will to shape the environment following mental images supported by institutionalized ideas, and on the ideal self-positioning in that space within/in contrast with the natural environment. This conceptualized space is made visible through the maps drawn in determined contexts.

Thirdly, this chapter has explained the process of reconstruction of collective memories concerning the "mythical" beauty of the landscape through local mass media, motivated by the institutional transition to semi-liberal politics, the opening to the market economy, and its derivatives in the reconfiguration of social relations.

4. The sanitized waterscape: articulating the significance of contemporary local urban planning in relation to national spatial narratives

The urban fact is characterized by
physically different parts – zones or areas:
"They constitute the ultimate reading
we can make out of a series of historical, social,
and political issues that together form the city.
The different areas of a city are
an authentic geography of mutually tensioned forces."
Aldo Rossi (as cited in Fabbri, 1984: 151)

Based on the idea of the state as a complex system of infrastructures, this chapter highlights how the local planning is connected with both the regional and the national planning in a way that reveals a studied discipline about the management of the resources and the human capital. The "local" becomes also the stage for the performance of practices developed outside the context and often enforced by the state propaganda as a reflection of the idea of "sustainable development". These practices are introduced in a coercive way to satisfy interests that are not related to the actual needs of the population. Apart from the practical benefit, the symbolic power of the urban planning is another factor that must be taken into consideration (Ashworth & Graham, 2005: 61-71): It conveys discipline, sense of belonging, reflexive capacities related to the identity-building process, and new positive attitudes to juxtapose to the changing political-economic scenario.

The analysis of Chongqing urban planning proceeds in parallel with the historical vicissitudes that took place in the area, and it follows a scaling visualization from the local to the national-global level: This method permits to synthesize in key points the major changes happening in the territory, and to give them an order. Nevertheless, this system of representation neither aims to give a fixed image of Chongqing urban planning nor to provide a description of a closed circuit of power-sharing for the maintenance of a status quo. In fact, the dialectics among the various stakeholders are object of a constant mutation due to a number of factors at the basis of which lies however a precondition, i.e. the ultimate purpose of enhancing the solidity of the party within the social structure.

The term "sanitized" used at the incipit of this chapter, indicates the characteristic aspect of Chongqing contemporary waterscape, where some previously "forgotten spots" along the watershed are now redirected under the aegis of the political arena. These "spots" are real sections of the rivers, the lakes, and the water reservoirs. They also point to the broader idea of "integrated planning" according to which the local government should dispose of the natural resources to obtain the maximum economic benefit, creating new market opportunities such as hydropower production, fishing, management of the drinking water, and finally the upscale real estate market through the *beautification* of the waterscape. The modernist idea of "sanitation" of the urban is still useful to describe the ongoing urban planning process and its side effects.

4.1   Territorial specificities and historical practices of integrated urban planning

The development of a territorial planning as governmental strategy in China has followed a peculiar pattern that is closely connected not only with the historical vicissitudes of the country as determined by policies and people's behaviors, but also from external factors such as defense from enemy invasion (Wu Yanglong, 1986), and environmental changes like soil productivity variations or floods (Bao Maohong, 2010; Elvin, 1993, 2004; Marks, 1998: 327-330; Qu Geping & Li, 1994), with the support of theological sophistications and geomancy (Bruun, 2003).

From a geological point of view, Chongqing Municipality is structured as an intermission area between two terrestrial plates, viz. the Eurasian plate in the western and northern part, and the Yangzi plate on the east. Located on the south-eastern border of the Sichuan Basin, this portion of earth's crust was the product of the collision of the Yangtze Plate with the North China Plate (in the Eurasian Plate) in the Triassic period of the Mesozoic Era (252.17 to 201.3 million years ago). Due to the movement of the plates, in particular the thrust of the Indian plate towards the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, the number of earthquakes in the north-eastern area of Sichuan is dramatically high. They frequently happen on surface, causing the death of many people and serious damages to the local infrastructure (e.g. USGS, 2008). Around five hundred km north-west from the administrative border between Chongqing and Sichuan Province, lies in fact the Longmenshan Fault (*Longmenshan duancheng*), a thrust fault created through the clash of the two plates mentioned above, which motion caused the uplift of the mountain chains running in longitude with an east-to-west direction on the lower side of the Sichuan Basin, more precisely where Chongqing city centre is located, giving the area its particular hilly landscape (Jia Chengzao et al., 2007; Fig. 4.1). Although the seismic activity is rather limited in comparison to the one detectable in Sichuan Province, however, the northwest zone of Chongqing city is also interested occasionally by some movements of the earth's crust, while the complex geological characteristics of the soil strata determine additional risks for what concerns the opening of tunnels along the communication ways, e.g. highways and light rails (Chen Ke-Lin et al., 2016).
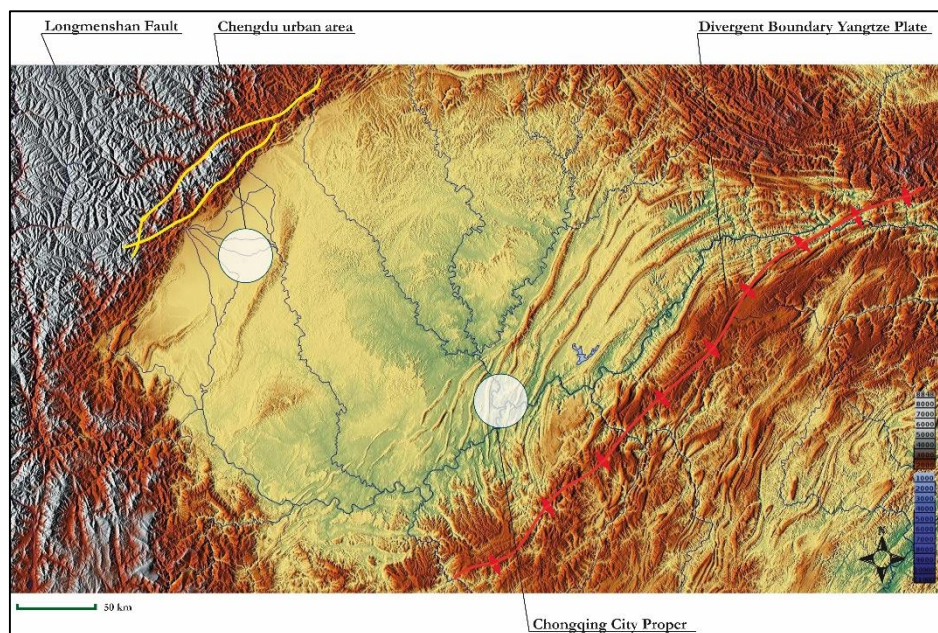

Figure 4.1. Sichuan Basin between Chengdu and Chongqing (rough map retrieved in CC0 license from http://maps-for-free.com, and modified by Bonato, 2017)

 For what concerns the spatial distribution of the urban settlements and their internal ordering, in "pre-modern" China the theorization of the urban planning relied on two different but complementary visions of the space:

> "One was represented by 'Kao Gong Ji', which proceeded from ceremonial rites and was formal and regular in design; the other, represented by 'Guan Zi', based its planning on natural topography" (Wu Yanglong, 1986: 85)
> "'Guan Zi' suggested that a city should be built according to local circumstances by making best use of the favorable conditions of physical geography, and saving manpower and material [...] 'Guan Zi' paid great attention to the *position* of handicraft industries and commerce in the city [...] Proposed that the 'officials be settled near the palace, non-officials and farmers near the city gates and workers and businessmen near the market places'. This gives expression to his ideas on *functional zoning* and *land utilization*" (*ibid.*: 6; emphasis added).

Even if representing two schools of thought, and therefore two different ways to regulate the urban management (the first one being more conservative, based on state monopoly of resources and supported by Confucian rites; the latter one concerning the employment of legalist tools as a means to regulate the country, and more demanding for personal initiative and entrepreneurship in economy), their urban guidelines can actually be found simultaneously in the same place to testify the dialectics of power elapsed over time. Moreover, the internal subdivision of the city in blocks and neighborhoods, all of them being walled and protected by sentinels, and subject to night curfew, forced people to a substantial immobility, and their subjugation to a system of mutual assistance and control (*baojia* system. Cf. Bray, 2005; Brook, 2005). This early form of integrated urban planning pointed to the consolidation of the local political power through a system that aimed to suffice the needs of a growing population – hence the importance of the storage warehouses strategically distributed over the territory – and also to contribute to the ideological reinforcement through the facilitation of tax vexation and mechanisms of regulation. However, such a rigid territorial planning could not prevent the appearing of adverse phenomena, for instance, the climate changes, the over-exploitation, and the unequal distribution of natural resources, summed up to the progressive environmental degradation due to human activities that through the times caused the decline and resizing of entire cities (Bao Maohong, 2010: 88-98). The environmental agency, however, has long been neglected by Chinese historians as an important factor in the shaping of the urban landscape and in the understanding of Chinese history itself. The human approach to the natural environment has often demonstrated arrogance on the part of men, so much so to debunk the claims of an active role of nature in human life (Smil, 1993: 179-203). In fact, the landscape is rather valued as a background for human activities or as an object to be commodified and exposed to the market for its alleged exchange value.

 To frame a logic behind the planning politics, I found it useful to catch three moments in the overall urban planning process, with particular reference to Chongqing and the Yangzi area: The *urban level*, the *regional level*, and the *national level*. Even if these stages could be read in a diachronic order, they are also responsible for the many topographic situations of contemporary China where legacy and future learn everyday how to coexist sharing the same landscape. The various facets that the Chinese planning reveals at the same time, give credit to the idea of a *multi-dimensional China* that becomes tangible in the diverse political directives and economic distances among the single places (Goodman, 2004; Tomba, 2012; Wang Kai, 2007).[1] Scaling is therefore analyzed in relational terms rather than understood as a linear

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[1] On Chinese urban history, cf. Liu Haiyan and Stapleton (2006). On Chinese urban planning, cf. Chen Xiangming and Sun (2006), He Shenjing et al. (2006), Leaf and Li (2006), Lin George C. S. and Yi (2011), Ma Laurence (2004, 2006), and Wu

development between the local-global axes (Amin, 2002: 385-389; Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003; Swyngedouw, 2000; Tuan Yi-Fu, 1977, 1979).

4.2   Planning at the urban level: an ongoing process

 The urban space is the minimum unit to deserve an analysis in order to understand a place and its history, whereas its visual representations provide details on the relationship between that place and the human beings through the mental images, and the language and vocabulary produced by a cultural system. In its role of *prefecture-level city*,[2] "pre-modern" Chongqing is a good example of the two divergent planning views described above by Wu Yanglong, and the *spatial remodeling* between the Yangzi and the Jialing Rivers responds to the ideological demand of balancing powers in the view of maintaining a status quo in a difficult area like the Sichuan Basin, frequently subject to invasions, internal feuds, and natural disasters (cf. Ch. 7). Since the establishment of the municipality, Chongqing has been object of a *guided project of metamorphosis* that although altering the urban scenario, could not wipe away the intrinsic significance of the place. On the contrary, the traces of the ancestral place are almost morbidly researched nowadays by both academics and local people to rediscover part of a lost identity through a man-nature reunion, and also by the local government that urgently needs to implement dynamic restorations of historic buildings/oral memories to attract more tourists, performing a sort of ideological pressure in order to enhance the land exchange value and favor the upscale real estate market.[3] Furthermore, the use of precise historical legacies devoid of their original significance to justify new political maneuvers in terms of historical re-enactment, represents an attempt of political manipulation that should silence possible controversies at the social level related to the misuse of the natural resources, the limited access to what was previously considered as a common space, and the new forms of "servility" towards some foreign corporations investing in the municipality. This tool is often exploited in

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Fulong (1999, 2002, 2007, 2009). Although the economic aspect is not the unique factor to determine the development of a particular area, it represents without any doubt one of the most important ones. In point of fact, "trade appears to have been far more potent than administrative transactions [...] in shaping *systems* of cities within China" (Skinner, 1977: 276).

[2] Chongqing has around 3,000 years of history. After the submission and subsequent annexation of the Ba reign (of which Chongqing was the main settlement) to the Qin reign in 316 BCE, its territory was firstly administratively ranked as *jun* (*Bajun*), a prefecture headquartered in Lanzhong (now in Sichuan Province); later in 280 BCE the peninsular urban centre was renamed as Jiangzhou and chosen as Bajun political venue. According to the administrative hierarchical order, the term *zhou* indicated a prefecture-level city where the magistrate used to reside. With the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 CE), the administration moved to the northern bank of the Jialing River in the area that nowadays corresponds to Jiangbei District, at that time part of Jiangzhou county (*xian*). The area was then called *bei fu cheng*, "northern prefectural seat", as opposed to the peninsula called *nan cheng*, "southern walled citadel". After the administrative reform operated during the Tang dynasty, the term *fu* was introduced to indicate a prefecture invested with more powers: In year 1189 (Southern Song) the area at the time called Gongzhou, being praised as a loyal border of the country, was finally named Chongqing ("double celebration") and upgraded to *fu*. The area went under the jurisdiction of Sichuan Province in 1371 (Ming dynasty). During Qing dynasty three levels of government were established: Eastern Sichuan Circuit (*chuan dong dao*), Chongqing Prefecture, and Ba County Office (Ba *xianshu*) which government seat was located in what is nowadays the southern side of Yuzhong District. Chongqing Prefecture included a governmental department (sub-prefecture) located in Jiangbei (Jiangbei *ting*), two regular prefectural cities (Hezhou, Fuzhou) and eleven counties (Ba, Jiangjin, Changshou, Qijiang, Dazu, Bishan, Tongliang, Yongchuan, Rongchang, Nanchuan, Dingyuan). Many of the county administrative borders have remained unaltered since then, and only few counties have seen their status upgraded to "urban district" (*qu*) after 1997 (cf. He Zhiya, 2010: 18-21).

[3] The local media play a key role in spreading knowledge on the lost local customs and history. In June 2017 the newspaper Chongqing Ribao launched an awareness campaign on "retracing the road of ancient poetry in Chongqing" to educate people on the history of the place and local legends (one example here: http://epaper.cqrb.cn/html/cqrb/2017-06/05/001/content_169922.htm). The relative recent phenomenon of mass cultural tourism was also defined by some Chinese scholars as "the contemporary tourism that consumes tradition – *xiaofei chuantong de xiandai lüyou*" (FDWY, 2010: 284).

Chongqing by leveraging the intense patriotic and civic feelings of the local citizens, which are partly caused by the strange fate that has marked the place for a long time, leaving the people with a sense of "unfinished".[4] Figure 4.2 shows the rapidity of the urban development within the years 1990-2017 using six satellite images from Google Earth. In particular, the images clarify how there has been a selective urbanization of certain agricultural areas, following a pattern that has favored a rapid growth of the city to the north, north-west, south, and south-west. This is due to geomorphological limits, and the necessity to create "a concatenation" of architectonic facts starting from the already urbanized zones in order to proceed in the development of the urban with a certain sense of continuity. The last reason is the strategic repositioning of the city in a visual and logistic dialogue with Chengdu.


Figure 4.2. Chongqing urban development in the years 1990 (top left), 1997, 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2017 (© Google Earth - Landsat/Copernicus images. Screenshots used on the basis of "fair use" principle)

As stated by Chongqing local government (Chongqing Municipal Government, 2007), the territory of Chongqing city after its upgrading to municipality in 1997, has been planned following a pattern named "One-hour Economic Circle", which physical boundaries clearly reproduce the limits that had been imposed when the first urban districts of the modern city had been established in 1937, thus launching a sign of discontinuity with the territorial policies implemented after 1949 (Gaubatz, 1998). In Figures 4.3, 4.4 there are shown the similarities between the road system planned during the provisional capital period (1939-46), and the communications system theorized in the period 1996-2020 within the Master Plan. In particular, the distribution of the roads follows a concentric pattern in both plans, and the urban

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[4] The events happened before 1911 and also during the KMT government. The arbitrary request by the English Army to open some ports to foreign trades after the Second Opium War, and the Japanese bombing the city from 1939 to 1942, are both part of Chinese national history and the fight against foreign Imperialism (cf. Li Danke, 2010). Later events happened after 1949, like the central government decision to downgrade Chongqing to a provincial-level city in Sichuan after being the capital of China from 1937 to 1945, the creation of the Third Industrial Front, thus giving the city a clear footprint related to the heavy industry, and the exclusion of Chongqing from the first neo-liberal policies (Special Economic Zones – SEZs – like Shenzhen), which might signify a relief from state subsidies and so a greater financial independence of the region, were part of an internal state-building strategy based on the planned economic system and the geopolitics implemented until early 1990s. On the image of the city through a popular perspective, cf. Chabrowsky (2013: 273, 292-294). On the fruition of the contemporary urban space, cf. He Shenjing and Lin (2015).

growth planned in 1940s and based on the development of strategic points, i.e. Jiulongpo, Jiangbei/Yubei, Beibei, Shapingba, Nan'An, and Changshou, has been partially achieved according to the Master Plan through the boost of economic, residential, and service activities in these areas.
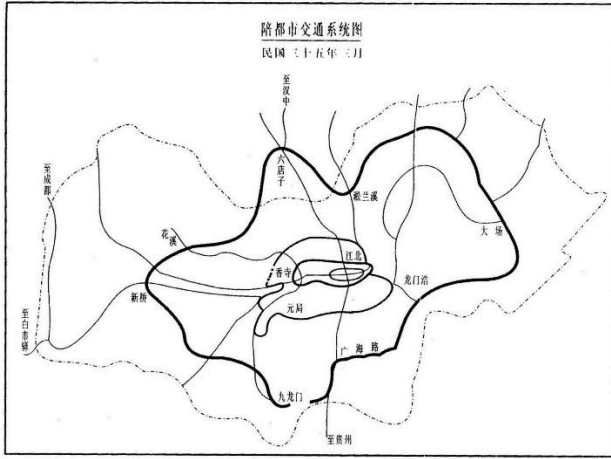
Figure 4.3. Road system of the war-capital with newly established districts, March 1946 (Planning Committee for the Construction of the War-Capital. In PJJW, 1946: n.p.)
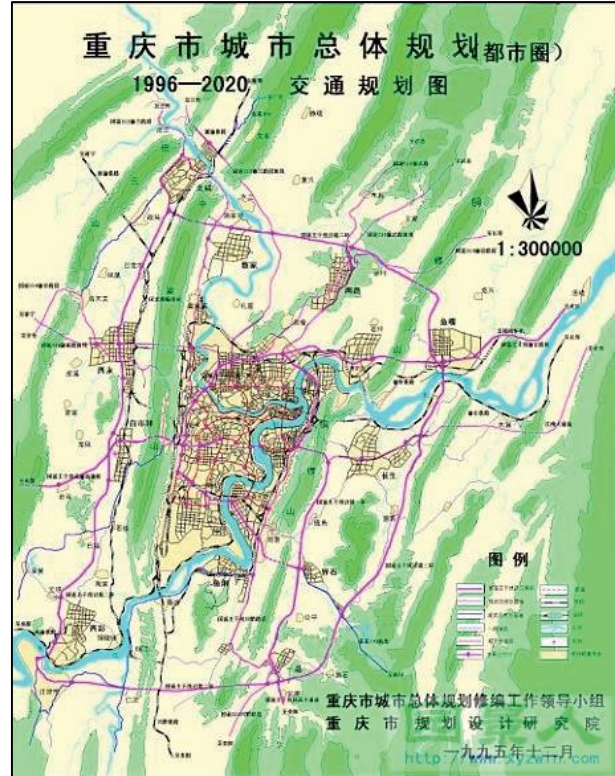
Figure 4.4. (right) Master Plan of Chongqing City 1996-2020. The new urban areas and the road loops are well visible (© Chongqing Planning Bureau, http://www.xyzwin.com/linianpian/7787.html)

In the last ten years the narratives concerning the urban have been directed towards the restoration of a glorious past to be realized through a material improvement of the citizens' lifestyle. This has also triggered the cult for a new environment that might suit better the *forma mentis* of the local people. Following a new urban classification, Chongqing has been included in the *Super-Megacity – chaoda chengshi* typology (People's Daily Online, 2014), on the base of its permanent resident population (*changzhu renkou*), which is more than ten million people.[5] Looking at the "mission" that the local government has embraced through the theorization of "*five functional areas*" (*wu da gongneng quyu*), a schematization of long lasting processes encompassing the material aspects of living the urbanity, it comes out that Chongqing is focused on (Hualong wang, 2016):

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[5] Before the implementation of the new classification on November 20, 2014, Chinese cities were divided into four categories according to the amount of non-agricultural population residing in the city centre and the suburbs. The new ranking breaks the citizen-farmer gap, and it also takes account of the population residing in the county administered by a city. According to the definition, a *super-megacity* is designed to fulfill a need for services and facilities to a population projected towards the globalization of consumptions and practices. Being a *super-megacity* is "a matter of culture", and therefore the incoming of new residents must be controlled on the assumption that "only who owns the necessary mental openness and entrepreneurial temperament can bring benefits to the city", thus deserving to join the urban living on a top-level environment (Baidu Baike, 2017). As for 2015, Chongqing Municipality counted a population of 30.17 million people (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016), of which around 19.8 million people were registered with an "agricultural *hukou*" and 13.9 million people with a "non-agricultural *hukou*" (Chongqing Statistical Yearbook, 2016). On the policies implemented since the late 1970s in favor of Chinese smaller cities, and their significance in terms of environmental impact, cf. Hahn (1983: 189-210).

- More quality rather than quantity in industry production;
- More attention to service industry;
- Enhancing the image of Chongqing as "contemporary city" (*Stadt der Gegenwart*);
- How to properly relieve urban congestion (*shujie renkou*);
- Sharply and carefully modifying the urban space.

Speculative games and a dreamed urbanization are the two engines of the dramatic change in the landscape: The administrative boundaries have been resettled following new logics, and some county areas devoted to agriculture have been converted into urban districts on the basis of a partially manifested *potentiality*.[6] In this sense, there is a need for *a forward-looking leadership* to lead Chongqing properly towards a new phase of development – a discourse that might be ideologically inserted into the dialogic complexity of the party and its renewed capacity to converse with the ancient masters of Chinese social disciplines. In particular, Mencius spread the vision of a wise governor whose skills "must be used to *humanize* the ignorant people all around" (Skinner, 1977: 356). Moreover, there seems that the "pre-modern" trend of the central government to choose a place as administrative pole only if it had proved to be already a thriving economic centre – trade and manufacturing working together in a combination of forces (*ibid.*) – has been abandoned. In fact, the political maneuvers of the early 2000s have broken the logic of security, exposing the city to speculative attacks and frequent financial rescues by the central government. To administer a sort of potentiality means that the local people are *driven to dream* about a better future for their environment, accepting with less resistance the body politic that takes control over the territory and converts it into a sort of machine to create surplus-value.

The recent urbanization process has included the establishment of Liangjiang New Area Administrative Centre as a supra-municipal power, i.e. an administrative and control organ located in Yubei District, far away from the congested "old town" (Yuzhong District) where the local government and the party representative have their main offices. The area has been planned on an ultra-modernist scheme where the buildings are surrounded by green, and are well connected to the main communication routes provided through the "One-hour Economic Circle". This centre of power operates in line with the central government provisions, and controls the economic and innovation hub called Liangjiang New Area (Qing Jingwei & Zhou, 2013). Furthermore, a great amount of new administrative services related to the "informatization era" are also situated along the Jiangbei-Yubei Districts border, a fact that shows a precise strategy to turn this zone into the beating heart of Chongqing technological transformation.

The relocation of some government offices out of the city historic centre reflects a national vision inaugurated by the decision taken by the central government in Beijing to displace the municipal government offices out of Zhongnanhai (the traditional site of power in the capital) in the next few years to relocate them in a satellite town (Tongzhou) specially designed to host the bureaucracy (Johnson, 2015). Apart from the environmental benefit such a decision could bring with, this might also be interpreted as a sign of the party withdrawal from the people, and a further break between the Party

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[6] Banan was formerly administered as a county, and turned into a district belonging to Chongqing City after 1997. It hosts an important research centre. Nan'an District was site of industries and working-class residential blocks, but its core, Nanping, has been successfully transformed into a commercial and leisure area. Yubei District in the north used also to be a county: It was predominantly wooded and little densely inhabited. In the northern part of the district, its greenness was merged with a new niche agricultural vocation, in particular fruit farming and viticulture (personal visit to the "Xiangnongshuo Ecological" Company at Yufeng Mount in Yubei District, 2015). The southern side is more industrialized (cf. Liangjiang official website: http://english.liangjiang.gov.cn/2014-01/07/content_17253237.htm). The administrative borders of Jiangbei District have been adjusted in 1994 with the dissolution of Jiangbei County and the establishment of Yubei District, where the "Jiangbei International Airport" is now located.

Central Committee and the local administration. The imposed isolation regime can also be linked to the necessity to cut off those insidious ties between officials and entrepreneurs, therefore trying to stem the phenomenon of corruption that represents a major threat to the legitimacy of the party, and its credibility in the eyes of the Chinese people and foreign observers. In fact, the administrative employees, who are also party members, are called to follow a tight regulation concerning their personal behavior in social and private life, in order to curb the devastating phenomenon of cadre corruption and to limit as far as possible the spread of state secrets. This national policy called "*liang xue yi zuo*" – "two studies, one practice" was introduced in 2016 after an escalation of corruption allegations against high cadres, from which intricate networks of bribes emerged (Li Yuan, 2016; Liu Chunxue, 2016).[7] Although Chongqing urban structure partly differs from the capital model, nevertheless, they are both two municipalities with in common the fact that the administrative districts own a certain degree of autonomy, having a mayor and a proper internal economic system, without neglecting the fact that the central district still has a radial influence on the territory (Lynch, 2006: 85, 123 ff.; YJRW, 2014; Zhou Yixing & Ma, 2000), imposing a pattern of development that ensures the maintenance of a "composite urban space - *fuhexing de chengshi kongjian*" (Qian Caiyun & Zhou, 2010).

4.2.1 Liangjiang New Area: a cutting-edge superstructure branched into three districts

Liangjiang New Area was established in June 2010, and it reports directly to the State Council together with the other 18 National (Level) New Areas (*guojiaji xinqu*). As explained in China Policy Observer (2017), "first launched in 1992, National New Areas enjoy preferential policy support to solve urbanitis and integrate industry and urban development, covering housing, transportation, resources and the environment."[8] In particular, Liangjiang New Area can be defined as a *territorial spinoff* from the "normal" administration of the district, a superstructure established by the central government to become a passe-partout to Western China (*zhongyao menkou*), particularly in

- technology research and development;
- advanced manufacturing industry;
- services;
- informatization;

- logistics;
- foreign trade;
- party representative;
- eco-sustainable living.

Clustered among Jiangbei-Yubei-Beibei Districts, it covers a surface of 1,200 sq.km, of which 550 sq.km of developing zone, and 650 sq.km of undeveloped land, viz. water basins, mountains, and protected spots (Liangjiang.org, 2010). As shown in Figure 4.5, Liangjiang New Area does not cover the entire surface of the three districts, being its administration focused on the development of strategic locations such as towns, conglomerates, and street offices according to the economic benefit, the local resources, and the previous activities in the area:

> "In comparison to the 'analogous functions and conflicting policies' of Pudong New District in
> Shanghai and Binhai New Area in Tianjin, [Liangjiang New Area] is a 'new area' of

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[7] Cf. also Li Ling (2011), and Zhang Yan (2015). Cf. Li Ling (2017) for an overview of the 2013-17 anti-corruption campaign in China, and Weber (1978: 1416-19) on the necessity to limit the bureaucratic power.

[8] Cf. also Lam (2010: 350-354), and Liangjiang official website: www.liangjiang.gov.cn.

comprehensive development which influence should provide impetus for the West and the vast internal area [of China]" (http://www.liangjiang.org/article-1194-1.html).

Unlike other municipalities that see their core districts already densely urbanized and blocked by zoning policies, Chongqing with its delay in embracing changes, has had the chance to better design a comprehensive planning of development as propagandized in the official website (Fig. 4.6). While in Beijing the central government is forced to develop its New Area (Xiongan) as a satellite-city in Hebei Province (Chublic Opinion, 2017), Liangjiang New Area is instead located near the city centre, a position that enforces the potentiality of the area but also encourages the further development of Chongqing suburbia. In this regard, a third road loop is under construction to connect Liangjiang New Area (Beibei and Yubei) with Hechuan and Nanchuan. The route Nanchuan-Liangjiang is the fifth part of the project "Chongqing Highway Network Plan 2013-2030", and its construction work began in June 2015 (ZGW, 2014, 2015).
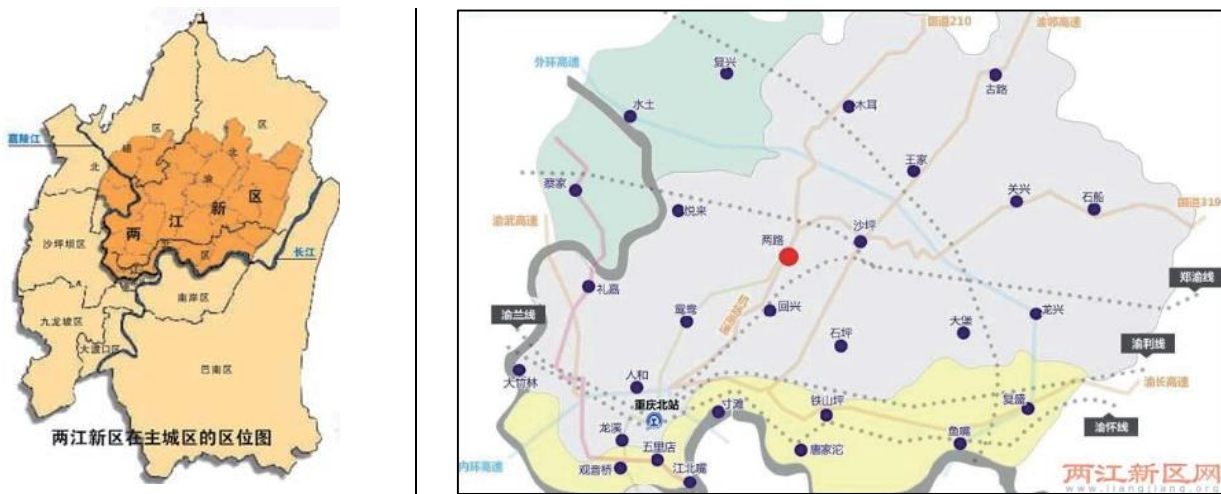

Figure 4.5. Surface of Liangjiang New Area within the Jialing-Yangzi Rivers watershed (left), and the main urban centres involved in the project (URL: http://www.liangjiang.org/article-1194-1.html; http://www.liangjiang.org/article-1262-1.html. Copyright unavailable)

Figure 4.6. Advertisement poster on Liangjiang New Area official website (URL: http://ljxqzw.gov.cn/; © Chongqing Liangjiang New Area Management Committee)

4.2.2 Radial influence and haphazard growth: a dynamic urban planning

According to the Chicago School of Sociology (1920s-30s), the development of a city normally follows a concentric pattern as in Figure 4.7, where more emphasis is put on *ecology*, *zoning*, and *radial expansion* from the centre (e.g. Wirth, 1939). Aymonino (1977: 157 ff.) related this model to the representation of the 19th century European bourgeois city, which intrinsic features were zoning, social exclusion, and displacement. Fabbri explained the shift to a new concept of urban space in these terms: "The residential building does not appear anymore on the basis of building typologies, but rather through the use of the soil subdivision into construction areas. This marks a 'historical' cultural leap' in the shaping of the modern city" (Fabbri, 1984: 157). In the modern city as of mid-nineteenth century,
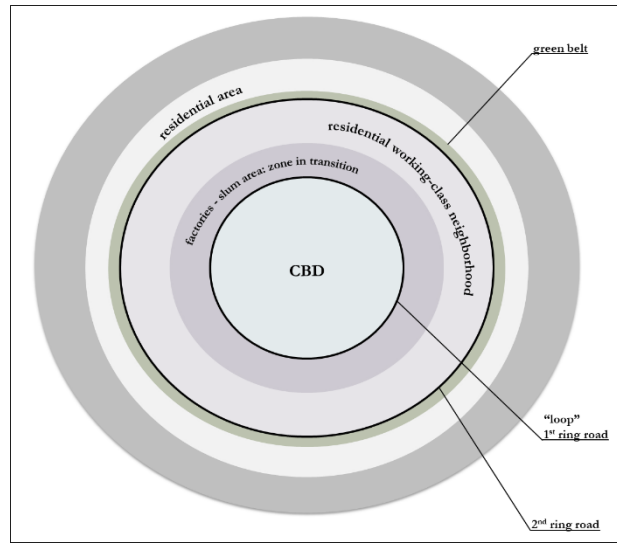

Figure 4.7. Urban development according to the Chicago School of Sociology (author's drawing)

the emptiness of the places is for the first time conceived as a new kind of monumental aesthetics: It leads to the demolition of the perimeter walls, and the opening of ring roads as majestic expressions of power and signs of the coming era. The relationship among three elements (dwelling, public places, public facilities), i.e. their spatial distribution in the territory and the solutions of *proximity* developed through the urban planning, gives evidence of the possible social problems arising within the urban boundaries (*ibid.*). In fact, the problematic development of the urban related to the deterministic vision above described, was already clear in 1940s. For instance, according to Norman J. Gorden, Chongqing City Planning Adviser of the provisional capital (PJJW, Preface, 1946):

> "In the last fifty years that America and Europe have developed, many mistakes have been made from which China can profit [...] railroads must never be permitted to run through cities, the density of population must be kept down [...] and slums are to be prevented [...] At present China is short of planning technicians. The city of Chungking was fortunate in having such able men to draw up the present plan [...] There is no doubt that if these proposals are carried out, the Chungking of 1965 will be much place to work in, to live in, and to invest in".

Despite the exhortations, Wu Jin described the typical Communist city at the end of 1980s using a model similar to Fig. 4.7 (Wu Jin, 1991: 49-50), with the basic difference that the Chinese city had replaced the residential middle class neighborhood with an industrial fringe-belt.

The failure of the bourgeois city as planned by the modernists, as well as the socially and environmentally unsustainable pattern of the Communist "production city", forced the theorization of a new paradigm based on urban fragmentation and chaos. In particular, as emphasized by Dear (2005: 248), the post-industrial urban theorists ("Los Angeles School", 1980s) asserted that "the concept of an urban core organizing its hinterland is obsolete, since the urban peripheries now organize what remains of the center; [...] a linear evolutionist urban paradigm has been usurped by a nonlinear, chaotic process that includes pathological forms such as gated communities and life-threatening environmental degradation".

In this bipolar scenario dominated by the extremes of rigor and political fragility, the case of Chongqing as urban fact appears in all its ambivalence. The dynamics of "peri-urbanization" since the establishment of the municipality, have been following a particular pattern that goes beyond the aforementioned urban theories, although being inspired by them. For instance, the main communication routes have been developed in tune with the ring structure on the mold of the first ring road designed in 1927 (*Changjiang binjiang lu*). The second road loop has been planned and completed in the 2000s (*neihuan kuaisulu* "internal ring"), and recently the third ring has been finalized (*Chongqing raocheng gaosu gonglu* - "city bypass highway"). Considering also the local topography, the Chongqing Urban Planning Bureau has modified the concentric pattern of development in the attempt to avoid slums, zoning and radial gentrification, and urban sprawl.

As visible in Figure. 4.8, this results in the possibility to spatialize the urban as a *non-concentric system* where all the main districts envelop both an administrative and a commercial core. The distribution of the residential blocks apparently does not converge with the idea of territorial gentrification proper of the Chicago School, following a more complex pattern connected with the distribution of the natural resources. It cannot also be conceived as a "chaos" since each zone is designed to be consistent with a long-term strategy of financial accumulation and circulation based on the needs and aspirations of the local elite (Chongqing Municipal Government, 2007; CSGHW, 2015; Cui Zhiyuan, 2010-11; Hualong wang, 2016; Huang Guangyu & Liu, 2005; Ravetz et al., 2013; van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998).[9] Figure 4.8 shows in detail the *mixed approach* to the zoning process, starting from the city historic centre where the local government struggles to obtain more space for land renewal and further gentrification. Apart from Yuzhong District where politics and services are based, the surrounding central districts still have industrial areas near the residential neighborhoods, mainly located near water to make easy the discharge of industrial waste. Agriculture is also a practice spread in all the districts except Yuzhong, but there are only a few model zones that benefit of funds for the mechanization, in line with the "urban-rural coordinated development" campaign.

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[9] On Beibei District urban-rural cohesive planning, cf. BBQFJ (2017); on the strategic planning of Beibei and Nan'An Districts, and the second ring area, cf. Lin George and Yi (2011: 74); on a brief history of the opening of the first CBDs in China, cf. Zacharias and Yang (2016).
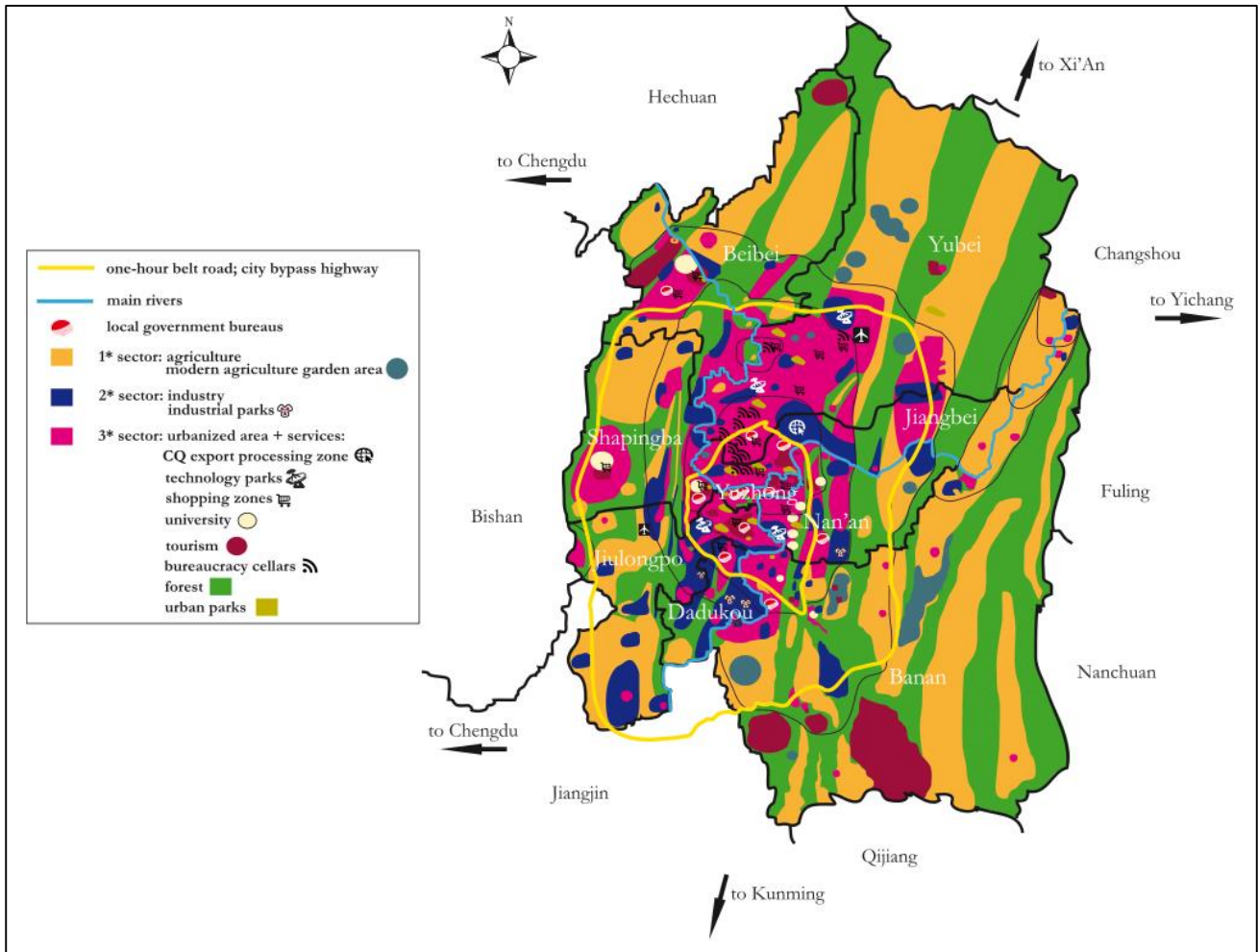
Figure 4.8. Map of Chongqing urban planning implementations (Bonato, 2018 on data retrieved from Baidu Ditu, administrative regulations, and participant observation)

4.3   Planning at the regional level

Before the market reform had taken place in China in the early eighties, infrastructure and communication routes were understood by the central government as a burden: The economic chain normally used to settle within the province itself, thus leaving not much space for intra-provincial exchanges (Bao Maohong in McNeill et al., 2010: 87 ff.; Han Sun Sheng, 1998: 121-122). Roads and railways were of least benefit for the economic development, while most of the population was spatially blocked through the *hukou* system and the agricultural communes. There was a centripetal flow of resources from the suburban countryside to the city, namely to the production units (*danwei*) located within the city (Bergére, 1981). During the Maoist period, the urban landscape as well was seen as a dying exoskeleton of the previous capitalist-imperialist phase, hence much effort was given to strengthen the communist spirit through architectonic symbols within the *danwei* space rather than in the city itself (Bjorklund, 1986; Bray, 2005; Gaubatz, 1999; Hahn, 1983). Along with the sunset of a urban planning

pattern mainly focused on *programmatic architecture*,[10] which had its theoretical and visual apex during "modernism", the urbanists started questioning which method could better pursue the qualitative research of the historical-physical reality, i.e. the dialectics between the architectonic volumes and the space-time variables out of a pure planimetric analysis.[11] This came with the synthesis of the *functions* attributed to particular urban locations, since the permanence of relationships and the housing typologies could also lead to the formulations of constants in the process of urban metamorphosis.

In the perspective of a market economy "with Chinese characteristics", infrastructures have become investments for the local governments, and a key pillar to facilitate the path towards a territorial marketization, but also a more rapid and capillary exploitation of its natural resources. Chongqing area and the Sichuan Basin in general has lacked of proper ways of communication until the mid-nineties (CCJGW, 1997: 207-209; Zhou Yong, 2003: 101-105): The "Route Network Planning for Chongqing 2013-2030" aims to literally modify the territory and close the gap between the more emancipated urban areas of Chongqing city and the suburban districts. The technological advancement is allowing the opening-up of remote areas, something impossible in the past due to their difficult geographical position, and somehow a gift in terms of preservation of natural scenarios and environmental uniqueness. Because of this *backwardness*, Chongqing has become one of the two sites of a national pilot project studied to rebalance the forces among the urban core and its suburbs, adopting special policies, incentives to rural towns, and promotion of more intelligent systems of agriculture to avoid the excessive departure of rural migrants to the cities and the consequent abandonment of the agricultural activity (Yan Alice, 2017; cf. the ADB projects in Ch. 6).[12] The local government is also involved in advertising eco-tourism (e.g. in Qianjiang District; Chongqing Tourism Bureau, 2016b), and cultural tourism (*wenhua lüyou*; Chongqing Ribao, 2017a, 2017c).[13] It also promotes the diffusion of valuable crops like expensive vineyards, while on a broader scale it appears to be focused on safeguarding Chongqing huge natural heritage.[14]

Based on the central government discourse on "promoting a more equitable and sustainable pattern of development throughout the Chinese territory", in recent years Chongqing Municipality has worked for

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[10] It would be misleading to think about the modern history of Chinese urban planning as a narrative based completely on "Westernization" and "Soviet" patterns, i.e. a passive assimilation of external theories of thought. On the contrary, fervent debates have accompanied the creation of the post-1949 New China in its urbanization process, in accordance with the political fluctuations of the ruling class. As explained by Hahn (1983: 64-66), even after the Opening-Up Reform in early 1980s the previously formulated orthodox line had to be maintained in order to give substance to the party narrative on following the "mass line" principle. In particular, "the masses should directly take part in the planning process, so to shatter gossip around planning being a mystery". Mass participation also helps in shaping a "collective wisdom" (*ibid.*). After the cities were reintegrated of their functions in the late 1970s, a first form of urban zoning was introduced, and consisted of a clear division into industrial, residential, cultural, and green-leisure areas (*ibid.*, 72 ff.). More attention was given on industrial pollution, with the first air and water quality researches made in Beijing (*ibid.*: 86-106).

[11] For what concern the studies on programmatic architecture, cf. for example Le Corbusier (1925).

[12] Chengdu is the other place chosen for the testing of new urban-rural cooperation policies (Chen Aimin & Gao, 2011).

[13] Within the classification of "cultural tourism", in China it has recently emerged the phenomenon of "cinematographic tourism", i.e. the touristic influx incremented by the turning of a location into the set of a particular movie or TV show (Kelly, 2014). In Chongqing, two places are especially famous for being film sets: Shuangjiang near Tongnan Town (Tongnan County), and Baisha Town (Jiangjin District). The latter has gained fame as "ancient town" thanks to the old port and the traditional streets, which have become a favorite place for shooting scenes depicting "pre-modern" Chongqing. The tourist inflow has allowed the survival of the place, otherwise destined to vanish in the grip of modernization. Moreover, this advertising process has triggered an increase in the value of land and properties: As explained by Baisha Town Party Committee Secretary Mr. Qin Min, "originally in the old streets no one would buy a building even for six thousand yuan, now no one would sell it even for sixty thousand yuan" (Jiang Ying, 2011).

[14] According to Chongqing Statistics Yearbook 2016, in Chongqing the forest area amounts to 37,080 sq.km on a total surface of 82,400 sq.km. The forest coverage rate (2015) is thus 45% of the municipal territory (http://www.cqtj.gov.cn/tjnj/2016/indexeh.htm). On the basis of Chinese environmental regulations, this percentage should remain unchanged, so while yearly some areas are converted to urban development, other ones should be redirected to reforestation or should be labeled as "non-exploitable land" (CTJ, 2015). Cf. also Feng Weibo et al. (2010).

the purpose of becoming a visible proof of the possibility to establish a more harmonious system of growth (Lam Tao-chiu, 2010: 350-351; ZCGSY, 2017; Zhuang Pinghui, 2017). One of the techniques consists in the local government underlining the importance of *restoring* the economic value of certain places. This narrative is built on a process of recollection of the past prosperity, leveraging the power of local myths and historical documents through a combination of "emotions and science".

Despite the importance of a polycentric pattern of development, as explained by Qing Jingwei and Zhou (2013), the benefits spreading from a core to its extremities should not be dismissed but rather cherished (Wenxuecity, 2016). In this sense, Chongqing city proper detains a leading role within the space of the municipality that the city itself is called upon to represent. Due to the environmental barriers and the necessity to make trades along the rivers, in the past there was no linear developmental pattern in the Sichuan Plateau. Skinner's analysis of the geo-economic conditions in the Upper Yangzi region in the nineteenth century has led to the configuration of a complicated *market town system* (1977: 275-346), where the main problematic was the minimizing of transport costs (Fei in Perkins, 1975: 235 ff.). The cultivated area around the market was also index of prosperity in the agrarian economy (*ibid.*). This hierarchy based on the *hexagonal network* is still relevant to conceptualize the approach of Chongqing local government towards the matters of territorial zoning and division of responsibilities, and the Chengdu-Chongqing confrontational partnership (Chen Aimin & Gao, 2011; Feng Wenlan & Zhou, 2009; Hong Lijian, 1999; Xinhua, 2011). In fact, in order to implement a more integrated and equal urban-rural development, the local government is working on enhancing the number of small/medium cities and towns within its urban and suburban districts, carrying on a pattern of development that actually resembles Skinner's paradigm. The planning of new urban areas follows the rule of spreading a scale economy based on residential, industrial, and services zoning, thus privileging those places located in strategic positions with respect to the existing communication routes (or the already planned ones), and those areas that are evidently interesting for a particular production site. Other decisive factors are the historical background and the landscape beauty. These features, in fact, constitute an already "added-value" to pursue a successful enlargement of the urban areas.[15]

In Figure 4.9 I have drawn a representation of the city-towns hexagonal power network, comparing it to a recent map that shows the focal points of the municipality new urbanization phase: It emerges that the next step in the process of modernization will touch the areas included between the Sichuan Province border and Chongqing city in the west and north-west (Hechuan, Tongnan, Dazu), Nanchuan in the south, and Fuling and Changshou in the east (Fig. 4.10).

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[15] Cf. e.g. Bishan New Master Plan, and Binjiang New City Plan (Jiangjin District) at
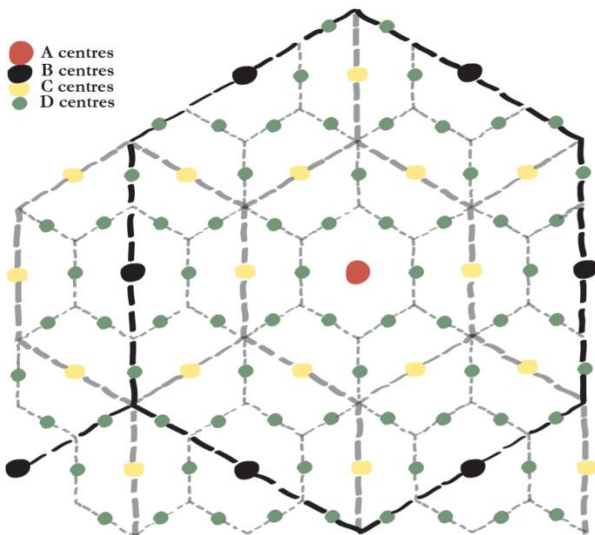http://www.jjbjxc.gov.cn/www/site/web_show_154.shtml.

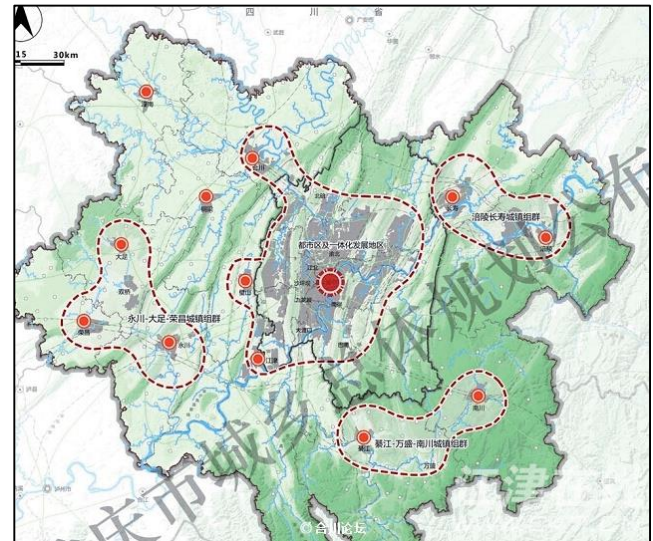Figure 4.9. Upper Yangzi market town system (author's drawing based on Skinner, 1977: 279)

Figure 4.10. Chongqing Master Plan "Cities-Counties Network". Detail of Chongqing western suburban districts from Sichuan border to Fuling and Changshou (Wuling is excluded because classified as a county. © Hechuan Luntan, http://pic.e47.cn/uploade472012/forum/201410/2014102315564474.jpg)

The areas listed below are already part of Chongqing modern economic circuit, with a more or less precise sectoralisation of production as shown in the following table (Tab. 4.1):

Table 4.1. Chongqing central districts' industrial sectorization

Yuzhong	*representative offices, commerce, luxury leisure activities, entertainment*	foreign consulates (UK, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Japan, Italy, etc.), Hong Kong Trade Office, bank branch offices, etc.
Jiangbei	*services, manufacturing and transformation, logistics, export processing, research*	CocaCola Corp., B&S Corp., Meixin Corp., Dongfeng Shipping, Applied Technology Research Institute, etc.
Shapingba	*pharmaceutics, chemicals, agrochemicals*	Huafu Gongye Gongsi, Wangjiang Motorcycle
Nan'An	*light industry, chemicals, materials*	Meixin Construction Material Base, Qinghua Latex Plant
Jiulongpo	*research, technology development*	Zongshen Motor Technology Research Institute
Dadukou	*metallurgy*	Chongqing Iron & Steel Gr. Co., Steel Thermal Ceramics Inc.
Banan	*mechanics, tourism*, luxury leisure*	Zongshen Ind. Gr., Jianshe Ind. Gr., thermal baths
Beibei	*metallurgy, research, tourism*, luxury leisure*	Sewage Treatment Plant, CIGIT, Shuitu Hi-Tech Ind. Park, Chinese Academy of Sciences, thermal baths
Yubei	*mechanics, logistics, hi-tech research, aviation*	Yufan Parts Corp., SAIC IVECO Vehicles Co. Ltd.
Changshou	*chemicals*	BASF China Ltd., Chemical Park
Dazu	*cultural tourism*, hardware, mechanics, high-tech smart technology*	Buddhist carvings, High-tech Development Area

* mass tourism is here considered as a proper industrial sector (Dotti, 2017)

4.4 Planning at the national level

The Chinese central government is in charge of establishing and promoting all those initiatives that should take place simultaneously in more provinces or are designed to reach the global interest for strategic purposes.[16] Chongqing has also been involved in the strengthening of the merchant lines through the systematic use of the freight rail route to Duisburg, Germany, since April 2015 (the line was operative since 2011; van Leijen, 2018).

Looking at the internal front, the Yangzi Economic Belt (*Changjiang jingji dai*) is part of the national process of creating supra-regional institutional entities with the purpose of bypassing the local discrepancies to focus on a common goal, which should be a more sustainable and equal development of the state infrastructure (Xinhua, 2016; Zhang JF & Deng, 2010). This economic project brings together nine provinces and two super-mega cities (Shanghai, Chongqing) along the upper and down reaches of the Yangzi River with the scope to homogenize the distribution of industries and services, and to give the population of this huge area that runs transversely from west to east across China, a plan of common intent for what concerns some social problems such as environmental protection: "Grasp together a greater protection! – *gong zhua da baohu*!" is the slogan ideated for this campaign (Zhang Yi, 2016). In fact, apart from the planned clustering of industrial parks along the Yangzi River, this institution is called by the central government to work on the environmental protection, in particular on the care of the specificity of the amphibious territory touched by the river – from Tibet to Jiangnan region. This task is incorporated
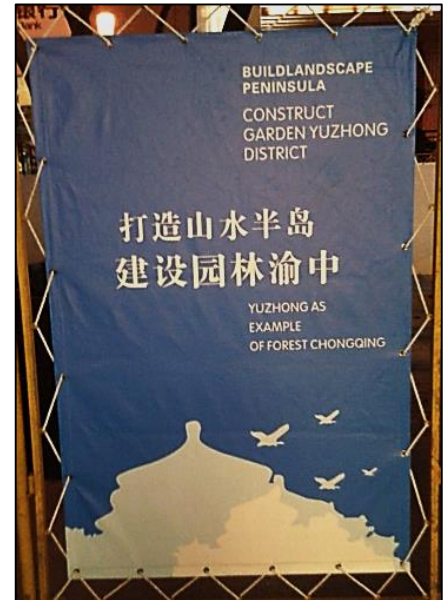

Figure 4.11. Local green campaign: "Creating a peninsula of green and waters, gardening Yuzhong District" *Dazao shanshui bandao, jianshe yuanlin Yuzhong* (Bonato, 2015)

in the bigger "*embellishing China*" political campaign (*meili Zhongguo*) which promotion is done through diverse media channels, from the billboards to the news on television as in Figure 4.11. The poster realized by Yuzhong District government, represents in a stylized form the Dalitang Palace, i.e. the seat of the local party power, surrounded by trees and birds. The key colors used in the poster are the white, symbol of cleanliness, and the light blue that can both represent the sky and the waters. The idea behind the image is actually more linked to the necessity to "do gardening" in the city, i.e. to embellish the cityscape with an acculturated version of nature, rather than to the desire to protect the environment in its entirety. The poster was put along the main pedestrian street near Jiefangbei together with other ones of the same topic, creating a colorful chain to cover and delimit a site object of road maintenance works.

As a recent political flagship to uphold the party legitimacy and to gain the sympathy of the masses, pro-environment policies are spread through the mass media. Particular attention is put to those activities related to the Chinese President Xi Jinping, which discourses range from "building a beautiful country" (Xinhua, 2017c), to "adopting green lifestyles" (Xinhua, 2017a), to advocating for better developmental methods along the Yangzi: "To restore its ecological environment will be an overwhelming task and no large-scale development will be allowed along the river at present and for a rather long period to come" (Xinhua, 2016). The use of human affections is in contrast with the fact that in the upper Yangzi River
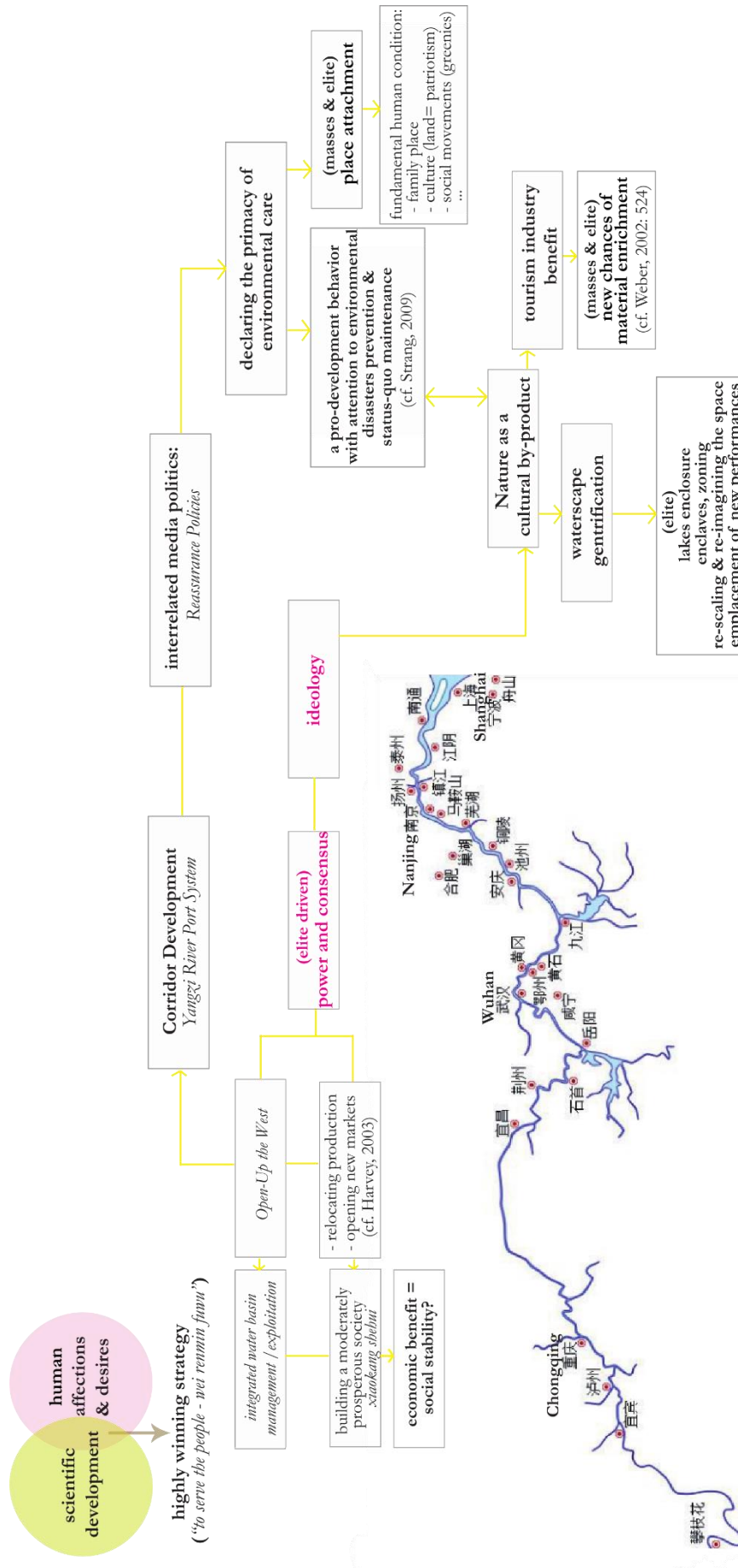
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[16] Cf. the *One Belt One Road* series of development activities (*yi dai yi lu*) aimed to spread the "Beijing consensus" beyond the national borders, through South-East Asia to Australia and Africa, and through Central Asia to Europe (Xinhua wang, 2017).

basin, the process of "modern" environmental exploitation has actually just begun, e.g. with the construction of China third largest hydropower station located between Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces (Xinhua, 2015). Other damages to the waterway could be caused by the expansion of cargo shipping in the area (Notteboom, 2012; Veenstra & Notteboom, 2011). The Chongqing-Duisburg cargo rail system goes to support the river transport system, which is limited by the decreasing navigability of the upstream sections due to barging capacity (Veenstra & Notteboom, 2011: 778), and by the elongated timelines due to bureaucracy and obstacles (e.g. the Three Gorges Dam). The Yangzi Economic Belt as a programmatic structure, provides a holistic infrastructural expansion, viz. the improvement of railways, waterways, and air connections (GOV.cn, 2014).

The maintenance of green areas has manifold significances within the party orthodox narrative in matter of global climate change, and its impact on human life and the environment. Since China has embraced the UN cause against the deterioration of the climate conditions, the topic has become a source for legitimacy in leading the country.[17] Planning the greening is also conceived 1) in a modernist optic of sanitation, and 2) in the sense of "artificial naturalness" that allows the urban citizen to enjoy the countryside without leaving the city as prescribed by the early modernist planners (Valentini, 2005: 24 ff.). The third point is the necessity to preserve the green in order to develop tourism in its various forms: Red tourism (CGSY, 2010), gastronomic tourism (Yan Alice, 2017), adventure tourism, luxury tourism, etc., thus exploiting all the possibilities of creating use value by misunderstanding the natural environment as a pure commodity. In fact, the great Chinese market revolution happening nowadays, envisages that the *emotional economy* will mostly shape new cultural and performative spaces through a dialectics of needs production, the framing of a place potentiality, and the human bodies' research for satisfaction (Thrift, 2006). From an ideological point of view, this historical change is still built upon a hegemonic knowledge of the reality represented as a subdivision of hierarchical levels, each of them collimating into a sphere of relevance of human fetishism. In China the *new freedom of movement* that allows masses of consumers to travel from place to place, does not imply that the party has loosen the grip on the population. In fact, looking at the new practices of physical control and performance of the *Socialist body*, the situation is actually deteriorated after the advanced informatization technologies have become coercive tools in the hands of the party-state (Mason, 2017; Rajagopalan, 2017. Cf. Ch. 7).

In Figure 4.12 I have summarized in a scheme how the local management of natural resources is merged with a broader vision encompassing the political, economic and "spiritual" spheres of the Chinese daily life. Since the economic benefit cannot ensure social stability, there is a need to compensate the contradictions at the political and cultural level. In this case, the "Yangzi Economic Belt" represents the re-scaling of the national expectations in the south-west and south-central China, from Yunnan Province to Shanghai, through the exploitation of the river as a natural resource and as a symbol of power and rebirth. The use of scientific vocabulary, and the appeal to human affections and material yearnings, makes the legislation successful within the optic of an organic strategy of governance of the watershed. Profit and demagogy are often the main ingredients of the official discourses related to the national request of selective urbanization and industrial modernization: They are used to deny the question of state responsibility towards the environment, and to spread a misleading knowledge on those politics that allow the dramatic changes happening to the landscape.

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[17] On the implications of globalization on the constitution of the local, cf. Amin (2002).

Figure 4.12. Organic strategy of governance of Chongqing watershed and rescaling of the "Yangzi Economic Belt" hegemonic purposes

In the picture: "The 29 urban centres along the Yangzi River involved in the Yangzi Economic Belt project"
source: http://pic.baike.soso.com/p/20140429/20140429142238-363783438.jpg

4.5   Conclusions

In this chapter I have pointed out the network existing between the local and the central government, looking at the significance of local urban planning in relation to orthodox spatial narratives, which are decided at the top of the hierarchical administrative system. The main outcomes are as follows:

1) Chongqing has been living an extremely rapid developmental process. However, it is improper to define it as "chaos", since it can be better appointed as "dynamism and experimentation" of diverse economic and social practices in adjacent spaces. The areas of maximum industrial redevelopment (new technologies, machine industry, chemicals, services, tourism, etc.) are also the areas where a greater number of gated communities is located (cf. Ch. 6).

2) Chongqing city centre has still a radial influence on the rest of the territory, but there is no concentric pattern deployed throughout the districts.

3) The rapid development implies a partial fulfillment of the local people's expectations in response to a common sense of "unfinished" regarding the history of the city and its role at the national level.

4) There is no Chongqing without the central government endorsement, i.e. there must be a political sign of convergence between central and local government, with the tacit recognition and acceptance of a practice of centralization of the strategic resources (state monopoly) through the establishment of "superstructures" crossing municipal and provincial borders in the name of "state interest".

5) There is an evident instrumentalization of historical events, scientific proofs, and cultural credo to build a collateral source of legitimacy to complement the economic performance.

5. Performing happiness in the urban: neoliberal patterns, governance strategies, and localized architecture

> Clearly those with power, education, skills and
> political connections are the winners
> in economic transition and urban restructuring.
> Laurence Ma (2004: 253)

> Public buildings provide an important means
> of gaining access to the meaning
> embedded in the urban landscape.
> Y. Whelan (in Ashworth & Graham, 2005: 67)

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one concerns the political economy of China, in particular the current path of development promoted by the central government, and its impact on the natural environment. The assessment of an ideological goal borrowed from the Classics, i.e. the establishment of a "moderately rich society" (*xiaokang shehui*), appears to be the reading key to understand the recent political maneuvers:[1] The advancements in the economic field constitute the fundamentals of the concept of "material happiness". The idea of the natural environment as agent allows the deconstruction of some human attitudes based on the misconception of nature as weak and submissive to human agency. Those developmental politics that materially enrich (part of) the society, have been absorbed and to a certain degree accepted by the population because of the material benefit promoted on a central level, and made visible by the economic performance of Chongqing annual Gross Domestic Product (hereinafter GDP), which is in constant growth. However, this narrative of legitimation has already been overtaken by new and somehow more sophisticated ideological discourses such as national security and economic supremacy – otherwise the entire system of capitalist governance and despotic ruling would have already collapsed under the weight of a growing social dissatisfaction.

The second part of the chapter unravels how current landscape aesthetics are in accordance with the tradition of Chongqing housing, and to what extent they are a derivative product of the imperialist period. This analysis is in assonance with the literature concerning Beijing *hutongs* and Shanghai *shikumen*, two traditional housing systems apparently destined to disappear in the nineties during the first chaotic phase of urbanization, which are instead still present in the local geographical imaginary not only as objects of historical preservation to fulfill the needs of mass tourism, but also, and even more interestingly, as *architectural fetishes* where to stage luxurious gated communities. Chongqing also provides examples of this form of cultural and architectonic consumerism thanks to its long history, the strategic role covered during the anti-Japanese war, and also the post-1949 urban oblivion that has somehow enabled the maintenance of certain urban structures over time.

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[1] The *xiaokang* [*shehui*] represents a Confucian near-ideal state of society in which the material needs of most citizens are adequately met (cf. Davis, 2000: 16-17). On the use of "quasi-Confucian" concepts to explicate the necessity to develop a Chinese pattern of management suitable to the party internal and external politics, cf. Ford (2015).

5.1   Socialism 4.0: capitalist governance unraveled?

What has been named as *socialism with Chinese characteristics* has to find its origins back to the figure of Deng Xiaoping and the first "open-up the country" campaign.[2] This is an intriguing appellation for two reasons: 1) "With Chinese characteristics" is a way of speech coined by Deng Xiaoping but strongly resembling the opinion that Lenin formulated over the *Asiatic mode of production*, and 2) its ambiguous significance has caused the spreading of manifold political-economic practices during the eighties and nineties.[3] While the Communist orthodox vocabulary has been promoting this line for a long time, however, a veil of partiality has accompanied its manifestations along with the changing of the socio-political circumstances (Cheung, 2012).[4] The unceasing reconfiguration of the global alliances after around thirty years of effective opening to the global market, could be easily labelled as "Chinese *new imperialism*" (cf. Harvey, 2003). However, this taxonomy is not in line with the party-state propaganda, which better relies on discourses promoting non-interference in other countries internal politics, global stability, and harmony: The "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*) is a principle applied in both internal discussions and foreign affairs (Womack, 2009; Wu Zhong, 2006; Yu Ruidong, 2007). This expression is clearly imbued with ideology since it does not reflect the actual foreign politics of the country (e.g. the dispute on Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and the South China Sea establishment of artificial islands). In fact, since 2012 the concept of "harmonious world" has been re-elaborated into Xi Jinping's new vision named "China Dream" - *Zhongguo Meng*, a political project that better expresses the wish to raise China to the role of world leader in antithesis to the US.[5]

The domestic situation is based on a rational "balanced opacity of the relationships among state-private funds and state-foreign investments" (Ding X. L., 1994), which has allowed the central government to pursuit the economic restraint through a synchronic promotion of liberal policies and reassertion of the state monopoly under the motto *guo jin min tui* ("the state advances, the private sector retreats"). This has implied the denied participation of the private in the management and funding of certain economic sectors considered strategic for social stability and internal security, such as telecommunication and water management, which delayed liberalization has involved the foreign joint-ventures rather than Chinese private investors, causing resentment towards the local governments (von Roda, 2010). The direct exploitation of raw materials is under state monopoly in accordance with the assumption that *the land belongs to the State* (Land Management Law, § II, arts. 8, 11); for the same reason, many real estate construction companies are basically state driven. Thanks to the 1994 Tax Sharing System Law

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[2] Cf. Brandt and Rawski (2008). Cf. Foley (2002) on the demagogic power of Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin's vocabulary: According to the author, Jiang Zemin's "pseudo dialectics" is forged on Mao Zedong's "situational dialectics".

[3] As reported by Wittfogel, "in 1914 in a discussion with Rosa Luxemburg, he [Lenin] defined 'Asiatic Despotism' as a 'totality of traits' with special 'economic, political, and sociological *characteristics*' and he ascribed its great *stability* to 'utterly patriarchal pre-capitalist traits and an insignificant development of commodity production and class differentiation'" (as cited in Wittfogel, 1957: 578; emphasis added). Although not deviating from the guiding principles of Marxism, Mao Zedong also emphasized the necessity to build a new nation according to its cultural and economic characteristics (Mao Zedong, 1940).

[4] Yu-Shan Wu has compared the developing models of mainland China and Taiwan ("authoritarian state capitalism" in PRC and "democratic market capitalism" in ROC), suggesting that in the future the PRC could move towards a "democratic state capitalism" on the base of the two countries common state-building values both derived from Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of post-imperial China (Wu Yu-Shan, 2014). On a "Chinese model" as *paradigm*, cf. Dirlik (2012); on the bond between economy and socio-political environment, cf. e.g. Huaxia (2015). On the ambiguity of the Chinese economic development, cf. also Song Lei and Zhang (2013). On Chinese "developmental-ism", cf. Lanteigne (2013).

[5] Chinese state media have embraced the "war" metaphor to describe the global economic events (Hu Chunyu & Xu, 2017). Chinese soft power is also well spread through the economic bilateral agreements that China has set up with many foreign countries, and it is reflected in the growing influence of Chinese culture abroad (Callahan, 2008). The political assignment of the Confucius Institutes dislocated worldwide is also questioned (ChinaFile.com, 2014; Volodzko, 2015).

(*fenshuizhi*), the urban land use tax, the urban construction and maintenance tax, real estate tax, capital gains tax on land, and the state land sale revenues remain at the local level. On this premise, a fruitful source of income for the local governments has been the mechanism of land leasing to property developers (Elosua et al., 2013; Huang, 2010b: 18-19; Wong, 2000).[6]

The first phase of Chinese economic growth (end 1970s - early 1990s) was characterized by the run toward material enrichment, the breakout of the ideological platform, and the disconnection between the party and society. The perception of no alignment between material choice and freedom of choice was real and tangible – not yet covered by representations (Brooks & Frolic, 1997: 144 ff.; Bray, 2005: Ch. VI. Cf. also "retaining the outer form but losing the soul" in Mao Zedong, 1940: 24). In order to reconsolidate the state power, President Jiang Zemin formulated the Three Represents (*san ge daibiao*) in the early 2000s (Lewis & Xue, 2003), thus sanctioning the failure of the ideas of class struggle and workers' direct political participation. In this way, the party has de facto deprived the masses of their legitimate policy-making channel, creating a new form of political consensus that should "naturally" derive from the *representation itself* as embodied by the CCP (Foley, 2002: 9-11). The more conservative and populist Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao leadership (2005 on), has changed the political economy (e.g. the already mentioned *guo jin min tui* policy), and focused on the state-building renewal with huge investments addressed to the embellishment of the *national image* (e.g. the performance of Beijing Olympic Games in 2008).[7] This strategy was both necessary abroad and internally 1) to attract more foreign investments; 2) to build up the image of a solid country in prevision of its concrete upgrading to the international economic and political "chessboard"; 3) to teach the Chinese a new global attitude in line with the expectations of a great civilization; 4) to rebuild the lost credibility of the party as the unique protagonist of the Chinese renewal; 5) to provide the Chinese with a new ideological content – a mixture of socialism and traditional "de-valued values", in order to shape a *new Chinese identity* imbued with patriotism and "sense of the self". In fact, to overcome the perceived crisis of values, the central government has enriched the citizens with new narratives about China that might take root in the generation of millennials and in the Maoist front of the elderly people (Bandurski, 2016; Ekman & Pajon, 2014; Wong Edward, 2011). However, it remains a matter of fact that society behaves unexpectedly, and the result is a compromise of hegemony and resistance: In the stormy sea of a market economy which strings are pulled by the state, private property is still a controversial question, and global influences could suddenly burn the internal finances, the party-state capacity to safeguard the masses appears as an incontestable truth.[8] At the same time, the population is invited to embrace the new operational methods

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[6] See for example the CITIC Construction Co. Ltd., founded in 2002 in Beijing as the construction and engineering subsidiary of CITIC Group (formerly the China International Trust and Investment Corporation), a Chinese state owned conglomerate that includes also a Real Estate Branch (CITIC Limited: www.citic.com). On the exploitation of raw materials, cf. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), a Chinese state-owned oil and gas corporation and the largest integrated energy company in China. It is the parent of PetroChina Ltd., and one of its subsidiaries is the China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPP), the primary builder of pipelines in China but also active in Africa, Central Asia and India. Other state-owned competitors are Sinopec Group and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC Group), all administered by the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC; cf. Aguiar et al., 2007). For a list of other SOEs under SASAC jurisdiction, cf. http://www.sasac.gov.cn/n86114/n86137/index.html.

[7] On the ideological use of the term "renewal" – *fuxing*, see Mittler (2018: pp. 83-119).

[8] Cf. the Shanghai Stock Exchange and Shenzhen Security Exchange stock market bubbles that burst between July 2015-January 2016, and the many efforts made by the central government (early monetary stimulus, new market security regulations) to curb the damage caused to the so-called "retail investors", estimated as ¾ of the total investors (as cited in Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015%E2%80%9316_Chinese_stock_market_turbulence). Cf. Bradsher and Tsang (2016), and Christine Wong (2011) on the financial stimulus provided by the central government in late 2008. The construction of a stable, trust-worthy government uses also the visual expedient of music videos to spread propaganda messages, e.g. "The Power of a Profound Transformation ft. Xi Jinping" released on December, 2015 (*shen gai de liliang*, URL:

based on consumerism. [9] In line with the classic liberal thoughts, the economic development is propagandized as an *act of liberation*, a pathway of individual self-assertion where a broader range of material choices should be provided indistinctly to each single person. Private property and freedom of choice should assure the economic growth out of state intromission: A spontaneous market order vis-à-vis state planning (cf. Bauer as cited in Dorn, 2002: 356).[10] The peculiar state-led liberalism of China could then be defined as "pseudo development" based on the fact that the state process of economic and political planning "creates positions of power that politicians, administrators, and intellectuals expect to fill, with resulting political, emotional, and financial advantages" (*ibid.*: 359).[11] Chinese intelligentsia prefers to describe the particular socio-economic experience of the country as "phases of experimentation" towards the fulfillment of a satisfactory and harmonious socialist regime.

Looking at the internal political structure, the governmental praxis is based on mechanisms of feedback among the various hierarchical layers. The dialectics goes not only from centre to periphery, but also in the opposite direction, creating particular spatial orders. These operate horizontally not only to spread the directives, but also to implement partially democratic behaviors noticeable at the local level in the smallest bureaucratic cellars, i.e. the Street Offices (*jiedao banshichu*) and the (Community) Neighborhood Committees (*shequ jumin weiyuanhui*), which are an important propaganda vehicle but also a means to store innovative ideas coming from the bottom of society, and to perceive the premature signs of social malaise (Bray, 2005: 181-190; Lu Hanlong, Ren & Chen, 2009; Wu Fulong, 2002). The efficacy of this system lies in its combination of *creativity and coercion*, going beyond classic liberalism. This double mechanism is also against a complete totalitarian state planning, and the neo-imperialist practices of some foreign aid promoters/financial institutes (e.g. the World Bank). According to the political statements and the statistics, the status of "harmonious society" has not yet been reached: The ideal time fixed for the achievement (firstly indicated as by 2020), has been extended until the year 2030 (Huang, 2010a), after Xi Jinping announced in 2014 the beginning of a new economic period called "New Normal" (*xin changtai*), shifting the annual economic growth to a "moderate" level (around +7%).[12]

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhU8C5RCbBs), celebrating the two-year campaign against local officials' corruption (RTW, 2015), or "The six small issues together make a big issue" released on March, 2017 (*liu jian xiaoshi, dou shi dashi*, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eucw3PSAazo). In 2013 an unknown "Fuxing Road Studio" based in Beijing uploaded a video on "how leaders are made" in which there is an evident panegyric of Chinese leaders' *cursus honorum* that is compared to the "ridiculously short" political experience of some Western leaders (*lingdaoren shi zenyang liancheng de*, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M734o_17H_A). Later in 2015, in concomitance with the release of the 13th Five Year Plan during the CPC's 18th Central Committee, a funny jingle in English was set on the web by the same studio to catch the foreigners' attention, and inform about the complexity of Chinese political system ("The 13 WHAT", URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhLrHCKMqyM). The "Four Comprehensives – *sige quanmian*" that paved the way to the "China Dream" formulation, are also decanted in a music video released on January 2016 by Xinhua All-Media Service (URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rXMLAmuWIs).

[9] Since 2004 China has been the world largest waste producer, overtaking the US (Tang Damin, 2017; cf. also Bolongaro & Li, 2017). On Chinese E-waste problem, see Leahy (2017).

[10] In fact, in the mid-nineties there has been a linguistic change, being the Soviet term "planning" (the five-year plans), i.e. "planned economy" (*jihua jingji*), replaced by a more nuanced variant, i.e. "regulated economy" *guihua jingji* (cf. Samarani, 2004).

[11] Here Bauer seems to deny that liberal policies also create a power spiral, and the liberal network dynamics among stakeholders happen in democratic regimes as well as in protectionist regimes. Analyzing extremely liberal societies nowadays, power games and political balances appear to rotate around a more and more corporative management of public affairs, where social welfare is dismissed to the needs of the exchange value. Bauer's "freedom" based on limited government and private property rights, is even more utopian than the Soviet central planning model (cf. Swyngedouw, Moulaert, & Rodriguez, 2002). Looking at the Northern European economies as a model (Sanandaji, 2012), a *mixed economy* could be the ideal Chinese aspiration, even if the party-state is showing no intention to retreat from the public domain.

[12] According to Tradingeconomics.com, in December 2015 China GDP ranked world 3rd place after US and EU with more than 11,000 US billion dollars, whilst the GDP per capita PPP (at purchasing power parity) was still low, ranking world 86th place, showing the huge social disparity (in December 2015 around 13,500 US dollar versus 52,500 US dollar for US citizens;

Embracing this ideological narrative, the entire population is still *mobilized* and performs for that purpose, which practically means that the party still covers the role of arbiter among the parts (administration, corporate interests, and personal expectations), pursuing a *compromise* to enhance the *symbolic and material value* of the country. The CCP social engineering attitude derives from the affirmative belief of its necessity for the good of the country (Wang Rusong & Yan, 1998). Figure 5.1, for instance, shows two posters of the 2014 Beibei District "New Normal" campaign, teaching about the best practice during the phase of economic adjustment, i.e. incentivizing the savings.[13] Socialism 4.0 pushes towards a composite visual and performative space with posters promoting citizens' participation in the reforms, confidence in the party, and cooperation in the urbanization process, and slogans like "respect the law – *zunzhong fa*", "believe in the party – *xiangxin gongchandang*", and "cooperate together for the progress – *weile jinbu yiqi hezuo*" (Fig. 5.2). As a matter of fact, Socialism 4.0 is more than rule of law, economic transparency, and attacks against officials' corruption: It did not even begin as a whole initiative of the central government. In fact, the experimental practices of service-oriented bureaucracy, infrastructural subsides, and neo-Maoism were firstly implemented in the early 2000s in Chongqing thanks to the former Committee Secretary, Mr. Bo Xilai, with the support of the local mayor, Mr. Huang Qifan (Gao Xiaolu et. al., 2015: 230; HLWZH, 2015a; Huang, 2010b; Lam Tao-chiu, 2010; Leonard, 2012; Martin & Cohen, 2011).[14] In 2007 there came the approval of Chinese State Council to make Chongqing "the national experimental zone for integrating rural and urban development" (Cui Zhiyuan, 2011: 647), with the hope to transform this area into the first visible success of the "*xiaokang shehui*" (cf. *infra*, note 1).[15] Beloved by his fellow

Figure 5.1. "New Normal" propaganda campaign in Chongqing, Beibei District. On the top: "Oppose extravagant eating and drinking, and pay attention to thrift and economy" *fandui dachidahe, zhuyi jieyue*. On the bottom: "Practice strict economy, avoid wasting" *lixing jieyue, fandui langfei* (Bonato, 2014)

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https://tradingeconomics.com/china/gdp; https://tradingeconomics.com/china/gdp-per-capita-ppp, retrieved June 2, 2017). On the impact of the New Normal to the trades in Asia, cf. Saggu and Anukoonwattaka (2015).

[13] Chu study on Chinese regime legitimacy shows that the Chinese trust more the central government rather than the local office-holders (Chu Yun-han, 2013), corroborating the idea that at the local level the officials are often unpopular, seen as a corrupted and despotic part of the "socialist land masters" clique (Hsing You-tien, 2006) and easily entangled in money laundry (Li Ling, 2010; Zhu Jiangnan, 2012; Wang Yuhua, 2013). On the Western influence upon the Chinese application of the "rule of law", and the use done of it to perpetuate a strong regime, cf. Richard Wong (2015).

[14] Before becoming Chongqing Party Secretary, Bo Xilai was mayor of the degraded ex-industrial port city of Dalian, Liaoning Province. Despite the apparent success of the modernization process, a huge debt was caused in the local finances, forcing the intervention of the central government to save the city from bankruptcy (Xu Jiang & Yeh, 2005: 301-302).

[15] As initiator of the central government "integrated urban-rural planning" campaign, Chongqing Municipality has widely benefited of the Asian Development Bank loans (ADB) for the funding of projects concerning road construction works, water capture structures, water treatment works, water transmission and distribution pipelines, pumping stations, road maintenance equipment, water pumps and equipment, and consulting services (e.g. Project No. 42012-013 at https://www.adb.org/projects/42012-013/main). Another ADB project aims to improve the access to safe drinking water and all-weather roads, and resilience to flood risk in Chongqing eleven districts and counties (e.g. Project No. 45509-002 at https://www.adb.org/projects/45509-002/main). Affordable housing and transportation infrastructure have also been the focus of the state owned enterprises (SOEs) working locally on Chongqing "rebirth".

citizens, Bo Xilai as political figure has marked a turning point in Chinese government behavior, aligning the local economic ambitions with a "spiritual" rejuvenation of the place and people's identity. [16]

Figure 5.2. Socialism 4.0 propaganda posters in Chongqing: 1) "Think the reform, plan the reform, seize the reform! Study and implement the essence of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee" *si gaige, mou gaige, zhua gaige – xuexi guanche dang de shiba jie san zhongquanhui jingshen* (local gov. poster); 2) "China is strong thanks to the Party!" *Zhongguo heyi qiang yuan you Gongchandang* (central gov. campaign); 3) "Strengthen the Red Line consciousness, promote a safe development!" *qianghua hongxian yishi, cujin anquan fazhan* (Chongqing Chaotianmen Shaanxi Road Street Office slogan. Bonato, 2014)

Using soft power, the highest achievement a politician might pursue in China is "to let people have faith in the Party", a feeling that could also become a measurable parameter of the officials' popularity through the evaluation of the social *happiness index*.[17] As Bo Xilai said in a speech in 2009:

"It's not about how many tall buildings you have, it's how happy people are" (HLWZH, 2015a).

The necessity to make people happy – no matter which idea of happiness is considered – has been theoretically cherished by the state since 1912, when Dr. Sun Yat-sen promulgated the Three People's Principles (*san minzhuyi*), i.e. Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood. The latter one is exactly the object of the idea of happiness promoted by the CCP, namely a material happiness achievable through the improvement of the living standards. As stated by Chongqing Municipal Government Financial Bureau (CQSCZJ, 2017),

"Talking about the masses, 'people's livelihood' is not such a complicated matter. To have good food and a comfortable housing, go smoothly through a course of studies, find a job easily, and be reassured when consulting a doctor: These are exactly [people's] bigger *yearnings* and *expectations*. From this point of view, Chongqing Municipal Government Financial Bureau has continued to

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[16] According to Mao Zedong, the task of a real conscious revolutionary was to abolish class domination and oppression, otherwise "he or she remained a manipulator of conflict" (Dirlik, 1983: 197). Purified from the excesses of his personality, since the early nineties Chairman Mao's figure has undergone a process of "resurrection": The escalating image marketing is associated with a new fetishist phase in Chinese popular culture (cf. Latham, 2007; and Landsberger, https://chineseposters.net/themes/mao-pop.php). Mao's image has become a *social product* of the times, denatured of his historical essence and re-used to support ideological games of power. In Maoist terms, this process resembles *the mass-line approach to politics* (*wei renmin fuwu*), i.e. an "organic relationship [between the party and the people] where the culture (in its broadest sense) of the masses and the party would be 'interwoven'" (Dirlik, *ibid*.: 199). Cf. ChinaFile (2015), where Xi Jinping's current anti-corruption campaign is also compared to Mao's Cultural Revolution in the vision of dismantling the party as an elitist system. On Xi Jinping appearances in the media and future urban projects, cf. Chublic Opinion (2017).

[17] Welfare statistics are published from time to time by the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, e.g. "Women and Man in China 2004" http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/Statisticaldata/OtherData/200509/U020150722579392934100.pdf.

provide large funds and policy investments; in this way, the livelihood shortcomings accumulated in many years are now in the process of being filled up and replenished. [We] are walking the gradually maturing and progressively fixed *path towards the improvement of the living conditions*, which must be based on equality, efficiency, and sustainability" (emphasis added).

Chinese central government has long understood that beyond any coercive power or state will, the real driving force of the country are its people. In recent years the "mass-line" as ideological concept has pursued a sort of genetic mutation, becoming a market category; however, as political façade the motto "at the service of the people" has been maintained.[18] The term "mass-line" is still used in official discourses, for example, when talking about technological innovation (*chuangxin*), being it turned from private into state business. The People's Daily Online reporting on a symposium held at Tsinghua University in Beijing, December 2016, explained the new socio-economic trend in these terms (Yang Fang, 2016):

> "The 'innovation á la chinoise' follows the mass-line [...], everyone can be the protagonist of innovation; [...] the masses eagerly look forward to the market innovations. China applies innovations based on integrated conformity, where all the cutting edge [innovative ideas] are combined together; [...] the government and the market are two big forces driving the innovation á la chinoise; [China] has a great mass of consumers wishing to enjoy the market novelties; [Chinese innovation] is [a form of] industrialized informatization."

According to these excerpts, the innovative era should come from a three-pole cooperation among the state, the market, and "the masses of consumers". However, the predominant role of the state is also clearly asserted, since it has the power to regulate the market and standardize ideas, making them conform to the orthodox ideology. This is the official process for any idea coming from below that wishes to be approved and enter the Chinese market. The role of the people seems to vary from time to time: The single person is entitled with action and performative capacity, while the "mass" of consumers is more considered as a valuable source of exploitation because of its insatiable yearnings.

The essence of the Chinese innovative pattern, i.e. the *industrialized informatization*, is related to an early research for technological innovation born to suffice a state fundamental need, i.e. that to provide the Chinese with an alternative system for the transmission of information in the new digital era, after the ban of Google and other Western/Russian technological giants from the Chinese soil. In fact, a sort of "closed information circuit" has prevented the party to lose power in the netizens' realm (cf. the recently promulgated Cybersecurity Law; KPMG, 2017), while giving the consumers an efficient market product that has nothing to envy to its "Western" counterpart.[19] At the same time, the state has seized the

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[18] Jiang Zemin reformulated the "mass-line" concept in non-Marxist terms, thus denying the class-struggle against bourgeois capitalism as a fundamental of socialism (Foley, 2002: 17). However, there could be no contradiction with Mao's vision of the "mass line" in 1934: "We [the cadres] should make the broad masses realize that we represent their interests, that our life and theirs are intimately interwoven" (Mao, 1965: I/149 as cited in Dirlik, 1983: 198). Jiang Zemin's political maneuver can be considered either as Mao's *stagist doctrine to pursue socialism* or a *pseudo-dialectics* imbued with opportunism (cf. Foley, *ibid.*).

[19] In 2018 the Chinese version of the famous brand Wikipedia was released on the web, closing the gap in the Chinese information system (Wikipedia is occasionally available in China, but most of the content is restricted). Private companies such as Baidu are already offering this service, but the new state-driven project is aimed to "overtake the rivalries" (BBC, 2017). The central government vision outlines an integrated development system based on smart energy and smart information system (*zhihui xinxi xitong*). The complementarity of both these two elements needs to be "planned as a whole" (*tongchou*), and therefore coordinated/harmonized (*xietiao*) by the CCP (Liu Yangyi, 2017). The deployment of ideological content in the "smart globalization" discourses has already embraced the new technologies like internet of things (*wu lianwang*), so much so that the proactive power of smart energy is believed to be able to promote a civilized behavior towards nature – *shengtai wenming* (Cheng Siwei, as cited in Baidu Baike, 2016 on "smart energy, *zhihui nengyuan*"). On the coordination problems

opportunity to obtain access to the people's private data again, thus holding more instruments to control the population. Although there are scholars marking a shift from a top-down technological statism (*jishu guojiazhuyi de zi shang er xia*; Yang Fang, 2016) to an innovative down-top path led by the massive creative industries (*zi xia er shang de dazhong chuangye, wanzhong chuangxin*; *ibid*.), it might be more appropriate to speak of relational exchanges of power rather than antinomies between state and technology producers. This sort of cooperation derives by the official acceptance as party members of industrial magnates and capitalists, thanks to which the central government could restage a classist scenario within the society, accepting with benevolence the emerging of a new prominent social force, i.e. the upper-middle class.[20] Although ideologically speaking about the "mass-line", the CCP wants/needs to concoct a new pathway to maintain control over the more and more striking inequalities and purposes derived from the uneven development. When at the end of 2016 the new public-private partnerships (PPP, P3s) platform was officially launched, it conferred new participative tools to the private sector in those economic sectors that were formerly under the state sphere of competence.[21] Carried forward by the Ministry of Finance, this administrative measure is de facto a *translative concession* in juridical terms, implying a transfer of state rights/powers while the "right owner" (the state) continues to retain the ownership (Hodge & Greve, 2007). The long-term infrastructural development is the main reason behind this kind of cooperation that exploits the social capital (*shehui ziben*) to enhance the state value (Marsilio et al., 2011). Some scholars also underline the fact that the P3s could evolve into private monopolies on the ground of rent-seeking behaviors (Vining & Boardman, 2014). Being the PPP itself a vague concept, in the Chinese context it also includes those agreements signed by local governments with state-owned corporations, which are indeed among the bigger investment lobbies in mainland China (see e.g. the 50-billion RMB agreement between Shantou local government and CITIC Group to build Shantou East Coast New Town. Cf. Yan Ni, 2014; NBBJ, 2017; RRH, 2017; Yu Qiongyuan, 2017).[22] In these cases, the local government is jurisdictionally forced to pay the debt back. This attitude is in line with the dynamics of *entrepreneurialism* typical of the neoliberal contexts (Weber, 2002).

5.1.1 General urbanization trends and soil usage: statistics and land exchange value

The economic uprising of Chongqing Municipality can be read through the data retrieved from the governmental statistics. Although not completely reliable, the statistical results provided by Chongqing National Bureau of Statistics help to rate the annual urban development in relation to the exploitation of the local resources, starting from the land subtracted from primary activities or chosen from the register

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inherent the market (value creation and enforcement, order of competition, etc.), cf. Reusswig and Isensee (2009: 121). On the "internet civilization" state project, cf. Barmé and Goldkorn (2013: 320-349).

[20] Also called "new aristocracy" by Gerth (2011), the first generation of this heterogeneous social group was mainly composed of people become rich thanks to the first reforms promoted by Deng Xiaoping in the mid-eighties. Many of them belonged to the farmer category, thus to indicate these people, the Chinese have coined the derogatory appellation of *tuhao* (nouveau riche or local tyrant), where *tu* means "soil", and by extension it indicates an "unrefined, illiterate person".

[21] Shanghai has been one of China pioneering cities to introduce the PPP system since the late 1990s, for example in the marketization of urban water sector (Seungho Lee, 2007).

[22] Interestingly, the most developed areas in China are not making large usage of the PPP system (Chongqing has got 71 projects, Beijing 90, and Shanghai only one according to the data on April, 30 2017), while other places are taking greater profit of it (Xinjiang has 1114 projects, Sichuan 890, Gansu 491, etc.). Data retrieved on June 19, 2017 from CPPPC Official Website, URL: http://www.cpppc.org:8082/efmisweb/ppp/projectLibrary/toPPPMap.do. On public services and their corporatization, cf. TNI at: https://www.tni.org/en/multimedia/water-and-power-are-public-services-still-public.

of the uncultivated land. Statistical data shed light on the strategy of territorial management implemented by the local government, put emphasis on the uneven level of development and social welfare, and allow us to postulate trends for the future control over the territory. Table 5.1 shows the percentage of urban space within the municipal total surface, and also the real amount of built surface at the beginning of the economic boom in the early 2000s. It emerges that the propaganda focused on spreading the image of a green municipality, was difficult to be contradicted since the data outlined how the urbanized area was covering only a small amount of the entire territory administrated by the local government.[23]

Table 5.1. Urban surface, overall built surface, and built surface in the central city – *zhucheng* in 2005 (CJW, 2006: 1)
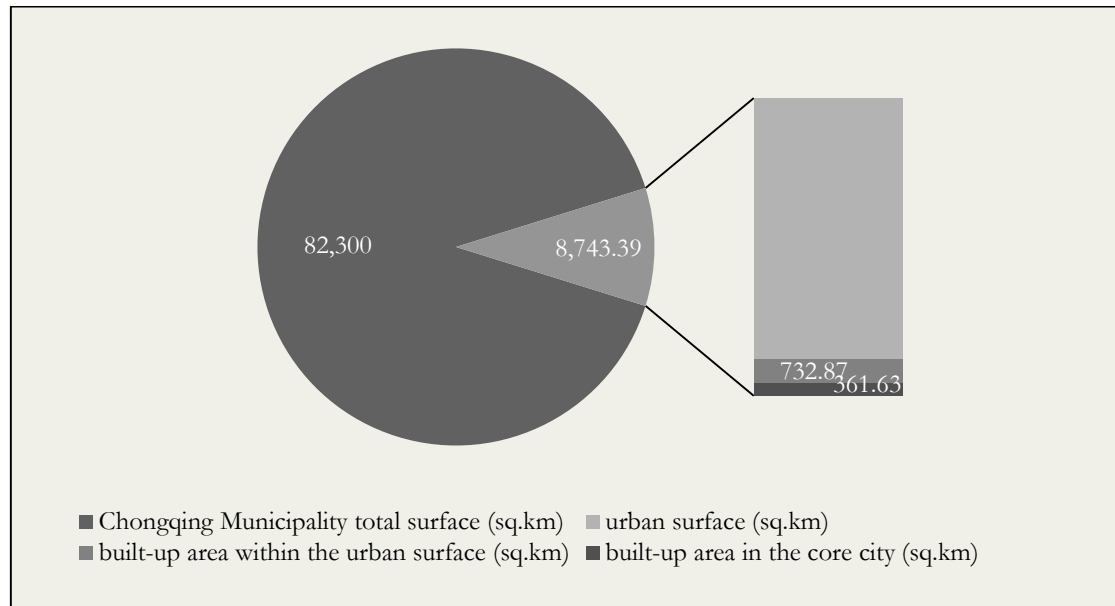
As visible in Table 5.2, construction (secondary industry; *jianzhuye*) and real estate (tertiary industry; *fangdichan*) have become two prominent sectors of Chongqing market, producing in 2016 around the 15% of the total Gross Domestic Product (hereinafter GDP), with a market dominance of the construction industry. However, the excellent growth of the real estate sector since the end of 1990s foreshadows the future success of this rising market wing that, in fact, has been growing fast since 1978. In Table 5.3 it is shown how the real estate GDP has increased over a hundred thousand times since 1978, especially after 2005. In the same period the construction industry has also started growing steadily (Tab. 5.4). The worst periods for the two sectors have been at the end of 1950s during the Great Leap Forward campaign, and during 1995-97 as preamble of the Asian financial crisis. A subtle inflection is registered after the change of the CCP Committee Secretary in 2012. The New Normal phase is also characterized by a fall in the GDP growth rate in the years 2015-2016 (Tab. 5.5).

The uncertainties due to the scandal at the top of Chongqing party secretariat in 2012, has certainly affected the market and together with the general progressive economic slowdown since 2015, is partly the cause of the downward peak of real estate activities; however, the urbanization process actually never stopped if we consider the constant increase in residential floor space (Tab. 5.6). In 2016 almost 32% of the terrain used to expand the urban area, was reserved for the development of residences (Tab. 5.7). The segmentation of the territory is testified by the growing percentage of villas and high-grade flats

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[23] In 2018 Chongqing *zhucheng* ha raggiunto la superficie di 647.78 sq.km (Zhujiang shangbao, 2018).

built in Chongqing, which implies a diverse and elitist use of the land. However, the percentage of upscale housing sales is oscillating from time to time, a fact that alarms on the possibility of a new real estate bubble (cf. par. 6.4.1). In fact, Table 5.8 reveals how the upscale housing sector belongs to a niche market: In the years 2008-2012 the percentage of villas for sale was higher than that of villas completed but thereafter the statistics show a countertendency, demonstrating a new phase of real estate speculation after an almost complete saturation of the market.

Table 5.2. Composition of Chongqing GDP 1949-2016 with GDP=100% (CTJ 2017, Chs. 2: 2, 2: 6)
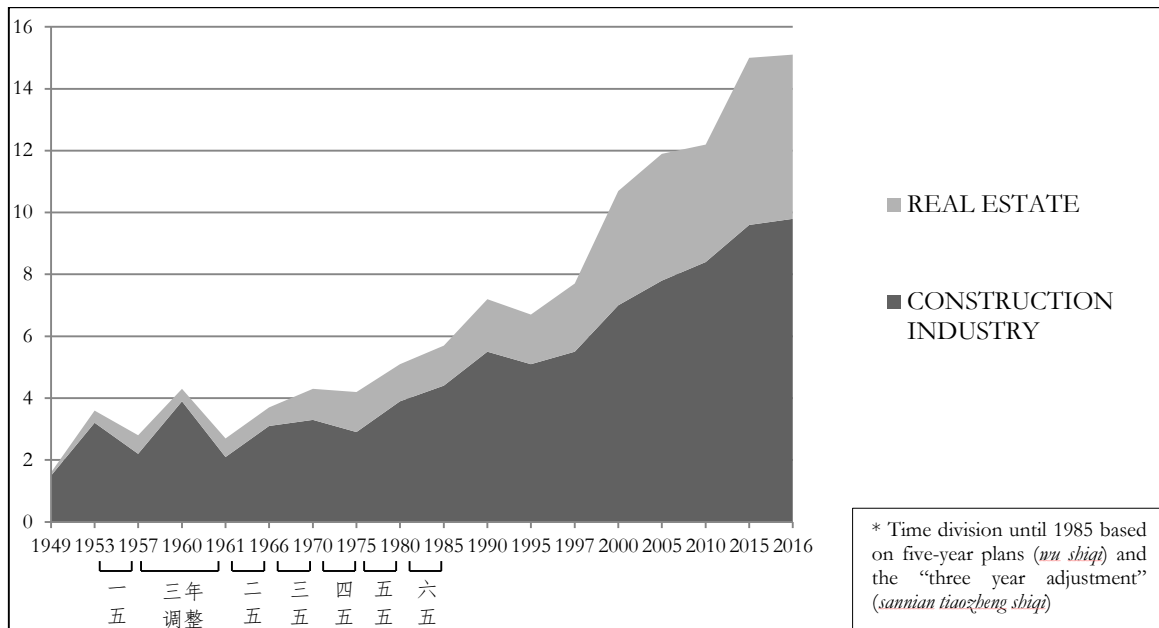
Table 5.3. Real estate and construction: Indices of GDP 1978-2016 with 1978=100% (*calculated at constant prices; CTJ 2017, Chs. 2: 3, 2: 7)
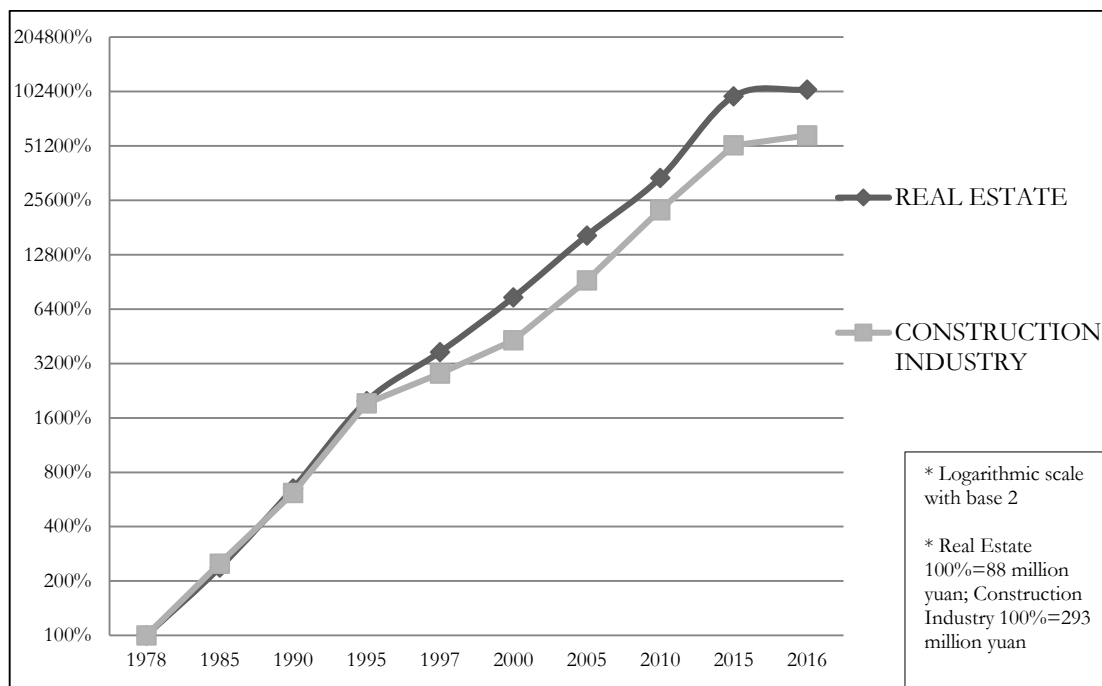
Table 5.4. Construction industry: Index of GDP growth rate 1949-2016 (CTJ 2017, Chs. 2: 4, 2: 7)

* Time division until 1985 based on five-year plans (*wu shiqi*) and the "three year adjustment" (*sannian tiaozheng shiqi*)
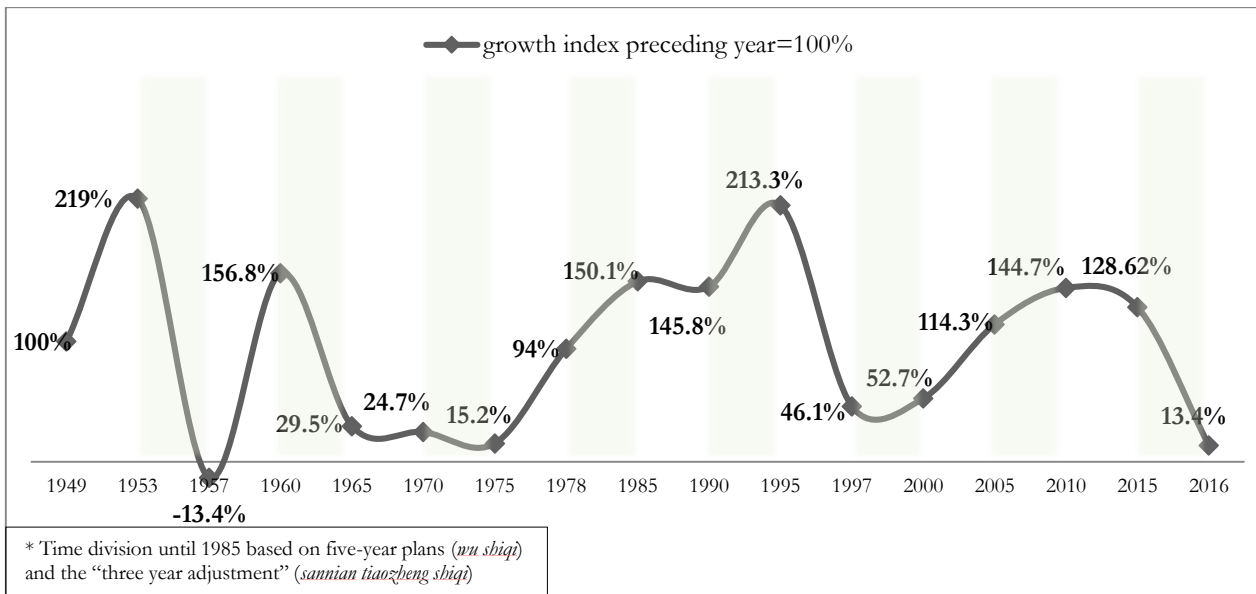
Table 5.5. Real estate industry: Index of GDP growth rate 1949-2016 (CTJ 2017, Chs. 2: 4, 2: 7)

* Time division until 1985 based on five-year plans (*wu shiqi*) and the "three year adjustment" (*sannian tiaozheng shiqi*)
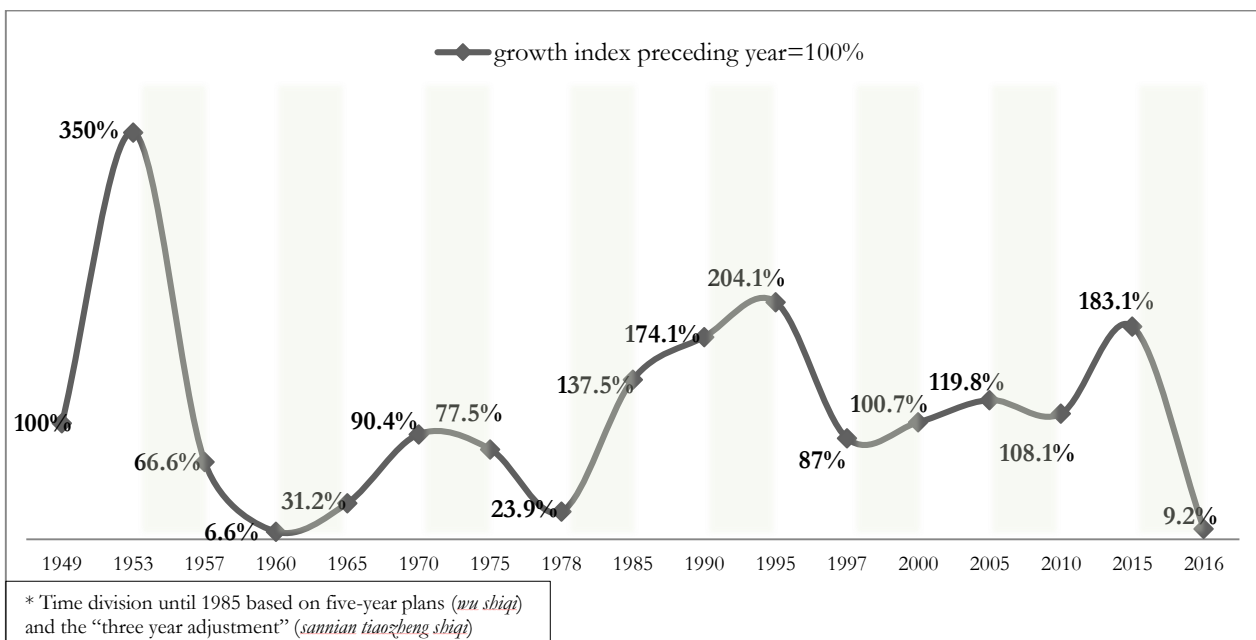
Table 5.6. Land for urban construction and residences in sq.km (CTJ 2017, Chs. 8: 1 - 8: 4)
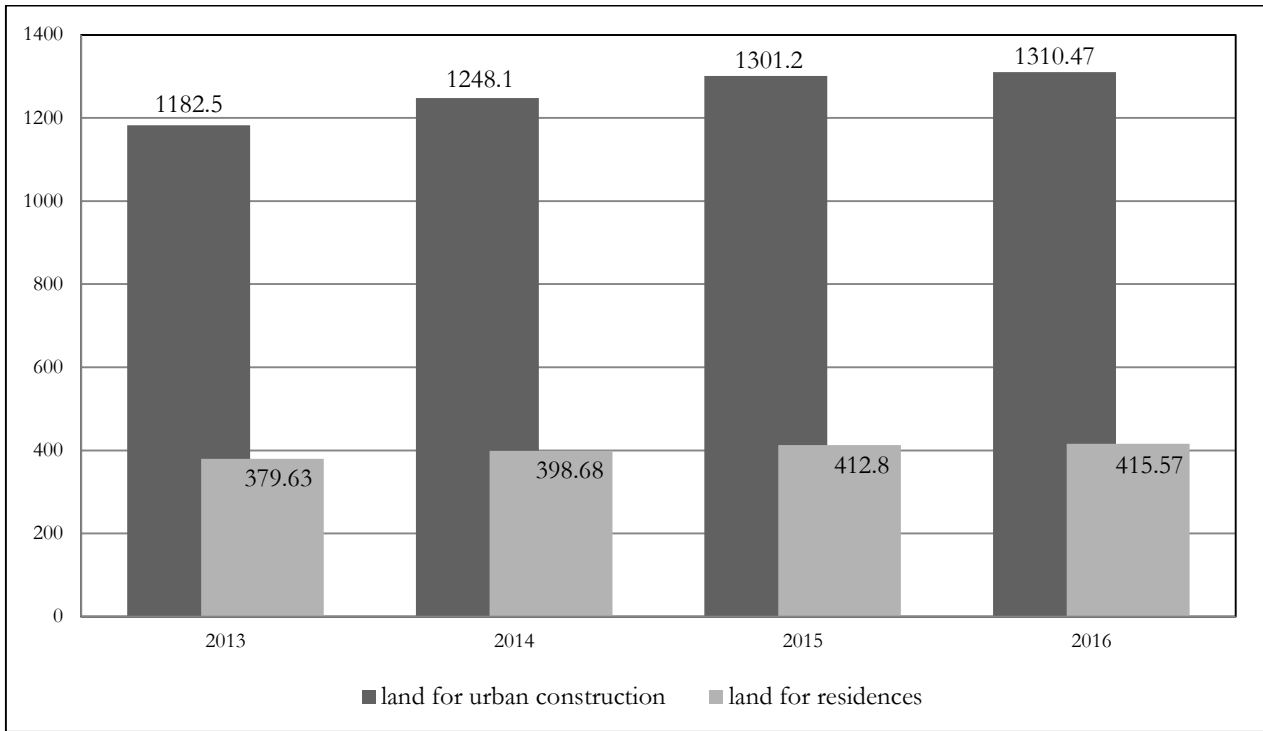
Table 5.7. Residential buildings: Floor space completed 1953-1985 in Chongqing city (CCJGW, 1997: 88), and 1997-2016 in Chongqing Municipality. Land space purchased per year for real estate development (CTJ 2017, Ch. 4: 14)
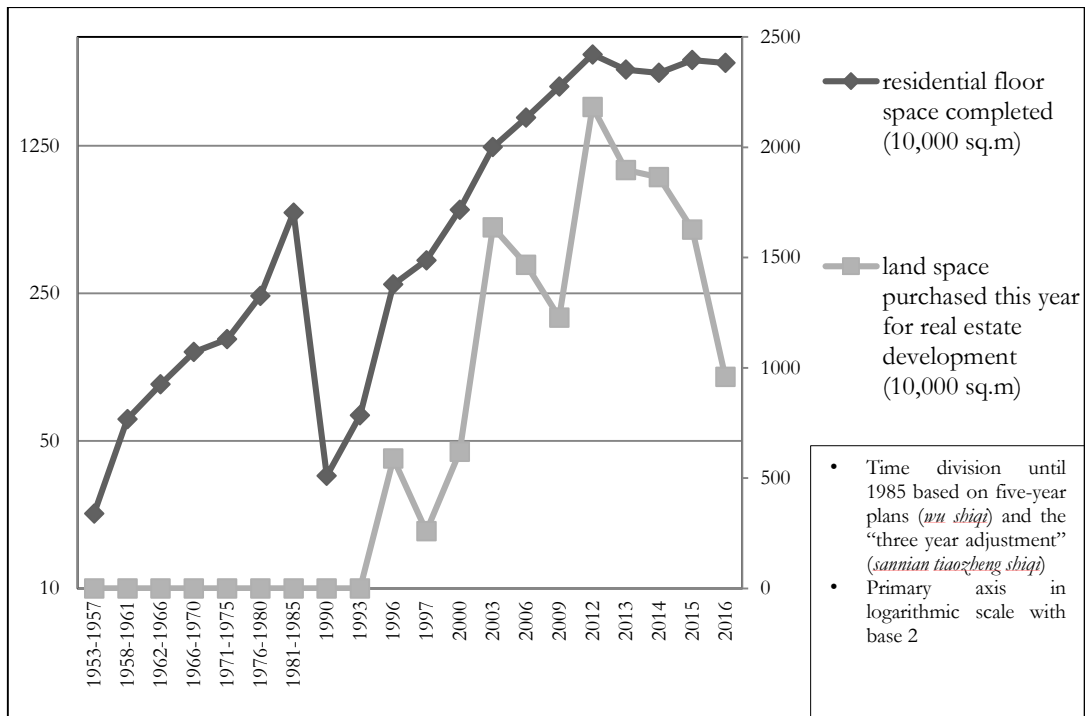
Table 5.8. Residential buildings: Floor space under construction, completed, and sold in Chongqing Municipality 2012-2016 (CTJ 2009: 102; 2017, Ch. 4: 16) and percentage of floor space used for villas in relation to the total amount of floor space used for residential buildings per year
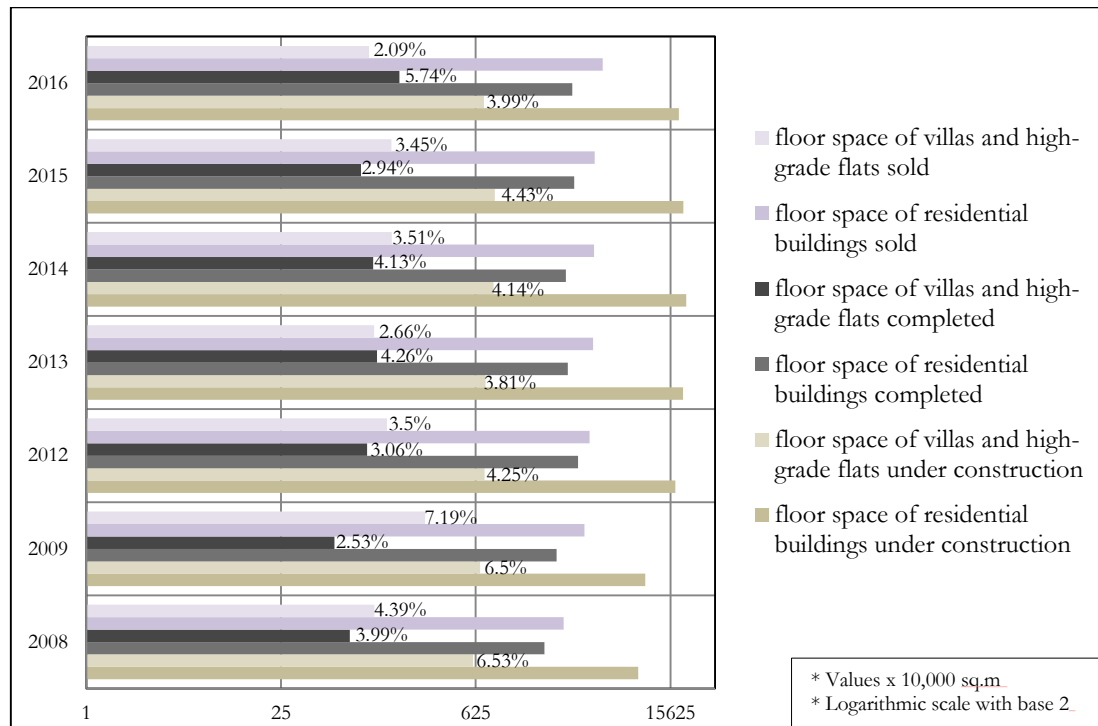
5.1.2 Construction investments, official incomes, and land transfer mechanisms

Since the early 2000s Chongqing Municipality as a quite new territorial domain with large agricultural plots that can be turned into developmental projects, has been object of a mechanism of land exploitation that not only consumes the territory, but also its population to the extent that the added-value superimposed to the land strengthens the practices of consumerism and gentrification (Huang, 2010b: 30-31; Weber, 2002). Despite the fact that the implementation of capital circulation related to the upscale real estate causes similar social problems throughout the world (Dirlik, 2012: 289; Foley, 2002: 19), Chinese paradigm of economic development still owns its peculiarities determined through the centralized political regime, the local directives, and territorial constraints. In fact, the call for a greater urban entrepreneurialism is actually impracticable without the leadership of the local administration and the local party secretariat approval. As explained by Xu Jiang and Yeh (2005: 284),

> "the problem is exacerbated by the dominance of *government elites* in decision-making. These elites are more often than not *urban boosters*, advocating pro-growth strategies for both economic construction and their own career advancement. As a result, rampant imitation, redundant construction and speculation in Chinese cities – the 'snakes-and-ladders' game of interurban competition – are not uncommon" (emphasis added).

With the gradual dismantling of the state construction companies in Chongqing, the role of non-public investors has become vital to boost the local development, but these coalitions are often temporary, and limited by an idea of governance based on the party-state as ruler and arbitrator. Table 5.9 shows the central/local investments in construction projects (rural households excluded). The 674.5 billion-yuan

total investment of 2012 reached 1,351 billion yuan in 2016. New construction projects, particularly related to the tertiary sector, are the main recipient of the funds: The local government, in fact, has spent "only" 17.5 billion yuan in urban residential buildings in 2016.[24] The central government investment has also been growing since 2012 (83.3 billion yuan in 2015). International construction companies, architecture agencies, and private real estate developers are all in to supply the demand for new residential buildings: Arup Group, Spark Architects, Safdie Architects, Pure Design Group, Vector Architects, Hassell, Martha Schwartz Partners, 10 Design are some of the great names working on Chongqing renewal.[25] As clearly shown in Table 5.10, the local government appears to be more and more interested in reducing its support to the construction sector, thus leaving room for the private initiative and/or the state-owned holdings managed as private companies. This fact is supported by the increasingly lower income that the local administration gains from the sector (Tab. 5.11).

Table 5.9. Investment in construction projects – rural households excluded (CTJ 2017, Ch. 4: 10)
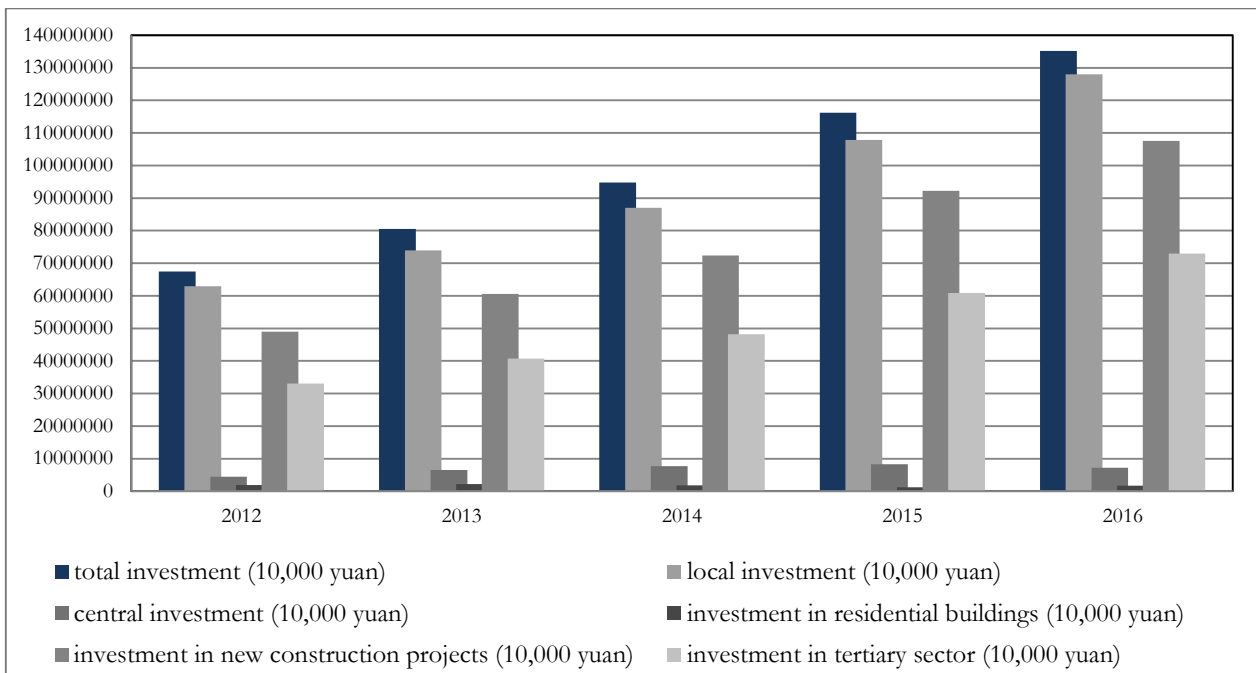
Table 5.12 points out that in year 2005 in the urban area the total floor space used for residential buildings was circa 14.31 million sq.m (CJW, 2006: 153), a derisory amount if compared to the data provided after 2012. In 2009 the amount was still low (23.84 million sq.m. CTJ, 2010): This means that a real development in residential construction has started after 2010.

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[24] Please note that in Chongqing urban area the total investment on the real estate sector was around 4.8 million yuan in 2005, of which 2.75 million yuan dedicated to housing (CJW, 2006: 150).

[25] On Arup projects please see http://www.arup.com/global_locations/greater_china/chongqing; on Spark Arch. projects cf. http://inhabitat.com/spark-architects-chongqing-clubhouse-rises-in-china/; on Vector Architects see http://inhabitat.com/huge-sprawling-green-roof-fuses-a-community-center-into-chongqings-mountainous-landscape/; on PURE Design cf. https://www.dezeen.com/2013/04/02/chongqing-greenland-clubhouse-by-pure-design/; on Hassell cf. http://inhabitat.com/hassells-palm-island-uses-surrounding-pools-to-keep-cool-in-chongqing-china/; on Martha Schwartz Partners see http://inhabitat.com/martha-schwartz-partners-colorful-perforated-pavilions-mirror-the-mountains-of-chongqing/; on 10 Design cf. http://www.10design.co/work/architecture/selected/danzishi-central-business-district. For other projects please visit http://www.archdaily.com/tag/chongqing, and http://retaildesignblog.net/tag/chongqing/.

Table 5.10. Construction companies in Chongqing 2008 and 2012-16 (ZRGZHCJ, 2009: 665; CTJ 2017, Chs. 13: 5, 13: 6, 13: 7)
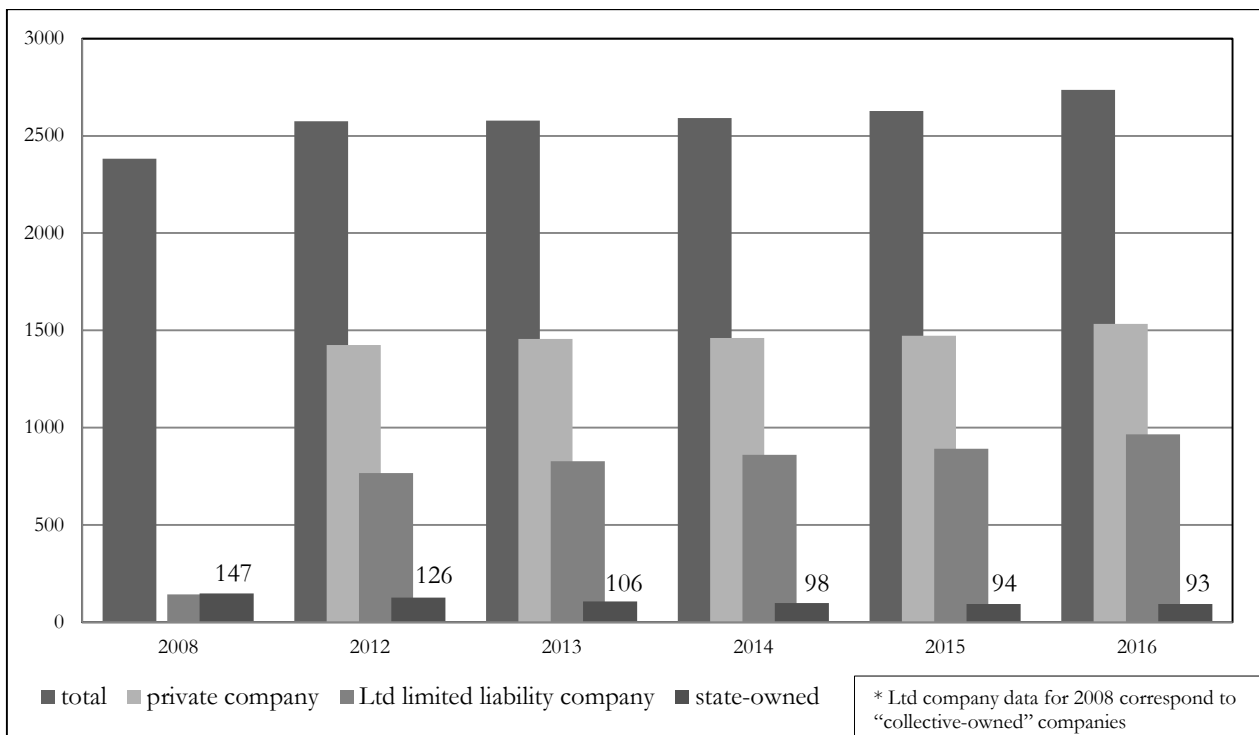

Table 5.11. Output value of completed construction in Chongqing 2012-16 (CTJ 2017, Chs. 13: 5, 13: 6, 13: 7)
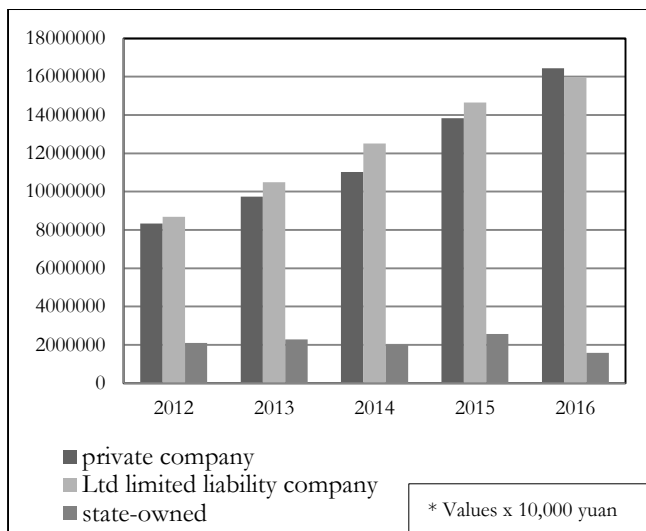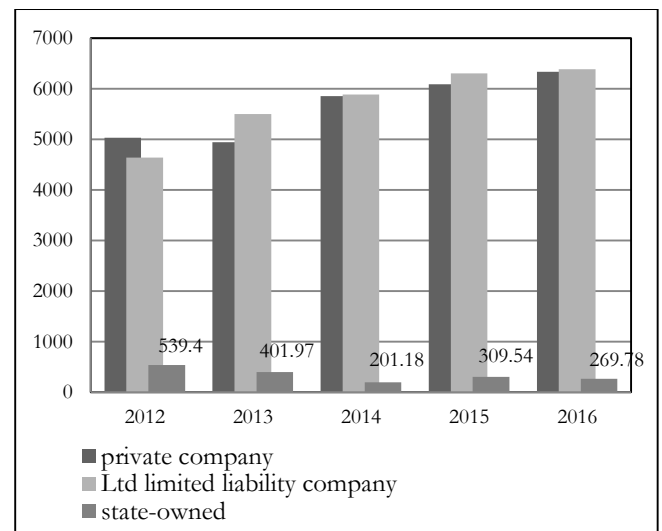

Table 5.12. Buildings floor space completed in Chongqing 2012-16 (x 10,000 sq.m; CTJ 2017, Chs. 13: 5, 13: 6, 13: 7)

Local bank institutions play an important role in granting funds to developers and constructors, and loans to private consumers being eager to purchase a house. The system has been implemented since 1995 with the establishment of the Public Housing Fund (PHF) and the Individual Housing Mortgage System (IHMS. Cf. Cao Junjian, 2015; Han Sun Sheng & Wang, 2001; Zan Yang & Jie, 2014: 16-19). For what concerns the prices of the land transfer certificate for private citizens (*huabo tudi*), the amounts are as follow: 88.5 yuan/sq.m for first quality soil, 75 yuan/sq.m for second grade soil, 63 yuan/sq.m for

third grade soil, and 47.5 yuan/sq.m for the fourth grade (Dianping, 2018a). The state land put on leasing for commercial use (real estate, business, etc.), followed by the payment of the land use rights (*churang tudi*), is currently regulated by the public bidding system, the auctions, and the stock market (*zhao, pai, gua*), thus limiting the direct transferring of land on a fixed price. The *huabo* system of land transferring, on the other hand, does not provide the local government with a compensation for the usufruct (Cui Zhiyuan, 2011: 653; Dianping, 2018b). Apparently, the "land market fever" has not been suffering a crisis despite the recent strict policies concerning the real estate market (ZJZ, 2018). The reason lies in the substantial increase of land supply at the local level, in particular in the "second-level" and "third-level" cities where the party-state has focused its attention to avoid the implosion of the countryside under the unsustainable enlargement of the "mega-cities", viz. Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Chongqing. In the period 2008-17 Chongqing local government has earned a total amount of 1.0585 trillion yuan through the land market, while the price of a second-hand house in December 2017 has risen to circa 10,351 yuan/sq.m. Therefore, some Chinese thinkers are spreading the idea that the central government should fix the land leasing prices, so to avoid speculation on the housing prices. However, this would signify a huge financial loss at the local level, in particular Chongqing would lose more than 60% of its monetary base (*ibid.*: 6-8). The practices of terrain allotment and transaction by leasing the land use right, have been in continuous growth since the establishment of the municipality: In 1997 the total amount of revenue collected by the local government in respect to this item (*tudi churang zhuanrang jin*), was of 23.69 million yuan, risen in 1998 to 41.63 million yuan – of which 25.46 million yuan derived from the transfer of land use rights within the main city (CJW, 1999: 23).[26] Despite the financial crisis, the "New Normal", and Chongqing real estate bubble in 2011-12, the total value of right transaction and state land allocation remains more or less steady (Tab. 5.13). The land assigned to the construction of residential buildings in the nine core districts is also much more "valued" than the land in the suburbs, and the local government earns the most from this trading. In fact, the annual GDP reveals the gap between the urban centre and the periphery, and the unequal distribution of the investments according to the necessities of the market: The so-called One Hour Economic Zone and the Metropolitan Function Areas appear to be privileged places for the most advanced investment policies (Tab. 5.14).[27]

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[26] In 1998 the Developed Metropolitan Economic Circle did not include the districts of Beibei, Yubei and Banan. During the first years of municipal administration, the use of this technique to make cash had an escalation between 2001-2004, when the income arose from 35.75 million yuan to 395.84 million yuan, and then from 1.3 billion yuan in 2003 to 2.2 billion yuan in 2004, to go back down to 1.4 billion yuan in 2005 (CJW, 2006: 2).

[27] One-Hour Economic Zone includes: Yuzhong, Dadukou, Jiangbei, Shapingba, Jiulongpo, Nan'An, Beibei, Yubei, Banan (Developed Metropolitan Economic Circle, *dushi fada jingji quan-zhucheng*); Wansheng and Shuangqiao Special Development Zones; Fuling, Changshou, Jiangjin, Hechuan, Yongchuan, Nanchuan, Qijiang, Tongnan, Tongliang, Dazu, Rongchang and Bishan Counties (West Chongqing Economic Corridor, *Yuxi jingji zoulang*). Chongqing Function Areas have been introduced in 2013. Core Metropolitan Function Area (*dushi gongneng hexin qu*) includes Yuzhong District, and the area of Dadukou, Jiangbei, Jiulongpo, and Nan'An Districts within the Highway Inner Ring. Extended Metropolitan Function Area (*dushi gongneng tuozhan qu*) includes all those special zones developed within the metropolitan economic circle (9 districts, core centres excluded), e.g. Liangjian New Zone, the two free ports (in Jiangbei and Dadukou), the National Economic Zone, etc. Newly Developed Urban Area (*dushi fazhan xinqu*) has basically expanded the borders of the One-Hour Economic Zone to other areas of the districts involved. This new nomenclature should represent not only the scientific pattern adopted in the urbanization process, but also the harmonious fusion between city and countryside (Baidu Baike, 2017a). Northeastern Ecological Conservation Area includes the territories near the Three Gorges (e.g. Wanzhou). Southeastern Environment Protection Area includes Qianjiang District and the remaining counties (e.g. Wulong and Pengshui. CTJ, 2011: 3).

Table 5.13. State-owned land rights transactions and allotments (CTJ 2017, Chs. 10: 1, 10: 2)
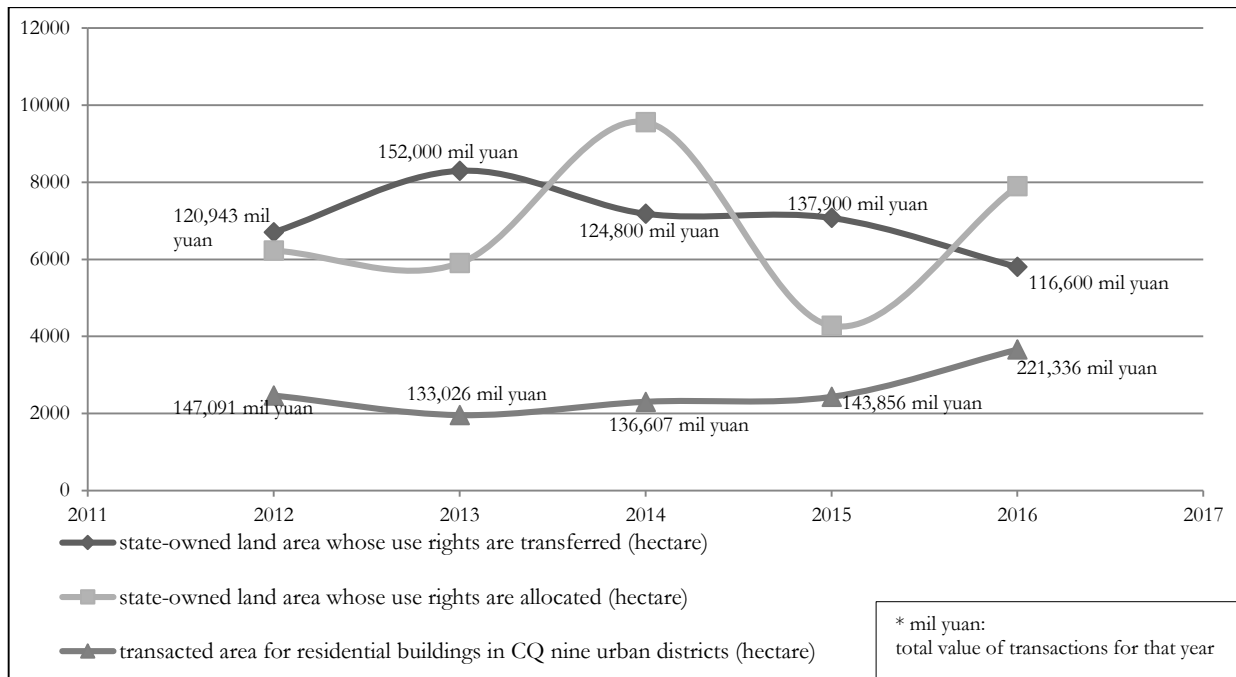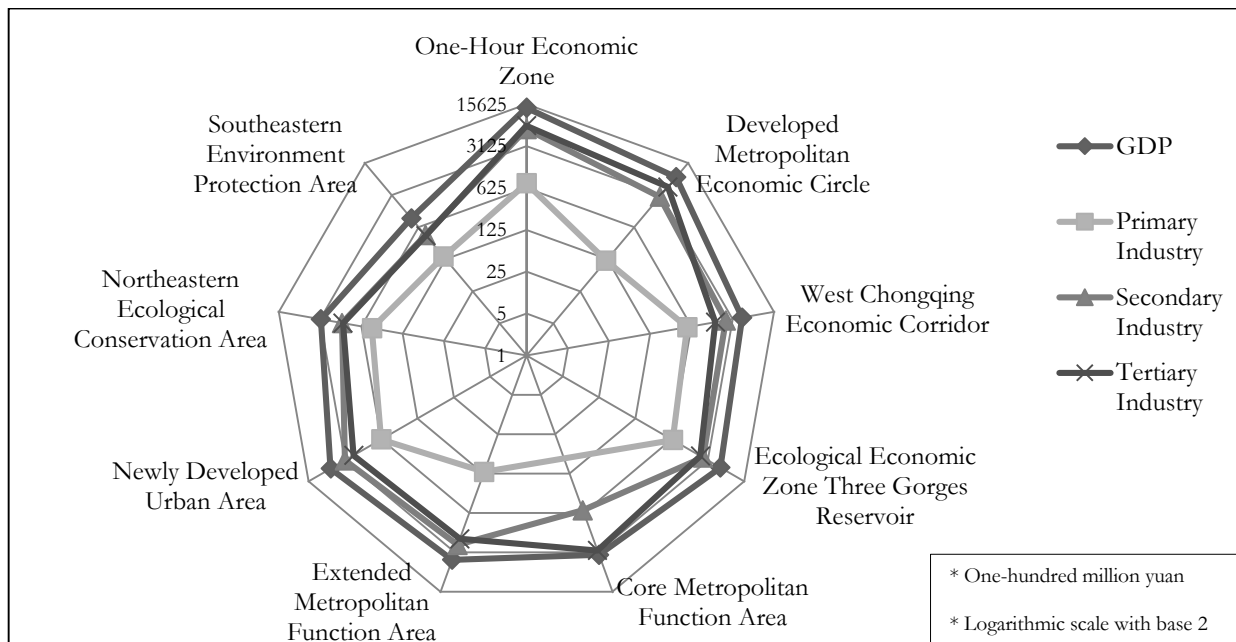

legend:
- state-owned land area whose use rights are transferred (hectare)
- state-owned land area whose use rights are allocated (hectare)
- transacted area for residential buildings in CQ nine urban districts (hectare)

* mil yuan:
total value of transactions for that year

Table 5.14. GDP by region in Chongqing Municipality 2016 (CTJ 2017, Ch. 2: 11)

legend:
- GDP
- Primary Industry
- Secondary Industry
- Tertiary Industry

* One-hundred million yuan

* Logarithmic scale with base 2

In Chongqing the increase in land revenues has to be summed up with a new mechanism of *benefit sharing*, which involves the urban and rural land owners. It was established as the first "land exchange market" (*tudi jiaoyi suo*) of China, and is based on "land certificates" (*dipiao*), a quota through which rural owners can earn money from the urban land market, being unable to change their rural land ticket into

development land due to the local restrictions (Cui Zhiyuan, 2010, 2011; Land Management Law, § IV, arts. 31, 37; Jia Huajie, 2015; Shao Jing'an et al., 2007; Wu Yi, 2016).[28]

The following table (Tab. 5.15) shows the more recent terrains chosen for development in Chongqing city proper, the leasing price, the surface, and the date of expiry of the notice. Table 5.16 represents an extract from an official bulletin published online by the Chongqing Centre for Territorial Natural Resources' Use Affairs, and points out the latest activities of land leasing and development. The content is made available to the citizens for a limited period of time, to give them the chance to express doubts and ask the office manager questions regarding the content.[29] This mechanism allows the local people to partially take part in the process of urban renewal, at least becoming aware of the future planning, and owning the right to criticize a project before its implementation. This procedure grants a minimum degree of democratic sharing of knowledge about the use of the territory, in accordance with the central government's will to sow democracy sprouts at the local level through a greater communication between officials and citizens (RTW, 2015). However, taking Sherry Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation" (1969) as parameter, the apparent minimum degree of policy-making given to Chinese citizens at the local level through "information and consultation", can be clearly channeled into the sphere of *tokenism*, i.e. a manipulative governmental behavior intended to provide the semblance of active participation to those citizens truly interested in the reform process. As a matter of fact, Chongqing urban redevelopment does not deviate much from the national trend of delegating the planning phase to professionals, who have to elaborate projects compliant with the political directives promoted by the CCP. Only through a mechanism of partnership, delegation of powers, and self-management, the population could perform a higher grade of active power in the remaking of the urban landscape, leading to unexpected consequences for the social living in the encounter with a more democratic sharing of the spaces (Qian Caiyun & Zhou, 2010: 210-217). As clarified in the previous paragraph, the central government has already expressed the willingness to involve part of the population in the construction of a more harmonious country; however, the help is not allowed in the decision-making process but rather in the economy of the country. This "neo-liberalism" follows a pattern of exploitation of the social capital to maintain the status quo.

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[28] The Chinese biggest land-transfer online platform, *tudi ziyuan wang*, is designed for people interested in land leasing and land-use right transfers (*tudi shiyong quan zhuanrang*), allowing also to choose advertisements on land and water resources (*shuiku*). This website belongs to Guangdong Land Joint Network Science and Technology Co., Ltd., established in July 2009. The subsidiary motto is "to promote the value for the land *wei tudi tisheng jiazhi*" (http://www.tdzyw.com/subject/Companyculture; Chongqing branch at http://cq.tdzyw.com/supply/list-u29). On rural land disputes, cf. O' Brien and Li (2006), Whiting (2011). On land rights restitution to overseas Chinese, cf. Abramson (2011).

[29] On the establishment of local governments' centres for land development with functions similar to an urban land bank (e.g. the one founded in 1996 in Shanghai), the institution of public auctions, and the implementation of stricter land use regulations (e.g. No. 11 Ordinance, May 2002), cf. Hsing You-tien (2006: 586-587). On the scrutiny process made by Chongqing Urban Planning Authority for the implementation of construction projects, cf. Han and Wang (2003: 99-100).

Table 5.15. Example of announcement of the designed supplies on Chongqing City land parcels (Chongqing Centre for Territorial Natural Resources' Use Affairs – *Chongqing shi guotu ziyuan liyong shiwu zhongxin***, http://jyzx.cqgtfw.gov.cn/com/default.asp; retrieved on May 22, 2017. Original version in Appendix II)**

	Announcement of designed supplies on Chongqing City land parcels *Chongqingshi ni gongying dikuai gonggao* – 重庆市拟供应地块公告						
No.	Land Position	Use	Surface m²	Buildable Surface m²	Total Price for Land transferring (Yuan)	Remarks	Registration Expiring Date
1	Nan'an District Chayuan Precint M allocated area, Portion M23-1/02	Logistic store	88,234	≤ 1.5	58,240,000	Environmental demands according to the 2016/6 Regulation of Nan'An District Environmental Protection Bureau	09/06/2017 12:00 am
2	Banan District Lijiatuo Precint G allocated area, Portions G14-2/03, G15-3/03, G16-3/03	Second class residential area, commerce area	179,607	≤ 419,754	2,098,770,000		09/06/2017 12:00 am
3	Banan District Lijiatuo Precint G allocated area, Portions G21-1/03, G21-3/03, G22-1/03	Second class residential area, commerce area	113,365	≤ 340,095	1,530,430,000		09/06/2017 12:00 am

Table 5.16. Extract from a public official bulletin concerning the upcoming projects on urban renewal and land development in Chongqing (Chongqing Centre for Territorial Natural Resources' Use Affairs – *Chongqing shi guotu ziyuan liyong shiwu zhongxin*, http://jyzx.cqgtfw.gov.cn/news/news1411.asp; retrieved on May 22, 2017. Original version in Appendix II)

Announcement to be inspected by citizens
Chongqing bulletin n.9, 2017

Published by Chongqing Natural Resources and Building Management Bureau to be inspected by citizens between 30/04/2017 (9:00 am) – 09/05/2017 (5:00 pm). In case of doubts and questions, please reach the Chongqing Centre for Territorial Natural Resources' Use Affairs.

No.	Land Position	Planned Use		Surface m²		Buildable Extension (m²) according to the Planning Bureau		Surface Extension (m²) according to the Planning Bureau		Price (yuan) of transfer rights cost – original land price to be added	Original Land User	Basis for Adjustments
		Original	Foreseen	Original	Foreseen	Original	Foreseen	Original	Foreseen			
116	Banan District Lijiatuo Precinct Entire building area	Commerce Garages	Commerce Garages	2,109.86	2,109.86	4,900.98	4,900.98	2,226.89	2,226.89	1,460,000	Chongqing Zhao Li Real Estate Development Ltd.	The project must be focused on economically suitable buildings, ready for use. The actual land use right's applicants must obtain a portion of 2,109.86 sq.m of land to plan 2,226.89 sq.m stores in surface, and 2,674.09 sq.m garages not in surface. The process passes through the allocation of the property transfer, and by covering the expenses of the land cost.
117	Jiangbei District Dashiba Precinct B allocated area, Portions B3-2, B3-4	Second Class Residences, Commerce, Finance, Space devolved to protect greenery patches	Second Class Residences, Commerce, Finance, Space devolved to protect greenery patches	224,378	224,378	940,761.94	1,253,976.93	940,761.94	940,761.94	15,590,000	Chongqing Jia Xun Real Estate Development Ltd.	According to the "Planning Permit on Building Projects" approved by the Planning Bureau, the buildable surface cannot increase, i.e. the costs of the space in latitude must be added for the 313,214.99 sq.m buildable area not in surface (of which the costs of land requisition are not accounted: 238,543.02 sq.m garages, 6,422.57 sq.m auxiliary facilities, 386.16 sq.m installations, 1,689.43 sq.m impracticable floor).
118	Jiangbei District Dashiba Precinct A allocated area, Portions A3-1/01, A3-2/01, A4-1, A5-1/01	All uses	All uses	263,341.6	263,341.6	674,069.85	831,416.52	633,914.22	633,914.22	1,410,000	Chongqing Hongfan Commercial Enterprise Ltd.	According to the "Planning Permit on Building Projects" approved by the Planning Bureau, the buildable surface cannot increase, therefore the proportion related to the usable sections must change, i.e. the costs of the space in latitude must be added for 157,346.67 sq.m buildable area not in surface (of which the costs of land requisition are not accounted: 142,438.28 sq.m to garages, and 5,594.46 sq.m to auxiliary facilities).

To conclude this section, I have drawn a scheme in Table 5.17 to show the ideological system of governance and power sharing among the elitist part of the political class, constructors, and developers who operate in an environment almost devoid of powerful antagonists from the civil society. As Han Sunsheng and Wang wrote (2003: 110), "The government is grandpa, developers are grandsons." Far away from a true neoliberal context, Chinese domestic development is led by the state-party and its local branches that have been entrusted by the central government towards a process of decentralization of powers and finance: "The role of Chongqing's local governments moves beyond promoting and regulating development. Rather, governments have entered into specific contractual arrangements with private-sector developers as a partner and have built joint-venture relationships in the land and property development process" (*ibid.*: 104. Cf. also Lin George & Yi, 2011).[30]

In fact, some stakeholders are state-driven (SOEs or ex-SOEs now running as private holdings but still under the state aegis), some ones are private companies based in the PRC, while others are owned by members of the *huaqiao* communities (Chinese expats) residing in Hong Kong, Taiwan or Singapore, in joint-venture with foreign companies, too. Their roles in the chain are all but perfectly distinct from each other, since on some occasions the developer is also involved in funding and construction, while other times there are different characters playing the plot. Local governments give indeed a fundamental propulsive boost to the system because they outline the future urban development of the city, give approvals to the developers, and work as an arbitrator among the diverse promoters of urban renewal. The flow of capital is therefore channeled into a *regional path* departing from local governments, passing through foreign developers, and returning back to Chinese soil in the form of a renewed urban landscape, ultimately prompting the consumption of the territory. Governance is here based on *circulatory networks* that refer to the multi-national companies, and their way to do business in a globalized market (Amin, 2002; cf. also Jessop, 2000). In the Chinese environment, the game is driven by the party elite thanks to its heterogeneous members spread among various sectors, from politics, to economics, and knowledge creation. The arbitrary decisions and solutions given by a narrow niche are the indissoluble background that must be kept in mind while managing to explain power dynamics in China. These are the material representations of hegemony over space-time constructions and rearrangements. Despite the opening to the global market due to the entrance in the WTO, the Chinese internal market continues to be driven by party directives. The assimilation of market economy principles, in fact, has not impeded the central government to reaffirm its policy techniques and the socialist spirit. Hegemony is therefore given by the ability of the party to coordinate, compromise, and readjust its political sights to the needs imposed by the market, while at the same time trying to influence them.

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[30] "Local governments" mean here all the governmental systems working on the territory in a regime of dependence from the central government. In Chongqing case, the term indicates municipal as well as district governments.

Table 5.17. Stakeholders in the ideological circle of Chongqing housing system (data retrieved online by the author, and listed in Appendix II)

state vision for the ongoing development:

need to allocate capital

developmental pattern based on the ideological premise of "consumption logics"

market forces:

pressure from both the Chinese and the global markets

need for a business-friendly environment → local elite and rich expats' request for luxury housing

MEANS: rhetoric, normative power and scientificity, profit agents

central state and local government propaganda:

"Five Chongqing Campaign – livable, healthy, smooth, safe and green" (2008-2012)

government directives:

- 2002 water law, etc. (cf. Ch. 7)
- housing reform
- entrance in the World Trade Organization (1999)
- county-city comprehensive planning of development and management of natural resources, implying the possibility of land rights/water rights trading for the maximum profit
- beautifying China propaganda
- anti-corruption campaigns and stricter handling of officers' resources by the central government through informatization and data transfer
- globalization and Western standards of living systematized through regulations and policies (quasi free-market practices epitomized by the e-commerce, One Belt One Road initiatives, etc.)

investors:

local and global banks, development banks, local government's bonds, PPP

real-estate investors and constructors

RESULTS

direct results:

- luxury housing system as paradigm for Chinese development
- integrated urban planning derived by a rhetoric of happiness built on an imagined spatiality
- land privatization, and exclusion from the free use of water resources

collateral results:

- building of infrastructures and facilities exploitable by a larger part of the population (squares, roads, restaurants, and spaces for leisure activities such as KTVs or outdoor fitness equipment in the parks)
- development of mass tourism in adjacent areas

state-aligned market infrastructure:

online and print commercial advertising agencies, instant messaging software services, consulting firms

technocracy:

inland state-funded research institutes; global holdings specifically involved in water management and construction

5.2   Sharing the land value: ecology, architectonic symbolism, and class issues

Architecture and housing aesthetics are intrinsic expressions of human desires, greed for power, and living uncertainty: For this reason, human beings need to develop constructions that are able to provide them with a certain state of reassurance from the deeper eschatological questions regarding the existence. The ability and desire to manipulate the natural space is de facto a human characteristic, representing the attempt to shape a system of power based on hierarchical subdivisions of the space. As Tuan Yi-fu (1979) has underlined, the human-social experience is fundamental to determine the fruition of space. Therefore, the architectonic practice is both the result of the cultural input, and of the necessity to standardize the social relations. The *verticality* in construction is a sign of sacredness, but also a masculine sign of virility; *limits* give a geometry to life and social duties. The *patriarchal structure* of society also engenders architectonic forms through the performance of power: The gynaeceum, the walled courtyards in Chinese housings, but also the closed structure of an urban settlement are the transposition of hierarchy and heavenly order.[31] In the configuration of the urbanity, economy and culture can mutate the aspect and/or the essence of architecture:

> "In the urban building process there are historical phases of transformation and expansion, in
> which residential dwellings take a primary and conforming role. They constitute the main
> 'quantity' of the urban artifacts, differentiating the city in areas according to their way of being
> and their typological characters. They are the physical *sign* most sensible to economic and cultural
> mutations" (Fabbri, 1984: 152; emphasis added).

Chinese housing forms have obviously been changing over time following a particular developmental pattern in accordance with politics, functionality, territorial restrictions, and aesthetics (Knapp, 2000; Spencer, 1947).[32] External influences have also become prominent thanks to the intensifying of the relationships with other countries towards the mid-1800s: The building of extravagant foreign architectonic forms has been firstly considered as an imprint of the imperialism – given the aesthetic and functional incongruity with local architecture, while in the republican period it became a sign of progress, and a necessary step to modernize the Chinese urban landscape (Bergère, 1981: 1-22; Henriot, 2010; Wasserstrom, 2008). During the Maoist era the socialization of previously "private" spaces, namely a political intrusion into the private sphere to destroy a social system based on family and clan ties (considered a feudal legacy of the "old China"), brought to the theorization of an integrated political space system called *danwei*, "work unit", where housing and workplace were connected to each other (Bray, 2005; Hua Lanhong, 2006). The new developmental politics (1980s), but mainly the "open-up the West" campaign started in 1999 at the behest of Jiang Zemin, have deeply favored the proliferation of real estate developers in Western China, attracted by tax incentives and promises of emancipation from the state monopoly. In particular, Chongqing new administrative status of "municipality" has paved the way to highly speculative building phases that have even caused a *real estate bubble* (Maxxelli, 2011a, 2011b). The central government has eventually guaranteed the municipality with the funds necessary to avoid a crisis, thus entrusting the local officials with the management of the resources. Lately Chongqing

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[31] Cf. Rykwert (2002: 31-43, 122-146, 213-223), and Wheatley (1970, 1971).

[32] On the process of urbanization in ancient China, cf. also Chang Sen-Dou (1963), Trewartha (1952), and Wu Liangyong (1986). In particular, Chongqing is mentioned for the good location among mounts and waters (Trewartha, 1952: 87). Wheatley wrote on the spatial subdivision of the ancient city among social classes (a sort of *zoning*), and also on "cultural zonation" based on the radial influence of the main urban centre towards the minor settlements (Wheatley, 1970: 166, 173). Spencer described the new suburbs of "modern Chongqing" as based on chaos with no particular planning (Spencer, 1939: 58). On the role of American planners in the reshaping of urban China during the KMT government, cf. Cody (1996).

has demonstrated to deserve that confidence, since its GDP is still growing at a double rate compared to the national average (Chen Aimin, 1998; China Daily, 2017; Hong Lijian, 1999).

Nowadays in Chongqing, local advertising and propaganda turn around the concepts of *fuxing*, i.e. a sort of urban renaissance, and material/spiritual happiness. In the discourses made by the governance stakeholders to legitimize the recent housing policies, I have identified three recurring architectonic aspects, i.e. *symbolic power*, *visual continuity*, and *socialist opportunism*.

5.2.1   From the *diaojiaolou* to the enclave: continuity in the ecological architecture

From a historical-cultural perspective Chongqing architectonic pattern has been often praised for chasing the essence of the harmonious union between man and nature. Being an important centre of the Sichuanese Ba-Shu Reign with urban foundations datable back to the 12th century BCE, the historical settlement was so geographically described in poetry (XJSDJY, 2007: 33):

> "The hilly Ba reign has a leaf shape; like a dress,
> the two rivers wrap the Futu passage."[33]

The local environment had indeed a strong influence on housing construction. Since Ming dynasty there has been evidence of local dwellings built according to the topographic line, as shown in Figure 5.3 where there are represented plumps anchored to the rocky shores (*lin kan diaojiaolou*), and artificial caves dug into the rock on the lateral promontories (*yadong*). On the slopes the houses were built on terraces (*suowu*), while on the flat land there were turret-shaped caravanserais (*zouma zhuan jiaolou*), and basement-set houses equipped with courtyards (*chongtai tianjinglou*). The *diaojiao* and the *zhongtai* models remained the most popular housing types until the end of 1800 (He Zhiya, 2010; Xiao Mo, 2008: 113-114).[34] According to some scholars, the characteristic of these diverse architectonic solutions is the comprehensive homogeneity of the urban unit where no particular composition or section seems to prevail over the others. For this reason, "Chongqing heterogeneous architectural style is a model that has to be studied to understand the development of Chinese hilly architecture" (*shandi jianzhu*, XJSDJY, 2007: 37; Zhou Yong, 2003: 261 ff.). It is also considered "a high expression of naturalistic aesthetics" (*jianzhu meixue de ziranzhuyi*, XJSDJY, 2007: 54 ff.), which is currently a dominant discourse in the hegemonic narratives related to the upscale housing market, as further analyzed in chapter six.[35]

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[33] The Futu passage (*Futu guan*, "passage of the Buddha") was the only guarded passage to lead to the walled city of Chongqing from the hinterland, and the unique road on the route toward the capital Chang'An (Xi'An), and also to Chengdu, otherwise replaced by river navigation. Nowadays the site is located within the Eling Park, Yuzhong District (CLBLJ, 2014; Zhou Yong, 2003). The passage was embellished with a traditional monumental stone gateway (*paifang*) of which Chongqing was rich (Wang Chuanping, 2007: 20-22). The Yangzi River is characterized by dries and rapids in the upper reaches, and sudden floods in the middle and lower course, and it is still considered a river of difficult navigation (Winchester, 1996).

[34] On Chinese architecture and the massive use of wood in housing construction, cf. ZGJW (2011).

[35] On architecture and rituals in Chongqing, cf. Xiao Mo (2008: 31 ff.), and XJSDJY (2007: 52-56). The discussion is on the *compromise* between sacredness and territory, i.e. the idea that the shamanic practices in hilly and mountain areas had to be changed according to the territorial exigencies. The *fengshui* geomantic practices were readjusted through the rituals to let the people benefit of certain spaces, even if theoretically their use was forbidden by *fengshui* rules. This technique was aimed to "transform a bad omen into good luck – *hua xiong wei ji*" (*ibid.*). The Confucian etiquette and rites were also disregarded by the local population, which was mainly composed of Tujia people, until the Han started a process of mass migration after the conquest of Ba Reign by Qin (316 BCE). Tujia people are remembered to be devoted to the "white tiger" totem. On the ideological narrative of the Chinese cultural uniformity at the end of the 19th century, cf. Brown (2007).
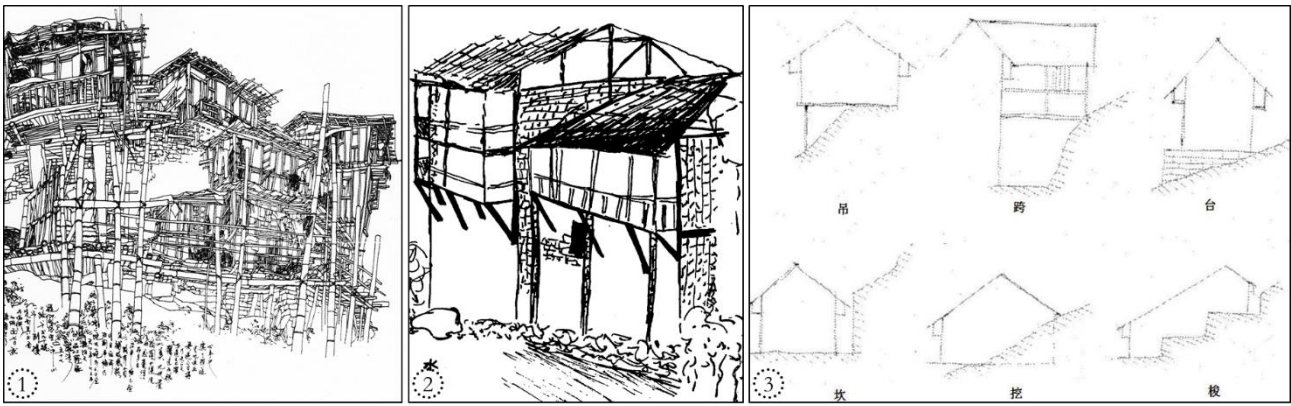
Figure 5.3. Ancient housing modules in Chongqing area. 1) *diaojiaolou* (Wang Chuanping, 2007: 32); 2) building with suspended bridge, *kua* type (Bonato 2011, retrieved in XJSDJY, 2007); 3) Chongqing six housing typologies: *diao*, *kua* ("striding forward"), *tai*, *kan*, and *wa* ("by excavation"), *suo* ("going backwards and forwards or from side to side". In XJSDJY, 2007: 50)

5.2.2   Brick symbolic power: imperialist-republican traces as a positive model of renaissance

During the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and after the Treaty of Tianjin (1858), foreigners obtained the right to navigate upriver along the Yangzi River, and to establish more land concessions in the hinterland (Johnstone, 1937: 944). The port at Chaotianmen (Yuzhong District) was formally opened in 1891 (*kaibu*), with the subsequent building of extravagant architectures, i.e. foreign consulates respectively in 1890 (Great Britain), 1896 (France), and 1904 (Germany), Japan exclusive national concession (Wangjia Bay in Nan'An, 1896), military buildings (French Marine, Nan'an), private residences for legates and businessmen, and places of worship, e.g. Ruosetang Church built in 1864 in Yuzhong District (CJGJ, 1997: 143-145; XJSDJY, 2007: 43; Zhou Yong, 2003).[36] At the moment of their construction these official buildings impressed a clear imperialist sign on the territory, being the representation of foreign power over the Chinese government. The architecture followed a "pure foreign style – *chun yanfeng*" based on the European tendencies of the time, i.e. neo-Palladianism, neo-gothic, and art nouveau decorations (Wittkower, 1995: 280 ff.). The private villas were instead the architectonic sign of a European-American bourgeois desire to dominate the political scenario as well as the social manners and customs. Alienating the traditional landscape, these elements caused a *visual interruption* with the local historical structure, the cultural substratum, and the collective memory. The power gained through unequal treaties, was ideologically performed in these austere architectures characterized by impressive gates, high basements, bleachers, columns and bows, and a massive use of concrete, which was indeed something new in Chongqing (Spencer, 1939). Following the founding of the Republic of China (1912), and the May 4th Movement (1918), the KMT rise to power with Chiang Kai-shek (1928) determined a first radical shift in the Chinese ideological narrative: The nationalist cause was aligned to the *modernist and liberal ideals*, and supported by the Christian credo; the urban landscape was once again reshaped towards a "development path of balanced fusion between East and West – *zhongxi jiehe de fazhan daolu*" (XJSDJY, 2007: 43). The "advantage of superior western goods and institutions" (Harris, 1991: 321), had repercussions in the architectonic field with the assimilation of *orientalist and futuristic*

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[36] Cf. Harris (1991) on Protestant missions and their role in spreading the "imperialist culture" in mid-nineteenth century China. Before 1891, the Sichuan plateau was evangelized by the Sicilian Jesuit Buglio (1606-1682), who arrived in Chengdu in 1640 and was later supported by the Portuguese Jesuit de Magalhães (1609-1677). Buglio and Magalhães could build churches in Pao-ning (now Langzhong) and Chongqing, before being transferred to Beijing in 1648 (Treccani Encyclopedia 1972, on "Buglio": http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ludovico-buglio_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/).

artistic patterns of European matrix. The Chinese gentry referred to this process as a necessary step *useful* to promote a technological and urban advancement that could save China from a total enslavement – *zhongti xiyong* (*ibid.*: 324).[37]

The repetition of the aesthetic patterns – once denatured of their original meaning – is related to a common acceptance of certain standards to evaluate the quality of the architectonic fact. For this reason, the current spreading of gated communities in Chongqing must be associated with a revival of the "colonial taste". Trying to erase the negative signs labeled to this architectonic typology, the local government has opted for the recovery of a specific republican image of the urban linked to the provisional-capital period, to accelerate the theoretical formulation and the practical implementation of Chongqing "rebirth". In this new context, the imperialist forms assume the partial significance of "power model", "urban grandeur", "modernity (in the sense of '*Gegenwart*')", "scientific development", and "health". Figure 5.4 shows a parallelism between Chaotianmen harbor as planned in 1946, and its appearance in the period 1998-2014.[38] There is a similarity between the original modernist project of the harbor and the design chosen by the municipal government, which had to publicly show the beginning of the "rejuvenation process". Located in Yuzhong District on the extreme eastern tip of the peninsula called Chaotianmen, "the imperial door", until the end of the 19th century this is where the ship of the imperial legate coming from Wanzhou had to dock to enter the prefecture city. Being the point of arrival of goods and people coming from other provinces or countries, the harbor as "open space" could balance the closed structure of the pre-modern urban settlement. According to the local popular culture and *fengshui*, Chaotianmen represents also the "head of the dragon" in Chongqing: Invested by this symbolism, the port "embodies" the hegemony of the city on waters.

In Figure 5.4, image no. 1 shows the project prepared by the Wartime Capital Construction Planning Committee for the rehabilitation of Chaotianmen after the end of the Japanese bombing and the great fire that hit the city in 1939. The committee was supported by foreign experts, in particular American advisors. Chaotianmen was thought to become an urban park where green geometric patterns should have ruled the space, now cleaned of the shanks forbidden after the fire. The disposition of the trees resembles that of an exedra open in the centre to allow the eye to enjoy the experience of the "mountain and water" vision. Having the blueprint of the Nationalist government, this project was abandoned after 1949. In 1998 after the renewal (image no. 2), the trees reappear, even if only as a sort of decoration. The geometric structure is also restored. However, the idea of Chaotianmen as urban park is clearly not fulfilled because of the different logics regulating the contemporary spatial creation of the urban. In fact, there is a sort of tension between the desire to restore an imagined past accredited by the projects of the 1940s, and the necessity to comply with the orthodoxy of the socialist public space that has to be sober and impressive even at the expense of functionality (more green would have helped as shelter against the summer heat, but this purpose was not fully investigated).

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[37] At that time, Chongqing University was established (Institute of Engineering, Science, Library, and the park; cf. URL: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_755b1ea30100rpjz.html). The Sino-French University, Sichuan branch was established in August, 1925 in Daxigou, Yuzhong District, by Yang Jiangong and Wu Yuzhang, with the purpose of training communist cadres and soldiers (Yang Angong House Museum, Shuangjiang Town, May 2015; cf. Baidu baike, 2016c).

[38] The idea of "obsolescence as neoliberal alibi" to implement the urban redevelopment in order to enhance the land exchange value (Weber, 2002), explains why Chaotianman neighborhood (harbor included) is undergoing a new process of image restyling. The other reason is that the previous infrastructure had become a symbolic witness of the political power of Bo Xilai, and therefore, it had to be erased from Chongqing spatial memory. The new architecture ready in 2019, called "Raffles City Chongqing" and designed by Safdie Architects, marks the symbiotic alliance between Chongqing and Singapore where the twin structure "Raffles City Singapore", planned by the same studio, is located.

This resemblance tried to rebuild a bridge between the present and a moment of Chongqing history when the huge political and economic potential of the city could only shortly be exposed on a global level. The sense of "unfinished" of the republican period and the somehow punitive politics of Sichuan Province after 1949, needed to be replaced with a positive feeling of imminent success. The desire embodied in Chaotianmen harbor to overcome the sense of *historical disruption* created by the party-state after 1949, has provided the local community with the idea of a finally re-established historic continuity.
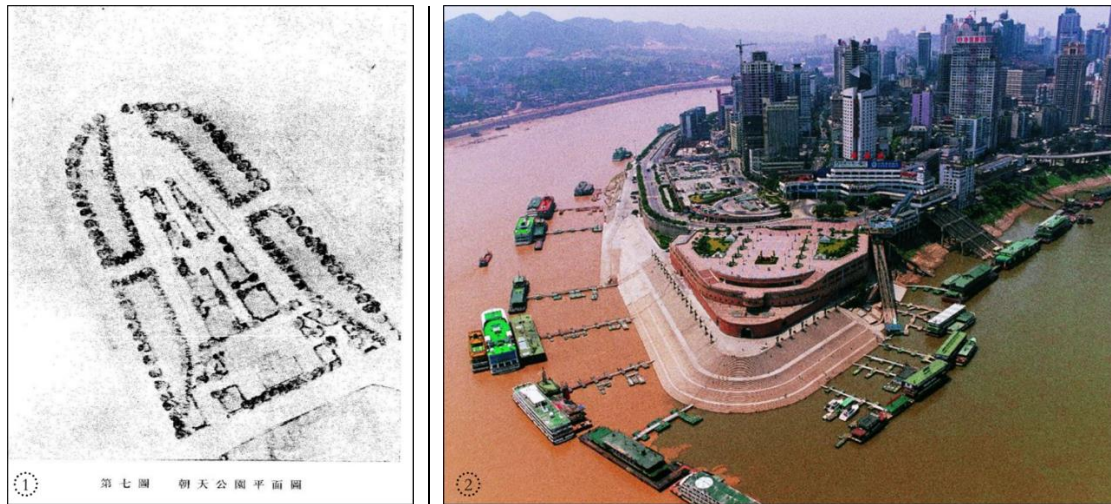
Figure 5.4. Architecture and ideology at Chaotianmen. 1) project for the new modern port (PJJW, 1946); 2) the port in 1998 (http://china.newssc.org/system/2007/06/18/010379296_02.shtml)

The appropriation of imperialist architectonic schemes is an actual reversal of "orientalism", i.e. a sort of "westernism" as process of Chinese identity-building. At various social levels the history of China betrays some frenzy for "exotic" practices, justified by the elite through diverse ideological discourses ranging from a pure aesthetic pleasure to a more dramatic necessity of the times. The Chinese define this fever for foreign products as "*yanghuo re*", which has a very long tradition and multifarious cultural implications (e.g. Zheng Yangwen, 2005: XV). Since the 1980s the housing space has been reconfigured as a casing protecting from the external political sphere, a nest devoted to apparently depoliticized activities and moments of private leisure. It was described "as an 'exit' for many of those who have found the public life meaningless and alienated" (Wang Shaoguang, 1995: 18), and a symptom of liberation from the ideological yoke (Latham, 2007; Müller & Pollacchi: 2005; Puppin, 2014; Stockmann, 2013; Zhao Xin & Belk, 2008). Figure 5.6 is an example of colonial architecture and its legacy. Image no. 1 represents the French Marine in 1902; the no. 2 shows a detail from the façade of French Benevolence Church that witnesses the presence of foreign people in Chongqing at the beginning of the 20th century. A similar architecture has been reused in the construction of Rongchuang Baixiangjie "Sunac White Elephant Street" gated community that has been opened in 2016 in Yuzhong District: here the housing blocks are clearly designed according to a stylistic pattern that wants to pay tribute to the past historical period. During the building phase the temporary containment walls were decorated with advertising slogans and colorful pictures of white elephants with the intent to restage a particular historical moment along the streets, offering a preamble of the atmosphere that was soon to be recreated through the new built space. In particular, image no. 4 is important for the advertising message that says: "Have a personal experience of the cultural and commercial marvels of Chinese history", referring to the "pre-modern" commercial function assigned to the neighborhood. In fact, the area going from Baixiangjie (the white elephant street) in the south to Shaanxijie in the north near Chaotianmen was commonly used

for market activities and commercial trades: The regional guilds of Zhejiang, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Nanjiang, Hubei, and Henan were here located (He Zhiya, 2010: 56-57; Golas, 1977: 555-580; Tang Yeze & Feng, 2007: 20 ff.; Wei Yingtao, 1991: 411-420; XJSDJY, 2007: 57 ff., 145 ff.). After the opening of the trading port, many foreign activities were also established here, recreating an atmosphere that some people at that time compared to the Bund of Shanghai. In 1932 a certain Mr. Jin wrote "Future of Chongqing, rear view of Shanghai – *Chongqing de qiantu, Shanghai de houying*":

> "It is indeed a small Shanghai; the scale is a bit smaller but the miniature corresponds in all respects to it. As in Shanghai there are the same Western-style buildings, the hotels, in a word, the same development."[39]

To justify the building of the enclave and the aesthetic choice, the real estate company has put a stele outside an entrance that says (Fig. 5.5):

> "Sunac China Holdings, Ltd. has financed the renovation of the street to demonstrate its support to the century-old city of Chongqing. Since the Southern Song, the street had become famous for the many merchandising activities taking place there (*lishi shangye mingjie*). In fact, this is the only street in Chongqing to have all the credentials (*zizhi*) to be considered a national 5A scenic spot, with two parks, three harbors, nine guilds, and ancient buildings. Because of its long history, Baixiangjie is ready to undertake the heavy task of supporting Jiefangbei [Chongqing urban centre, lit. Monument to Liberation], now that it has become a centre for the global market and finance. The street is the conjunction belt between 'the lower and the upper city' (*shangxia cheng*), and will pioneer the urban redevelopment of the area in accordance with high global standards, so to contribute to Chongqing cultural rebirth (*wenhua fuxing*)."

The public content of the stele outlines the evident alignment between the local government political discourses concerning "image rebuilding" and "urban rebirth", and the advertising techniques employed by the other stakeholders involved in the mechanisms of capital circulation and financing of the upscale real estate market. A new bond with Chongqing traditional culture also emerges when the text refers to "the lower and upper city" as geospatial indicators: Although being obsolete terms, they still indicate a certain degree of sophistication of the advertising material that not only has a commercial purpose (in the case of Baixiangjie it is clear the process of commodification of the architectonic heritage and its embedded space), but it is also used to convey some selected knowledge about the long history of Chongqing to the local people who may not know about certain facts. The educative intent operates in the sphere of legitimation of the land politics applied to the territory. This means

Figure 5.5. Sunac Rongchuang Baixiangjie information stone (Bonato, 2015)

that the advertising sector responds positively to the local government in the research for sources of legitimation to go along with the process of land privatization and environmental gentrification.

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[39] Mr. Jin in the supplement of New Shu newspaper 新蜀报副刊 June 20, 1932 as cited in Zhang Jinzhao (2003: 289).

Figure 5.6. Colonial architecture and its legacy. 1) French Marine in 1902 (picture taken at the Three Gorges Museum in Chongqing by Bonato, 2011); 2) detail from the façade of the French Benevolence Church, operative since 1902 in Yuzhong District (Bonato, 2014); 3) "Rongchuang Baixiangjie – Sunac White Elephant Street" enclave, Yuzhong District (© Fang.com, URL: http://baixiangjierc.fang.com/); 4) Advertising "Rongchuang Baixiangjie" enclave: "*qinli Zhongguo lishi renwen shangye qiji* – Have a personal experience of the cultural and commercial marvels of Chinese history" (© Fang.lianjia.com, URL: https://image1.ljcdn.com/hdic-resblock/71f1436d-e907-4dd5-8481-91a3368af52d.jpg.1000x.jpg)

5.2.3 Socialist opportunism: the meaning of housing space in transition

Housing provision as a socialist class issue emerged towards the mid-1800s in Europe, in particular through the analysis and denunciations of some scholars on the dramatic living conditions of factory workers in the main European cities. The so-called *Wohnungsfrage*, the "housing problem", was absorbed into the *housing ideology* exposed by Engels in 1870s, according to which the working class, mainly composed of people migrated from the countryside, had been bewitched by the idea of the city as a privileged place for a social living, and forced to inhabit the new suburban cottages built specifically to displace the workers out of the city centre through a mechanism of price speculation maneuvered by the "newborn" real estate companies (Engels, 1978; Fabbri, 1984: 162-165). This hegemonic process was aimed at moving part of the urban society away from the heart of political power, thus diminishing the working class political influence and ability to cope with institutional abuses (*ibid.*: 159-160; Gramsci, 2012). Although being essentially anti-revolutionary, these housing prototypes have been accepted by the CCP as the *best practice* to perform a socialist behavior due to their high population density, the preference for shared spaces, and also the capacity to limit wastes as promoted in 1958 through the *campaign against waste* (Hua Lanhong, 2006). Behind this urban settlement modelled on the *Siedlung*, the ideological message responded to those centralized politics based on space containment and control over human bodies, manipulation through the spreading of a selective knowledge, and coercive manners to promote socialism. Chinese were said to "first produce, and then live",[40] while leisure activities were also devoted to increase the socialist spirit through lectures, songs, and performances. In this context architecture had to make manifest its role as *social condenser* (Feuerstein, 2008: 235-237; Hahn, 1983: 55-56; Hua Lanhong, 2006: 103-116).[41] After 1949 the socialist housing system has been characterized by the superimposition of the industrial units to the urban settlement (Bray, 2005; Lynn T., 1981). The purpose of developing a housing welfare system was reached at the expense of architectonic originality, i.e. creativity went to serve the principles of functionality, standardization, and economy of space (Xing Quan Zhan, 1997).[42] The accommodation modules were composed of narrow spaces, with kitchen and bathroom in common with other families, and no particular comfort or design. In the houses destined to high-ranking officials, a more comfortable lifestyle was admitted. From an environmental perspective, the socialist industrial city could not properly adjust its development with a balanced exploitation of the natural resources, a fact that worsened the Chinese environment up to the actual state of degradation.[43] Figure 5.7 shows a project for a four-story "extra-economic" residential unit to be built in Chongqing, which peculiarity lies in the sharing of spaces and services. The pictures have been taken in the period 2014-15 in three different districts (Shapingba, Beibei, and Jiangbei), demonstrating how the housing

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[40] The motto derives from the extraordinary industrial production of Daqing community during the Great Leap Forward (later it emerged that the community chiefs used to falsify production data). Daqing was therefore a model together with Dazhai agricultural commune: "First adjust the slope, then embellish buildings (Dazhai spirit); first produce, and then live (Daqing spirit)" – *xian zhi po hou zhi wo de Dazhai jingshen, xian shengchan hou shenghuo de Daqing jingshen*. Cf. also Fu Dacai (2007).

[41] On the residential blocks built during 1950s-1980s in Chongqing, cf. CJGJ (1997: 127-132, in Chinese).

[42] In modern times the first material application of the concept of space containment to housing models, is traceable back to the European workers' neighborhoods planned in Berlin mainly by Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner (*Siedlungen*, 1920-30), and Karl Ehn in Wien (*Karl Marx-Hof*, 1927). At the end of the 19th century the topic was already discussed in certain theories on the "health city" (*Hygieia* by Richardson and I. B. Papworth), the "garden city" (*Garden Cities of To-Morrow* by Howard, 1898) and the "industrial city" (*Cité Industrielle* by Garnier, 1904). On the utopian city models, cf. Feuerstein (2008) and Rykwert (2002); cf. also Aymonino (1977), Tafuri and Dal Co (2003). A Chinese housing welfare system in its embryonic stage can be found in the KMT housing policies of 1920s-30s, but as explained by Xing Quan Zhan (1997: 434), the process was slowed down by the anti-Japanese war and later by the civil war (Danke Li, 2010).

[43] Chongqing was already described in the 1930s as "an urban chimney overwhelmed with a black smoke, where the hilly area was thinning and people started suffering of breathing problems" (Wei Yingtao, 1991: 509).

blocks built before the market liberalization are still a widespread characteristic of the urban landscape also in the area near/within the city centre. The buildings are very different from one another, in particular the no. 2 and no. 3 are in precarious conditions (part of the neighborhood near the no. 2 had already been razed at the time of the field survey). The no. 5 in Shapingba could still be considered an attractive investment because of the surrounding green area and the good lighting, despite the vicinity to the highway (due to the hilly terrain, the old buildings are often located in fanciful positions with respect to the streets, thus creating suggestive scenarios).

Figure 5.7. Housing models before 1990s. 1) Two housing models for Chongqing, based on the *chao jingjixing* – extra-economic form: four-story buildings with kitchen, washtubs and toilet in common on each floor (Hua Lanhong, 2006: 119); 2) façade of a four-story housing in Guanyinqiao, Jiangbei District; 3) bricks on a four-story building façade in Beibei Old Town; 4) housing in Beibei Old Town, and 5) in Shapingba North (Bonato, 2014 and 2015)

Urban dynamics in China have undergone a profound reform under the auspices of "scientific development", aimed to modify the *accumulation strategy* applied by the pre-1979 urban policies that constituted a hindrance to the soil monetization because of the tendency to undervalue urban assets (Wu Fulong, 2009: 130-131). Ideologically inverse but driven by the same hegemonic fire, nowadays the housing developers are put in the conditions to stimulate the land gentrification formula in the effort to penetrate the market in Western China. The former constraint on land *value* has been replaced by a restriction on land *uses* within the urban perimeter (cf. Harvey, 1989: 66-98).

From the architectonic perspective, the research for *verticality* is marking the passage to market development and internationalization, thanks also to the use of new materials and the knowledge-sharing coming from a re-established flux of capital and resources from the overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*) mainly resident in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Singapore (Han Sun Sheng, 1998; Wu Fulong, 2009: 132-

135). However, in the early nineties the real estate sphere was still an informal practice under state surveillance: The urban façade entered de facto a long lasting process of infrastructural renewal that was planned to be gradual and compliant with citizens' material response in order to avoid the jeopardizing of socialist assets, especially in South-West China. Furthermore, being housing privatization linked to the land property question, it created an epistemological problem in a socialist country where land belongs to the state by constitution. This controversy has been solved through the fifty/seventy years property concession act – another ideological loophole favored by the Chinese peculiar view of the cyclical nature of life, and practical habits such as the small interest in architectonic restoration due to the dubious quality of construction materials.[44]

Evaluating the development of Chongqing housing and infrastructures after a decade of municipal administration (1997-2008), what was depicted as a devastated city in the early 1950s – *yi zuo manmu chuangyi de chengshi* – was later described as one of the most dynamic cities in China, with a dramatic progress for what concerns both the institutional guarantees and the specialized education in building practices. In fact, in 2008 the city became one of the first arenas where the energy-saving approach was implemented to housing methods, like the use of heat pumps to heating or refrigerating spaces. Chongqing is also considered a national model in the establishment of an evaluation system for residence performances, and in the setting up of *ecologic districts* (ZRGZHCJ, 2009: 239). In October 2001 the local government officially started a project for the realization of affordable housing blocks (*jingji shiyong zhufang, anzhufang*). In 2008 there were ten million square meters completed (*ibid.*). However, it is worth noting how the design standards are not equally applied in the territory of Chongqing, not to mention the fact that the housing floor area is still far from the Western standards, i.e. around 30 sq.m for a one-person flat (Parker Morris Standards as cited in Park, 2017: 23-24): In 2005 the per capita living surface in Yuzhong District was 17.08 sq.m (CYT, 2005: 28). Due to space constraints and energy issues, small/medium houses (ca. 80 sq.m) are nevertheless paving the way to a new pattern in Chinese architecture, responding to the slogan "maintaining small dimensions, enhancing the quality of furniture" – *xiao mianji, gao pinzhi* (Liang Shuying & Weng, 2009: 99).[45]

Recently built affordable housing blocks in Beibei and Yubei Districts (Figure 5.8), show a different reality from the fancy enclaves also built in these areas. The model communities no. 2 and no. 3 (Fig. 5.8) are the result of a political campaign done during the years 2008-2012 to avoid the creation of shanty towns along the light railway connecting Beibei to Yuzhong District. The idea behind the project was that to prevent the emergence of "urban villages" (*chengzhongcun*) that could have damaged the process of "urban image construction", provoking social instability in territories running out of the official control. The affordable condos and buildings have been designed by the previous administration as part of a complex project of land renewal aimed at repositioning part of the population in strategic points along the main communication axes. In this way, these people in their narrow private space are more or less invisible to the upper-middle class, but still capable to move within a certain distance and enter the new economic circuits that have been developed in the surrounding zones (service industry, manufactory, etc.).

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[44] Cf. China State Council Decree No. 55 "The Provisional Regulations for the Provision and Transfer of People's Republic of China on Urban State-Owned Land Use Rights", art. 12 (May 19, 1990); Property Law, art. 149; Law on Urban Real Estate Administration, art. 22. On the uneven spatial diffusion of private business in China (manufacturing and services), cf. Han Sunsheng and Clifton (1999).

[45] Cf. Vanke, 2012. As explained in Gao Xiaolu et al. (2015: 229-230), the 18th CCP National Congress in 2012 stressed the importance of reforming the housing security system, implementing the directives on eligibility, prices, and property tax standards. "Rational construction standards" were advocated to define the housing typologies according to the square footage.

Figure 5.8. Affordable housing 1990s-2000s. 1) Housing model in Beibei Old Town; 2-3) Kangzhuang, Dazhulin Fanshequ "Big Bamboo Forest Model Community" in Yubei District, established in 2008 (Bonato, 2015)

As explained above, the mechanism of capital circulation and its approach to the real estate sector as incubator of exchange value, represents a sign of *modernity*, here understood as "unconditional development of the territory". Nowadays the housing question should therefore be associated with the various forms of globalization that emerge locally (Mann, 2013: 7-8).[46] On one level there is the "house possession as fetishist performance" driven by volatile forms of capital financing, where private property is treated as a sacred good. The phenomenon is exacerbated by mutable political regimes,[47] which explains how China detains one of the higher percentages of property owners in the world, i.e. 90% of the entire Chinese population according to Trading Economics, and based on data collected by Peking University's Institute of Social Science (Trading Economics, 2017).

While pursuing consumerism on a global scale, in second place an intrinsic discourse puts light on the phenomena of zoning and class division, which are exacerbated by the upscale housing market related to the gated community system. Although being a sign of "economic differentiation in a post-socialist fragmented space" (Wasserstrom, 2008: 135),[48] however, it could be delusive to think on this new architecture as a space deprived of ideological forces. In fact, the landscape-reshaping governmental actors are partly also the beneficiaries of this spatial generator of luxury commodity, together with the Chinese entrepreneurial upper-middle class, and the richer section of the international community settled in the territory (Fraser, 2000; Lange, Meier & Anuradha, 2009; Laurence Ma, 2004; Wu Fulong & Ma, 2006; Wu Fulong & Webber, 2004). Moreover, the territorial management focused on *urban beautification*, causes social malaise and exclusion through the dislocation of the former residents of the areas affected by the process, and the destruction of entire neighborhoods and neighborly ties (He Shenjing et al., 2006).[49]

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[46] Cf. the World Bank that as financial group lead by a small number of economically powerful countries, has interests in enforcing the globalization of commodity items through the persuasive motto of alleviating poverty and temping loans, promoting projects of affordable housing in the "global South" (World Bank, 2017, and URL: http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/commodity-markets#1; http://datatopics.worldbank.org/consumption/country/China; http://projects.worldbank.org/P131973/housing-finance-development-program?lang=en).

[47] Trading Economics.com lists a long series of ex-socialist countries as the places with the highest percentage of home ownership in the world, excluding Singapore at the second place and China ranked fifth (Trading Economics, 2017). The home property *titling policy* has been enforced since the early nineties in China upon payment of the property rights, and institutionally recognized by the Private Property Law enacted in March 2007 (Ho Peter, 2001, 2015; ZGXK, 2017).

[48] On the shift from walled *danwei* residential units to enclaves, cf. Li Si-ming, Zhu and Li (2013), and Yip Ngai Ming (2013).

[49] On the psychological distress following a coercive displacement process, cf. e.g. the studies on the Three Gorges Dam's migrants made by Hwang Sean-Shong et al. (2007), and Wilmsen et al. (2011); on a general discourse on Chinese migration problems, cf. Liu Zhengkui et al. (2009), Scheineson (2009), Wong Daniel, Fu et al. (2010), and Zhan Shaohua (2011). A

5.3   Conclusions

In the first part of this chapter my intent was to unravel which are the logics and the discourses carried on by the party in order to maintain a certain degree of consent internal to the country. The reassurances made at the local level by the governmental officials suffice the need to establish a lasting contact with the population, and also prompt the basic idea of the goodness of the party in its efforts to build a harmonious society. The networks of power based on the media diffusion of propaganda messages, are the catalyst of the paternalistic image of the party as a "good despot" (*wang*) – embodied in the figure of the President and, at a local level, in that of the Party Committee Secretary. Stressing the idea of continuity between apparently incongruent developmental patterns, is also in line with the legitimation policies of the government. Crossing the data retrieved from Chongqing Statistical Yearbooks, it appears how the real estate and construction sector are two virtuous industries that cover a good portion of the local GDP. The process of land re-evaluation related to the residential market, has had a great impact in Chongqing city centre, in particular Yubei District.

In the second part I have explained how Chongqing architectural practices are linked to the process of land gentrification carried on through the urban planning agenda in response to the local and global elitist necessities of the moment. Architectural features become the visible seal of the transformation of Chongqing waterscape into a scenario where to perform the fetishist activities proper of consumerism that enable – but are also dialectically favored by – the reification of nature. The profusion of historical traces in the city, especially in the main districts of Yuzhong, Shapingba, Nan'An, and Beibei, are used by the local government as a tool to stress the legitimacy of the upscale housing market, making use of the architectonic features typical of the imperialist and republican times as symbols of renaissance.

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plastic model of Chaotianmen renewal project including the relocation program of part of the population from the historic centre, was exposed at Chongqing City Planning Museum located at Chaotianmen, Yuzhong District (personal visit, September 2011). Cf. Chongqing Tourism Bureau (2016a), and Tan Yingzi (2015).

6. On "hydro-ideology" and urban remodeling: organic exploitation of the Jialing-Yangzi Rivers watershed to develop the upscale real estate sector

In this chapter I analyze how the entire watershed in light of its cultural and social power, has become a useful tool in the hands of the local technocratic management that directs it for the maximization of the economic profit. The waterscape, in fact, is a prominent source of legitimation and signification for the party politics, and it can also regulate the socio-economic practices thanks to its remarkable cultural weight determined by the peculiar spaces produced in/through the specific environment. The other focus of this chapter concerns the spatial distribution of the gated communities within Chongqing complex urban fabric, the local society marginal reactions to the phenomenon of land and water privatization, and some political-administrative local practices of control and surveillance.

6.1   The well-established and the new functions of Chongqing watershed

Based on the data retrieved through the fieldwork and the analysis of satellite images from Google Earth and Baidu Ditu,[1] it appears that there are some constants in the process of exploitation of Chongqing watershed. In particular, according to the dimensions of the lakes they can be manipulated to respond to diverse human activities. The Table 6.1 summarizes the main functions assigned at the same time to a natural lake after its renaming as "water reservoir", a legitimizing tactic to acculturate what should instead be considered a common good to be shared openly in a community. This process requires the lake to be dismembered into functional sections, thus eliminating the essence of its natural unity. In this sense the environmental protection that should be granted to these new space by law through the etiquette "water reservoir", does not pertain the maintenance of the virgin conditions of the place, which happens instead to be domesticated through human agency. Apart from the endorheic lakes located in the municipality, whose most striking example is "Haidigou underground water reservoir – *Haidigou dixia shuiku*",[2] there is also a certain amount of artificial lakes created in line with the hydraulic revolution implemented since 1930s (cf. Ch. 3), i.e. water reservoirs for agricultural irrigation, hydropower production and/or aquaculture that, if located in a position considered strategic for the future urban development and new profit activities, are also included in the urbanized waterscape.[3] More recent artificial lakes resulted also from the abandonment of ore mines (Fig. 6.1).

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[1] Baidu Ditu represents the Chinese counterpart of Google Maps/Google Earth. Another Chinese map supplier also used in this thesis, is Gaode Ditu.

[2] Located near Fuxing Town underneath the Longwangdong Mount, China biggest underground lake-water reservoir was discovered in 1966 during the works of enlargement of a coal mine, and since then its water has been used in agriculture. Renamed as "the small-scale Dujiangyan", it is still considered "a marvel – *qiji*" (Zhu Xiaonuo, 2018).

[3] The fishermen community in Chongqing city has access to 56 water reservoirs (www.cqfishing.net, 2018).

Table 6.1. Functions, features, and examples of organic exploitation of lakes and minor rivers in Chongqing (Cf. Annex II for a list of the gated communities built in Chongqing)

small lakes - ponds *

- enclaves in Liangjiang New Zone and in Beibei District: agricultural areas since early 2000s, no intensive industrialization → easy assignment of the new function;
- enclaves in Jiulongpo District: already highly urbanized district → small space left for urban re-adjustment

only housing function

small to vast lakes **

- Lake Longjing in Yubei District (0.67 sq.km): commercial Expo Park / state representation, tourism (4A national scenic spot), luxury housing, hydropower;
- Lake Blossom in Nanchuan District (18.43 sq.km, medium size): luxury housing, agriculture

two or more economically not-related functions

lakes and rivers **close** to each other, and within the same district administration

- "slow food" topic in Shapingba District: mass tourism, enclave;
- "bio agriculture" topic at Lake Blossom, Nanchuan District: "Swiss style" countryside villas to support a "slow lifestyle in the seasonal country villa", biologic agriculture, and tourism;
- "reinforcing family ties as in Western families" ("Golden Triangle International Tourism Resort" at Simian Mount, Jiangjin District): countryside villas and mass tourism promoting outdoor activities to strengthen the role of the paternal figure in the education of the children, "as Western fathers do";
- promotion of the "beautiful Chongqing" campaign: land reclamation of the formerly-industrial watershed around the Expo Garden Park, Yubei District, to enhance the land exchange-value, including e.g. the Jiuqu River, Renhe *shuiku*, and Bolin *shuiku* (Chongqing shibao, 2018; Hualong wang, 2018)

already tangible gentrification sprouts among the residences of the local bureaucracy: vicinity to power centres

small and medium lakes *

- enclave on the Zhaomu Mount, northeastern slope
- Beibei and Nan'An Districts: various lake-enclaves built near the District Administration Palace

small and medium lakes *

- Zhaomu Mount Forest Park: during the reforestation works lasted until 2013, part of the lake was subtracted to the park surface to build the "Jinke Tianhu Meizhen" enclave;
- Longran Lake in Yubei District: hydropower and enclave

local policies to readjust lake boundaries, build sewage systems and hydropower plants

same topic used in neighboring areas to legitimize the development of the watershed in consumerist terms

Legend

* according to China national standards, small size: from 100,000 m³ up to almost one million m³ (2ⁿᵈ level), and from one million m³ to almost ten million m³ (1ˢᵗ level)

** medium size: between ten million m³ and one hundred million m³
big size: up to ten hundred million m³ (2ⁿᵈ level), or bigger than ten hundred million m³ (1ˢᵗ level) such as the Three Gorges Reservoir

Figure 6.1. Example of pond near a bio-agricultural estate in Yubei District. Some of these small lakes are the result of the cessation of mining activities (Bonato, 2015)

Local statistics can also demonstrate how important are the water reservoirs for Chongqing economy. Since the establishment of the municipality more and more water ponds of diverse size have been dug and opened to economic activities such as aquaculture, while the bigger natural lakes in the region have been privatized and partly transformed into thematic parks, which access is monitored and subjected to a payment. Furthermore, the production of hydroelectric power has been increasing not only thanks to the opening of the Three Gorges Dam, which production is managed by a central commission, but also by the construction of minor hydroelectric power plants along the tributaries of the Yangzi River. In Chongqing the total amount of hydropower energy available for consumption in 2016 was around 25.6 TWh (Tab. 6.2).

Table 6.2. Statistics on Chongqing water sector 2012-2016: water conservancy investments (CTJ 2013-17, Ch. 4: 13), gross output value of fishery (*ibid.*, Ch. 11: 5), output value of fishery commodities (*ibid.*, Ch. 11: 14), surface for aquaculture (*ibid.*, Ch. 11: 11), and total hydropower energy available for consumption (*ibid.* 2017, Ch. 5: 9).

investment in the management of water conservancy (10,000 yuan)
gross output value of fishery (10,000 yuan)
output value of fishery commodities (10,000 yuan)
output surface for aquaculture: reservoirs (hectare)
total hydropower available (100 million kwh)

* Logarithmic scale with base 2

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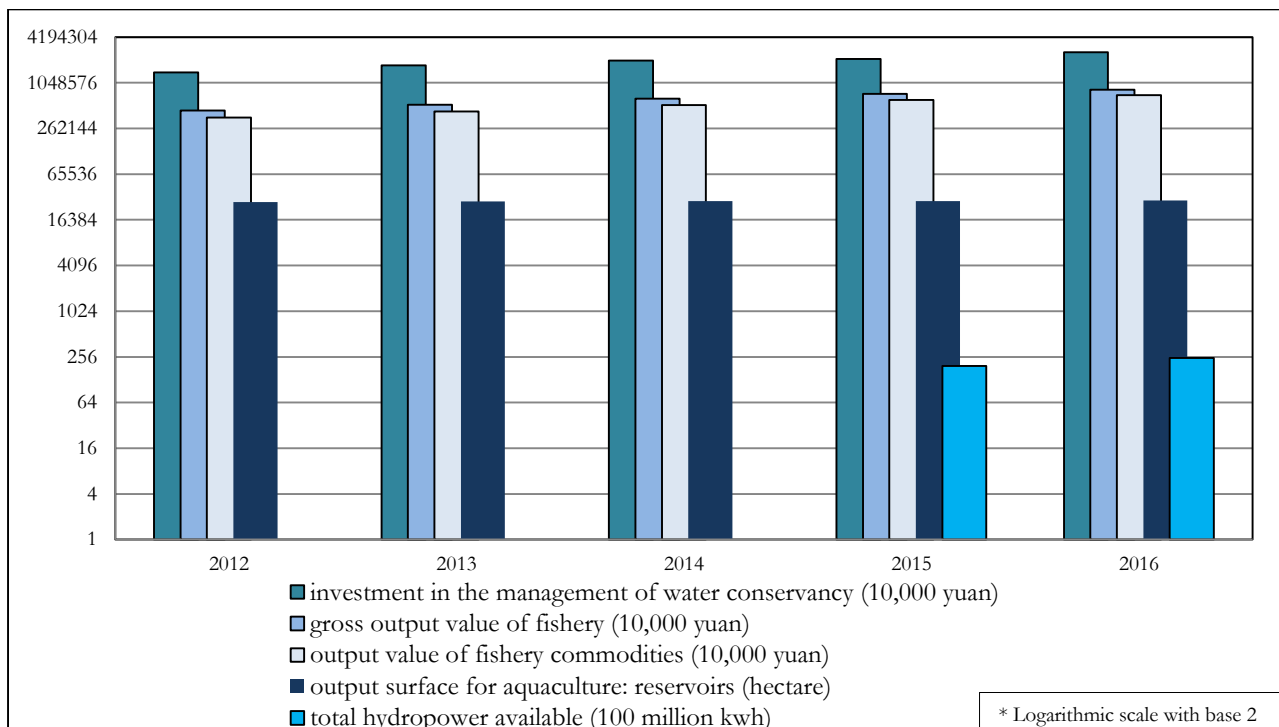
6.2   Gated communities in Chongqing: the spatiality of chaos?

The building of the gated communities in Chongqing *apparently* follows no particular logic: They seem to be randomly distributed all over the territory administered by the city in the nine main districts, plus Jiangjin and Nanchuan suburban districts. The initial idea leads to speculate on the chaos inherent the administration of the area due to the colliding interests among different bureaucratic apparatuses, with a consequent mismanagement of the local environment and its resources. As also explained in chapters four and five, however, the central government orthodox direction is that to constitute a network of local urban plans that might mutually interact also on an extra-regional path, to build up a complex system based on the holistic idea of *organic urban re-planning* (e.g. Chongqing-Chengdu axis, and the Yangzi Economic Belt).

The residential buildings completed in Chongqing show a tendency to implement urbanization along the West Economic Corridor, especially in Tongnan (upgraded to the district level in 2015 according to Chongqing Statistical Yearbook), and in the two industrial areas of Changshou and Wangzhou. Banan represents the southern frontier for the city expansion, having important technological and research poles located there, even if the percentage of urbanized land is still low in comparison to those districts situated within the highway inner ring (the "historic" centre of Banan with the seat of the local government is just outside the ring). Yuzhong is on the upswing, fact that implies a process of land reclamation, demolition of "old" buildings, and displacement of that segment of population unable to cope with the increased rental costs in the peninsula (Tab. 6.3). However, the sales revenue is clearly not directly proportional to the number of residences built per year, as shown in Table 6.4. In fact, the district of Yubei has been planned according to specific functions, and the cost of the soil has been increasing because of the representative value that the district has gained based on an image shaped by the local government and juxtaposed to what was an undeveloped/agricultural area. Inflated prices mark invisible borders, and corroborate an idea of the urban based on modernist schemes of sanitation and ethical rigor, two "values" reflected in the personal wealth spatialized in the territory.[4]

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[4] Cf. Zhang Wenjing (2012a) on the construction of four residential clusters in Yubei District; Wang Yanni (2012) on the construction of Yuelai Eco-Town in Yubei District; Deng Jun (2012d) on the greening projects aimed at enhancing the aesthetics of Liangjiang New Area, which surface largely collimates with Yubei District. This area has been particularly targeted by the local government for the purpose of maturing the *global image* of Chongqing city proper. Cf. the articles "Liangjiang New Area and UK *join hands* on sustainable development" and "Hitachi *to help* Chongqing Liangjiang New Area build intelligent city", both appeared on The China Times (Zhang Wenjing, 2012c; Zhang Yingling, 2012. Emphasis added).

Table 6.3. Residential buildings completed by region (x 10,000 sq.m; CTJ 2017, Ch. 20: 6)
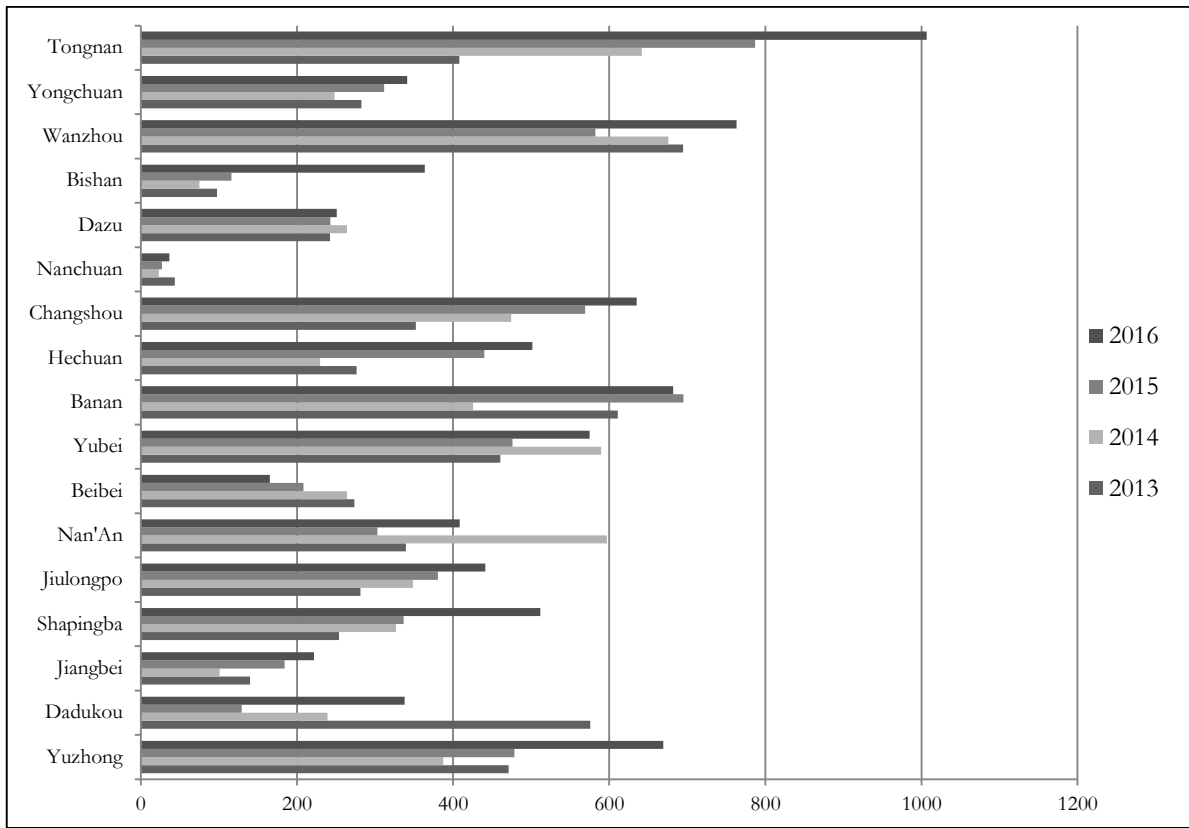
Table 6.4. Sales revenue of residential buildings completed by region (x 10,000 yuan; CTJ 2017, Ch. 20: 10)
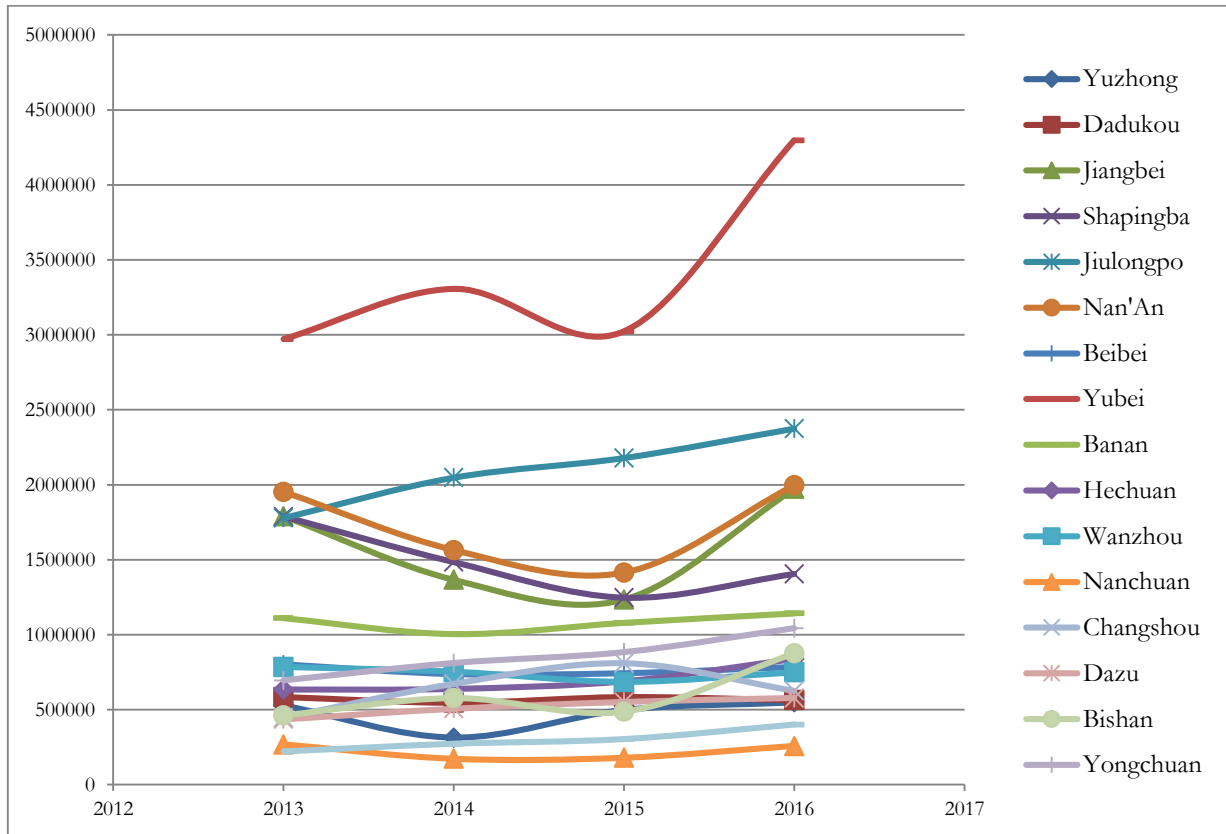
In line with the invasive management of the resources, the enclaves are invested with new significances, and specifically built to satisfy the local and international rich clientele residing on site (Wu Fulong & Webber, 2004). Their isolated locations in the forest or in the open countryside, are actually signals of the future expansion of the city, which takes place partly in the form of new urban conglomerates to be built in pristine areas, and partly through the redesigning of the agricultural landscape within the urban perimeter, producing "sustainable" niche products that fulfill the masses' desire for eco-tourism. Another direction is constituted by the preservation of the natural enchanting scenarios promised by the constructors through the institution of national/municipal parks, where further development activities are partially interdicted. In these cases, the forestry sector assumes a great importance for the perpetuation of the economic exploitation of the natural resources without causing a drastic change in the landscape aesthetics. This functional readjustment induces a rethinking of the housing and livelihood practices native of a territory but now considered "obsolete" within the performative scenario of a highly-globalized consumer society (e.g. subsistence farming and the self-organized markets, which are two slowly declining activities). Shapingba and Nan'An shores partly still host light industries; the area near Ciqikou along the Jialing River, Shapingba District, is the place where a process of industrial dismantling is more visible. Chosen since 1920s to host a sort of pharmaceutical cluster for the ease of discharging industrial waters into the river, this sandy strip of land is nowadays undergoing formal changes that aim at the building of a fashionable promenade as an extension of the "Chongqing Bund" advertised in Yuzhong District. In fact, a greater control of the waters in the Jialing and Yangzi Rivers has allowed a process of *land reclamation* for civil scopes, i.e. the building of enclaves along the river banks to exploit the landscape potential and enhance the land exchange value. This marks a break with the tradition according to which the river shores were unsanitary places at risk of diseases because of the stagnant waters and the humidity (until 1930s, in fact, only the "outsiders" used to live there in bamboo huts. Cf. Li Danke, 2010).

Looking at the aesthetics, Chongqing gated communities as "self-containing" projects, are rarely in dialogue with the surrounding environment, being themselves built to satisfy a need of temporary escape from the reality. For this reason, they engulf part of the natural environment within their boundaries to assure a humanized contact with nature which is "revisited" to meet the current expectations of the upper-middle class. The lucrative development succeeds not only thanks to the knowledge that the stakeholders hold on matters of cultural background and social status of their customers (Wu Fulong, 2010: 394), but also through the tacit positive assessment given by the party-state to the phenomenon of gentrification, which is in line with the market reforms, and by the local governments that benefit from the land leasing (Gaubatz, 1998: 266; cf. Ch. 5). Being the lakes partly or entirely closed to the population, thus privatized, *social exclusion*, i.e. the denial of the free enjoyment of the natural resources, represents one of the side effects of these practices, together with the forced reconstruction of the waterscape according to the fetishist taste imposed by the momentary consumerist fashion.

To summarize, the construction of enclaves is influenced by the proximity to (cf. App. I, and Annex II):

- The district centres of power and administration (valid for almost all the districts);
- The highway exits (first, second, and third loop);
- Proximity to/inclusion in the circuits of elitist amusement (e.g. golf clubs in Beibei, Shapingba, Nan'An; the expo park zone in Yubei);
- The high-tech zones (enclaves in Banan, Yubei and Jiulongpo);
- High-ranked universities, Peking University high school branches, international private schools;

- Environmental sites, preferably listed as "national beauties" (Nan Mount in Nan'An, Gele Mount in Shapingba, the thermal bath area in Beibei, Simian Mount in Jiangjin);
- Early-built small elitist settlements (small enclaves built near the district governments at the beginning of 2000s, or previous *danwei* compounds hosting high ranking officials).

6.3   Overcoming the difficult environment: atypical gentrification and new suburbs along the watershed

As already seen in chapter four, Chongqing has a specific territorial morphology tending to fragmentation, which is contrasted by a strongly growing logistics infrastructure. In fact, Chongqing does not have a single business centre – even if the CBD in Yuzhong District clearly shows its symbolic superiority, but rather more centres arranged in a network connected by rivers and roads. It is around these infrastructural segments that the new gated communities are built, privileging the natural characteristics of the environment as a perfect scenario for the enclaves' acculturated landscape.

Because of the inability to establish a residential pattern freed from the "Western" tradition, and the necessity to perform a "globalized archetype" for what concerns the living standards,[5] the enclave housing models are actually *detached from the place*, giving often the impression to be built as *theme parks* (Nyiri, 2006: 14-15; Pow & Kong, 2007). As further explained in par. 6.3.4, according to the community dimensions, certain services related to the learning of new leisure activities are also provided to the inhabitants, while the local public services are normally not replaced by private one (cf. Tanulku, 2012). The state sovereignty on the territory close to a gated community is held thanks to the power of the local government, and its ability to act as arbitrator among the singular interests of the various stakeholders involved in the gentrification process. For this reason, the gated communities in Chongqing are not constitutive of a unitary and homogeneous structure: They are located in the crowded "downtown", in the hills, and in still virgin or agricultural areas now absorbed in the urban fabric even if their landscapes and their inhabitants' behavior contradict the basic idea of "the urban".

The most influential developers have also the tendency to acquire huge lots of land in order to build different housing typologies, thus opening the housing market to the middle class. In these "cities" or "towns" as they are usually called (normally preceded by the name of the company, e.g. "Wanda City" in Shapingba District), the prices vary according to the typology (villas, semi-detached houses, luxurious apartments in small buildings, and small flats in twenty-thirty-story buildings), and also to their location within the internal landscaping structure designed by the developer. Typically, the rich enclave, which is separated from the other blocks by walls, gates, internal streets or water, has the better site, e.g. along the lake shore. These structural elements determine a spatial closure, so that the fruition is rationalized according to the monetary capability of a person. Externally, these allotments should avoid the problematic of "sowing gentrification sprouts" by providing a broader spectrum of housing choices open to the middle-class, too (cf. Tab. 7.1). Other gated communities are instead dedicated only to an elitist range of consumers, as for example most of the enclaves in Annex II, in particular those ones located in Beibei and Jiangjin Districts.

Therefore, the local phenomenon of sub-urbanization entails a distinctive character (cf. Zhou Yixing & Ma, 2000), implying that in some areas of Chongqing the processes of zoning and gentrification follow a

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[5] In the housing description, the seller always specifies that the real estate is built according to "foreign standards" (*yangfang*).

more sophisticated pattern in relation to those places where there is a clear tendency to create a "rich housing community" like, for instance, within and around the golf clubs of Yubei, Nan'An and Jiulongpo Districts.
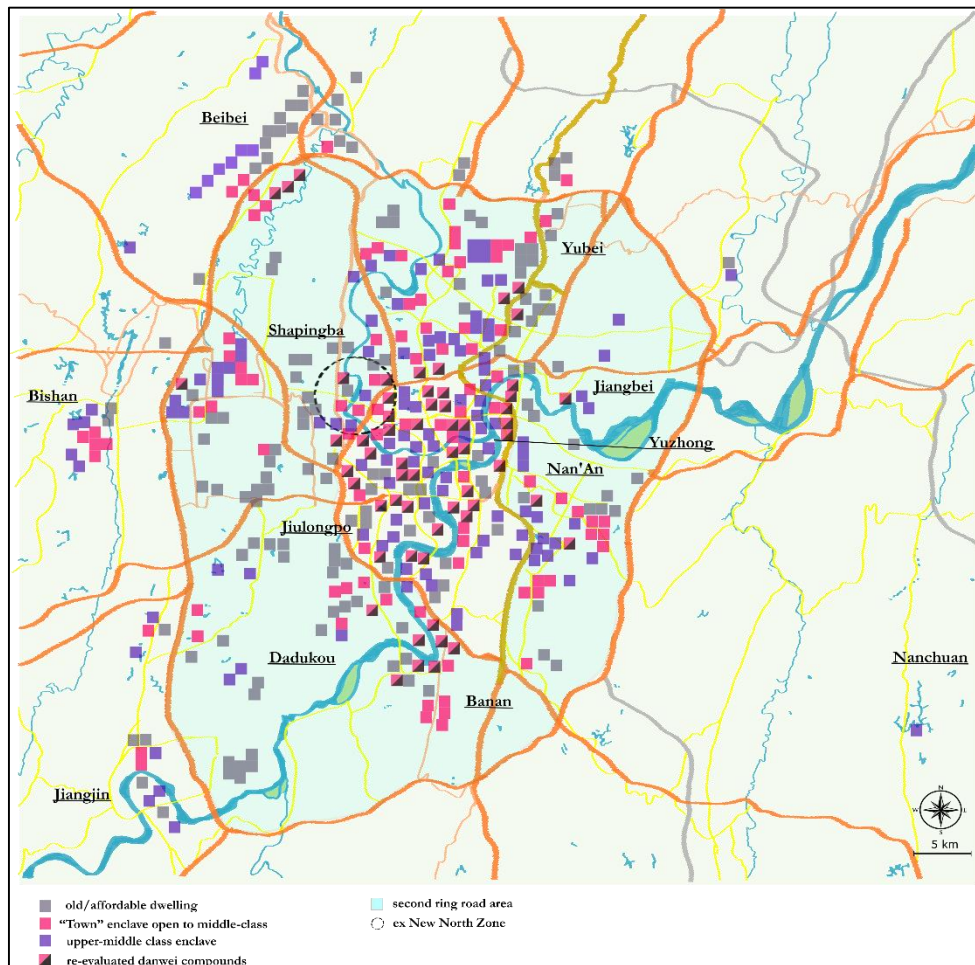
Figure 6.2. Spatial distribution of urban housing in Chongqing with focus on the enclaves (Bonato, 2019)

As observable from the map in Figure 6.2, the spatial distribution of the urban housing is composite and inhomogeneous among the districts. This is due to the fact that the real estate sector has seen a fast development only in recent years, forcing the municipal government to move from a concentric pattern of growth to the simultaneous development of several areas located even very far from the city centre, such as Bishan (ex-county). However, it is controversial to talk about *urban sprawl* since the entire process of land management is controlled by the local government, so there is no political disengagement that could justify the spread of communities along the waterways and near the highway entrances in terms of free market causality. Furthermore, the new developed areas are not necessarily following the "low density" and the "long car distance" principles: In fact, most of the new neighborhoods built on the city outskirts, offer the basic services nearby. The variety of housing modules creates atypical gentrification patterns, visible in Banan, Bishan, Dadukou, and part of Yubei, i.e. those either agricultural or industrial zones enclosed in the second ring highway (cf. the Evergrande City example in par. 6.3.3).[6] In Beibei the

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[6] In fact, Chongqing city is not completely devoted to the service sector. The industrial production is located in Jiulongpo and Dadukou (e.g. Foxconn), Yubei and Banan (automobile, and light industry such as Coca-Cola), Jiangbei harbor, and Beibei where the local government is trying to renovate the obsolete industry through foreign investments, e.g. from South Korea.

scenario is once again different since most of the new enclaves lies at the foot of Ziyun Mount, reconfiguring the landscape of the mountain range and also the access to the green. In this case, the gated communities are clearly delimited both by nature and the highway passing nearby, shaping the area into an *exclusive island* (cf. par. 6.3.2).

Within the first ring road the remains of a previous phase of urbanization pose some architectonic limits to the future development; Foe instance, there are still many *danwei*-style enclaves that were used by high-ranked officials until the end of the nineties. When located in the vicinity of a new gated community, the market value of these buildings increase. Therefore, they are still a desirable solution for the middle-class because of their limited housing density and the high percentage of green, despite being qualitatively inferior to new houses for what concerns space economy, finishing of the construction, and services (e.g. squat latrine, minimum cooking space, etc.).

In Yuzhong District, Shapingba, and Jiulongpo there is a limited amount of affordable housing since a large part of the lower social classes that used to live there, have been displaced to the outskirts. Jiangbei has been redeveloped as a first extension of Yuzhong CBD where services, commercial activities, and enclaves should beautify the waterscape near Chaotianmen.

The gentrified areas of Shapingba and Yubei have been planned following a pattern of *urban-green alternating bands*, also in accordance with the new "eco-sustainable, smart" regulations of Liangjiang New Zone. The dismantled New North Zone that was a diffuse site of high-tech production located between Shapingba, Jiangbei, and Yubei, covered an area that now is assigned to new residential neighborhoods. In particular, the Jialing River banks in Jiangbei and Shapingba Districts are now of interest to the upscale real estate constructors because of the *shanshui* combination and the vicinity to the centre; in Yubei District, the Jialing River bank has been exploited for the development of Yuelai Eco-Town near the Expo Centre.

6.3.1   Yubei between the Jialing River and the International Airport

Yubei was originally an agricultural county with little urbanization, and this characteristic has given much freedom to the local government to decide how to develop the area. Figure 6.3 represents a part of the district, which extension goes from the Jialing River to the airport (and beyond to an area that is still partly green, now object of the bio-dynamic agricultural estate).

The presence of dormitory neighborhoods near water is due to the fact that in the past the ponds/lakes used to cover the process of wastewater discharge to address the lack of a sewer system. In the 1980s-90s, in fact, the inclusion of lakes within a compound for aesthetic reasons was rare, and an exclusive of the government *danwei* housing. The residential units within an industrial *danwei* were functional for housing as many employees as possible, thus the green space within the buildings was limited.

After the year 2005 the district has been systematically developed starting from the construction of new automobile industrial sites, which are now famous at the national level. The logistic sector is facilitated by the presence of various highways, the North Railway Station, and the airport. Being the functional core of Liangjiang New Zone, its bureaucratic offices are widespread throughout the territory, promoting also new interactive services for the population based on the internet. These should enforce the idea that Chongqing city is in line with the concept of "smart city". For what concerns the enclave distribution, Figure 3.6 points out how these elitist spaces have modified the watershed, turning water into a commodity valuable for its aesthetic appeal. Most of the gated communities have been built after

2010, when Chongqing started its economic rise in the national circuit, partially renouncing to the central government funding to rely on private investments and PPP methods. Recently in 2018 the Jiuqu River area and the streams near the International Expo Centre have been reclaimed to ameliorate the quality of the urban green: Along the Jiuqu River a "wetland park" has also been established, despite the fact that the industrial area on the hill discharges its waters on it, as it happens for the southern part of the Expo Park lake.
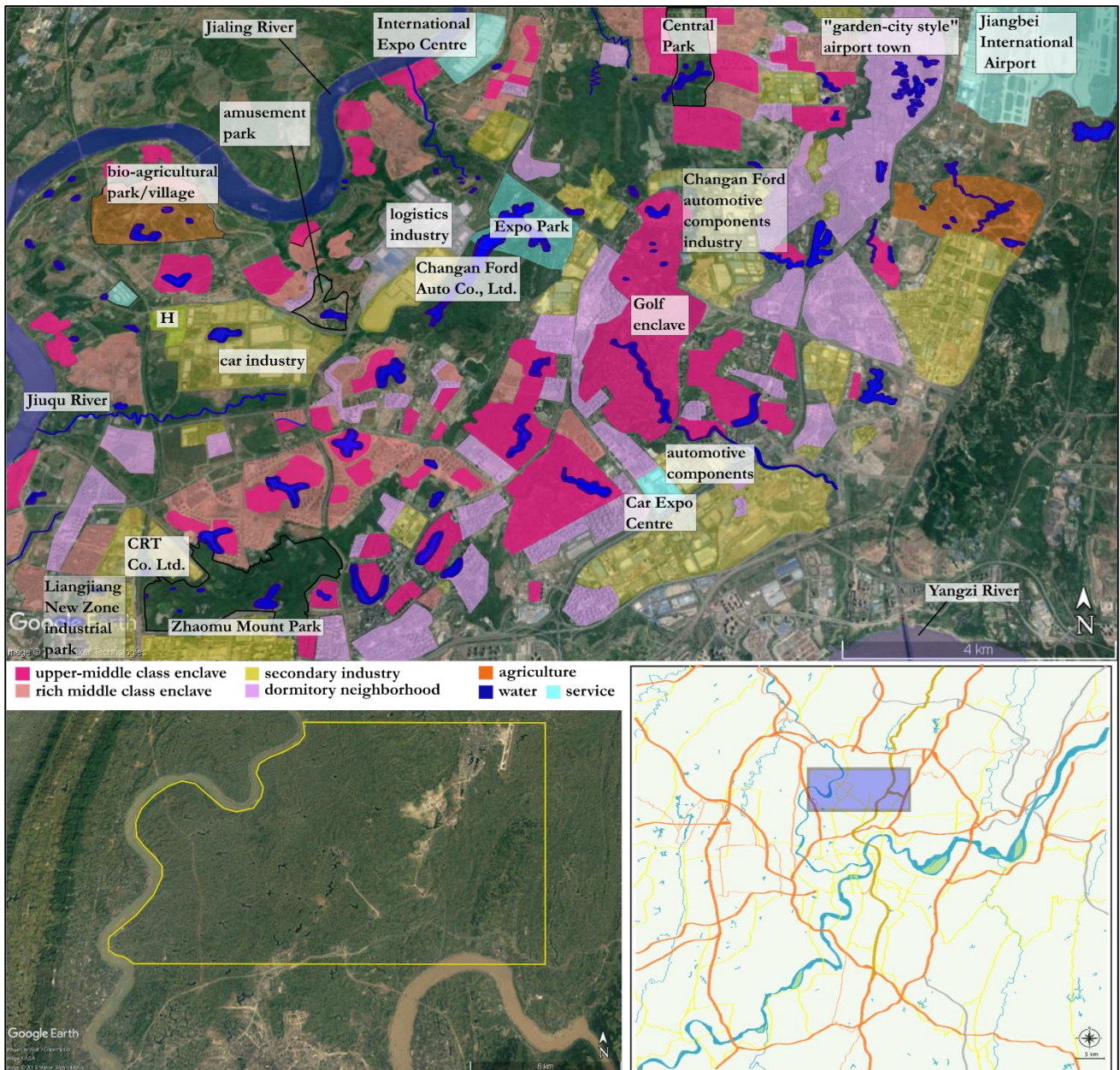
Figure 6.3. Enclaves distribution in Yubei District. Bottom left: Yubei urban development in year 2001 (rough map © Google Earth, modified by Bonato 2019)

6.3.2   Beibei and Beibei New Town

 The spatial structure of Beibei is divisible into two parts crossed by the Lanhai highway: The area on the north is the "old" Beibei as described in Ch. 3, while in the south there is the "new town", also called *chengnan*, i.e. "southern part of the city". Here are located the local government building and a new commercial area, which main attractions are a supermarket with "Western" products, a disco, and a multiplex cinema. As visible in Figure 6.5, the "old" Beibei is also object of urban reclamation: Luneng Celebrity City is the first project for the middle class to be built in a previous agricultural area (around 10,000 yuan/sq.m for a two-room or three-room apartment of 57 sq.m, 63 sq.m, or 80 sq.m).[7]

The "modern-style" gated communities (vs. "*danwei*-style" as in Fig. 6.4), have started being built after 2010, and some of them are now under construction: Zhongtie *Shanyucheng* - Mount Expression Town (no. 144 in Annex II) was built in 2015 with a total of 404 housing units and 50% green area. In December 2018 a villa in the second-hand house market was valued 16,496 yuan/sq.m while in May 2019 the price dropped at 13,235 yuan/sq.m; later it has been on the rise again.[8] Longfor Feicui Mount (no. 146) is now under construction: The price for a two-family villa (350 sq.m) is around 4-6 million yuan, and for a single villa (540 sq.m) it is around 13.8-50 million yuan.[9] In June 2019 Rongchuang *Ziquan fengdan* - Mauve Fountainbleau (no. 142) has put on sale part of the villas on a price included between 2.3-4.2 million yuan.[10] This enclave is particularly interesting for the

Figure 6.4. Ziyun xiaoqu in Beibei New Town, "danwei-style" enclave built in 2010. Price in the second-hand market around 1 million yuan/+100 sq.m (© Fang.com, URL: http://img1.soufunimg.com/agents/2009_07/15/cq/project/1247635726837_000.jpg)

sophisticated multi-layered sense of place that the internal space should produce thanks to the variety of elements that are put together in its environment. As described in the advertising,

> "Rongchuang real estate is considered the initiator of 'China upscale quality work and lifestyle', and Mauve Fountainbleau represents one of its implementations. This project follows the French Fountainbleau Castle *model*,[11] and it is based on three *classic* European estates: Villa Lante al Gianicolo, Farnese Gardens, and Villa d'Este.[12] It also integrates the quintessence of Shanghai Rose Garden into the *millenary sacred mountain*, creating a French style villa neighborhood on Mount Ziyun"[13] (Fangtianxia, 2019; emphasis added).

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[7] Last time retrieved August 8, 2019 at https://beiyuxingchengln.fang.com/.

[8] Last time retrieved August 8, 2019 at https://chongqing.anjuke.com/community/view/908817.

[9] Last time retrieved August 8, 2019 at https://cq.focus.cn/loupan/42176/dongtai/2982911.html.

[10] Retrieved at https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/251133.html?ifx=p3013a0c20r0m241201&from=&ifxc=3013.

[11] The Chinese text uses the term *xuetong*, lit. "blood relationship, lineage", which better externalizes the need for legitimacy, and the implicit idea of quality of the construction.

[12] The three estates are all located in Rome, Italy. The solemn language is here given by the use of *lanben* ("chief source of a literary work"). The term reminds to the traditional writing of the commentaries, and the originality of the poem in respect to the previous version. It means here that despite the fact of being a copy, the architecture is able to revise the significance of the original project, and to add different sense experiences to it, thus showing its quality in the contemporary context.

[13] Shanghai Rose Garden is one of the first enclaves opened in China following the "green city" motto: Built in 1995 in Pudong District, the second-hand market average price is 96.654 yuan/sq.m (retrieved August 12, 2019 at URL: https://shanghai.anjuke.com/sale/rd1/?kw=%E7%8E%AB%E7%91%B0%E5%9B%AD&pi=baidu-cpc-sh-shantou-sp4&kwid=73116040382).

The connection between the mount altitude and the idea of sacredness is a new concept in the vocabulary of the real estate broker advertising: It goes beyond the sphere of material happiness, even if wealth remains a necessary prerequisite for its achievement.
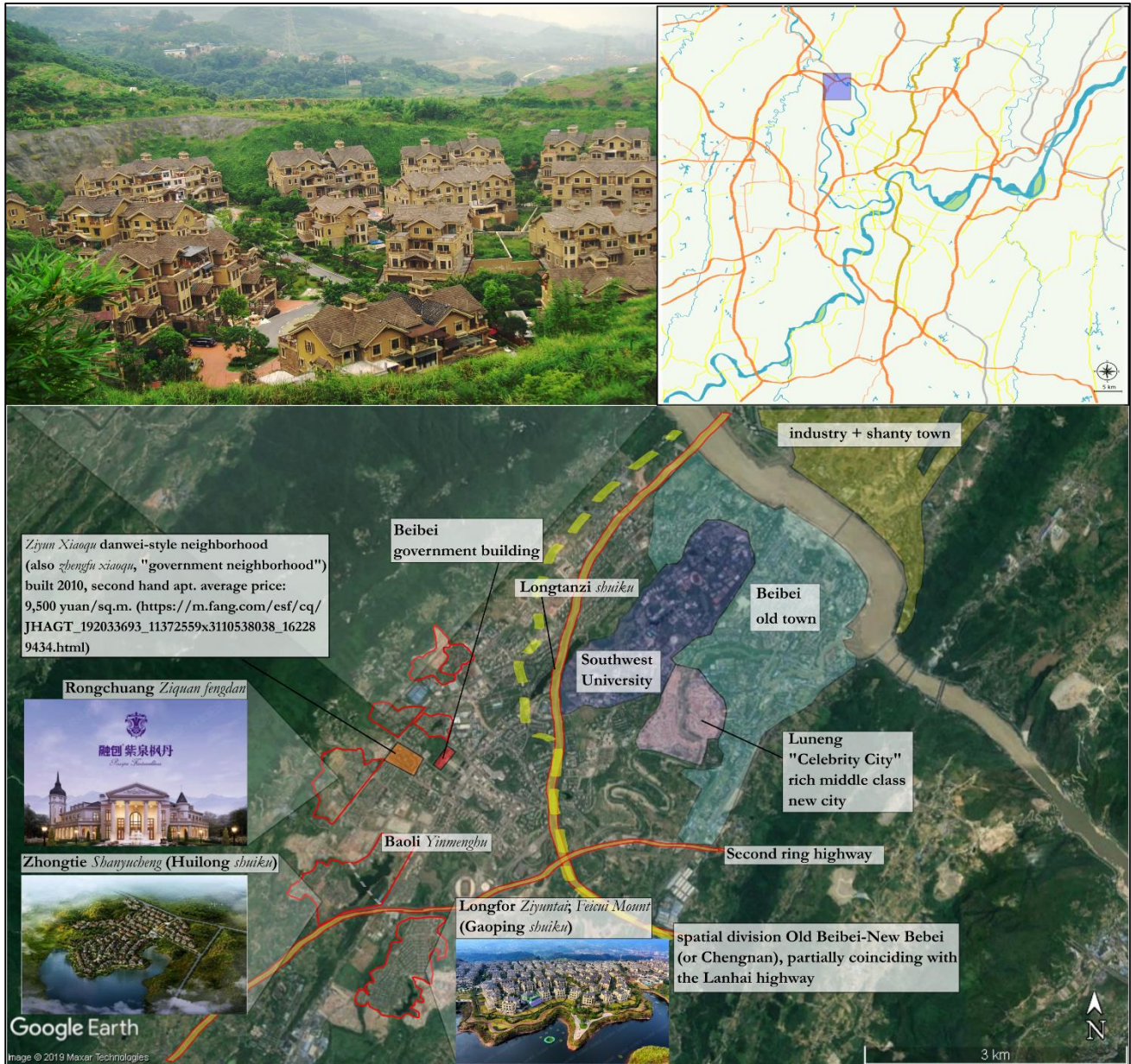
Figure 6.5. Enclaves distribution in Beibei New Town (rough map © Google Earth, modified by Bonato 2019. Picture © Bonato, 2015. Advertising pictures Rongchuang URL: http://imgs.focus.cn/upload/news/15478/a_154776531.jpg; Zhongtie URL: http://imgs.soufun.com/news/2012_06/25/news/1340596048339_000.jpg; Longfor URL: http://img4.focus.cn/upload/cq/38913/b_389124508.jpg. Copyright unknown)

6.3.3 Evergrande City - Hengda Cheng

At the end of the 2000s in conjunction with the first corporate promotional messages, the local media started praising these new spatial structures as a sign of progress and global recognition of the city. It was called the beginning of a new conceptual vision for the contemporary lifestyle, i.e. "the age of outdoor-scene community":

> "It is reported that two communities of Evergrande Real Estate, namely, Evergrande City and Evergrande Palace, created the good sale achievement of 650 million yuan in May [2009]. Evergrande City and Evergrande Palace are both in the *future center* of the city. The value potential of the area is *limitless*. With outdoor-scene gardens and complete auxiliary facilities, the whole large communities are tangible and visible [...] Auxiliary facilities such as a large supermarket, luxurious Chinese restaurants and western-style restaurants, multi-function conference rooms, a luxurious sports centre, and a famous kindergarten are complete. Auxiliary facilities of the *national standard level* such as fine arts room, piano rooms, and pottery art room are available in the luxurious club [...]" (Chongqing Morning Paper, 2009; emphasis added).

One of the first examples of capitalist enclave in Chongqing, the Evergrande (Hengda) real estate, was built in Banan District, Lijiatuo neighborhood.[14] In April 2012 the price was 7,507 yuan/sq.m – nowadays in the second-hand house market the average price is 14,179 yuan/sq.m. The positive revaluation of the real estate in this area increases the speculative practice, demonstrating how the district has become object of the capital circulation for two main reasons: Its landscape (*shanshui*) and water resources (thermal baths), and its previous agricultural vocation (easy transition into building land). By focusing on future grandeur, and praising the potential financial capability of this underdeveloped part of Chongqing, the media uses a language dense of expectations, creating an atmosphere of desire. The educative message conveyed to the readers through these words, is that the surrounding environment should be conceived in monetary terms not only as physical resource but also for the socio-cultural space embedded in the landscape, that can be exploited in even more lucrative ways if channeled into the industry and service sectors. The last point touched by the article concerns the avant-garde private services connected to these buildings that although being already an integral part of the urban class structure of certain coastal cities, were still a novelty here. The retreat of the state from the political management of people's free time was necessary to boost the consumerist practices and start a competitive process in the private sector.

For what concerns the space usage, a clear mixture of activities dominates the landscape nowadays, in particular housing neighborhoods, light industry, and services. As visible in Figure 6.6, the industrialization process started in the early 2000s when a technologic park was established in Banan, along the Yangzi River bank. This area was previously used for agricultural purposes, as well as the nearby hills, where a massive process of land claiming has changed dramatically the environment. In fact, because of the higher altitude and the thermal springs, two positive health factors, this zone has also been object of gentrification.

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[14] China Evergrande Group has won the first place in the "Fortune-Global 500 list" concerning the top-ranked companies in the real estate sector. With a revenue of 46,019 million dollars, it is positioned in 230th place of the total ranking (data retrieved at Fortune Global 500 official website, URL: https://fortune.com/global500/2018/search/?hqcountry=China).
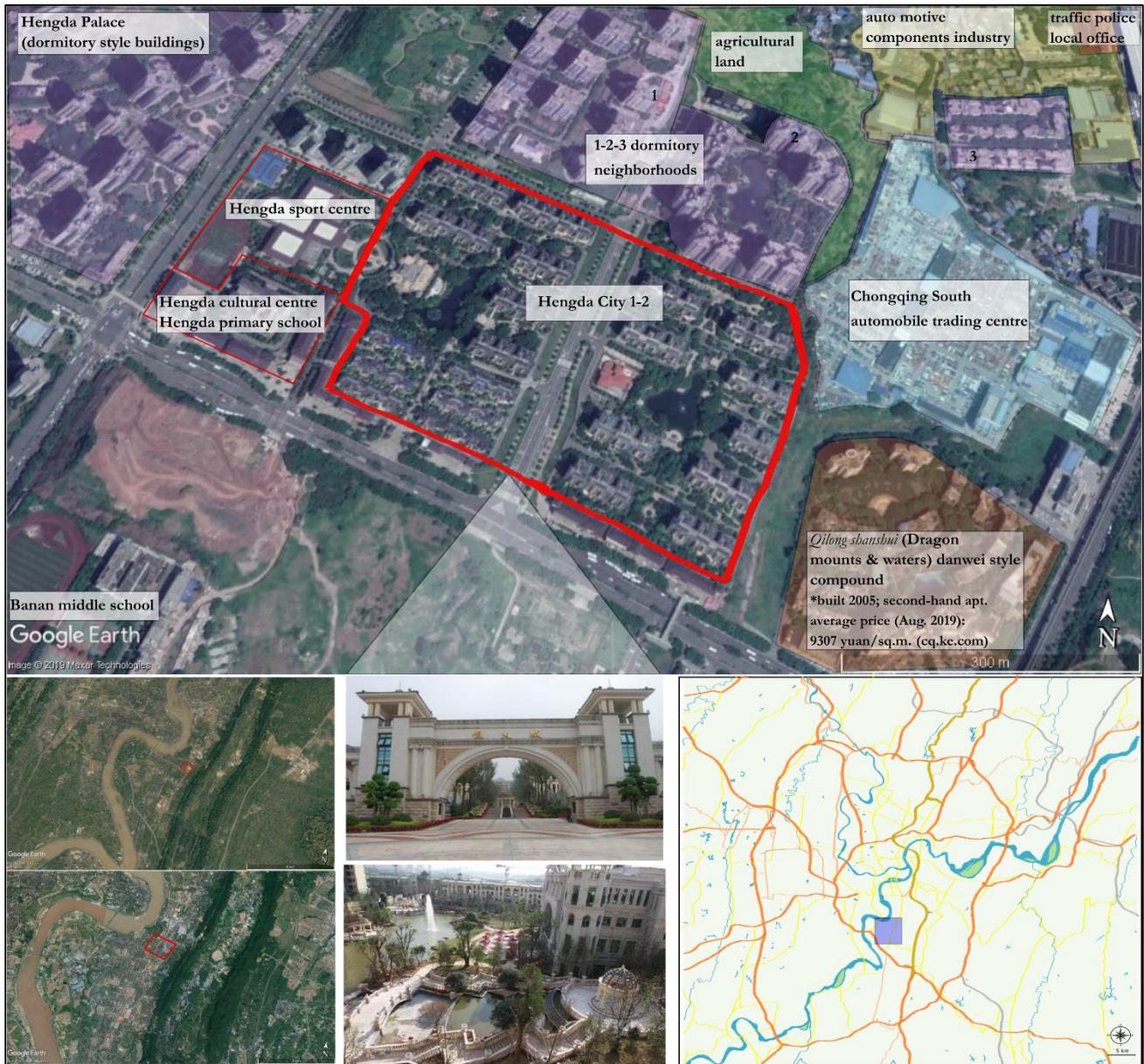
Figure 6.6. Spatial distribution and particular zoning of Evergrande City - Hengda Cheng enclave. Bottom left: industrialization level of Banan District in 2003 and 2018 (rough map © Google Earth, modified by Bonato 2019). Pictures URL: http://a.cdn.zhuolaoshi.cn/user/bnzx/webimg/20091021/20091021182713317.jpg; http://s11.sinaimg.cn/bmiddle/518fd00dg5d821dd6e2ca. Copyright unknown)

6.3.4   Lake Blossom enclave

In Figure 6.7 I consider the example of "Lake Blossom" (*lixiang hu*) in Nanchuan District, also named Tuxi Reservoir (*tuxi shuiku*): Built in 1958 and in 1973 with the addition of a dam, this reservoir alone brings a yearly benefit to agriculture equal to eighty million yuan (Baidu ditu, 2018). It lasts 59 km to Chongqing city centre, and in 2014 it was partly incorporated into the "Zhonghai Lake Blossom – Geneve and Lucerne Districts" gated community, which has been inhabited since 2017 (there will be 1,783 houses in total). The enclave average price is 8,000 yuan/sq.m (Nanchuan average price for a new house is 4,000 yuan/sq.m; retrieved on Aug. 3, 2019 at http://cq.loupan.com/loupan/6162019.html):

> "Zhongguo Haiwai Co., Ltd. representative project pioneers in the development of a comprehensive urban-rural business. It is a first-class work, part of a broader project of 'industrialization of the three cultivations' [*sanyang*]; a plan with a composite nature based on the concept of 'welfare, care for life' [*yangsheng*]. It also operates as new planning model for the city outskirts, leader in the creation of a completely new lifestyle concerning the enjoyment of free time and vacations in the suburbs. Providing all the necessary services (school, hospital, hotel, commercial activities, etc.), it will give the impression to 'leave the dust, but not the city' [*li chen, bu li cheng*]. Lake Blossom entails the advanced western livable ideas [*yiju linian*] while carrying on the traditional eastern living atmosphere [emotions]. Representing a high quality product, every household owns a private front courtyard, a private garden at the back, and a private garage, emphasizing the 'villa with sky and land' lifestyle [*"youtian youdi" de zhuangyuan shenghuo*], and the high class pleasure of the private property reform [*sijiahua*]. The lake 'at hand', the sky, and the garden are all private domain [sic]" (cq.loupan.com, 2018).

The advertising stresses the idea of private property where not only the lake, but also the sky can be turned into a commodity. The consumer is praised for having a good taste, choosing to live in a futuristic environment where all the natural and artificial elements are in harmony under the human control. The western exoticism is accompanied by the tradition of a "Chinese sense of place", two elements that combined together create a mixture of tactile sensations, which is required to suffice the sophisticated aesthetics of the local real estate.

Zhongguo Haiwai Co., Ltd. (English name "China Overseas Holdings Limited – COHL") was founded in June 1979 in Hong Kong. It is a subsidiary of China State Construction Engineering Corporation, which is ranked 21st in the "Fortune Global 500" list of the year 2019 (Zhongguo Jianzhu, CSCEC). According to the company official website, "In the property development and investment area, China Overseas adheres to the mission 'To Envision Delightful Space and Create Infinite Value' as the developer and pioneer in the field of residential development in China".[15] Being covertly owned by the state, the company is indeed a standard-bearer of national politics, and its influence in the spatial distribution of the real estate market in mainland China follows the logics of urban development as established by the central government. In this sense, the party-state has a role of arbitrator among the diverse stakeholders *but* its power often coincides also with that of the "strongest player" in the chessboard: This explains the meaning of "governance" and its collusion with "hegemony" (cf. Ch. 5).

The "industrialization of the three cultivations" refers to a precise political campaign promoted by Xi Jinping during the 13th Plenary Session of the fifth CCPCC, according to which every aspect of the human life – from pregnancy to senility – should be object of reform in order to improve the quality of life of the population:

> "The three cultivations include the study experience, the job's environment, and the private life, so to finally reach a sense of happiness [*anju leye*, lit. "live and work in peace and contentment"]. A set of activities [in Banan District] are established to make people happy. The "industrialization of the three cultivations" refers to all those economic sectors that are specialized from each other but also mutually linked to the "three cultivations", and in this way they are establishing a standardized business platform.[16] Banan District uses its own excellent resources as main industry to seize the economic development of the future district according to the ecologic "industrialization of the three cultivations". Some concrete measures such as the strengthening of the policy support and the guidance of the concept (based on history and culture, and the training

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[15] Retrieved on August 3, 2019. URL: https://www.cohl.com/en/Page/list/94.html.
[16] It refers to the semi-privatization of the health system, the school, and the entertainment structure based on mass tourism.

of qualified personnel), should in many ways propel the vigorous development of the ecologic "industrialization of the three cultivations" (Zuo ge, 2014).

Nanchuan District where Lake Blossom enclave is located, borders Banan District, which administration has fully embraced the new political-economic agenda explained in the quote. The highway connecting the district to Liangjiang New Zone is under construction, a fact that raises the expectations for the future of the area. Finally, it is clearly stated that the process of environmental commodification plays a fundamental role in the sphere of the comprehensive urban-rural planning as experimented in Chongqing. These politics gain significance if contextualized in the practice of recreation of the urban as an incubator of urban-rural industrial services, where the natural environment must be handled as an object along the process of commodification and creation of the fetish. The new space of the gated communities not only enforces the gentrification process but as in the Lake Blossom example, it also fuels the rapid assimilation of new practices that should stimulate the local economy, educate the citizens to a different lifestyle, and promote mass tourism. In this way we lose track of the natural landscape as experienced by the previous ideology, being it manipulated and turned into an acculturated product of the consumption extremism.
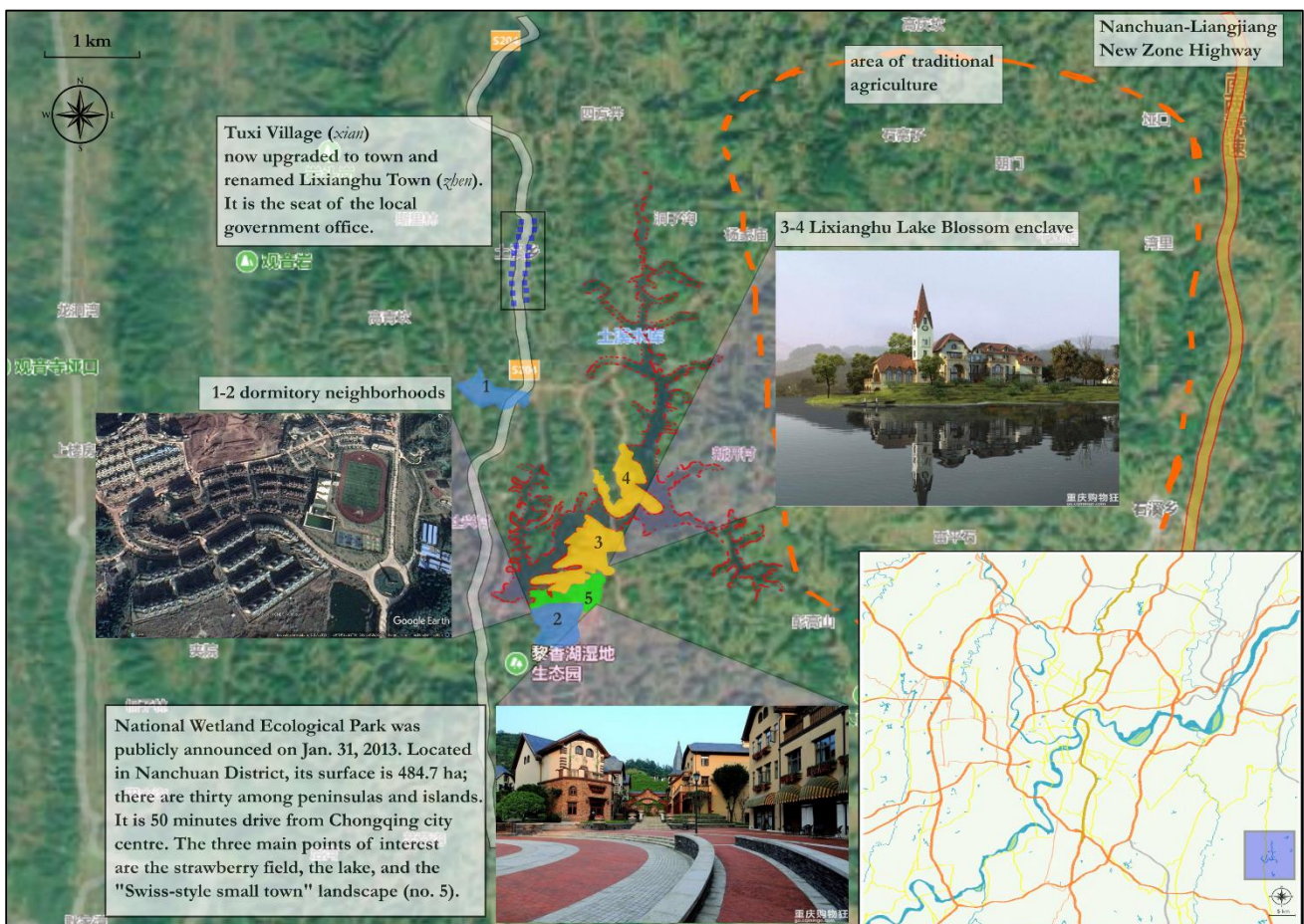
Figure 6.7. Lixiang Lake National Wetland Eco-Park – example of integrated urban-rural planning (rough map © Baidu ditu, modified by Bonato 2019. Pictures from © Google Earth, and © go.cqmmgo.com, URL: https://go.cqmmgo.com/forum-233-thread-47371529648166500-1-1.html)

6.4   Urban resistance to zoning and watershed privatization

There is probably not much to be surprised if in Chongqing at a broad social level there is no question related to the massive privatization of the watershed brought on by the real estate developers to convert the land into a gentrified space of happiness. For what has emerged during a discussion with a Chinese scholar active in the field of urban geography (Nanjing, July 2015) is that:

> "The contradiction does not lie in people's incapacity of seizing the gravity of the problem [...] I would rather say that the majority of the Chinese does not read the phenomenon as a problem at all. At the moment they seem to be more concerned with other kinds of environmental and social issues, like air and water pollution [...]"

Another more technical point is related to the cultural weight of the "wall" based on its traditional uses. Seen the long history of gating within the urban structure, from "pre-modern" China to the *danwei* system and also after 1978, the enclaves that as Wu Fulong explains, "have no equivalent Chinese terminology [...] due to the lack of public debate over 'gated' communities (the closest one is *fengbi xiaoqu*, enclosed district)", are not considered as a problematic phenomenon if analyzed from an architectural point of view (Wu Fulong, 2010: 394). It becomes therefore acceptable, if not desirable, that the local government is proceeding in sanitizing the urban spaces, and that the planning of new urban areas has to comply with the needs dictated by the (global) market. By allowing this process, the upper-middle class fetishist greed for a utopian beauty is partially and momentarily satisfied. Following Baudrillard's political economy of the sign then, the media and advertising convey specific messages of hope and future expectations that help the common citizens to overcome the strong contradictions inherent the ongoing elitist privatization, enabling all the body senses to perceive the atmosphere of change even without actively experiencing it (Baudrillard et al., 1976; Baudrillard, 1981).

Furthermore, the gating process corroborates the idea that Chinese society is becoming strongly classist towards what are elsewhere considered as the most elementary elements of the right, e.g. the principle of water as a common good,[17] or the consideration of natural landscapes as a reality in need for protection and preservation, an invaluable resource in se and for the humanity.

 That said though, in recent years sprouts of urban resistance to extreme phenomena affecting the Chinese environment and the society as a whole, have been visible in Chongqing through street events and the mobilization of people thanks to the transmission of information via internet. Although it is unrealistic to define the Chinese "civil society" as a homogeneous group because of the country socio-geographical differences, there are however some topics that have connected the majority of the people because of their sensitivity and the huge impact on the lifestyle, especially on younger generations (Brook & Frolic, 1997; Cavalieri & Franceschini, 2010; Eyles, 1988; Fulda, 2015: 33-77; Rowe, 1990). For example, the Chongqing Green Volunteer League (thereafter CGVL) since its foundation in 1996 by Tian Dasheng, professor of German language at Chongqing University, has successfully carried on many important activities related to water quality issues, soil pollution, and the wellness of the population (Economy, 2004: 165-167). However, the league established as a friendly group of students, has been later incorporated into the governmental system, and after the national reform of the INGOs (international non-governmental organizations), which has also put a hold to the international founding

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[17] In a socialist country as China declares to be, water and the other natural resources belong to the state, which should operate in a way apt to redistribute the resources equally within society.

of Chinese NGOs (Lubman, 2016), the NGO's internal policies have been aligned with the interests of the local government. In fact, in the CGVL official website the organization is so described:

> "We are the government's friend, partner, officer, and assistant; we are the government's connection to the people. We work to advance dialoguing and collaboration in the field of environmental protection between the government, the public, and enterprise" (China Development Brief, n.d.).

By strengthening the alliance with the government, the basic essence of what should be called "NGO" fades away. Moreover, the fact that all the efforts are counterbalanced by a possible economic benefit, makes the CGVL in line with the principles of any corporation acting in the sphere of a market economy. In matter of fact, while I was trying to fix an appointment for an interview, the contact person on the phone referred repeatedly to CGVL by calling it "*gongsi*", i.e. "firm, company".[18]

The CGVL experience is a story of a civic independent production from below that has been reabsorbed within the state corporatism.[19] Seen the challenging politicized environment, other forms of citizenship are being experimented, using the internet as interface and as a means of news dissemination to increase the social awareness and responsibility towards the environment.

For instance, it is not unusual to catch the circulation online of satirical cartoons exposing the greed for land segmentation among private constructors, and denouncing the local bureaucrats' share of incomes coming from the land market. In Figure 6.8 on the plate where it is written "*tudi* [land]", suited types are frantically grasping pieces of land. On the sleeve of a jacket it is written: "*Longtou fangye* [dragon head's real estate developers]". Traditionally, those coastal cities that first could enjoy the opening-up reforms promoted by Deng Xiaoping, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, are considered to be "the head of the dragon" (e.g. Cheng Li, 2009). By extending the meaning, it indicates all those firms covering a leading role in Chinese land development (cf. Tab. 5.3).

Figure 6.8. Satirical cartoon on land grabbing. Image appeared on Baidu at http://house.china.com.cn/searchdir/HouseSearch2014.aspx?ddlcity=%B1%B1%BE%A9, retrieved on August 4, 2017 (URL: http://house.china.com.cn/home/UserFiles/20151016/08461208.jpg. Copyright owner unavailable)

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[18] Personal communication with a person working for CGVL, July 2015.

[19] Xi Chen's panel "Weeds and Flowers: The 'Shenzhen Model' of social organization management" held at ICAS 11 (Leiden, July 2019), developed the topic of the central government floating approach towards Shenzhen NGOs in recent years, moving from sponsorship to incubation within the state censorship mechanisms. It was pointed out how challenging has become for the still independent local NGOs to maintain a certain degree of autonomy after Xi Jinping's rise to power.

Even if direct criticism against the process of land gentrification and the unequal sharing of community water resources is quite rare, however, it is still possible to read online some voices expressing concern about the recent privatization policies. On *Weixin-Wechat*, in fact, there are some groups with open discussions functional to solicit awareness among the population on questions related to the management of the environmental resources. To avoid the risk of being shut down by the authorities (through the cybersecurity, the Great Firewall, etc.), on these platforms it is possible to find information about foreign aggressive investments, and some critique against the excessive use of concrete that undermines the beauty of Chongqing unique landscape. What we cannot find, instead, is a systematic protest against the approach of the local government to the issue, the methods used to implement policies that clearly damage the natural landscape and treat it as a pure economic asset, the future scenarios where the disparities among social classes risk being accentuated, and the "free" access to nature could turn out to be a luxury intended for a select few. From a collective in *Weixin* (October 6, 2017):[20]

> "Soon after Huarun Co. Ltd. [a joint venture of China Resources HK Ltd.] has been settled last month, there is another "big brand" *taking land* in our Beibei!
> Among the world's 500 strongest companies – Wanke Co. for a total sum of 925 million yuan (4,794,700 yuan/mu) *has taken possession* of Beibei block D standard allocated parcels nos. D2-4/03 and D2-1/04" (emphasis added).

Another article refers to Jiujie Company and how it managed to buy an entire old village – Jingangbei - hidden on the Ziyun Mount, Beibei District, with the purpose of transforming it into "China first thermal bath set in a four-hundred-year-old town" (June 12, 2017).

For what concerns the access to the water resources for leisure activities, in Chongqing there is a network of amateur fishermen who have developed a sort of online "attachment" to each other, which becomes manifest through the frequent messages spread to the community in order to 1) warn about lakes temporally closed by the authorities, 2) suggest the best spots, 3) spread tips whether it is possible or not to fish in a certain water reservoir: "[...] Even if forbidden, nothing prevents you from fishing in secret" (posted on August 4, 2017, and October 9, 2018).

6.4.1 The "house fever": real estate speculative games and local response

Looking at the phenomenon of the gated communities built in Chongqing, the real estate broker websites make once again clear that the value of the property is dictated by the *proximity to the water* as well as the type of housing, e.g. Western style villas, semidetached houses, luxury apartments, etc. (Igoe, 2010; Luttik, 2000). This sort of "geography of consumerism" is definitively in line with the underlying ideology of consumerism, as explained by Yang Zhen and Xu (2008: 39):

> "[...] According to many Western scholars, since 1990s the main Chinese cities have entered the consumerism phase where consumerism is understood as the driving force of urban development in spite of the previous production phase."

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[20] I prefer to maintain the name of the group anonymous. Some of the participants react to these posts writing support comments such as "You're brave [to post it]!".

From the period 2005-2015 the housing price is increased by 3.6 times (Huashang wang, 2015). Chongqing people are quite aware of the fetishist conditions prevailing on the territory within the city's urban boundaries, so much so that for example in 2015, after the second real estate bubble happened in Chongqing in connection with the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock market collapse, the local people started behaving accordingly. Being aware of the exchange value "over-writable" to a house located in a green area (if the environmental conditions do not get worse over time), the act of buying a property is conditioned by the possibility of earning on its possible future sale. At the same time, the volatility of the prices in the financial market make people be skeptical about the purchase, being these manipulations largely derived by power geometries within the real estate global governance system. In fact, following the fall of house prices during the crisis, the local media spread alarmism on the next real estate market stall (Huashang wang, 2014; Fig. 6.9):

Figure 6.9. Satirical cartoon: "Inflection of the housing prices. Are you still buying it?" The article explains the loop caused by the governmental policies on housing price control that forced the real estate vendors to cut the prices (Chongqing wanbao 2011, September 14, page 33. Printed version)

The local people also acknowledge the work done by Huang Qifan, Chongqing former deputy mayor (2001-2009) and then city mayor (2010-2016). According to the local saying, Huang was able to maintain the real estate market prices under a certain control. His retreat from Chongqing politics actually represents for most of the local people, the end of a stable period where rules have been settled: Chongqing people can own a maximum of three houses in the municipality, while strangers only one. Nevertheless, since the beginning of 2017 the prices for both new houses and second-hand houses have soared, in contrast with the price stagnation of 2011-2016: The average price touched 10,083 yuan/sq.m., an increase of 21.85% compared to the previous year. There is also great concern for the monthly swing of the market prices that clearly are detached from the actual costs of a property, and the fact that most of the land converted to development has actually been used to build luxurious apartments: In 2017 the annual increase was +263% (Ye Tan, 2018).

Despite the alarmism, some market researches show a more or less constant increase in real estate purchases in Chongqing, with a greater interest in the categorization of the population into age groups: In Fangtianxia webpage (*fang.com*, a major online housing broker company), there is explained how 62.47% of the *consumers* [sìc] belongs to the generation born in the eighties (Fangtianxia, 2017).

Another interesting topic on the web responds to the question: "Where do rich people live in Chongqing?", thus augmenting the perception that gentrification is a real matter in the city (Chongqing

shequ, 2014). It is common knowledge among the netizens that within the first highway ring, the northern part has been "colonized" by the rich (Yubei District), e.g. around Zhaomu Mount (cf. Tabs. 6.1, 7.1), and more largely in the newly established Liangjiang Zone (cf. par. 4.2.1): These new "housing colonies" aim to rebind its inhabitants with the environment (understood as acculturated landscape), and to promote happiness in the guise of material wealth, physical health, and availability to practices of global consumerism. There are also proposed some niche practices that may attract the younger population, being more connected to and informed about the global trends: Apart from the luxury skyscrapers and the villas, the Zhaomu Mount land development model – born from the cooperation of two major real estate developers, Dongyuan and Longfor – is for example the case for a new typology of comprehensive planning empathetically called "pleasant life – *yue shenghuo*" (WXFC, 2016; cf. also Leju, 2018). Banan District has also become a new focus for massive land development, with the consequent rise of housing prices. This area is famous for its thermal baths; Beibei thermal area is also well exploited for its natural features. Bishan is instead praised for the purity of its landscape, well-preserved as a previous underdeveloped agricultural county. In this case, to be turned into a commodity is not only the nature in itself but also the annexed sensory experience of "purity", thanks to which the numerous lake surroundings can be transformed into "health towns" even if the soil and water have no particular scientifically approved benefit to the person unlike the thermal areas in other districts. Other favorite places for the construction of enclaves are on the mountains or along the river shores as in Shapingba, Jiangbei, and Yubei (cf. Annex II).

A blogger in a *Weixin* forum (CGKL, 2015) after making a list of inaccessible gated communities, concludes the discourse by playing down the problematic situation: "Maybe in the heart of every Chongqing inhabitant, there is a rich neighborhood", thus sarcastically moving the discussion on the ethical point of the human equality by nature.

6.5   Conclusions

 In this chapter I have pointed out how the local watershed has undergone a process of complete manipulation in order to stage a suitable performance of advanced capitalism, visible through the multifunctional attributes given to the landscape. Luxury housing communities, bio agriculture, mass tourism, hydropower production are economic sectors that happen now to be closely connected in virtue of their harmonization into a "common factor", i.e. water. Crossing information from different sources has helped in picturing an exhaustive image of the practices of privatization of the watershed and land gentrification in the main districts of the city but also, recently, on the acculturation of the countryside perpetrated by the elite. The second point has been the analysis of the enclave spatial distribution in relation to the official urban boundaries of Chongqing. Finally, while highlighting the critical aspects of the political censorship implemented locally, I have briefly touched the question of the social awareness on the ongoing process of watershed re-management: The paragraph is intended to suffice the exigence of demonstrating that there are circles of citizens able and willing to interpret reality in a critical way, thus strengthening a substratum of compromise that the local stakeholders involved in Chongqing development should take more into consideration.

7. Hegemonic discourses: reinventing multiple waterscapes as spaces of fiction and science, exclusion, and utopic happiness

This chapter analyzes the production of discourses and visual material based on the ideological handling of the ideas of *water as enemy*, *water as power*, *water as natural value*, and *water as exchange value*. This allows the local government to spread a common sense of legitimacy towards a precise practice of water management that turns water into a commodity in all its significances. The data analyzed are official documents, newspapers, and advertising linked to the local government and the corporate world.

7.1 Water, landscape, and lifestyle in propaganda and advertisement: the two faces of an ideological representation

As seen in chapter two, visual arts have a long history of correspondence with the sphere of myths and beliefs, giving access to an upper level of significance which is connected to the hegemonic ideological thought of a certain historical period. The characteristic to produce *illusions* originated in the Imperial China (Kleughten, 2016), and nowadays has repercussions on the production of the advertising and state propaganda material. Having the image a capacity to evoke atmospheres, it activates the receptive sensors of the human body beyond the sight, thus prompting the observers to be deceived by their own eyes: Although aware of being in front of a work of art, the people still can grasp the value of the *utopic landscape*, feeling and learning from the visual experience.[1]

Since the end of the 2000s there has been an exceptional impulse in the reconstruction of the urban image of Chongqing as "international megacity". To make this process successful, the re-designing of the urban planning was not sufficient. In fact, the local government has invested conspicuously in the communication platform, i.e. a complex structure composed of billboards, videos, newspaper articles, street office red banners with reminder messages, and websites. The idea was to spread information and teach the local people about the change of pathway, in order to start urbanizing the population that was still too much attached to its rural background, and to reassure the emerging upper-middle class of the local government efforts for the fulfillment of the urbanization process. Three are the main objects of this long-lasting campaign: 1) The political-economic reform of "market (pseudo)liberalization" and "state-private governance"; 2) the rapid growth of the upscale real estate request; 3) the diffusion of visual aesthetics useful for the advertising sector and different from the socialist creative techniques.

I have identified four phases of development of a new consciousness regarding the instrumental power of the emerging media techniques.

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[1] The technique of illusion paintings (*tongjinghua*) has been improved by the Jesuit painter Castiglione in the 18th century, introducing in the Chinese painting aesthetics the Italian linear perspective (Kleughten, 2006; Musillo, 2008). Cf. Fung (2005) on the poetic memory juxtaposed to the Chinese garden.

First phase: experimentation of hybrids between political propaganda and advertising

The first example (Fig. 7.1) is a representation of the "Livable Yuzhong" campaign, a district visual propaganda poster that was located near Jiaochangkou, i.e. the starting point of the long pedestrian way that leads to Jiefangbei monument. The area was object of displacement and land renewal in September 2011, the time I took the picture. In Figure 7.1 the expedient of the perspective view is used to "catapult" people into the image and make them live a daydream, giving the perception of being walking in a beautiful garden on the way to the main door of a gorgeous house built in "Western style".[2] This is the only traceable example of an image used for a social campaign, which is actually advertising a real enclave built in Nan'An District by Xiexin Jituan - Sincere Holding Co., a land development company established in 1994 in Chongqing. The particular combination of politics and market that lays the foundation of

Figure 7.1. *Yiju Yuzhong* "livable Yuzhong", "Five Chongqing" **propaganda poster (Bonato, 2011)**

this image, shows the uncertainty related to the opening of this new real estate sector and its impact on local social stability. The image relies on modern technical devices, primarily Photoshop, which use has clearly become immoderate and aggressive in order to catch the attention of the viewer. Through this experience, human responses can be manifold and lead to the production of new significance (Barthes, 1964; Oswald, 2010a, 2010b, and 2016). However, the hegemonic message is that living in an enclave is fair, and creates no contradiction in socialist terms; in fact, it should be rather desirable to aspire at that level of material property since these new housing modules seem to deeply grasp the essence of the traditional cosmic harmony and man-nature balance. The environment is once again understood as a "cultivated nature" embedded in a process of modernization.[3] In this first phase the advertisement of elitist products such as the "gated communities on a lake", contributes to the process of shaping a state image that should consolidate a selected knowledge concerning the environment and the comprehensive use of the natural resources in terms of commodity.

Second phase: heartening the population with timeless idealistic art

A new typology of visual propaganda marked the passage from a first moment of surprise and wander to a sense of powerlessness in the face of continuous displacement and land renewal, and disenchantment about the process of land marketization and the real interests of the local government. The conceptual systematization of the new ecological-economic pattern at the national level has caused in the last eight years a separation between political propaganda and the real estate market in terms of artistic techniques. The political posters as in Figures 7.2 and 7.3, talk to the masses about the past and the future of the country, voluntarily avoiding any mention of the present. The utopian space of a virgin

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[2] In Chongqing this kind of advertising is visible along the sidewalks of the main streets and highways (author's fieldwork, 2011 and 2014-15), but recently it has also become a trend in the image portfolio of many online real estate broker agencies.

[3] Despite the occasional *calls for re-education* intended to move the spotlight from the city to the countryside, it is undeniable that the line of conduct in the "process of further civilization", is firstly studied and implemented in the larger cities, and the urban lifestyle(s) is the mirror of the changes happening within the society. "Ideological civilization" means the amelioration of the everyday practices, the social behavior, and the morals, in order to enhance one's own spirit (*jingshen wenming*).

land and the positive sensorial emotions that it produces, are recollected by the people as a mythical primordial space where the creation of Chinese civilization took place. The future is actually a "going back to the origins" campaign, where the restoration of the pristine natural environment will be possible thanks to the efforts of the party, the only power legitimately entitled to carry on this "internal battle". The use of (pseudo) freehand drawing and bright pastel colors, combined with a stylized "cartoon" subject, reveals a clear intent to capture the attention of the younger generations that lack a serious ideological education. The new orthodox way to cultivate the Chinese civilization is based on a theoretical alignment between man and nature, a pact consolidated through the recently announced environmental policies. The "China Dream" visual strategy focused on material wellness and "smart" industrial development, proposes an imaginary reality *in anticipation of a better future*. Local people are ultimately driven to think that the party's only purpose is to guarantee the welfare and happiness of the Chinese, and to pave the way for the country to really become a globally-ruling power based on the most illuminated values forged by the socialist experience and the cultural legacy of a multi-millennial society. This makes sense in Baudrillard's perspective of the sign value, where the equality in potentiality rebalances the social divisions created by the exchange value: The visualization of an idyllic landscape should therefore reconcile all social strata. This kind of manipulation is based on the sharing of common cultural codes: In order to appreciate the image, the viewer has to grasp some elements of the picture and associate them to some feelings deriving from his/her background of ideas, and then reprocess that sign to be able to understand the significances, and make them being valuable. There must be then a common language among advertisement designers and their targets, so to enable the observer to channel the signs to those particular meanings, which are actually the hidden message of the advertising (Barthes, 1964, 2001). While a *pure landscape picture* in itself is marked by a general aesthetic archetype that all human beings, more or less, appreciate, it might be more difficult for the observer to understand/reprocess the written language placed on advertising. In this case, apart from the linguistic obstacle of the Chinese writing in itself, there are recurring puns, sayings and mottos that only those informed through a common cultural background can understand and associate to other significances not visible on the surface. The use of *idealism*, such as in the drawings in Figures 7.2 and 7.3 where the landscape is stereotyped according to the traditional aesthetics, is a practice already used by the party in the 1950s-60s (cf. *romantic realism* in Landsberger, 1998: 38). In particular, it is linked to periods of high social dissent (e.g. the great famine), when the dissatisfaction for the current living conditions must be controlled through strategies of idealization of the future.

Figure 7.2. Propaganda poster in Chongqing, Yuzhong District: "*Jixiang ruyi Zhongguo meng* – Propitious as you wish, China Dream". Explaining the new trend in cultivating [Chinese] civilization (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 7.3. Propaganda poster in Chongqing, Yuzhong District II: "*Zhongguo meng, chunyi nong* – China Dream, a dense spring air" (Bonato, 2015)

Third phase: the enfranchisement of upscale real estate advertising from the yoke of socialist contradiction

The second decade of the 2000s is characterized by a gradual process of enfranchisement of the upscale real estate advertising, an economic sector that no longer needs to be "hidden" from the majority of the population. Once the socialist contradiction of class struggle loses its value as parameter of political legitimacy, the importance of the land market for the local economy becomes clear: The luxury real estate represents a significant source of income for the local government that should reinvest the money for the general welfare of the municipality.

The advertising posters in Figs. 7.4-7.7 are structured as a metonymy (*jiedai*), i.e. they narrate a story. Describing something while picturing a broader implied meaning, these images focus on establishing familiar models and individual attitudes based on "Western" patterns and the Confucian idea of *filial piety*. They are also designed to concoct the legitimation of the enclaves, and thus of a classist territorial zoning and space segregation, to the extent that

1) The upper-middle class requires spaces for family activities in line with their social status;
2) There is a widespread desire to repay all the sacrifices done by the family in the last fifty years, on which the welfare of the younger generations is based. The houses should be big enough to host not only the nuclear family but also the grandparents, and be luxuriously furnished to properly enjoy the time remained after the hardships experienced (personal information, house agent June 2015, Beibei District).

In three of the four following pictures, water is co-protagonist of the scene by making up the scenario or becoming a tool to manifest filial feelings. The "pre-modern" knowledge on "acculturated water" is therefore preserved by assembling it into a fetishist mechanism of consumerism.

Whilst the performance of living within the boundaries of a gated community is indeed an elitist practice, the advertising of these enclaves is absorbed by Chinese popular culture: Its tangible presence is appreciable in all the main districts of Chongqing city in the form of billboards, street wall posters, signposts, advertising strings on the buses and in the bus shelters, and also along the containment brick walls provisionally built during the construction of the gated community itself. The bombardment of images and words triggers contradictory processes, in which the fight for equality in land and water usage should be postponed to the allegedly superimposed "needs of the City", represented as an almost divine entity. In this sense, the advertisement is a metonymy of a future made of "urban grandeur". The digestion of the displacement from the city centre to remote suburbia, determined by the market mechanisms of land reclamation and gentrification, should be less painful on the basis of the ideological promotion of an elitist desire in the guise of an irrevocable necessity.[4]

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[4] Cf. Chomsky and Herman (2014: 42-58) on the perpetual dissemination of news and official announcements apt to consolidate the ideological line of action designed by the elite. The use of "expert opinions" borrowed from academia is also essential to glaze news with a patina of scientificity, whilst "internalized filters" trigger a process of self-censorship in combination with the official mechanisms of state censorship.

Figure 7.4. Golden Triangle International Tourism Resort at Simian Mount, Jiangjin District (*Chongqing Shangbao* 2016, July 22 page 12. Retrieved July, 28 2016 from https://e.chinacqsb.com/html/2016-07/22/content_536633.htm#)

Figure 7.5. Advertising based on filial piety: "You buy a house, I pay for it – *ni lai mai fang, wo lai mai dan* " (© Qinghe sheji /Q.Hallo Design, n.d. URL: http://picapi.zhituad.com/photo/02/26/41AAB.jpg)

Figure 7.6. Advertising I at the Yulanwan 御蓝湾 [Blue Imperial Bay] enclave in Beibei District: "*si da biaozhun: shengtai, wenhua, guihua, jiaotong* – the four standards: ecology, culture, planning, and communications" (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 7.7. Advertising II at the Yulanwan 御蓝湾 [Blue Imperial Bay] enclave in Beibei District, concerning the importance of sticking to the family to have a life full of happiness. The intrinsic meaning relies on the capacity of the elderly to save money in order to offer a better lifestyle to their spring (Bonato, 2015)

Fourth phase: when visual propaganda is inspired by the real estate advertising

Advertising is not only a matter of technical expertise since its content is rather likely to be politicized in the Chinese arena where neo-liberal practices must be aligned with the state interests. At the same time, social propaganda can be inspired by the advertising techniques that help in grasping the attention of the viewer (e.g. through the use of photoshopped pictures as in Fig. 7.8), especially in the newspapers. New development *model areas* are praised for their ability to bounce back from economic stagnation through the exploitation of their natural resources, in particular through the practices of land reclamation and

171

new market-driven water allocation privileges. The research for a "new Dazhai" on the wave of the expansion of tourism in remote areas previously exploited "only" by the primary and/or secondary sectors, has started a kind of *gold rush* among local officials. Media discourses put attention on "successful" administrations based on technical efficiency and patriotic feelings for the motherland, being tourism strongly linked with the new mass line promoted by the party and based on environmental protection for *a better future in China*.[5]

For instance, Yunyang local government in Wanzhou District was able to modify the local economy thanks to its (now considered) strategic position on the Yangzi River within the Three Gorges Reservoir (Gao Qun & Mao, 2007; Fig. 7.8). Yunyang was an anonymous economically suffering area until its conversion into a national AAAA scenic spot town, the first county town to

Figure 7.8. Yunyang reborn as AAAA scenic spot town (© Chongqing ribao, 2017c: 4)

hold this title in Chongqing and in whole China (Chongqing ribao, 2017c: 4).[6] From being a place visited in half an hour, with no public parks, kids parks, or even decent toilet facilities, the town has been transformed into "a treasurable reservoir, the Chinese Cannes" (*kuqu mingzhu, Zhongguo Jiana*).[7] Yunyang New Town was planned as a model for all those relatively small realities in the eastern counties of Chongqing Municipality where the recent environmental restrictions have posed huge limits to the common industrial path of development, thus forcing the local officials to rely on the natural resources on the basis of their aesthetics (Li Yuechen et al., 2009; Xinhua, 2012; Yuan Xingzhong et al., 2011). According to Luo Guangbin and He (2011), the imposition of norms to protect the environment in rural areas is also a symptom of a diffuse poor ecological attitude in Chongqing countryside, much worse than in urban areas. Before the implementation of a more rigorous ecological line on the whole municipal territory, Chongqing was running at two speeds in terms of environmental protection, and the urban-rural gap could have undermined the foundations of a harmonious and balanced development of the territory. As a matter of facts, Chongqing government has clearly moved forward in the process of urban eco-development since 2009, promoting directives loaded with patriotism and internationalism, and talking of harmony and elegance (*hexie, gaoya*) as the proper attributes for a respectful urban landscape (Hu Xiaoxia, 2009: 13-14; Huang Guangyu & Lin, 2005: 5).

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[5] Cf. Strang (2009: 265-269) on the human desire to transcend time and mortality. Environmentalism might then be seen as a human need to exercise power over time and space, since leaving an imprint for future generations could mean a victory over death in a secularized world where discourses on resurrection find a limited application.

[6] On the development of mass tourism in China, and the reasons behind the establishment of new scenic spots, cf. Nyíri (2006). In particular, Nyíri affirms that, although "both Chinese law and UNESCO prohibit tourism in the so-called core and buffer zones of nature reserves, [...] an estimated 80% of these reserves have developed tourism in 1990s [...] due to the fact that these reserves receive very little funding from their supervisory agencies." Therefore, "creating 'world-class' scenic spots is more in line with officials' concern with development than is spending money on nature conservation, whose results are intangible in the short term: a 1997 survey found that 46% of the reserves never monitored the environment" (Nyíri, 2006: 30). Cf. also Hollinshead and Chun (2012).

[7] For what concerns the widespread state of degradation of public toilets in China, Xi Jinping has launched a new campaign called "toilet revolution", which should serve the purpose of upgrading the quality of public toilets in the countryside also in view of an increase in the number of foreign tourists (Xinhua, 2017d).

7.2 Enclaves as metaphors and allegories. Reading signs to reconstruct the reforming scope of this new housing strategy

Metaphors derive from a symbolic transposition of images. In China this *movement* is fueled by analogies, i.e. the performance of arbitrary linkages between things with similar characteristics. In other words, analogies happen when two physical images, situations or objects are juxtaposed by virtue of their resemblance or equality. In comparison to "Western" metaphors that rest on the idea of *a common essence*, i.e. immutable features intrinsic to both the objects (Van Straten, 2009), Chinese metaphors are the result of a common transformation between the two terms of comparison, i.e. an *analogic process* (*biyu*). Describing a quality of change, this transformation – an *action* in itself – becomes object of the human mental vision, arousing emotions. Dealing with human direct observation (even if the idea can be reproduced later as a mental image), metaphors work on the emotional level, and therefore can be universally understood (Chun Jiang & Yu, 2008; Slingerland, 2011). On the contrary, allegories are supported by conventions and ideas shared within a society, and are subjected to the restrictions posed by a culture. They are manifested when something abstract is expressed through a concrete image.
Considering the Chinese gated communities in visual terms, they are understood by the majority of the population as an *allegory of happiness and "living-in-a-dream" lifestyle*. Their advertisements are work of art of this allegory, and are designed according to two different patterns:

1) As a medium based both on *metaphors and visual allegories* (e.g. the "classic" landscape painting advertising as in Figs. 7.14-7.15);
2) As *symbolic representations* where the symbols are the protagonists rather than the whole picture (e.g. in Fig. 7.4 where the subjects are a family prototype and secondly the boats). Symbols are conveyed as "general attributes" or qualities, e.g. the clothing can refer to a universal dress code aligned with the global consumption practices or give notice of a particular social function (Van Straten, 2009: 65-77).

After the rehabilitation of commercial advertising in 1980s, the focus has been on looking for *Chinese elements* to make the advertisement be closer to the local sensitivity, while trying to renovate the obsolete advertising techniques (Puppin, 2014; Tse, Belk & Zhou, 1989; Xin Zhao & Belk, 2008). The result has been the re-staging of processes of "personification" that let the values and characteristics expressed by the protagonists to be transferred to the observers, thus inflating the viewer's mind with an "acculturated identity" that can be learned through the emulation of *positive models* (Gregory, 1998: 22-28).[8]
Considering that the construction of gated communities is officially approved by the central government, the enclaves as a cultural product are also an *allegory of a "healthy" way to experience and enjoy the richness in China*, i.e. under the party supervision, hence accepting the implicit social and practical boundaries of exclusion (*shehui geli*). The gathering of the upper-middle class within the gated communities implements an official mechanism of control of this heterogeneous group, a process that is partially of self-gratification (hedonism) and self-censorship ("fetishism in practice"), since many high-ranking officials use to enjoy these spaces (Oswald, 2010b). The paradox lies in the fact that the research for a diverse intimacy, particularly understood as a departure from the role imposed by society, i.e. leaving the mask

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[8] In China the use of *moral models* is traceable back to the dialogues of the ancient philosophers. In the reality of fact, those local officials and governors who ruled with benevolence and had spirit of loyalty were consecrated to immortality through the building of temples dedicated to them. Their canonization as masters and "saints" brought to devotion and emulation in Confucian terms. Cf. also Mao Zedong as cited in Landsberger (1998: 27-28), on how to develop a convincing propaganda.

behind to return back to the primordial times made of "a genuine happiness in Nature", has ended up producing a narrative of compromise where the party is once again the winner. In fact, the gated communities cannot be considered as depoliticized places, since the exclusive space there produced does not constitute a protective shield from the political system and its supremacist ideology.[9] Finally, people living in these enclaves mutually shape the understanding of being part of a community, enhancing their sense of belonging and satisfying the need for a new identity where traditional culture, patriotism/nationalism, socialist doctrine, and global practices are mixed together to forge the upper-middle class as new social entity.

In Chongqing many of these upscale neighborhoods are also built in areas previously designated as natural parks and/or water reservoirs. This fact is related to a certain fear spread within the upper-middle class that feels itself threatened by the living conditions in this megalopolis, in particular by the environmental pollution, and eventually develop the idea of being *an endangered species* (cf. Figs. 7.13-7.16).[10] Therefore, the gated communities should offer protection to the elite, which members perceive themselves as bearer of the noblest Chinese values, and experts of the "universal good manners".[11]

Analyzing the data in Annex II, there results that:

- Until some years ago the names of the enclaves used to evoke exotic atmospheres (e.g. "Flamenco, Palm Springs, Yorkshire"), and rich and powerful foreign places ("Washington, Beverly Hills"). The gated communities planned since 2016-17 show instead the tendency to appeal to the Chinese tradition more often than in the past, e.g. the constant use of the adjective "imperial", not to mention the character for "villa" given by the use of words such as "*yuan* – official place", "*(wang)fu* – high official mansion", "*chen* – great mansion but also imperial palace", "*zhuangyuan* – in "feudal" times indicating the land of a feud, nowadays a mansion with a private garden", and "*yuan* – imperial enclosed garden";

- A great role is covered by the natural elements to highlight the positive *fengshui* of the city with its harmonious balance of waters and mounts (*shanshui*): "*hu* – lake", "*he* – river", "*xi* – stream", "*wan* – bay", "*gu* – valley" (cf. Figs. 7.9-7.11). However, Chongqing enclaves are not original, since the most flourishing real estate companies like Evergrande, Longfor, Vanke, and Rongchuang, use "pre-packaged" architectonic models in various cities throughout China, so that the same enclave (similar architectural features, different prices according to the place) appears to exist in multiple versions, thus enforcing the consciousness of these housing solutions as "non-places" (cf. Augé, 2005);

- There is made a great use of adjectives that call to mind beauty, grace, and virtue (e.g. "*feigui, bi, lang* – jade"), the social status ("*shanding, feng, yun, tian* – being on the top of the mount, on the clouds, in paradise"), and virility (e.g. dominion over nature in "*lan* – to embrace, but also to monopolize").

As specified online, "the semi-detached villa is mainly oriented to the elite class, since this house typology represents at best the customer's dream for a private living space – *die shu zhuyao mianxiang*

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[9] Cf. Ch. 2 for the discourse about freedom understood as an act of resistance from within, namely freedom should derive from a political gesture rather than being an escape from society. Cf. also the *Arcadia* narrative. The idea of "private space" as the result of a private property statement, is controversial since the land use rights normally do not exceed the threshold of seventy years as per law, after that it is still not clear whether and how the land will return to the state.

[10] On the topic cf. Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), Mitchell (2005), Pow Choon-Piew (2012), and Walks (2006).

[11] This behavior seems more a manifestation of fear for survival rather than greed for land possession versus e.g. the Israeli enclaves built in Palestinian territories (e.g. Hanafi, 2013; Petti, 2007). However, it also leads to aggressive forms of manipulation of the natural environment, land gentrification, and social segregation, and impossibility to perform consolidated community activities where the land is subjected to privatization (cf. Davis, 1990: 221-263; Kohn, 2004: 89-129).

shehui 'zhongjian' jieceng, shi goufangzhe mengxiang zhong de sishu lingdi" (Baidu baike, 2017; cf. Marcus, 1997: 206). This description strengthens the conviction of a classist vision of Chinese society, where only the rich seem to be entitled to desire a private living space. The rest of society must be content to take pleasure in observing the enclave advertisement billboards.

Figure 7.9. Mianhu [Mian Lake] Shanshui enclave entrance, Beibei District (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 7.10. Shanyucheng enclave advertising: "real country villa, real *shanshui*" (Bonato, 2015)

Figure 7.11. Baoli Yinmenghu [Dream Lake] enclave "... invites You to go fishing to the Maldives". Billboard at a bus stop in Beibei Old Town near the university and the supermarket (Bonato, 2014)

In Figures 7.9, 7.10 the main subject is the written language that stresses the ideas of man-nature harmony (*shanshui*), and *authenticity* of the new neighborhood and its environment. The advertisement billboard in Figure 7.11 is more complex: It informs about the existence of the Yinmenghu enclave on Ziyun Mount, where the "lake-mount spirit" is cherished together with the intimacy of the private property, and it creates a micro-space within the bus stop area where an atmosphere of well-being can be perceived by the people. Finally, it also helps in shaping a particular mental association, i.e. "Baoli real Estate Co., Ltd. – upper-middle class fishing community". In fact, the advertising is actually inviting the new buyers to take part in an international fishing contest at Yinmeng Lake (the first prize was a voucher for a trip to the Maldives). For this occasion, Baoli company has initiated a collaboration with Chongqing angling associations and institutions (Chongqing wanbao, 2014).

For what concerns the literary language used in the enclave names and descriptions, its appreciation has returned to be a symbol of the high level of artistic perfection achieved in the past by Chinese civilization, and its coming back in vogue in the spoken language among the educated people is a symptom of the ever stronger disjunction of ideals between the elitist upper-middle class and the masses. A sophisticated research for a glorious past is thus necessary to the process of identity building and the shaping of a strong sense of belonging within a dismembered society. As for the language, Chinese contemporary aesthetics cannot get rid of centuries of tradition insofar that it still informs the practices of making art, and fosters a peculiar resonance of visual pleasure. In particular, the *imaginative realism* that is traceable back to the Northern Song landscape painting (960-1126 CE), is currently the ingredient that makes contemporary advertising stylistically successful: It allows the depiction of "velvet images" resembling the reality in a much more abstract way than what Western aesthetics do, thus requesting the observers to use their creativity. The incompleteness of meaning, which is an intrinsic characteristic of

Chinese visual arts (Hearn, 2002; Li Zehou, 2004: 208-232),[12] happens to be instrumental to the contemporary construction of ideological representations.

I have selected three case studies to see in detail the practical results of what has been said so far.

7.2.1 Case one: The "spring of filial piety" (*xiaomuquan*) on Zhaomu Mount, Yubei District

The name of this area entails a good omen, referring to a myth that talks about a python that living in a cave on the mountain, used to kill all the people passing by the hole. Once a young guy returning back home to visit his mother, was so impatient that he did not want to make a detour. After the guy was killed by the python, spring water started flowing through the snake cavity, sallow and luxuriant, and mingled with a light taste of raw meat. That was the guy's body fluids that had killed the python.[13]

Zhaomu Mount (AAA scenic spot) has been reassembled into a Natural Park opened to the public in 2014 after some gardening works. It has a surface of 4,300 mu ($\simeq$2.87 sq.km) and an estimated value of 1.06 billion yuan (Yang Hanxiao, 2014; Baidu baike, 2016e, 2017b), while the total surface amounts to 5,500 mu ($\simeq$3.67 sq.km). There is no compliance in the amount of green surface counted as park, according to the two maps published by Baidu Ditu and Gaode Ditu (Fig. 7.12). The eastern side of the mountain has been closed to the public and converted into three gated communities: The bigger one managed by Jinke Co., surrounds part of the Tianhu Lake, while the others are gathered around smaller natural ponds. The area has been reclaimed since the early 2000s when the first enclave, Jinke Tianhu Meizhen (Jinke "Beautiful Town on Heaven Lake"), has been opened (2005). As visible in Figure 7.13, the area north of the park has also been gentrified.

The coincidence of the term "*fengshui*" with "ecology" is a Western cultural construct that has had architectural repercussions in Greater China and other Asian countries (Bruun, 1995: 173 ff., 2003: 231 ff.; Chen Bixia, 2008). However, the development of upscale enclaves in areas traditionally known for their "good *fengshui*", and the appropriation of the term and part of its significance by the official propaganda and advertising, paves the way to an extravagant scenario where *fengshui*, banned by socialism because of its notion of private interest (Bruun, 2003: 227), is extrapolated from the original context and used to signify the process of achieving personal happiness through state ideology. This maneuver subtends the standardization of an unofficial practice (or at least of its "trademark"), to erase the memory of its previous anti-system characteristics (Anagnost, 1987; Bruun, 1996: 65).

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[12] Cf. also Ashworth and Graham (2005: 31-45), Cosgrove (1998), Cosgrove and Daniels (1988: 1-10), De Lue and Elkins (2008), Golas (2015: 37-43, 91-92, 130-137), Hall (1997), Rose (2016), and Spirn (1998: 216-239). For what concerns the construction of an "acculturated garden" as literary topos in Tang-Song poetry, cf. Yang Xiaoshan (2003). Of particular interest is the idea of the literati as elitist class that alone can purely understand and enjoy nature (*ibid*.: 21-36), and the practice of horticulture as a means to reach a balance between the "ideal gardenscape and the outside world" (*ibid*.: 56-72).

[13] In reality the spring water entails sulfur, and near there a natural swimming pool has been opened. The hearsay informs that this water cures dermatitis and people come by continuously to bath in it (Chongqing wanbao, 2012).
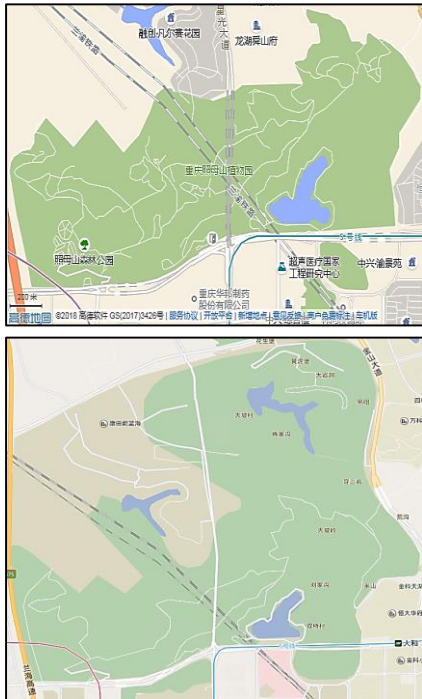
Figure 7.12. Gaode ditu map (on the top) and Baidu ditu map (bottom) showing different borders of Zhaomu Mount Forest Park and Botanical Garden (© Gaode Ditu, 2018 retrieved at www.gaode.com; © Baidu Baike, 2018)

Figure 7.13. Zhaomu Mount deforestation level in 2007 (on the top) and 2017 (bottom). Jinke Tianhu Meizhen enclave, Hengda Huafu enclave ["Washington DC" owned by Evergreen Real Estate Group], and Xiexin Xing Duhui enclave ["Star Metropolis" owned by Sincere Holding Co.] are located on the eastern side of the mount (© Google Earth, 2018)

7.2.2   Case two: "Qifeng Residences on the Clouds" and "Qifeng Scented Mount - Sea of Trees", along a stream on Gele Mount Forest Park, Shapingba District[14]

Thanks to the vast amount of pristine land, Chongqing government is experimenting various aesthetic patterns of landscape remodeling, as in the case of Gele Mount Forest Park where the "slow lifestyle" has been successfully employed to satisfy both the upper-middle class and the masses.

The Qifeng enclaves (no. 121 in Annex II), built in more stages since 2011 by Chonging Qifeng Developing Company, is also known as *Guoji Mancheng*, i.e. "international slow town", borrowing the name from the CittaSlow initiative.[15] The housing design should emanate a fragrance of ancient European flavor, while the choice of the name is linked to the idea of stimulating a virtual return to the countryside moral values: Thrift, simplicity, and respect for nature (cf. Griffiths et al., 2010). The advertising motto "Qifeng Residences on the Clouds lead to the 'slow living' wave" (*Qifeng Yundi yinling*

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[14] Chinese names *Qifeng Yundi*, *Qifeng Xiangshan Linhai*.

[15] Slow Food has been active in China since 2015, precisely in Chengdu and Chongqing (Pieranni, 2017; Yan Alice, 2017), but CittaSlow, an international initiative established in 1999 by the same movement, has no representative in Chongqing. Thus, the slow touristic spot at Zhongliang town, "the third of its kind in the entire China" (HLWZH, 2015b) and "the first one in Chongqing", is actually the result of a misleading appropriation of the brand (cf. *Zhongliang zhen: fazhan shengtai you – dazao Chongqing shi shouzuo "man cheng"* in SHXZ, 2015). In fact, Chongqing is not listed among the seven Chinese places owning the CittaSlow label (Baidu Baike, 2017d; CittaSlow, 2016). The "international slow town" enclave and the touristic "slow town" are both located on the western side of Gele Mount: The enclave is on the hill, while the town is located on the plateau between the two mount ridges of Gele Mount and Wuyun Mount.

man shenghuo fengchao), conveys a message of superiority since 1) the term *di* ("residence") is associated to the traditional mansion of a high-ranking official; 2) the villas are located on the top of the mount to strategically control the territory; 3) the place is specially designed for "urban citizens" (*wei shimin jianshe yi ge "man shenghuo" de taoyuan shijie*), stressing the urban-rural contradiction. The advertising weaves on a dreamy atmosphere, e.g. clouds resembling the ether, and the idyll given by the word "*taoyuan*" (lit. "Peach Blossom Valley"), comparable to the Greek "Elysian fields" (Leju, 2016; Qifengyundi, 2014).

Zhongliang eco-touristic "slow town" is instead a useful example of implementation of a systemic niche agriculture, i.e. non-native fruit trees and plants such as blueberries, correlated with mass tourism (Fig. 7.17). Leisure activities such as bio-fishing should enhance the spirit of participation in family activities out of the urban context (*he jiaren yiqi qinjin daziran*), reassessing the fundamental role of the kinship relations in the economy of the country. The surrounding landscape, including the Wenjing Lake, has been incorporated into the Eternal Peace Eco-Park (*yongning shengtai yuan*; cf. SHXZ, 2015).

In general terms, the concept of "slow lifestyle" is so described: "'Slow city' does not mean to bring the time back to the past, making people live their life 'in a museum'; on the contrary, 'slow cities' synthetize together those elements of the contemporary and traditional life that are qualitatively beneficial to the lifestyle" (Baidu Baike, 2017d). Ironically, the reproduction of alien architectonic forms, practices, and symbols on a territory in order to stimulate the economy, is in line with the dictates of this phase of advanced capitalism (D'Eramo, 2017: 78-79, 87). Fake villages become the scenography where to stage the show of an alleged local-traditional urbanity. In the case of Gele Mount Forest Park, this ideological narrative is valid for both the enclave and the touristic site.

For what concerns the advertising visual symbolism, Figure 7.14 depicts a fairy tale scene with a mountain village kissed by the first lights of dawn. The contre-jour technical effect is used to accentuate the chromatic contrasts and the natural shapes of the hills in the foreground, in antithesis with the rarefied air of the background. The "atmospheric perspective" that increases the spatial depth, is a legacy of the Chinese traditional landscape painting. As a result of the higher grade of sophistication requested by the customers nowadays, the more recent advertising in Figure 7.15 presents a more elaborated graphics; however, it is also drawn upon the landscape painting, using a vanishing atmosphere and a fake stamp on the top-left side. The three-dimensional elevation given by the bird's eye perspective, allows a greater sensory experience to the observer. In Figure 7.16 the juxtaposition of fake ancient architectonic structures should evoke a pleasant sense of slowness through the shift of meaning from a demonized idea of the past as feudal tradition to an understanding of the past as the key to the future. The façade of exposed stones, rather than suggesting a dangerous immobility, should be perceived as an expression of immortality (cf. Strang, 2009: 265 ff.).

Figure 7.14. Qifeng Yun Di advertising (URL: http://s2.sinaimg.cn/large/002cI9Ekgy6N3PgaUmd d1; copyright not available)

Figure 7.15. Qifeng Xiangshan Linhai enclave (© Leju, URL: http://src.leju.com/imp/imp/deal/eb/4c/e/eed48e9908 8d7f9922dc8b4c88f_p7_mk7_s655X368_wm47_pt1.jpg)
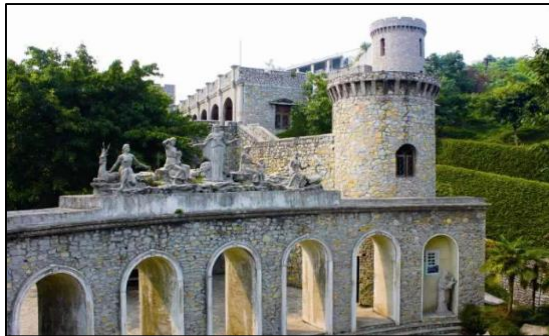
Figure 7.16. Particular of Qifeng Xiangshan Linhai enclave, second phase (© Leju, URL: http://src.leju.com/imp/imp/deal/12/00/5/883331fa 5318851718f2187ccd3_p24_mk24_sX0.png)

Figure 7.17. Bird's-eye view of the Slow Food Village at Zhongliang Town (© Chongqing Xinhua, URL: http://www.cq.xinhuanet.com/2016-03/10/1118284523_14575695456491n.jpg)

7.2.3   Case three: Sunac Rongchuang "Chongqing Wanda City", also named "Chongqing Wanda cultural travel city", along the Longfeng Stream, Shapingba District[16]

These "Western style" high-end residences located in an area of 6,700 mu (≃4.46 sq.km), are part of a bigger land development project that includes a water amusement park, a cinema, kindergartens, bars and restaurants, the modernization of the waterfront to facilitate recreational activities, housing blocks-condos based on the "garden city" model, and a detached area for the enclave. This synthesis of services for the masses and for a narrow niche of consumers, is aimed at obtaining a maximum profit from the exploitation of natural resources. Wanda City is situated north to Chongqing microelectronic park (*weidianyuan*, with Foxconn as main production and research facilities), and near the new university campus. The appellative "cultural tourism" has a controversial significance, addressing the peculiar relationship that Chongqing people have with water, a kind of enjoyment that seems to be universally reproducible through the experience of the amusement park. However, it could also significate that Wanda City is the place where a new Chinese culture is performed: A balance of green and waters, affordable housings and enclaves, services and joie de vivre. A space where the fusion of traditions and modernization gives origin to something new, a well-organized integrated project (*zonghe xiangmu*; Souhu, 2018). In fact, the advertising on a billboard says: "New coordinates for the three thousand-year-old Ba-

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[16] Chinese names *Chongqing Wanda cheng*, *Chongqing Wanda wenhua lüyou cheng/wenyoucheng*.

Yu culture, a destination for global tourism".[17] The idea of recreating a tangible geometry of cultural spaces is underlined by the use of the word "coordinates" (*zuobiao*). The appellative given to the residential buildings echoes also the sound of remote times, i.e. the "houses of Yu territory" (*Yu guotu fang*): Yu is the name of Chongqing first reign, and also the short name of the city (*ibid.*).

In Figure 7.18 the two satellite images highlight how the process of land renewal has modified the territory previously used for agricultural terracing, integrating the watercourses in the new urban landscape.[18] In Figure 7.19 the image on the top is a project rendering of the enclave "cultural centre", which should be built following the "traditional official aesthetics", with no reference to the local "pre-modern" architecture (cf. Fig. 5.3). The detachment from the peculiarities of Chongqing local history is clear: In fact, this image shows a pagoda surrounded by *siheyuan*, i.e. courtyard houses where officials and rich merchants or literati used to live. Thus, the enclave stages a stereotyped version of "Chinese classic architecture" in order to link the living experience to the idea of wealth, political power, and spiritual civilization. The natural element is strongly emphasized thanks to the waterfalls, which are the artificial product of a hydroelectric plant. The water flows and the mounts on the background subtend the positive *fengshui* of the place. The foggy atmosphere of the advertising, combined with the bird's eye perspective, are reminiscences of the traditional paintings, in line with the aesthetic request of the moment. The bottom advertising should provoke positive feelings through the use of bright and contrasting colors, even if the living space seems to be modeled on a theme park.
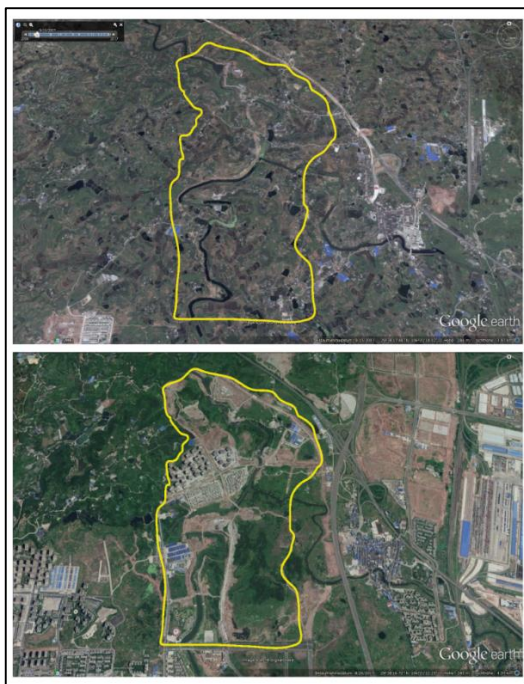
Figure 7.18. Wanda City land reclamation in 2018 and before construction works in 2007 (on the top); © Google Earth, 2018 retrieved on "fair use" principle; modified by the author)

Figure 7.19. Wanda City advertising (© Souhu, URL: https://t.focusimg.cn/sh520x390sh/xf/zxc/dd32608bd108366a85dc39 1bbfb6dbcb.jpg; URL: https://t.focus-img.cn/sh900x675sh/xf/zxc/6c247a35126b3a362cdd038f2ab4a624.jpg)

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[17] Retrieved at Gaode.com, URL: https://gaode.com/detail/B0FFH45NB4?citycode=500000.

[18] The urbanization rate in 2016 has reached 62.6%, growing steadily since 1997 when the municipality was established and the rate was 31%. In 1997 the amount of rural population was 20.2 million people; in 2009 it was 13.8 million people, gradually decreasing to the current 11.3 million. In 1997 the urban population was 8.9 million, grown to 19 million in 2016. Based on these data, it is clear that the process of urban renewal has subtracted land to the countryside (CTJ 2017, Ch. 3: 3).

7.3   Defending water and defending from water: the ethics of building water reservoirs

The discussion on the modernization and enlargement of Chongqing water reservoirs arose in the early 2000s, and since then it has been carried on thanks to a narrative of legitimation based on the assumption that "water is the enemy, local people are the victims." This "battle" has become clear through the propaganda statements spread by the media (Fig. 7.20):

> "Chongqing Water Conservancy Investment Group Co. LTD on February 9, 2012 released that a total of a 34.2 billion-yuan investment will be put into 133 water source projects, water supply and sewage infrastructure and power generation projects in counties and districts of Chongqing, during the "12th Five-year Plan", to solve drinking and domestic water difficulties for local residents [...] In addition, the Group also plans to accomplish a 4.2 billion-yuan investment in water conservancy and start 13 medium-sized hydraulic projects in Nanchuan's Jinfo Mountains and Rongchang's Huangjiaotan" (Deng Jun, 2012a).

To dive deeper inside the entanglements of this ideological discourse, the first point to highlight is the actual number of floods happened recently in Chongqing area, which are clearly connected not only with the *meteorological conditions* typical of a sub-tropical place, but also with the prominent *soil erosion* that has characterized the Sichuan plateau since the turn to an heavy industry production in 1950s, later called "third front movement" (*sanxian jianshe*, 1964-1980s), and the recent massive urban development taking place in the municipality (Chen Aimin, 1998, 2002; China Times, 2012a; Huang Philip, 2011; Zhang JF & Deng, 2010).[19] As already seen in chapter three (par. 3.4), Chongqing territory has been suffering of heavy rainstorms and floods consistently during the course

Figure 7.20. The China Times news title on the construction of 133 new water projects, February 2012 (Deng Jun, 2012a)

of time: since the exploitation of the resources has been intensified in the mid-1990s, the situation has certainly not improved. According to the statistics, the incidence time ranges between two and ten years; however, because of the peculiar geological conformation of the municipality, there are four regions with a higher frequency of inundations and heavy rains, namely Liangping and Kai counties (one time/year), Beibei (0.9 times/year), Rongchang (0.7 times/year), and Youyang (0.6 times/year). In other areas such as Fuling, Tongnan, and Jiangjin, the incidence rate is relatively low (around 25%). Normally floods happen for two reasons: 1) heavy rain in situ; 2) heavy rain in Western Sichuan causing the sudden increase of the water level in the Yangzi River and its tributaries (iask.sina, 2010).

The two disastrous floods happened in July 1905 and August 1945 are connected to the second cause, whilst the one happened in July 1985 was the result of both heavy rains in Eastern Sichuan and Chongqing. The worst episode after the foundation of PRC was in July 1981 with over 1.4 million people involved. Recently the most striking events have taken place in 1998, when Southern China has been almost entirely subjected to floods and bad weather: Chongqing was hit by heavy rains 194 times, and because of a mount landslide which further raised the water level, more than eighteen million people

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[19] The imposing construction of water reservoirs in Chongqing firstly for irrigation purposes and then to discharge industrial and organic waste without proper treatments, has favored the pollution of soil and water, affecting also their living organisms with possible dramatic consequences for humans, too (see e.g. Zhao Dawei at al., 2001; Zhang Zheng et al., 2007). The *eutrophication* of the water bodies is also an issue (Zhang Sheng et al., 2007). For the side effects of the Three Gorges Dam on the ecology and hydrology of the downstream course of the Yangzi River, cf. Zhang Xiao et al. (2016).

have been affected by the calamity (*ibid.*). At the local level the water disaster of July 2012 has been recorded as the worst one in thirty years: The water level raised up to 187.6 metres (+4.1 metres over the regular level), forty-two people died and fifty thousand people were evacuated, and the economic loss was estimated around 2.7 billion yuan (Chongqing shangbao, 2012; Xinhua, 2012). Later in 2016 three people died when floods reached sixteen among the local districts and counties (Xinhua, 2016).

 The party-state constantly makes use of the mass media to initiate the *alignment process*, spreading precise messages to influence the public opinion, and ultimately to instill the idea of *the need* for certain reforms. In situations of environmental emergency the local party cadres, being also technicians working in governmental offices, have the duty to reinforce the "empathy" between bureaucracy and civil society through the use of "scientific methods".[20] The Xinhua News Agency interview to three high figures working at Chongqing Weather Bureau and concerning the big flood of Chongqing 2012, is part of this policy (Liu Gang & Meng, 2012).[21] Some of the points stressed are interesting for their connotative meaning. In particular, they try to

- reassure Chongqing citizens about the rarity of the event;
- cut the connection between local climatic cataclysms and the Three Gorges Dam, which influence on the weather is only perceptible around ten kilometers within the water reservoir (cf. Jiao Meiyan et al., 2013; Wu Liguang et al., 2006). The reasons of the flood are imputable to the local micro-climate and the particular atmospheric circulation system in July 2012;
- maintain a scientific tone, avoiding popular discourses on "entering an era of misfortune – *elie de shiqi*", considering the fact that according to the statistics, the seasons of perfect climate (*fengtiao yushun*) have been more a long standing wish than a reality in Chongqing ("mankind is constantly combed by the wind and washed by the rain" *renlei shi yilu zhifeng muyu*);
- praise the information system that through the technological systematization of the data, can speed up the operations, and encourages the cooperation among offices;
- visualize the physical presence of the party on the territory, by describing the operations made to stem the disaster, rescue human lives and properties, and *maintain social stability* (*weihu shehui wending*);[22]
- spread the consciousness on global climate changes, which is the reason why "people have to *understand* the climate, *know* the climate, and *adjust to* the climate, rationally start using climate resources to protect the climate and ecological environment, and scientifically defend themselves from meteorological calamities and make great efforts to reduce damages" (Liu Gang & Meng, 2012; emphasis added).

On the other hand, the problem of soil erosion due to an extreme exploitation of the territory, remains a semi-taboo not properly covered by local newspapers, while some academic articles in Chinese language although recognizing the gravity of the situation and pointing out the *human responsibility* behind it, are more focused on praising the positive results obtained against the phenomenon. This *purposeful character* is necessary to maintain a certain grade of credibility while implementing self-censorship (Deng Jun,

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[20] The discourse includes terms such as "*xiji*", "(to make) a surprise attack, a raid", in reference to sudden meteorological phenomena that imply a state of calamity. The decontextualized military jargon creates an image of nature as the enemy. Another point is the attempt to reconfigure the bond between the party and the people, using expressions such as "*ganqun zhongzhi chengcheng*", "Party officials and ordinary people 'united are an impregnable stronghold" (Chongqing shanbao, 2012).

[21] The three people interviewed are Wang Yingmin, Director of CQ Weather Bureau, Liu De, Director of CQ Meteorological Observatory, and Cheng Bingyan, Chief of the Clima Centre in CQ Weather Bureau (Liu Gang & Meng, 2012).

[22] Chinese authorities evidently have learned from the US mismanagement of the operations during Hurricane Katrina in August, 2005. In *Baidu baike*, the second accessible article on the topic depicts the US as a "failed state" unable to bring aid to its own population (Tiexue shequ, 2010).

2012b). According to Zhang Junhong et al. (2013), the entire valley located in the upper-reaches of the Yangzi River (mainly the Sichuan Basin) has comprehensively lost 41% of its water and soil surfaces, a percentage above the national average of 38%. In Chongqing Municipality (an area of 82,400 sq.km from the upper-reaches of the Yangzi River down to the Three Gorges Reservoir), 37,500 sq.km of water and soil surface went lost, i.e. 45.5% of the total area administered.[23] Since 1989 the first "prevention key projects" have been implemented in selected towns and counties of Sichuan, evaluating also the possible negative effects of soil erosion to the areas located along the lower stream of the river. Despite its small initial proportions, this kind of comprehensive prevention is among the first ones entailing the idea of *China as an organic structure* after a period of territorial fragmentation.

Since the propaganda posters made to show off how many water management projects the party was responsible for during the first five-year plan (Fig. 7.21), there has been a gradual shift towards a more generic narrative on water conservation and management, based on the *scientific requirement* to have a "holistic approach to the matter" as earlier demanded by the environmentalists (Molle, Mollinga & Meinzen-Dick, 2008: 2-3). The *integrated water resource management* (IWRM) as "hegemonic sustainability" (Orlove & Caton, 2010: 408), allows the overcoming of the traditional managerial division of the resources (Svendsen et al., 2005: 3). It derives from the previous modernist institutions developed at the beginning of the twentieth century, when "river-basin planning and management were associated with centralism and state-dominated large-scale infrastructural development typical of the 'hydraulic mission'" (Molle, 2009: 492), and often it has been linked to the rising of new forms of despotic power (Molle, Mollinga & Wester, 2009; Mollinga, 2010; Strang, 2016). The celebratory article "Thirty years of water management in Chongqing" is in line with this approach (Cheng Hefa & Hu, 2011; Jiang Yunlu et al., 2012: 365; Molle, 2008).

Figure 7.21. "Water management projects for the first five-year plan: main significance and tasks" (© Landsberger, URL: chineseposters.net)

The *memory of the risk* once occurred, allows the government to take agency over human fears and implement policies based on a cult of technological practices (Ariano, 2005), triggering a net of social pressure in order to let some invasive interventions on the territory to be better accepted "for the common good". *Disaster risk management* as a sub-category of water management is praised for its scientific appeal and the request for a strong technocracy; it is also seen as essential to proceed through a "modern" path of development (Sidner, 2017; UN et al., 2010: 45-46; Xinhua, 2017b; Zhao Xinying, 2016). Thus, the politics of risk analysis and assessment have covered an important role in the construction of a hegemonic narrative based on control and conservation discourses, which have eventually led to a more or less legitimized application of the local government procedures in matter of water storage, e.g. by denominating "water reservoirs" what since that moment have been just *natural*

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[23] In the article there are explicitly mentioned some episodes that in the past have favored the degradation of resources in Chongqing, such as "those mass campaigns against nature after the foundation of PRC" (cf. Shapiro, 2001), "specific regulations that destroyed the forest and vegetation", "the 'indiscriminate reclamation of wasteland' and 'the farming on steep slopes', which both violate the law of objectivity", and "the absence of effective regulations to protect the environment during the opening-up reform." However, the intrinsic characteristics of the soil linked to the heavy rainfalls between May and September are also understood as a reason for soil erosion (Zhang Junhong et al., 2013: 284).

lakes. This first step has allowed the enclosure of such spaces to the public fruition, leading to a clear uneven distribution of the natural resources through a process of privatization and the subsequent construction of gated communities. Not only the *resource access*,[24] but also the prohibition of fishing and bathing has been recently extended to various reservoirs (twenty-seven in Bishan District), with the motivation of preventing the contamination of water assigned to the urban aqueduct. The need to safeguard the *integrity of water quality* is becoming increasingly urgent as the water network is expanded following the development of new urban areas (BSQSWJ, 2017).

7.3.1   Discourses of jurisdiction and authority

The notion of "*water as a state property*" partly derives from the idea that the rain must have a *divine origin*. In the imperial times, water was thus a property of the Emperor (Caponera, 1978: 95). At the end of the 19th century, water started being associated with the modernist ideas of sanitation and energy production: Their implementation required a strong technocratic will (cf. Ch. 3). After 1949, the necessity to rearrange the land and implement the agrarian reform as wished by the common people, accelerated the mechanism of land de-privatization, and led to the reaffirmation that all natural resources belong to the state (Spencer, 1959; Taylor, 1978). State power and technocracy became once again synonyms of hegemony and apparent social stability. There is therefore a line of continuity in the idea that the mechanism of power centralization (emperor, central government, politburo and standing committee) is legitimized to cover the role of arbiter and guarantor of a sound and equitable management of the resources. However, since the participative power within society is pretty much limited (cf. Ch. 5, *the ladder of citizen participation*), and the bureaucratic branches well spread on the territory, it is clear that the state can choose its priorities. The infrastructure is solid in its ideology and fluid in its mutation and resistance capacities (cf. Mitchell, 2005: 96).

With the definitive implementation of a "modern legislative apparatus" based on the *rule of law*, the legitimation of hegemonic practices is unduly supported by the law (*fazhi*).[25] Marking an elusive split between certain practices and its proponents, there is the risk that *abstract technicalities* can relieve the individuals from their responsibilities. Therefore, the "innocent" and legitimate formulation of land and water as state properties, actually hides dramatic legal repercussions for the everyday life of the local communities. The state can take advantage of the administrative provisions to exercise its own hegemonic strategy and continuously rebalance the forces to maintain the status quo. The necessity to upgrade the Chinese law to international standards, is also a discourse rhetorically conveyed to the masses by the ruling elite (cf. Tabs. 7.1a, 7.1b; Pia, 2015; Wouters et al., 2004; Zheng Hang et al., 2012).

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[24] Here intended as in Sturgeon (2005: 37): "Resource access means both formal property allocations derived by jurisdiction, customary practices of access, and local accommodation to – and reworking of – state-given property rights".

[25] Cf. Cavalieri (2003: 178) on the first revival of a sort of rule of law after 1978, after the Maoist self-justice revolutionary practices of the period 1968-78. The *instrumental characteristic* of the law as per tradition, was once again embraced as a tool to control the population through the exploitation of the "modern" mechanisms of justice.

Table 7.1a. Position of the urban land-and-water-related laws with respect to potential profit and the capacity to influence environmental behaviors

Economic Law on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Arts. 64, 65

Adm. Law on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Art. 20

Water Law Arts. 14, 23, 32

Economic Law on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Art. 3

Constitution Arts. 9, 10

Law on Water and Soil Conservation Art.12

Land Administration Law Art. 23

Law on Water and Soil Conservation Art.13

Law on Urban and Rural Planning Arts. 30, 35

Economic Law on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Art. 5

Forestry Law Arts. 4, 15

City Planning Law Art. 5

Forestry Law Art. 12

Law on the Adm. of the Urban Real Estate Arts. 32, 33

Land Administration Law Art. 4

City Planning Law Art. 25

Law on Urban and Rural Planning Art. 4

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X axis → ability to influence a critical environmental consciousness
Y axis → expected economic profit
* Exemplary values

185

Table 7.1b. Laws related to urban land and water management, and implications
(http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/Frameset-index.html)

List of laws on land and water politics	Implications: normative means to divert power
Constitution of the People's Republic of China	Arts. 9, 10: demagogy on land and other resources as a property of the entire population indistinctly
Economic laws	
Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2011-02/14/content_1620412.htm)	Art. 3: rhetoric on pure ecological principles Art. 5: local officials' career advancement based on a declared capability to fight pollution → human beings' objectification, and collective duty replaced by a bonus mechanism quantified economically and in social status representation Art. 64: special control over reservoirs in scenic spots, historic sites, or for fishing activities to ensure waters meet the quality standards → sanitation linked to economic profit and spatial control
Forestry Law of the People's Republic of China (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/13/content_1383970.htm)	Arts. 4, 15: forests categorized on economic scale → commodification and value transfer ("valued and converted as shares or used as funds") Art. 12: selective knowledge and rewards politics → misjudging meaning and praxis of environmental protection (carrot and stick policy)
Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383939.htm)	Art. 4: ambiguous discourse on "land for water conservancy", which can be labeled both as "agricultural land" or "land for construction" → legitimation of housing around the lakes re-named as "water reservoirs" Art. 23: clear call for the urban/rural planning "all-round harnessing of rivers and lakes" → enclaves entailing lakes are legit by law
Water Law of the People's Republic of China (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383920.htm)	Art. 14: readjustment of the waterscape in terms of a commodified object to be exploited for elitist housing and tertiary activities Art. 23: massive exploitation based on integrated management Art. 32: "[...] divide water function zones along key rivers and lakes defined as such by the State, which shall be submitted to the State Council for approval" → objectification and commodification
Law of the People's Republic of China on Water and Soil Conservation (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383873.htm)	Art. 12: discourse on waterscape "beautification" to attract tourism, and enhance land exchange value for elite-target development constructors Art. 13: easy manipulation of parks boundaries; easy methods of land re-reclamation from agriculture to housing development; vision of nature as commodity asset
Administrative laws	
Law of the People's Republic of China on Urban and Rural Planning (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2009-02/20/content_1471595.htm)	Art. 4: description of utopic harmonious society Art. 30: legal way-out that allows the encroachment of "public" water reservoirs to become the scenario for gated communities Art. 35: need of the local officers' approval to close lakes access
Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Control of Water Pollution (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/13/content_1383966.htm)	Art. 20: great economic potential for the development of domestic-and-drinking-water related services
City Planning Law of the People's Republic of China (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-12/12/content_1383918.htm)	Art. 5, 25: demagogy; premises for massive exploitation of the natural resources on the basis of a comprehensive path of development
Law of the People's Republic of China on the Administration of the Urban Real Estate (http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Law/2007-	Arts. 32, 33: The central government approves and controls urban real estate prices through the appraisal system; the raising of land exchange value is legitimized

12/12/content_1383755.htm)	
Administrative regulations	
Ministry of Water Resources, National Development and Reform Commission, and Ministry of Finance's joint declaration "On accelerating the implementation plan of post-traumatic water works and vulnerable spots' infrastructure" (SGJS, 2017)	Infrastructure concerning minor river basins should be strengthened, implementing the vision of a comprehensive organic planning (*tongchou guihua*)
Local directives	
Chongqing Regulation on Water Resources Management (*Chongqing shi shui ziyuan guanli tiaoli*), approved May 28, 2015, and in force since October 1, 2015 (Chongqing ribao, 2015a)	The central government allocates i.a. regional quotas of water usage, later distributed by the local governments among cities, districts and counties. The limits should not be exceeded; if a city/district/county has water surplus, it is allowed to *trade* water to other places in need

As already seen in Ch. 3, water management was a serious issue during Ming and Qing dynasties. In Chongqing, in fact, there were at least two water management offices (*shuili suo*, *shuifuguan*) in the "urban area", in Yuzhong and Jiangbei. The water management offices had different scopes and nature, being the smaller one due to local mobilization (corvée) for minor repairing works whilst the major ones were more active in raising funds from the central government and the local gentry to promote projects on macro areas (e.g. dikes). [26] The presence of these vertically oriented offices in a relatively small geographical area is a sign of the importance attributed to water management in Imperial China.

The memory of this administrative top-down jurisdiction has clearly informed the recent establishment of authorities over the major Chinese water basins such as the Yangzi River (GWP & INBO, 2009: 36). The scientific imprint and the impressive market value of water have facilitated also the concession of many water springs to highly specialized foreign companies like Suez Environment, in exchange for loans bestowed with the approval of the World Bank among other institutions. The strong take of position of the central government towards a tighter sectorialization of water distribution by turning water into a commodity, implies taking distances from the managerial practices pre "reform and open-up" (*gaige kaifang* 1978 on) and pre "go West campaign" (*xibu da kaifa* 2000 on; cf. Shen Dajun, 2009; Shen Dajun & Speed, 2009), when the horizontal administrative system based on consultation and solidarity as the fundamentals for the equal sharing of a common good, was widespread. Despite the great inconsistencies in the official propaganda, the narrative is still built on a sense of continuity between the politics and visions proper of the father(s) of the country and the current technocracy in power. In particular, there are some recurrent topics:

- The fervent pre-reform language of supremacy on wild nature (*da ziran*), manifested through mass campaigns (Shapiro, 2001);

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[26] By the end of Ming dynasty, the population increase favored the migratory flows towards the hilly and mountainous areas of Central-West China, Chongqing included (Guo Song Yi, 2011: 64 ff.). This fact promoted advancements in agriculture since new irrigation techniques had to be arranged to cope with the characteristics of the terrain, such as soil terracing, a practice already known since Tang dynasty (*ibid.*, 2011: 66). However, due to overpopulation and lack of expertise, the environment and water resources were also damaged, e.g. deforesting mountains, changing the course of streams, and burying wildland to develop agriculture (*ibid.*, 2011: 68). The *slash-and-burn* forest clearing was typically employed by Liao community that from Guizhou and Chuannan mountains, in the 4th and 5th centuries CE spread also to Chongqing, especially in Dazu area, to escape from local conflicts (Wei Yingtao, 1991: 103). On the agricultural production in Sichuan area after 1949, and the adjustments promoted by Sichuan Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang, cf. Donnithorne (1982, 1984).

- The pre-reform desire to mechanize the countryside to "let water run against gravity", well expressed by the Great Leap Forward propaganda images based on "romantic socialism" (Landsberger, 1998);

- The necessity to shape a Chinese path over the management of land resources, a discourse that in the early days allowed a massive industrialization of the urban areas and the establishment of a diffuse chain of "artisan factories" in the countryside at the expense of the environment. In the last decade this "necessity" has facilitated the reversal of the guidelines on industrialization, due also to the influence of global ecological trends (e.g. the Paris Agreement, 2015). China also has a great economic profit from the production of eco-friendly energy saving products and renewable energies, being one of the countries leader in the sector. China global image as "environmental bulwark" is also benefited, using the soft power behind those media awareness campaigns that inform on the state successful practices of environmental protection (Gang Chen, 2009; Gobbicchi, 2012).

Because of its sectorialization and complexity, the central government organizational chart is often the cause of defective communication among departments, absence of dialogue and therefore of common views, conflicts of interest, and slowdown in policy implementation due to bureaucratic overload (Cheng & Hu, 2011: 4; Liu Bin & Speed, 2009: 204-206).[27] In this scenario, the emergent phenomenon of the gated communities built around natural lakes, could be seen as a majestic work of interconnection among different state bodies at the local level, which has had as outcomes: 1) The organic implementation of water and land laws; 2) the cooperation among party cadres focused on a common objective; 3) the apparent lack of conflicts of interest.[28] The main offices involved are listed in Figure 7.22:[29]

SEPA State Environmental Protection Administration (recently become a ministry)

Development and Reform Commission

Changjiang [Yangzi] Water Resources Commission (CWRC, under direct control of the central government; www.cjw.gov.cn)

Water Management Bureau (http://www.cqwater.gov.cn/Pages/Home.aspx)

Planning & Management of Natural Resources Office (established Oct. 23, 2018; http://www.cqgtfw.gov.cn/)

Environment Protection Bureau (http://www.cepb.gov.cn/)

Construction Bureau

Chongqing Water Conservancy Designing Institute

University departments (e.g. Urban Planning Institutes)

Local NGOs

Financial Bureau

central government   superstructure beyond local/regional administration

municipality, city and district government   "external" agencies working with/for the local government

Figure 7.22. Main administrative offices and agencies managing the natural resources in China (Bonato, 2019)

As seen above, these offices contribute in different ways to Chongqing water and land management, with roles aimed at detecting different issues and formulating antithetical ways of management. These

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[27] [27] Cf. also Crow-Miller et al. (2017), Mollinga, Hong, and Bhatia (2005), Nickum (2010).

[28] It is worth noting how the implementation of a "multipurpose river basin development" in China, did not contemplate the possibility to gentrify the waterscape creating elitist zones (enclaves), even if this method surely provides the highest income to the local governments. The focus was still on exploiting the environment as a "public/common domain" through the implementation of agriculture, industry, and tourism (study promoted by the World Bank, in Sun Peter, 1994: 78).

[29] For what concerns the Planning & Management of Natural Resources Office, cf. Tabs. 5.15, 5.16 on land financial market.

offices look at environmental protection (land and water conservation), equal distribution of the resources (Planning Bureau), and energy production, while they promote the enhancement of the fixed assets' monetary value in a market-oriented economic planning, e.g. focusing on the upscale real estate. The demagogy lies in the paradox of a system in which environmental protection is conceived as a mere strategy to enhance the ideological value of the natural resources, a process that finally increases the power of the central government.

7.3.2   Corporate practices and the global necessity to save water

The official embracement of the market practices, epitomized by the entry into the WTO (World Trade Organization) mechanisms in 1999, recorded a significant loss of territorial sovereignty due to external authorities such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the WTO itself. In the sphere of water management, there has been

> "At a global scale, an accelerated process of concentration and consolidation [...] that is rapidly leading to a fairly oligopolistic economic structure of water utility companies on a world scale" (Swyngedouw, Kaïka & Castro, 2002: 134).[30]

With the rescaling of the economic profit up to a global level, many international companies have been authorized to invest in Chongqing water management more than what the local private companies could actually do. Rivalry and sense of betrayal towards the local government were common feelings until the early 2000s, when the local private sector could finally enter the water management market (Globalization Monitor, 2010: 15-18): A "virtuous" example is Chongqing Kangda Environmental Protection Industrial (Group) Co., Ltd., which was founded in 1992, incorporated in 1996, and nowadays is one of the first private enterprises in domestic environmental pollution control industry (EMIS Report, n.d.; Kangda Group, 2016).[31] Nevertheless, major projects related to the implementation of sewage services and water control/storage, are still in the hands of global holdings that through the establishment of joint-ventures can gain enough power, finances, and technical/cultural know-how to become the main referents in dialogue with the local government (cf. Yang Ying, 2016).[32] A prominent

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[30] A striking example is represented by Arup Group, which recent interest in the water management sector has brought the company to do consulting for Sydney Water (cf. also Strang, 2009). Recent advertising campaigns include a meeting with the Pop in 2016 (ARUP, 2017). ARUP has also worked as consultant "to carry out technical and health and safety due diligence reviews for 20 water and wastewater treatment assets in China" (*ibid.*: 46), and in 2015/16 has signed "the first major contract for water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) works in mainland China" within the Sponge City Program. The project site is in Baotou, Inner Mongolia (ARUP, 2016: 40). The new corporate trend is underlined by the obvious but still captivating sentence "Water is fundamental to a successful city" on "Cities Alive – Water for People" advertising video published in September 2018 on Vimeo by Arup Visual Communications (URL: https://vimeo.com/290240532).

[31] Another example is the PPP deal signed by Jiulongpo District (through its SOE Chongqing Yulong Asset Management Holdings) and Sound Global, a Beijing-based wastewater treatment solutions provider. The 25-year concession guarantees the operations and maintenance of sixteen sewage treatment facilities in Chongqing (Shreosree Banerjee, 2014). In 2011 the Singapore-based Hyflux Company won the contract on a BOT basis for three water projects at Hechuan Industrial Park in Hechuan District (Water Technology, 2011).

[32] Small-size foreign companies are more inclined to establish transnational cooperation based on the dislocation of production in China to bring down the prices, while the high-level Chinese technological know-how regarding water management, appears to be appreciated and assimilated abroad. One example is the Italian WaterGenPower Company (WGP) founded in 2008 with a registered office located in Genua, Italy, that derogates the production of water storage assets to

example is the *foreign-controlled* joint-venture Chongqing Sino French Water Supply Co., Ltd., established in 2002 between Chongqing Water Group Co., Ltd. (SOE), and Sino-French Water Development Company (subsidiary of SUEZ Environment), and active also in Jiangbei District for the implementation of a modern domestic-oriented pipeline system (Fu Tao et al., 2008: 66-70; cf. also Browder et al., 2007: 73). Suez Environment works in Chongqing also through the Chemical Industry Sino French Water Co. Ltd. in Changshou District Chemical Park (where BASF is located),[33] and the Tangjiatuo Wastewater Company Ltd. (SUEZ NWS, n.d.). Moreover, in 2015 it has been signed an agreement among Chongqing local government (Chongqing Water Assets Management Co., Ltd.), SUEZ, and New World Services Holdings, Ltd. (NWS), to launch Chongqing Derun Environment Co., Ltd., which should become a future leading group in water and waste activities:

> "Derun Environment will become an investment platform to tap into China's growing environmental-related businesses [...] We are totally convinced that near-term business opportunities will keep on emerging *thanks to stricter regulatory framework* imposed by the Chinese Government. With the set-up and ambitious development plan of Derun Environment, SUEZ environment, will be the foreign leader in environmental services in China" (SUEZ Environment CEO, Mr. Chaussade, in SUEZ Environment, 2015; emphasis added).

> "Derun's foreign investments could focus on South-East Asia, and possibly Australia, where Suez already has a sizeable presence. Africa could also be a possibility. Derun will be a second pillar for us in China" (SUEZ Head of international operations, Mrs. Debon, in De Clercq, 2015).

In 2017 the company has won the contract for the deployment of digital sensors in Chongqing Yuelai Zone ("Pleasant Future" in Yubei District; cf. 6.4.1). This avant-garde mechanism already in use in places like Paris and Singapore, should monitor the sewer and stormwater networks, and is part of the Sponge City program concerning flood risk management (Sidner, 2017; Water Technology, 2017).

China Water Affairs Group, Ltd.,[34] a public corporation registered in Bermuda in 2003 and listed in the Hong Kong Stock Market since 1998, but active in Mainland China in urban water supply services (China Water Group, 2018: 4), and China Water Investment Co., Ltd. (thereafter HHO),[35] are also carrying on projects in Chongqing, e.g. in Wanzhou District (HHO, 2018). China Water Affairs Group has been active since 2009 in Yongchuan District through its affiliated company Qiaoli Water Affairs Co. (ZSJYG, 2009). It is also involved in projects of *waterscape beautification* throughout China:

> "The people-oriented construction priorities the ecosystem and is planned from a macro perspective to implement and proceed independently but comprehensively under *sophisticated leadership*, which could ultimately reach the goal of keeping our waterway clear and improving the water quality, as well as enhancing greening and landscaping of the riverbank to help construct a harmonious and beautiful modern city" (China Water Group, 2018: 17; emphasis added).

Chongqing Water Turbine Works (CWTW), "one of the major Chinese suppliers of turbines and generators" (WaterGenPower, 2015). Compagnia Valdostana delle Acque S.p.A. (CVA) which owns 35% share of WGP, is "an Italian electric utility running 32 hydropower plants" (*ibid.*). To intensify the commercial partnership, an official bilateral agreement has been signed by Chongqing Municipality and Valle d'Aosta regional administration, where CVA is mainly operative (Chongqing ribao, 2015b: 2).

[33] It is a 30-year concession contract (with a possible 20-year extension) in force since 2010 (Water Technology, 2010).
[34] Official website at http://www.chinawatergroup.com/index.asp.
[35] Official website at http://www.chinahho.com/cn/index.aspx.

190

In Chongqing such water treatment projects often happen to be an integral part of the process of land gentrification, since they are at the service of the macro-infrastructural re-planning of the territory to fulfill the aesthetic and comfort needs of the local elite.

The reports published by these globally powerful actors mainly aim to radicalize the phenomenon of *service privatization* by pointing out how the transition is also to the benefit of the "natural element" itself, in this case of water and the problem of scarcity. The question of the connection between raising prices and an uneven distribution of the resource is barely considered among the side-effects (cf. Browder et al., 2007: 62-63). For instance, the World Bank (2010; Xie Jian et al., 2009) called for a better management of water resources through the implementation of a neo-liberal governance, which fundamentals are:

- Technical management;
- Direct government interventions, i.e. a strong, "integrated" and well-branched bureaucratic apparatus supported by supra-provincial institutions directly regulated by the central government;
- Opening to the water market. In the PRC this means a complete detachment from the socialist orthodoxy, upon which an imaginary of equal sharing of the resources was founded.

The company's hard and scientifically skilled work is often emphasized in terms of "virtue" as in the following slogan retrieved from the HHO official website (Fig. 7.23): [36]

Figure 7.23. HHO Company advertising. "Regulating Water as a Virtue", literally "regulating water is a good/virtuous deed", and "working without a break to reach perfection" (screenshot from HHO official website, November 20, 2018. © HHO. URL: http://www.chinawatergroup.com.cn/). This advertising recalls the ones spread by TVA in its early years when it strongly associated the application of modern water management to the wasteland reclamation works

On HHO official website, other two propaganda slogans entail the word "virtue", also used in the sense of "improving, perfecting" but also as the indicator of "a gesture of benevolence". The blurred outline of the term allows the transmission of multiple meanings, i.e. the performance of a complex significance rooted in culture. Privately run Chinese corporations have also embraced the rhetoric propelled by the party-state in matters of natural resource management. Therefore, the official language with its keywords has been assimilated and reused for advertising campaigns (cf. *infra*, par. 7.3), as visible in Chongqing Kangda Co., Ltd., official website (Fig. 7.24):

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[36] Being rooted in Chinese classic philosophy, the term "virtue" (*shan*) has a great resonance (cf. Cheng Anne, 1997; Ch. 3).

Figure 7.24. Chongqing Kangda Company advertising. By comparing the natural resources to golden and silver mounts, this advertising makes use of President Xi Jinping's metaphor. Therefore, the company demonstrates its alignment with the central government (screenshot from Chongqing Kangda Co. Ltd. official website, November 22, 2018. © Chongqing Kangda Co. Ltd. URL: http://en.kangdaep.cn/)

Foreign corporations seem to be more detached from the orthodox language and the party logics. For example, SUEZ NWS (the new branch grouping all SUEZ subsidiaries in Greater China), use slogans in its official website that are more related to a personal proactivity and desire to make a difference in the reform of resources management rather than enforcing the idea that the company works for the benefit of the masses. The vision behind it reflects a diverse cultural background (Fig. 7.25):

Figure 7.25. SUEZ NWS official website slogan "be ready to leave a clue in the transformation of natural resources" (screenshot from SUEZ NWS official website, November 22, 2018. © SUEZ Environment Co. URL: http://www.suez-environnement.cn/)

The *integrated river basin management* as already explained in chapter six, is the ideological epitome of the consumeristic practices involving water and the adjacent natural resources. Supported by the local elite and the state ideological belief in the necessity to upgrade the urban landscape to "global standards", urban waters are deprived of their "naturalness" to be channeled into highly profitable consumption infrastructures.[37] The strategic assimilation of "Western" practices conceived as *positive models*, is reflected in the Chinese IWRM legal framework. France is particularly favored in Chinese water market issues:

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[37] The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO, https://www.inbo-news.org/en/inbo/presentation-inbo) allows the transfer of technology and know-how within a fluid cooperative pattern worldwide, thus enhancing the spectrum of profit through the international IWRM system (governments, private associations, etc.). The China Europe Water Platform (CEWP, 2012), launched in 2012, has also enabled the sharing of knowledge and the establishment of joint business (e.g. the land reclamation projects in the South-China Sea held in cooperation with Dutch companies). Other chances for knowledge exchange are through conferences (e.g. "Sharing French expertise on water and sanitation management and techniques" hosted in 2013 in Shanghai by Aquatech China, https://www.inbo-news.org/sites/default/files/IMG/pdf/Aquatech_flyer_-

"France has developed a complete legislative framework and practical instruments to apply integrated water resources management at river basin level since the 1960's. This experience and the current implementation of the European Water Framework Directive bring elements that can contribute to help the Chinese society to meet the environmental challenges" (Yang Xiaolu, Donzier & Noël, 2009: 1).

Australia Water Entitlements and Trading (WET), as expertise commission, has also developed a partnership with Chinese local governments in order to implement consulting projects and find new patters of exploitation of water resources that should be more in line with the new environmental directives (Speed, 2009a, 2009b; Sun Xuetao, 2009; WET, 2007). The main result of this cooperation has been the introduction in pilot areas of the *water rights trading system*. WET policy papers are interesting since they corroborate the idea that the *two uses* of water – for profit-leading activities, and to ameliorate people's living conditions based on the principle of equal sharing of the resources – are perfectly compatible with each other (WET, 2007: 273).

To conclude, China is learning water-related technological and managerial processes from the French leadership, while Australia represents a source for normative comparison in matters of water trading in an ambience characterized by the hegemonic disposition to consider waters as pure economic assets.

7.4   How much is it? Exchange value of the Jialing-Yangzi watershed ecosystem

> We must work to build through tireless efforts,
> a Beautiful China where the sky is blue,
> the land is green and the water runs clear.
> *Li Keqiang, Report on the Work of the Government,*
> *4th Session of the 12th National People's Congress of the PRC (2016)*

Chinese water management has been historically based on networks of power branched from the centre to its peripheries, creating a fabric of semi-stable relations thanks to a well-defined bureaucratic apparatus (Caponera in Ulmen, 1978: 99).[38] Acting as an intermediary among the diverse social forces, the central government could keep in effect the centralized political system through the centuries (Li Cho-ying, 2010). Once this mechanism became unsustainable, other forms of water management started to emerge to make up for the lack of state interest, though considering water *as a common good* even during the early process of privatization.[39] Still in 1910, Archibald Little described the landscape of Sichuan as made of open and free spaces, a "privilege" neglected elsewhere:

_Sharing_France_s_expertise_on_water_and_sanitation_management-2.pdf). The Yangtze Forum *Changjiang Luntan* is instead a Chinese initiative.

[38] The political and economic management of "pre-modern" China has been described by Skinner in terms of "double layer": the "natural" one made of trading and informal politics based on networks of relationships (*guanxi*), while the other "official/artificial" one based on bureaucracy and administrative practices. Skinner identifies the smaller urban realities as the "locus of articulation" between the two structures (Skinner, 1977: 275 on). The special role covered by provincial secretaries – located in a dual position at the crossing of the two models, has been recently recognized once again by the central government (cf. par. 4.2 on the central control over local bureaucracy).

[39] Cf. Skinner (1970) on the description of the water guilds in Beijing at the end of the Qing dynasty. Some forms of privatization were already put in practice in Imperial China, but they primarily concerned the building and maintenance of the water wells and water mills. The role of morals in setting limits to the human greed, was still fundamental, e.g. the "water

"Hence such a thing as a tolled bridge or a tolled road is abhorrent to the so-called 'heathen,' while everywhere the poor have free ferries (and here in Chungking, throughout the winter, free rice) and, if they need it, free lodging as well at their disposal. Nor do vast private enclosures cut off the hill-tops from the tourist as in many of the most picturesque mountain regions in Britain. Here everything is open, as sportsmen well know, and liberty to enjoy is free to all" (Little, 1910: 131).

The *access* to water resources, and the *control and conservation* of the watershed should be part of the public welfare. However, even if discursively used to legitimize public politics, they become often tools for the uneven sharing and redistribution of the profits. In fact, the state actors in a regime of despotic power are granted with a certain degree of autonomy, which allows them to leverage their rhetorical mechanisms based on coercion and ability to influence the masses, so to "*reframe the interests* of special groups as forms of 'public interest'" (Ge Wenkai, 2015: 410; emphasis added).

In Figure 7.26 the beauty of a "revitalized landscape" is used as political manifesto by CCP Chongqing Committee Secretary Chen Miner, who encourages the local people to follow the directives concerning the green economy. In this way, the global economic and human capital will certainly be more and more attracted by Chongqing. The image of the Yangzi River taken from the Three Gorges as in Figure 7.26, has become an emblem of the state of environmental health of the entire municipality, misleading on the actual conditions: In the list of the most polluted Chinese cities published by Greenpeace in 2014 (air pollution, annual average of PM2.5 concentrations), Chongqing occupies the forty-fifth place with 63.9 micrograms per cubic metre,

Figure 7.26. "With green hills and clear waters, Chongqing power of attraction can just increase!" said Chongqing Committee Secretary Chen Miner (screenshot from CCTV13 News, retrieved on April 11, 2018 at Leju, URL: http://cq.leju.com/news/2018-03-14/00006377725523631852136.shtml)

almost the double of the national standard fixed at 35 micrograms per cubic metre.[40]

Normative power and soft power, also in terms of rearrangement of the ethical practices, are two fundamental ingredients in the Chinese peculiar form of water governance, which nowadays contemplates various methods of decentralization of powers and responsibilities. These include:

- Delegating water management to private companies through *subcontracts*, as suggested also by international bodies like the World Bank (e.g. sewages, treatment of waste water, etc.);
- Selling water use rights to the private sector (e.g. for the construction of water supply networks, maintenance of the facilities, etc.);

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equalization principle" was intended to prevent the creation of monopolies in the use of water by people living on the upper reaches of a water basin at the expense of the population living along its lower course (Caponera, 1978: 101-102).

[40] Retrieved August 14, 2019 at http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/news/blog/bad-to-worse-ranking-74-chinese-cities-by-air/blog/48181/. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2017 the level dropped by 16.3% after the National Air Quality Action Plan was implemented in 2013 (https://secured-static.greenpeace.org/eastasia/Global/eastasia/publications/campaigns/Climate%20and%20Energy/Analysis%20of%20air%20quality%20trends%20in%202017.pdf).

- Establishing state-owned companies running as private corporations occasionally located off-shore (Molle, 2008; Strang, 2009; Swyngedouw, Kaika & Castro, 2002).

Within this scenario a high degree of sophistication is tangible,[41] being also exacerbated by the fact that the central government still owns some SOEs connected to a different idea of water management related to the former socialist era (1949-1978 ca.). The property of water has also been enshrined by law since the judicial adjustments of the early 2000s, according to which rural communities are entitled to own the land and water reservoirs in the territory under their administration (Wouters, 2004); on this statement is currently based the private trading of water-use rights and water assets. To assure a transparent shift of property rights and the price adjustment, not to mention the local government necessity to track the financial movements in the water market, the internet has become fundamental through the many websites where water quotas and the annexed farmland can be transferred through negotiations (cf. Ch. 5, note 28). The spreading of the concept of water as a commodity comes also through the advertisement that in these websites, puts much emphasis on the idea of *water being like gold*:

Figure 7.27. **"If the rivers fill the reservoir, money will come" –** *shuiliu man ku, jinqian lai* **(© Tudi ziyuan wang, URL: www.tdzyw.com/subject/shuikuliuzhuan last time retrieved October 30, 2018)**

In Fig. 7.27 the Chinese character *jin*, which means "gold" (component of the word "*jinqian* – money"), is highlighted in yellow. The significance of this choice is to be found in the will to monetize the value intrinsic to water and the annexed resources: The reposition of the objectified environment within the secure boundaries of a governance ruled by the party-state, reconfigures this fetishist representation of a common asset at the disposal of the market forces (Appadurai, 1988).

The following infographics retrieved from *Chongqing bendi bao* (December 8, 2016; Fig. 7.28), explains the benefits coming from the construction of seventeen water reservoirs in Chongqing Municipality (2016), while Figure 7.29 is a screenshot from *Tudi ziyuan wang*, a website dedicated to the water reservoir use rights trading market:

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[41] Even if the central government behaves as a private corporation, there seems to be no conflict of interests. The accumulation of capital allows the party to maintain political stability and disseminate consent throughout the social classes, whilst assuring also the ideological control over the various state bodies (army, mass media, etc.). As a "blockchain route", the money in all its variables (financial savings, GDP, etc.), reassures the various members of the society that the work of the central government is legitimate.

Figure 7.28. Infographics on benefits deriving by the construction of 17 new water reservoirs in Chongqing (Chongqing bendi bao, 2016 December 8. URL: http://cq.bendibao.com/news/2016128/62605.shtm)

➔ Data retrieved from *Renmin wang*

➔ The list accounts for one big-size, ten medium-size, and six small-size water reservoirs

➔ Ten reservoirs have been built in the poorer areas of the municipality (to describe a "poor area", the image shows a straw hut that clearly resembles a colonial stereotype)

➔ Final investment of over 9.5 billion yuan

➔ Total water capacity near to two hundred and eighty million cubic meters; irrigated area increased by 340,000 *mu*

➔ Possibly solving the lack of drinking water for 1.68 million persons and 580,000 farm animals

Figure 7.29. Sample of Chongqing water reservoirs' use rights market (mainly for agricultural purposes), e.g., the first offer concerns a twenty-year transfer of the use rights to develop water conservation installations. The water reservoir and the annexed land are located in Zhong County, for a total of 1,000 *mu* at the price of eight million yuan (retrieved October 30, 2018 at Tudi ziyuan wang, URL: http://cq.tdzyw.com/supply/list-e%6%B0%B4%E5%BA%93-u1-a22)

Indeed, this *narrative based on profit* is legitimized and signified through the discourses of the central government spread in the media. In "Xi [Jinping] spurs green development" (China Daily, 2018), an embedded video explains "the two mountains theory (*jinshan yingshan*)",[42] according to which "clear waters and lush mountains are *invaluable assets* in comparison to a mountain of gold and silver" (*ibid.*; emphasis added). Xi Jinping's statement thus emphasizes the fact that China, unwilling to follow the

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[42] The link to the embedded video is blob:http://v-hls.chinadaily.com.cn/4c823bf2-386c-4a5f-8813-0194d6448666.

Western path based on "treatment after pollution",[43] is ready to embrace the ecological progress "as *the* national strategy" (aboluo wang, 2014; Li Kun, 2017). However, this rhetoric encounters a contradictory reality: The establishment of the Yangzi River Economic Belt in 2014 has had repercussions on the entire ecologic management of this newly-defined region. By appointing "the wetlands as the earth's kidney – *shidi shi diqiu zhi shen*" (CSGHW, 2015), Chongqing ecosystem has been involved in a new narrative entailing both the concepts of landscape preservation and economic exploitation. The short-term purpose is the fulfillment of the objectives contained in "Beautiful China 2020" (Tan Debra, 2016), i.e. the improvement of the waterscape conditions in purely aesthetic terms. The comparison between natural resources and money, is also traceable in the academic literature concerning water and land management: Already in 2013 Zhang Junhong et al. (2013: 285), made a parallelism between waters and mounts and two mounts of gold and silver. This demonstrates how academia and politics can be aligned in China to favor new strategies of development, and also how the party-state extrapolating the content from the context, makes use of academic discourses to spread a selective knowledge.

For what concerns the green rate in comparison to the degree of developed surface, the percentages of both space and coverage have actually dropped in the period 2012-15 (Tab. 7.2). The statistics take into account only the green space planned by Chongqing Planning Bureau, i.e. parks, public gardens, and squares, excluding e.g. the tree lined streets. The hectares of natural reserves have also been reduced: The increasingly expanding urban area has already devoured part of the forest vegetation while the land segmentation works in favor of the privatization of portions of wild green (Tab. 7.3). Although Chongqing appears as a megalopolis built amongst the greenery, this does not imply that the urban space is necessarily "green" enough to ensure its citizens an equal sharing and enjoyment. In fact, the situation in some central districts such as Yuzhong is so problematic that the local government is implementing a massive policy of demolition of entire neighborhoods in order to make space for a planned distribution of green areas (Yuzhong Comprehensive Planning 2030).[44] It goes along that the value of those properties near the new urban green tends to increase, especially in regards to the cost of the apartments (Luttik, 2000), which is enough to justify the large sums of money annually invested by the local government for the embellishment of the urban landscape. Table 7.4 shows how the statistics can be misleading in tracing the path of environmental protection in Chongqing. In fact, it seems that in the urban districts the green covered area has been increasing since 1998: As a matter of fact, what has increased is the number of "urban districts" that were formerly "counties" (e.g. Bishan): Being less industrialized areas, the amount of green was higher than in the central districts. While the first three data present the general trend in all the districts surface, the last three ones are the detailed picture of what happened in the urban area within the districts (#developed area2). It is evident that the urbanization and the public green preservation run at two different speeds: In the period 2009-2012 there was a great improvement in the green conditions and in the parks/zoos establishment (the data doubled), but since then the public green data have seen only a slight improvement. The number of parks has actually maintained a steady growth. However, the most recent urban parks derive from a process of deforestation and landscape redesign (e.g. Yubei Central Park), demonstrating the criticality of opportunist relationships with the environment.

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[43] Xi Jinping, in fact, warned the local cadres saying that "We should never follow outdated paths of development" (embedded video 0'42" on China Daily, 2018).

[44] The highest green space rate among the main European urban centres was recorded in the city of Vienna in 2016, where the built-up area contained 49.6% of green space (Wien Statistik, 2017: 8).

Table 7.2. Rate of green space within the built-up area (CJW, 2006: 59; CTJ 2017, Ch. 8: 2)
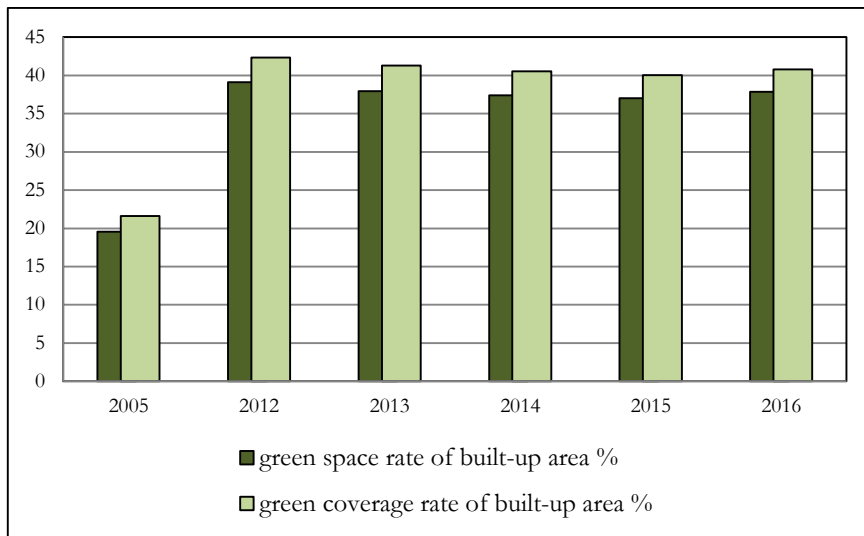
Table 7.3. Natural reservoirs and environmental protection (CJW, 1999: 98; CTJ 2010: 198, 2017, Ch. 9: 5)

* Values for the year 1998 so divided:
  11 nature reserves + 2 ecological model areas; 1,015 sq.km of nature reserves + 4,347 sq.km of ecological model area (1 hectare=0,01 sq.km)
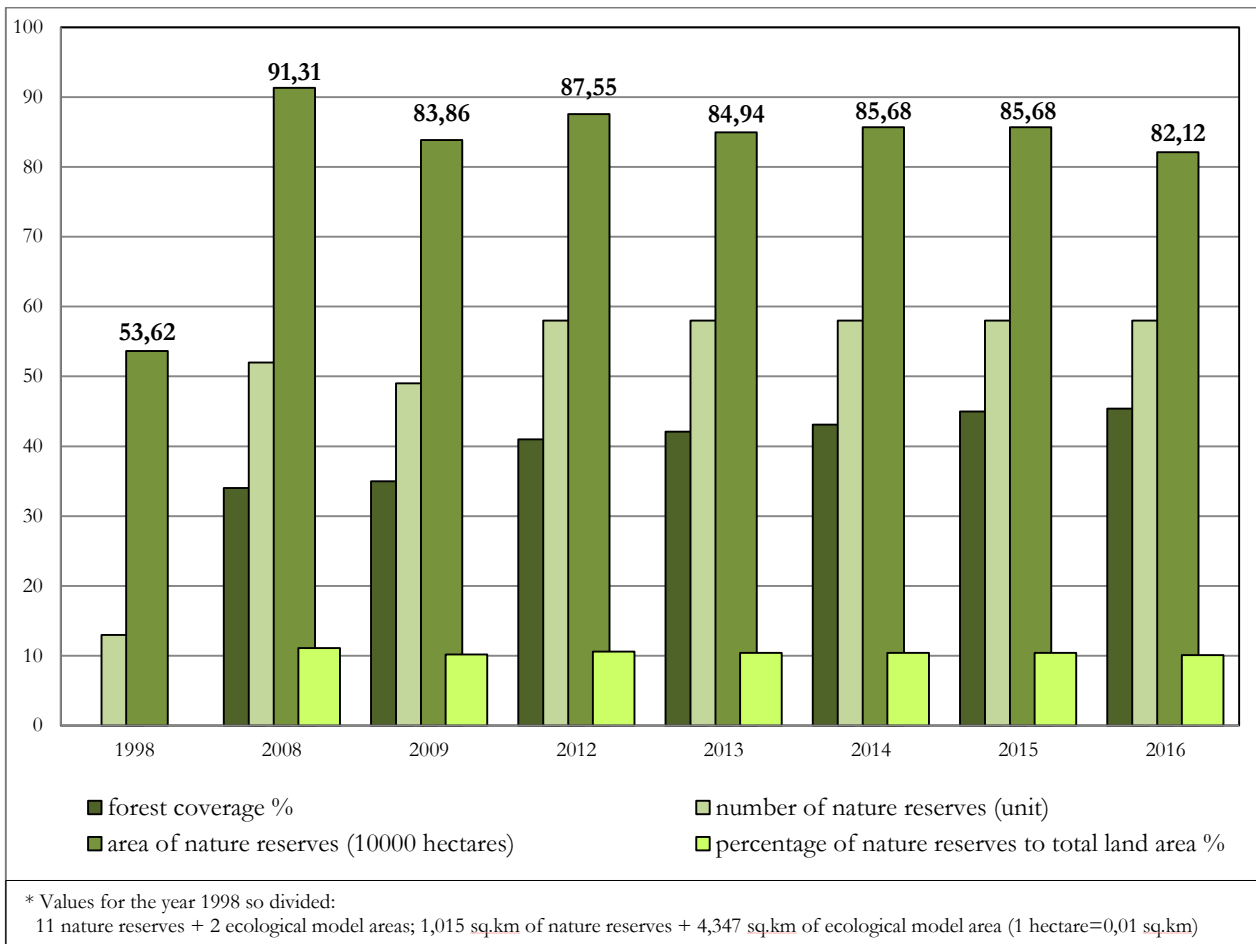
Table 7.4. Parks and green areas in Chongqing urban districts (CJW, 1999: 86-87; CTJ 2005: 4, 128-129; 2010: 184 and 2013- 2017, Ch. 8: 4)
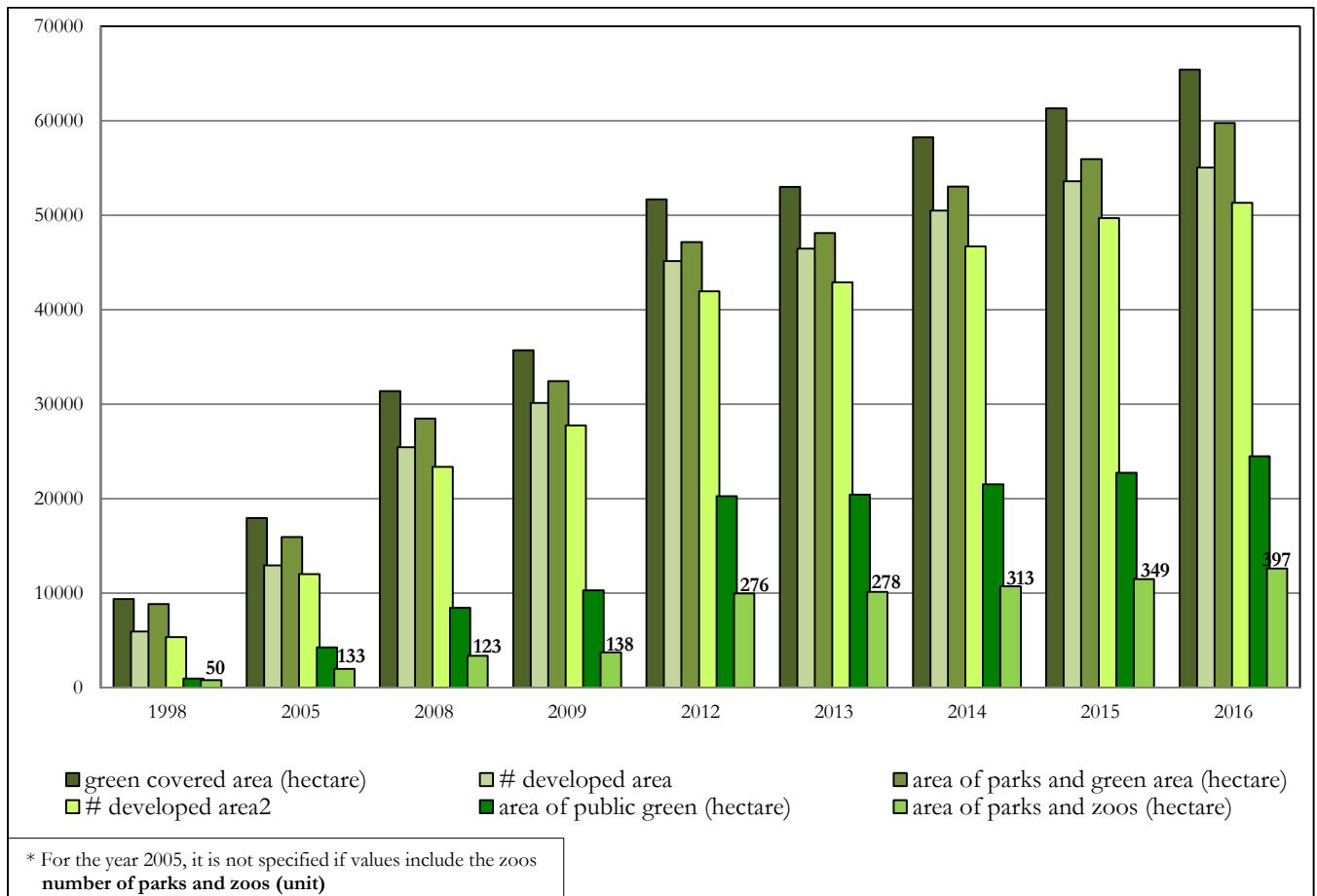
The peculiar ecological reform taking place in China, concerns not only the fetishist practices of consumerism, but also people's way of thinking in relation to the environment. Therefore, the party needs to "guide" the population towards the improvement of the cultural system with new signs. For instance, the central government must be on the forefront of the process of systematization/institutionalization (*zhiduhua*) of all those social aspects connected with the production of "smart energy", which are also in line with the "smart city" semi-utopian credo (cf. Ch. 5, note 19). The new technological path and the theoretically global request for a greater cooperation on the climate change issue, have also allowed the party to bring Deng Xiaoping's ideological strategy concerning ecology back to the field, reviving the propaganda motto "*shengtai wenming*" (Lin Zhen & Feng, 2014; Yang Lina, 2014). Bringing back the past, or rather speaking about *continuity* in the process of environmental civilization, nourishes the ideological vision of a party able to foresee the future economic and social trends, thus inflating people's minds with a unilineal perception of the state of things.

The ecological turning point is supported as a factual source of economic development for the local people, thus making clear that the marketing of sustainable goods and natural resources can produce a profit, such as through the reforestation business or the cultivation of slow-food/organic and sometimes "exotic" products (cf. *supra*, par. 7.1.1). Bishan and Nan'An Districts are two model areas out of the

thirty areas in Chongqing interested by conservation projects (Zhang Junhong et al., 2013: 284-285).[45] Forestry is also praised as a valid alternative to agriculture, and the prospective of becoming a migrant worker in the urban area. The media in Chongqing have propagandistically put attention on how the local government has been able to resettle the many people expropriated of their goods to make space for the construction of the Three Gorges Dam (2000s), in particular by relocating them within the suburban green areas to work in sustainable agriculture projects and reforestation. The economic revenue constitutes a fundamental incentive for the propagation of these environmentally friendly consumeristic practices (Huang Chunbo et al., 2018; Liu Wei, 2012a; Lu Hongyong, 2017; Peng Kai et al., 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Smil, 1993: 150-158; State Forestry and Grassland Administration, 2014e; Wang Jinnan et al., 1997; Zhang Wenjing, 2012a, 2012c):

> "In southwest China's Chongqing, there are totally 69 state-owned forest farms, among which, 67 are classified as public welfare institutions (Category I), which further promote ecological service of the farms for public welfare, and lay a solid basis for the ecological protection in Chongqing Province [sìc]" (Xin Shuyu, 2017).

As mentioned by the State Forestry and Grassland Administration (a governmental department whose scope is to promote best practices in forestry industry while safeguarding the ecosystems), state economy will receive greater impulse from this sector in the near future (State Forestry and Grassland Administration, 2014c, 2014d). The enormous business behind this practice is also made clear by the huge loans granted by the World Bank and other global institutions to Chongqing Municipality in order to supply the territory with new plantations, which should generate a future output (*ibid.*: 2014b).[46] In fact, the incomes deriving from the forestry sector and linked to the gradual expansion of the forest area, have been constantly increasing since 2005 (Tabs. 7.5, 7.6). In 2016 the gross output value was over 7 billion yuan, while the forestry commodities output was up to 5.2 billion yuan, showing a rapid increase since 2012 (+2 billion yuan). The amount of surface labeled as "forest area" is almost duplicated between the years 2014-2015, but the seeding raising area is actually diminished: In 1998 the seeding raising area was only about 375 hectares, and marked the point of saturation of the phenomenon in 2005 with 14,000 hectares. This means that now the local government gives a certain priority to already green areas previously appointed as "wasteland" zones rather than actually proceed with a total reforestation. As a matter of fact, the regional statistics can be misleading because they eclipse the fact that entire districts are losing huge areas of forest due to the developmental planning, while in other zones the reforestation is practiced so that statistical numbers can be kept stable, confirming that the process of re-greening is implemented as a pure industrial practice.

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[45] At the end of 2012 Chongqing was entitled as a "model city of environmental protection" by the central government since the local administration had been able to complete over 3,000 projects in eight years: "The 'construction of a biological civilization' passes through Chongqing" (Liu Wei, 2012).

[46] Bamboo is a favorite plantation because of its characteristics: Fast growth, adaptability to the ground, functionality (environmental shelters along the river banks), and quality of the cortex. The bamboo processing industry is on the rise (State Forestry and Grassland Administration, 2014a). Other plants are timber and fruit trees (*ibid.*: 2014b). Cf. also China Times (2012b), Ren Qiao (2012), and Zhang Wenjing (2012b).

Table 7.5. Forestry as primary sector: value of reforestation and exchange value of forestry products (CTJ 2013-17, Chs. 11: 5, 11: 14)
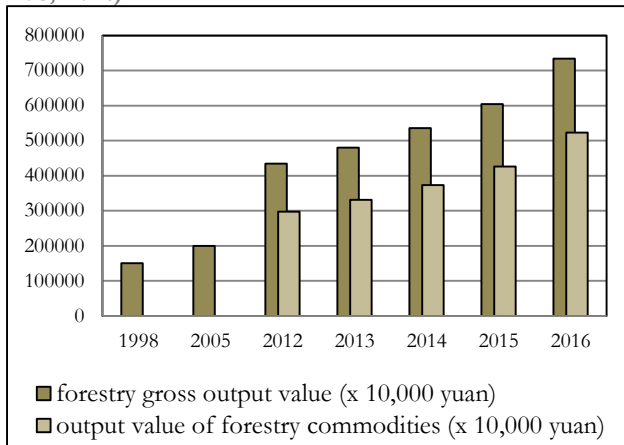
Table 7.6. Forestry as primary sector: new surface used per year in Chongqing (CTJ 2013-17, Ch. 11: 11)

forestry gross output value (x 10,000 yuan)
output value of forestry commodities (x 10,000 yuan)

increased forest area in current year
year-end area of hillsides closed for afforestation
seeding raising area
actual tending area for young and middle forest
* Value of the hillside area closed in 2014 unavailable
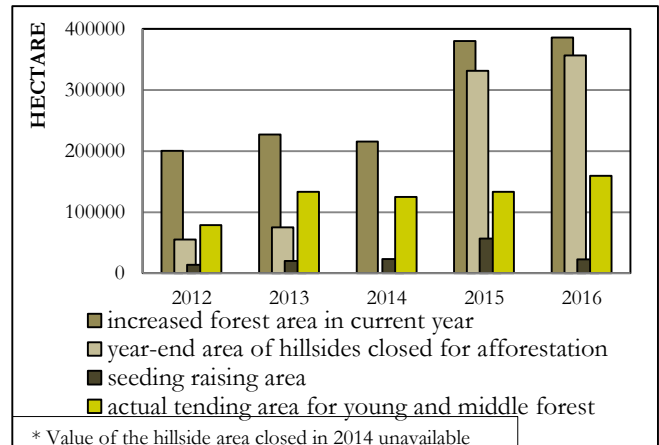
7.4.1 Local directives of surveillance and paternalistic manners

The natural landscape enriched by the Jialing-Yangzi watershed, represents for Chongqing Municipality a sort of "pot of gold", which management should be addressed properly in order to achieve a "harmonious development within the economic, social and environmental civilization":

> "[...] Every year in the Three Gorges Reservoir – Chongqing side – the service functions to implement the soil and water conservation in the forest are worth 1.48 billion yuan, of which 2,030,000 yuan to curb soil erosion; 11,960,000 yuan to prevent the silt deposits; 1.46 billion yuan for the protection of soil fertility" (Zhang Junhong et al., 2013: 284-285).

By the end of 2018, following the success of the river chiefs' system deployed at the local level to monitor the water quality in the major rivers (e.g. in Shanghai as explained in Lu Hongyong, 2017), the central government should carry on the implementation of the *lake chiefs' system*, i.e. local officials whose role is to monitor the water usage, control the grade of pollution of the lakes, and implement solid environmental regulations:

> "Establishing the lake chief system, [...] makes it clear local government leaders are *responsible* for the water resources in their areas.
> For a long time, the country's lakes have been threatened by land reclamation for development, the discharge of waste from industries, illegal aquaculture and sand excavation, among other things, which has resulted in the constant shrinking of the country's lakes, deterioration of the water environment and *degeneration* of the lake *functions*" (China Daily, 2018a; emphasis added).

The idea of the complete responsibility lying in the hands of local officials, who could be granted with a promotion on the basis of their performance, reconnects us to that grey sphere where the necessity for a greater environmental protection is glued to the market and the economic development of a place.[47]

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[47] Cf. Jing Yijia, Cui and Li (2015) on the politics of performance measurement in China.

Therefore, the establishment of such a closed and self-legitimizing system concurs to potentiate the risk of an excessive stagnation of power in the local administration (Fu Danni & Murphy, 2017).

The basic environmental problems such as the garbage collection, are approached with paternalistic manners by Chongqing government – from the district administrations down to the street offices, probably deriving this attitude from the idea of a continuous gap between the real living behaviors and the imagined standards of a civilized society. One frequent approach to "teach" people how to preserve the environment is to organize "model activities" that involve the presence of volunteers to show the population how to properly behave with regard to a certain problem. For instance in January 15-17, 2018, the Jijiang street office (Jiangjin District) organized the cleaning of the Yangzi shore at Tongtaimen wharf from the garbage accumulated by the nearby food market.[48] The staff was composed of members of the environmental management office, the local neighborhood, and the Jinsha Wuye Company. The official report concludes saying that "in order to establish a long-term mechanism of control, the military units will intensify monitoring the area to assure that people's behavior will be in compliance with the law, and the local control committees will be able to carry out more inspections to ensure that transgressors will be punished" (JJBSC, 2018).

This climate of control has recently been extended also to a traditional activity in Chongqing, namely swimming in the rivers. Whilst swimming in the Yangzi River can be easily associated with Mao's swim in 1966 – something already become a sort of "holy festivity" celebrated every year, the Janus face is instead represented by the list of dangerous places where people should not swim, that has been published by Chongqing maritime police. Not arguing the fact that swimming in rivers as large and deep as the Yangzi and the Jialing, is clearly potentially dangerous, what is worth noting here is that the places mentioned in the list are basically the main touristic spots in the city where a great number of foreigners can be found. This poses the question of whether the list should be read as *a preamble to shame* – the shame of letting half naked/naked men (basically!) bathe near the harbors of these recently renovated places, a practice that could undermine the new international image of the city, making the passing-by tourists and businessmen somehow uncomfortable with this "primitive reminiscence".[49] This directive is also in contrast with the propaganda article seen in par. 3.6, where the practice of free swimming is recalled to memory as a lost moment of purity and intimacy with the place, when the waters were clean and safe, and marked the slow mythical time of genuine human relationships. The dichotomy between rhetoric and deeds is a signal of the controversial politics taking place in Chongqing: The inevitability of social disruption and body control should be alleviated by the magic atmosphere of the myth.

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[48] The area coincides with Binjiang New Town; its planning was unraveled in 2013 by Jiangjin District local administration. This new urban settlement was designed as the "bright pearl of Chongqing second ring route – *Chongqing er huanxian shang de cuican mingzhu*" (Binjiang means "riverfront", and it is also the name of a famous district in Hangzhou). Cf. CQSJJQ (2013).

[49] The list includes places such as Chaotianmen, Ciqikou, both sides of the Shimen Bridge, Daxigou harbor, Nanbinlu, Beibei harbor (Chaoyang harbor), and also Beibei people's favorite spot to chill out and go fishing: Beibei Baiyunshi (Chongqing chenbao, 2013). To appreciate the radical change taking place at Chatianmen Port, cf. the pictures taken in September 2011 at https://dieblumenkohlrezepte.wordpress.com/2014/03/07/passion-magic-and-simplicity-in-the-south-west/#jp-carousel-668; https://dieblumenkohlrezepte.wordpress.com/2014/01/31/tempo-ingrato/. For a view of the daily activities happening along the Jialing River in Beibei District, cf. https://dieblumenkohlrezepte.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/life-on-jialing-banks-ii/#jp-carousel-1518; https://dieblumenkohlrezepte.wordpress.com/2015/03/09/life-on-jialing-banks-i/#jp-carousel-1519; https://dieblumenkohlrezepte.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/life-on-jialing-banks-ii/#jp-carousel-1521.

7.5   Conclusions

In this chapter I have analyzed and deconstructed the official media narratives implemented by the central government in order to systematize the demand for environmental protection into a process of marketing of the natural resources, in particular with regards to the construction of gated communities. Ecology as requested by Chinese people, becomes de facto a cultural product implemented in the territory in accordance with the state provisions, and through the spreading of propaganda posters and advertising. The artificial process of establishing water reservoirs in place of natural lakes, facilitates the subsequent implementation of a sophisticated mechanism of land renewal based on gentrification and zoning thanks also to the local government directives on water control and protection, which are based on the IWRM pattern. Since Chongqing forest and wildland could have blocked a type of urbanization based on "modern(ist)" standards, the local government proceeds annually to reallocate the economic functions to the territory, balancing the percentage of "wasteland" and "forest" according to the soil capacity of regeneration. This tactic creates a loophole to transcend the local measures on environmental protection, and moves the attention of the local society to a narrative focused on *control of natural phenomena* and *scientific protection* of the environment. In practice, this process gives rise to a sort of geography of happiness, which strategy (visible in the land fragmentation and gentrification) is disguised as a *service* provided by the government to the people as an answer to the social malaise caused by the environmental problems.

8. Conclusions

 The practice of water management has had a long and diversified history in China, resulting in the distortion of the landscape and the constant research for massive exploitation of natural resources. Since the theorization of the Chinese "hydraulic society" by Wittfogel in 1950s, historical studies concerning water management and "pre-modern" history have been focused on assessing the precise role covered by water in the state-building process and delineation of cultural models. This thesis moves a step away from this debate, preferring to focus on the networks of power originating around water, but not limited or fully alimented by it. However, in this work I have also made clear that water is an important determinant of Chongqing economic and socio-cultural conditions because of the particular conformation of local landscape, better defined as *waterscape* since the two main rivers, the Yangzi and the Jialing Rivers, together with the many lakes and water reservoirs, are the undisputed protagonists of the local environment. In fact, starting from the historic and cultural significance of water management in China and in Chongqing, I have unraveled which are nowadays the foundations of the party-state infrastructure at the local level, and which spatial changes are happening through the capital-driven metamorphosis of the urban. Within the sources of signification, domination, and legitimacy proper of the local administration during the transition towards an environmentally-friendly society and economy, propaganda has demonstrated to be focused on spreading the idea that the man-nature reunion is necessary to achieve a higher state of *spiritual happiness*. This has revealed the inconsistence between the narratives disclosed by the state apparatus and the real practices carried out in the territory administered by Chongqing Municipality to gain international recognition as economic hub in Southwest China. In particular, I have isolated the problem of land gentrification that is causing the enclosure of waterways previously accessible to the local population and used to perform daily habits such as fishing or swimming. I have pointed out how gentrification and land grabbing are not side effects of the given economic path, but rather they constitute leading phenomena of the capitalist-consumerist economic strategy, partly because the construction of upscale spaces (the enclaves) allows the elite itself to perform practices of self-gratification and self-censure. In fact, the idea of living in a natural environment protected by the pitfalls of urban pollution, may nurture the idea of deserving that "privileged space" more than "the masses"; furthermore, the misunderstanding of the enclaves as "depoliticized spaces" may satisfy the semblance of freedom people long for.

Because of the political nature of its administrative borders, the territory of Chongqing Municipality has been a favorite target for the experimentation of a particular form of "hegemonic governance", where the stakeholders accept the role of the party-state as ruler and arbitrator in all decisions. In practical terms, the need to monetize the land value and speed up the process of money circulation in this phase of "socialism 4.0", has favored those business activities that could at the same time invigorate the local government incomes and satisfy the upper-middle class desire for specific spaces of fruition, leading to the reconceptualization of the local space in terms of exchange value. This attitude has activated a system of "cleaning" of the watershed, which has become a symbol of a *network of power* and also a *vehicle of power* to the extent that the space is redesigned to please the upper-middle class conventional aesthetics. Environmental protection is turned into a slogan conveyed to the masses as an elitist skill, while richness and bodily health find their physical reproduction in certain places such as Beibei thermal baths. Finally, media advertising and a depoliticized *fengshui* culture are employed to support the legitimation of an imagined "spatialization of happiness".

As detected by the analysis of local statistics, the two economic sectors of housing construction and real-estate broker services have been almost constantly increasing in the recent years. This has facilitated the process of land segmentation due to the different affordability of the housing blocks. From this picture there stands in the eyes that the practice of land commodification has been deeply rooted in Yubei District where a vast portion of the local bureaucracy works, and where the spirit of "internationalism" was prompted through the construction of the Expo Park (also the product of the enclosure of a natural lake), the Yuelai International Convention Centre, a section of the Liangjiang New Area, and finally the presence of the international airport. The redistribution of the population displaced from the city centre to the outskirts of the main districts, has allowed the demolition of many historic neighborhoods; some of them have been later replaced by a fetishist reproduction of their old visual characteristics, even if the intrinsic soul of the place has gone irretrievably lost (e.g. Baixiangjie). Moreover, most of the setting derived from the destruction of entire urban blocks, has been purchased by big development companies with the purpose of reinventing the urban landscape in elitist keys, being it more suitable to attract the international business.

For what concerns the mainly internal upscale housing market, in this work I have analyzed in detail the relation existing between this economic sector, the image-building process, and the practice of spreading visual media messages, in particular those related to the considerable production of luxury space using the waterscape as a favorite representation of social status and cultural standards. In the production of new discourses of legitimacy, advertising and popular culture appear to be interwoven to the benefit of the upper-middle class. Other economic sectors benefit from the spreading of a gentrified urban structure, e.g. agriculture and mass tourism: The production of bio-organic niche products is linked to the proliferation of "countryside villas", and the objectification of the natural waterscape opens to new forms of land exploitation that combine "Western" active leisure practices to the Chinese experience of "observation" focused on admiring the landscape for its elusive, rarefied beauty.

Water plays a fundamental role in determining which is the best use for the annexed land in order to gain the highest profit. In this sense, Chongqing watershed is politicized not only because of the Three Gorges Reservoir (indeed the most visible example), but also, and even more interestingly, for the impact of water management to the entire urban structure. In fact, this thesis is mainly focused on the analysis of Chongqing city proper and its main districts, even if throughout the work there are some examples concerning the surrounding suburban districts of Nanchuan and Jiangjin, which are useful to outline the vast scope of the phenomenon of control and rearrangement of water uses and flows. Starting from the disclosure of "Chongqing comprehensive urban-rural planning" and the establishment of the Yangzi Economic-Environmental Belt, the performance of hegemonic strategies of land and water management promoted by the central government, shows how the new environmental narratives have little impact on the real problematics related to the ecosystem, and they rather produce new economic dynamics that enlarge the platform of exploitation of natural resources.

This form of integrated management of the resources is based on the echo of the methodology arisen along with the modernist wave during the republican period, and it is particularly related to the historic moment when Chongqing became the provisional capital of China (1937-1946). By developing the topic of "water as archetypical sign" and its correlations to local culture, I have therefore included the scientific experiments carried out in Chongqing during the republican period, and concerning the management of local waters (flood control, hygiene, hydropower production, etc.), to align the modernist "scientific fever" with the idea of a ritual based on the long-lasting desire to subjugate the natural forces. The still visible legacy and the historical meaning of these modernist works, enable the

current local government to make use of the language of the past to rewrite the past and consolidate the sharing of significance. This helps the design of a "future Chongqing" comprehensible to most of its inhabitants – hence the idea of *continuity* in the reproduction of the urban image and in the use of its resources.

This happens thanks to a form of governance based on a mutual interest between the central and local governments that allows the implementation of despotic practices, among which is included the production of fetishist images of a future (dreamed) China and also of the past, as in the imagined reconstruction of the water experience recollected through personal memories. In fact, in order to survive through the changing times, the Chinese government has turned itself to the past of the country as an almost infinite spring of ideas on which sew up stories of legitimacy, which power is measured by the capacity to feed the internal economic market and its new consumerist needs "with Chinese characteristics". The passage to an organic vision of "landscape as cultural by-product" is facilitated by the media that produce associations between personal memories and community green activities: This practice is clearly embedded in the broader national narrative aimed at supporting the industrial conversion into green/smart energies that should maintain the country competitive in the global market. At the same time the consequences deriving from the totalization of nature as a consumer good, are not given much consideration by large sections of society due to support to the environmental politics adopted by the central government, and personal material earnings. Space for criticism is on the brink of illegality, and mainly filled out by satire and sarcasm. However, a minimum level of civil society can be found, for instance, when a "virtual" community of people with in common the angling hobby, provides some insights on how resistance, group consciousness, acceptance, and satire work together to build a certain sense of solidarity. In this community people are not connected via class status but rather through a trans-class hobby: Using sarcasm and funny jokes to satirize and play down on the lakes enclosure, and therefore on new power geometries of neoliberal matrix, represents a way to lower the barriers of self-censorship, while relating the everyday routine to the sense of place and the performance of happiness in/with nature.

The reconstruction of Chongqing *image* (a sort of "Chongqing renaissance") has been evaluated through the study of the mechanisms of housing and water markets, the legislation, the significance of architectural and landscape aesthetics, the latest trends in urban planning, and the recursive use made of specific legacies, collecting visual material and both official and "unofficial" data. The outcome is a creative assemblage of relationships that wants to invite the readers to "think out of the system", avoiding the ideological impasse caused by the reproduction and "scientific" legitimation of the same discourses used by the "structures of domination", as Gregory called the forms of hegemonic governance (Gregory, 1980). The main results are the evaluation of gentrification process as a large scale phenomenon that exploits the landscape extremely loaded with ideological power; the attesting of a certain inclination to real estate speculation, in particular in Yubei District; the confirmation of overlapping space structures, where local and central government's interests are combined together forging a maximum form of territorial exploitation (e.g. Liangjiang New Area and Yubei District). Furthermore, a return to traditional, "classic" aesthetics is accompanied by the assimilation of Western practices and behaviors, without there being a critical public reading of the phenomenon.

Therefore, this work has been particularly focused in pointing out 1) the specific way in which the local government, covering the role of regulator upon the other stakeholders interested in urban development

(constructors, real estate agencies, tertiary services, etc.), has been able to concoct all these forces into the same ideological language, 2) how Chongqing spatiality has been modified by/for the performance of new practices, 3) what are the main discourses, signs, and significances entailed in the process; 4) how legacy in the guise of historical scientific knowledge is appointed to recreate a new meaningful geography of the city and its watershed. In relation to this, here I want to finally stress the main geo-anthropological contributions that this work has sought to give to the fields of urban studies and water studies, and in particular to the studies on urban ecology, identity-building related to environmental justice, the creation of new *imaginary spaces*, and the spatiality of power with its dialogic structures.

First, my analysis of a particular issue related to the man-nature relation, and in particular to the participation of water in the identity-building process of Chongqing people and their personal material and spiritual happiness, has shed light on some problematics related to water management in both the Chinese context and at a global level. Indeed, environmental practices embedded in a commodified space lead to controversial outcomes as pointed out in the literature (Baghel, 2013; Gandy, 2015; Bao Maohong, 2010; Qu Geping & Li, 1994; Smith, 1997; Swyngedouw, Kaïka & Castro, 2002; Zhang JF & Deng, 2010), however, the general idea that the struggle for environmental protection and justice should be aligned to the advancement in the capitalistic crisis regime (Benton, 1996), is quite illusionary. In Chongqing case, the recognition of an environmental problem is connected with the previous historic phase of socialist production ending in the late nineties, and the public debate cannot easily question the issue of land gentrification and water mismanagement happening nowadays without stumbling into the unconstitutional area of judgement of the party-state internal affairs. When the municipal government has endorsed a process of waterscape "cleaning" (e.g. industrial displacement outside the city centre), this has been done because in compliance with the broader strategy of rebuilding of Chongqing image (*beautification* process). The new "clean" zones, together with pristine areas of aesthetic significance, have been turned into objects of exploitation for the construction of gated communities, thus profoundly marking the fundamental of social inequality as "propellant" of the local political-economic choices.

For what concern the studies on water in general, looking at the corporate infiltration in Chinese water management, it emerges that non-Chinese companies prefer to use slogans related to environmental discourses in force globally rather than absorb the orthodox language spread by the party. This is done in order to demonstrate a certain grade of autonomy of the joint-ventures from the state regime. However, both Chinese and foreign corporations are adopting similar methods of exploitation of natural resources based on the "integrated water resources management" (IWRM) as predicted by many scholars (Molle, 2006, 2008; Molle, Mollinga & Wester, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2009), and manifested through the "integrated rural-urban planning" and the "modern agricultural model zones", whose national pillar is constituted by the Chongqing-Chengdu axis. The intrusion of financial mechanisms is strong (WTO, World Bank, ADB, etc.), and supportive of the technocratic-neoliberal approach where scientific knowledge alters the perception of water into a representation. Comparative studies between the IWRM implementation in China and in other "model countries" (Browder, G. J. et al., 2007; Speed 2009a; Sun Peter, 1994; Xie Jian et al., 2009; Yang Xiaoliu et al., 2009; Wong Christine, 2000), being financed by the same organisms that promote the diffusion of IWRM worldwide, take for granted the idea of IWRM as the best solution for the overall management of natural resources without facing the reality of discrimination and social division carried on by certain practices.

Discourses on environmental justice must be linked to the process of identity-building and the idea of social consciousness, especially in China where this term has a strong political significance. Building on Žižek's idea of "fetishism in practice", I have considered how conformism allows a certain grade of acceptance of the local politics. This is favored also by instrumental reason that solicits the diffusion of socialist orthodox ideas embedded in the contrasting epoch of consumerism, allowing the party to use these two contradictory sources of meaning at the same time. Therefore, the contemporary ecological reform of social consciousness has little to do with the Maoist request of constant skepticism, being projected towards a certain functionality necessary to the party-state, and based on the promotion of nationalism and patriotism rather than class struggle.

Political elite and market stakeholders nurture the idea that the upper-middle class holds the knowledge necessary to protect nature at best, as visually and verbally emphasized by gated community advertising. The rich are invested with the duty to protect the environment by living in newly built villas that are a product of the enclosure of hilly slopes and waterways. The ecological system should not be altered by its inhabitants, whose living performance is ensured by the reflexive behaviors enacted within this exclusive space. Despite the demagogy, this discourse is however supported by the numbers: In Chongqing there are 204 enclaves that have obtained the permission to use the local landscape as active element to enhance the monetary value of the property, with a construction peak in the last five years. The duty/privilege to cherish the local waterscape is also advertised as a sort of *meritocratic game* based on the rules of capital circulation. Therefore, the message of environmental justice "for all" is overturned by the idea that those who succeed in social climbing have more rights to enjoy the spaces of pristine nature. The language employed by the party-state is ambivalent: On one side, it declares war to social disparity, environmental exploitation, and economic waste, while on the other side it promotes planning methods based on territoriality, zoning, and exclusion. Following Douglas' theorization of the cultural evaluation of risk based on social control and cohesion (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982), I could point out how the spreading of scientific information regarding flood risks and environmental changes at the local level, are used as sources of significance for the works of lake and forest privatization. These practices are also supported by law.

Taking Chongqing as case study, this work has offered insights into the analysis of urban China, and in particular the south-western region in its stage of late development. In line with those scholars questioning the environmental impact of the "open-up the West" campaign (cf. Economy, 2012; Goodman, 2004; Smith, 1997), in this work I have extensively demonstrated how the local waterscape is undergoing a process of extreme commodification, whose problematics have become clear at the social level but are still not completely visible in terms of environmental pollution. Analyzing Chongqing urban space during the institutional change that has promoted the diffusion of gated communities in the central and suburban districts, I have posed a critique to the postmodern vision of "the city as chaos", according to which the implosion of the city centre should uniformly produce eco-social monsters. In this context the enclaves should represent the sense of alienation and fear derived from living in atomized societies (Bauman, 2005; Davis, 2006; Mitchell, 2005). Drawing on Marcus' idea of "the house as the mirror of the self" (Marcus, 1997), I have pointed out how in Chongqing this housing solution does not contradict the "Western" meaning, but it also entails significances more related to the cultural experience of private space and the surrounding landscape based on *fengshui* precepts, Chinese aesthetics, and the "wall" tradition. Urban planning itself as scientific practice shows how the role of the local government is still fundamental in the decision-making process, and how the need for class homogeneity

is balanced by a fierce fight against the creation of peri-urban slums and urban villages. The result is a mixed land-use policy that prevents the extreme sectoralisation of the single districts, and maintains alive the radial influence of the city centre to the surrounding territory.

The analysis of the enclave spatial distribution is inspired by Harvey's economic scientific concepts of "spatio-temporal fix" and capitalism based on dispossession (Harvey, 2003), which are also used to analyze the phenomenon of urban space commodification (Harvey, 1989b, 2004; Jessop, 2000; Smith, 2002; Soja, 2003). On the one hand, I have applied the concept to study the new role covered by specific economic sectors in Chongqing economy, i.e. construction industry and upscale real estate sector (advertising industry included). This has allowed me to raise some important questions for the scholarship of local development and advanced capitalism, in particular in reference to the idea that the sharpening of the social crisis is an inevitable outcome of the expanded reproduction and dispossession. The case of Chongqing demonstrates how the local government has been able to create both new urban spaces for the population displaced from the city centre, and new employment chances thanks to "integrated urban-rural planning" logics (agriculture, forestry, mass-tourism), so to stabilize social malaises. In this way, the local government has been able to postpone the social crisis as a local mass event. On the other hand, I think I have been able to show that the Chinese process of "insularity" based on a positive-sum-game relationship (Arrighi, 2005a), works also at the internal level in terms of welfare and social stability. I refer to the environment-friendly industrial and social practices that are partially borrowed from foreign experiences, and transformed into an ideological tool for the immediate benefit of the local elite.

Investigating how Chongqing government is remodeling the locale to respond to consumerist needs and create new financial opportunities in line with the central government regulations, this thesis has embraced Lefebvre's theoretical position of "space as social construct" deriving from dialectics of power and resistance, that allows the recursive performance of social practices and emotions (Lefebvre, 1991; Livingstone, 1995; Löw, 2008). Being both "physical space" and "atmosphere" informed by those signifiers proper of culture, class, and gender, their symbolic power is determined by the *relational position* assumed by agents and social goods (Katz, 2003; Massey, 2004).

Following this theoretical framework, it would be limiting to consider the rebuilding of Chongqing image as a process of scaling where the global influence represents the cause and the model for the local changes. In fact, "scaling" itself as analytical concept has become part of the propaganda vocabulary used by the party-state to justify certain politics, well sufficing the logics of the current economic-geopolitical structure (Jessop, 2000; Soja, 2003). Therefore, I have combined the scaling pattern to the idea of networks that develop through "the compression of time and the stretching of place" (Amin, 2002; Brenner, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2000, 2004, 2005), trying to be more critical on how to define the established and recently-developed spatial trajectories of power. In accordance with this line of thought, happiness is spatialized through different patterns embedded in the waterscape as idea and representation, and in the watershed as praxis. These patterns respond to the logics of hegemony (law, urban planning, architecture, mass media) and resistance (blogging platforms, WeChat).

In discussing the proliferation of gated communities in relation to watershed management, urban planning of central districts, and local architecture, this thesis has consciously made use of the terms developed by the above authors and by the methodological structure supported by semiotics, to stress

the idea that the significance of the urban is an unfinished process that is necessarily remodeled following class and cultural divisions.

A major role in Chongqing image-remaking is played by the media apparatus that includes local propaganda posters and private advertising spread through billboards, flyers, newspapers, and the internet. In the attempt to make visible a specific idea of happiness related to wealth, hygiene, and environmental protection, local government and advertising industry are adopting a common language to build *imaginary spaces*. Thus, in this work I have stressed the idea that through a process of "immersion" (Bartlem, 2005), the informed viewer participates in the elaboration of significance by grasping the connotative culturally-imbued meaning hidden in the image, which has been ideologically manipulated to enforce the hegemonic path of governance (Lyotard, 1982), using what Bourdieu calls "symbolic power" (Bourdieu, 2013). A step forward in the process of commodification of the natural environment happens when the "immersion in wild nature" is transferred from the image to the real, i.e. when the watershed is remodeled according to the representation: The result is the creation of *simulacra*, that in this thesis have been identified with the spaces of exclusion (the enclaves), but also with specific places devoted to the practice of mass tourism and food commodification (eco-parks, vineyards, niche farming practices). Promoting "comprehensive urban-rural planning" logics is therefore a strategy that allows the creation of consumption spaces for both the upper-middle class *and* the rest of the population, thus theoretically providing everyone with creative tools to perform happiness in line with the orthodox environmentalist-consumerist view.

To create such spaces, it is fundamental to have a deep knowledge of the local history, its material heritage and intangible legacies. For this reason, this work has investigated also the historical landscape of Chongqing starting from the end of the "pre-modern" until the end of the republican period, covering the topics of space-building in the urban and through the imaginary (the analysis of old maps in Ch. 3), water management (also in Ch. 3), regional planning as theorized by Skinner (Ch. 4), and local architecture (Ch. 5). Particular attention has been put to those elements institutionalized in time, and those that have been ideologically selected to compose the contemporary understanding of the urban. This part is based on the scholarship promoting historical landscape as a cultural production given by the dialogic encounter between nature and human knowledge (Bird, 1987; Cosgrove, 1998; Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988; Geertz, 2000; Spirn, 1998), the scholarship favoring the idea of nature as active protagonist in the history of human civilization (Bao Maohong, 2010; Elvin, 2004; Marks, 1998; Strang, 1997, 2009), and the scholarship on heritage as a human attempt to make the past tangible and reproducible through materiality (Ashworth & Graham, 2005: 3-11, 206-208; Graham, 2002; Hall, 1997).

Lastly, this work contributes to the field of study of Chinese politics and the debate over the transitional phase of the Chinese state. In various aspects of my analysis, I have connected Chongqing "rebirth" and "happiness research" with the national institutional change, particularly in relation to the management of natural resources and the selective behavior of local and central governments towards the different members of local communities. The shift from production to consumption that touches also the local waterscape, is index of the altered political conditions, where some scholars have seen the beginning of "liberal", "neoliberal", "post" phases, with clear indication of a "Western" assimilation of the capitalist economic practices and the subsequent "retreat" of the state from the social (Ding X. L., 1994; Mertha, 2009b; Kipnis, 2007; Wong, 2011; Wu Fulong, 1999, 2002; Xing Quan Zhan, 2000, Yang Ying, 2016;

Zhang Zhiming, 2011). However, I am more prone to use the term "socialism 4.0" to point out the complexity of Chinese political-economic choices, where the opening to market consumeristic practices does not necessarily imply that party-state and society run on two different tracks, on the contrary, consumerism is part of the state strategy to reconnect the population to the party. The coercive component of this strategy is made by the use of smart technology and systematized informatization as means of control, prevention, and compulsory re-education. In this work, through visual and discourse analysis of the current land gentrification process in Chongqing, the intention has been to highlight the dialectics that activate the phenomenon through the constant agency not only of politicians and market players but also of the population.

On the other hand, even if Chinese social problems are "not exceptional in relation to those ones afflicting liberal corporate economies" (Dirlik, 2012: 289), it is improper to consider China as a *paradigm* of socio-economic development because the approaches and solutions applied on the territory are peculiar and defined by Chinese specificities.

Structural continuity and creativity are at the basis of the recursive process of state-building (Gramsci, 2012; Rošker, 2010; Tuan Yi-fu, 1979); in China, the hegemonic system is based on a solid infrastructure and a multilayered application of governance mechanisms. The ability of the CCP to readjust the internal economic narrative to the global environmental context, has enhanced the public trust towards the party and its main figure, i.e. President Xi Jinping, who can be considered a "*despot – ba*" based on the terms explained in chapter two (Xunzi 7: lb-5b. Cf. Zhang Li, 2015). Establishing public confidence, the party has temporarily reconciled the problem of social disparities through the dissemination of selective knowledge on the idea of imminent widespread economic welfare based on the "China Dream" vocabulary (*xiaokang shehui*). At the same time, the upper-middle class quest for "spiritual happiness" is accomplished by the approval of contingent spatial structures of exclusion within the urban, creating the illusion of "living a dream". The tangible economic and cultural gap between social classes is leveled by the visual perspective of "future possibility for richness" as theorized by Baudrillard's "political economy of sign" (Baudrillard, 1981), which are implemented by the propaganda apparatus and the advertising industry.

Directions Forward

In concluding this thesis, I wish to point out how this work could be integrated and expanded. Firstly, the research could be strengthened by a follow-up concerning local people's attitudes towards the growing phenomenon of restriction to water resources, land readjustment to much more profitable scopes, zoning and the consequent dislocation of the most disadvantaged part of the population far away from the central districts. In particular, it could be interesting to hear the voices of the people negatively affected by the radical changes happening in the territory, so to see which are the discourses and narratives that dominate the vocabulary of these people in order to give a meaning to what happens in Chongqing. Because of time lacking and the large scope of this sectorial work, I could not dive deep into this topic by my own. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, I would suggest to enter in contact with local authorities and/or university faculties, and provide them with a solid plan of study before proceeding in the field. It should be especially highlighted why this study could help improve the

relationship between government and local people, accentuating the process of mutual recognition and respect as wished in a harmonious society.

However, the phenomenon of the spreading of gated communities along the lake shores located not only within the urban perimeter but also in pristine lands on the outskirts of the city, reveals how the process of land fragmentation intrinsic to Chongqing urban planning is going to radically change the landscape of the entire municipality. The idea of carrying on an organic, comprehensive urban-rural planning, in fact, will reveal its downsizes in the next future, particularly in the countryside as an entity no more detached from the city. At the local level there is a high risk for the population to lose control over the natural resources due to the market mechanisms of exploitation and displacement, and be passive spectators of the reification of the entire countryside into a romantic set where urban people can perform their fetishist practices of consumeristic lifestyle. Therefore, there might actually happen a further marginalization of under-represented individuals – women and non-Han communities living in the countryside, e.g. in Youyang and Xiushan Autonomous Counties, but also the less well-to-do social class once residing near the city centre and recently displaced to the peri-urban area. Further research in this direction is advisable, in particular on the gender and ethnic perspectives of water and land management in the periphery of Chongqing Municipality, focusing also on what kinds of space are created, recreated, and re-performed in the process, and their significance for the people living them.

In light of this summary, I hope that through this work there have been answered some preliminary questions concerning not only the particular management of water and annexed resources in Chongqing, through which an artificial *state of happiness* based on land gentrification, exclusion, and uneven access to public resources is in the process of being created to satisfy the needs of the local elite, but also how the phenomenon of mass tourism is deployed to favor the proliferation of the enclaves and their legitimation. To conclude, a critical analysis of this complex system has been possible thanks to the advancement in the use of dialectics to rationalize the problem from different angles and perspectives. I would encourage the further implementation of this method through which interesting holistic outcomes can be appreciated.

Appendix I.
List of enclaves exploiting the waterscape (early 2000s – 2020)

This list has been compiled by crossing data derived from the analysis of satellite images (*Baidu ditu*, *Google Earth*), and from the online platforms hosting the housing broker advertisements, e.g. cq.fang.com, cq.fang.anjuke.com, cq.lianjia.com, cq.leju.com. Data are updated to January, 2019. At the moment in Chongqing there is a total of 400 gated communities (already built/under construction), of which 204 make use of natural resources to build acculturated landscapes. The first examples of enclaves, i.e. those ones built in the early 2000s, are highlighted: It appears that the process of land gentrification has started with the building of gated communities near the city centre (Yuzhong), in particular in Nan'An (Nan Mount), Jiangbei, and Jiulongpo Districts. Sporadic examples of zoning before 2010 are also found in Yubei District, mainly on the mounts near the airport and near the lakes in the vicinity of the city centre. A map displaying the exact location of the gated communities is provided in Annex II.[1]

District	No. assigned on Annex II	Enclave Name	Link
Enclaves surrounded by waterscape			
Yuzhong (3)	1.	SHUI ON LAND RIVIERA 新天地 *Xintiandi*	http://www.shuionland.com/en-us/property/detail/chongqing_tiandi
	2.	XIEXIN-SINCERE Acadia - RIVER CITY 27 PEAKS 重庆协信阿卡迪亚 江域二十七峰 *Chongqing Xiexin Acadia Jiang cheng ershiqi feng*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/367506975272071
	3.	CHONGQING RUFFLES CITY 重庆来福士 *Chongqing laifushe*	http://cq.xinfangke.xyz/pc/index/floor_info/251.html
Nan'An (25)	10.	A GREATLY ESTABLISHED GOLDEN CORNER – NAN MOUNT NEIGHBORHOOD 金隅大成南山郡 *Jinyu dacheng nanshan jun*	http://cq.loupan.com/loupan/6158325.html
	11.	JINKE CENTRAL IMPERIAL YARD 金科中央御院别墅 *Jinke zhongyang yuyuan bieshu*	http://zhongyangyuyuanjk.fang.com/
	12.	ZHONGTIE (China Railway) LEISURE TIME 中铁山水时光 *Zhongtie shanshui shiguang*	https://cq.fang.ke.com/loupan/p_ztbmsgaaxep/?utm_source=baidu_xf&utm_medium=alading&utm_term=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_content=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_campaign=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86
	13.	QINGLONG GOLF INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD 庆隆高尔夫国际社区 *Qinglong gaoerfu guoji shequ*	http://nanshangaoerfuql.fang.com/
	14.	ZHONGYUAN MOUNT SLOPE SMALL SETTLEMENT 中原地产坡岭顿小镇 *Zhongyuan dichan po ling dun xiao zhen*	https://falanxifengdanli.fang.com/
	15.	CHANGQING LAKE VILLA 长青湖别墅 *Changqing hu bieshu*	https://m.fang.com/xiaoqu/cq/3110067984.html?sf_source=bdjz_esf (2004)
	16.	RONGCHUANG YIDUN (ETON) VILLAGE PARK 融创・伊顿庄园 *Rongchuang yidun zhuang yuan*	https://yidunzhuangyuanrc.fang.com/
	17.	ZHONGTIE MOUNT & WATERS TIME 中铁山水时光	https://shanshuishiguangzgtj.fang.com/

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[1] The enclaves entail specific zones dedicated to "countryside villas" mainly formulated according to "Western" parameters of aesthetics and disposition of the housing internal spaces. The houses, garden included, are up to 150-180 sq.m, or more (e.g. the enclave no. 311 has sixteen villas with 600/700 sq.m each). Luxurious apartments in housing blocks/skyscrapers are also partly listed, since they are the latest form of urbanity that the land developers are importing in Chongqing. The price ranges between 13,000 and 20,000 yuan/sq.m, or more. Due to the financial market housing speculation, local politics and external factors, the prices can be subjected to considerable fluctuations over a limited period of time.

		Zhongtie shanshui shiguang	
	18.	LONGFOR BEAUTIFUL RIVER 龙湖郦江 *Longhu li jiang*	https://longhulijiang.fang.com/
	19.	CHONGQING ZHONGHAI VILLA ON THE PEAK 重庆中海峰墅 *Chongqing Zhonghai feng shu*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/383824.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	20.	YUNENG INTERNATIONAL VILLA 渝能国际别墅 *Yuneng guoji bieshu*	https://yunengguoji.fang.com/villa/ (2006)
	21.	CHONGQING GREEN LAKE MOUNT VILLAGE VILLA 重庆翠湖山庄别墅 *Chongqing cui hu shan zhuang bieshu*	https://cuihushanzhuang023.fang.com/ (2000)
	22.	CANADA INTERNATIONAL GARDEN 加拿大国际花园 *Jianada guoji huayuan*	https://guojihuayuanjnd.fang.com/ (2000)
	23.	ROSE VILLA 玫瑰山庄 *Meigui shan zhuang*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611060990343/
	24.	JINHUI TOWN - RIVER OUTSTANDING TOWN 金辉城江城著 *Jinhui cheng jiang cheng zhu*	https://jiangchengzhujhc.fang.com/
	25.	JINHUI IMPERIAL RIVER RESIDENCE 金辉御江府 *Jinhui yu jiang fu*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm925084/
	26.	RONGQIAO TOWN - FLOWER LAKE SANDBANK 融侨城-花湖汀 *Rongqiao cheng - hua hu ting*	https://rongqiaochenghuahuting.fang.com/ (2009)
	27.	JINHUI RONGQIAO TOWN - ACROSS THE RIVER & CLOUDS 金辉融侨城江云渡 *Jinhui rongqiao cheng jiang yun du*	https://cq.esf.fang.com/villaintegrate-xm3111049012/
	28.	RONGQIAO PENINSULA BREEZE ON THE SAND BAR A-B NEIGHBORHOOD 融侨半岛风临洲 A－B 区 *Rongqiao bandao feng lin zhou A-B qu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611060972338/ (2003)
	29.	CHONGQING SECULAR GARDEN 重庆世纪花园 *Chongqing shiji huayuan*	https://shijiahuayuan.fang.com/villa/ (2005)
	30.	SUNSHINING TOWN 中天·阳光美地 *Zhongtian yangguang mei di*	https://yangguangmeidizt.fang.com/ (2005)
	31.	LONGXIN 72 MANSIONS 隆鑫 72 府 *Longxin 72 fu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3620021980505278/
	32.	BEAUTIFUL HOUSE NANBIN YARD 美每家南滨上院 *Mei mujia Nanbin shang yuan*	https://nanbinshangyuanmmj.fang.com/
	33.	VANKE GOLD LAND SEAT OF LEARNING 万科金域学府 *Wanke jin yu xuefu*	https://www.anjuke.com/xinfang/cq-lp250747/
	34.	BLUE LIGHT WOOD ESSENCE PARK 蓝光林肯公园 *Lan guang lin ken gongyuan*	https://langguanglinkengongyuan023.fang.com/villa/
Banan (19)	40.	BAOLI SMALL SPRING COUNTRY VILLA 保利小泉别墅 *Baoli xiaoquan bieshu*	https://baolixiaoquan.fang.com/
	41.	YUANYANG GOLF INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD 远洋高尔夫国际社区 *Yuanyang gaoerfu guoji shequ*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3610616914063394
	42.	DIANYA HUA STREAM PENINSULA VILLA 典雅花溪半岛别墅 *Dianya hua xi bandao bieshu*	https://dianyahuaxibandao.fang.com/villa/
	43.	BAOLI LAKE & MOUNT DEER CALL 保亿湖山鹿鸣 *Baoli hu shan lu ming*	https://byhslm2.fang.com/
	44.	ZONGSHEN GOLD GREEN BAY 宗申金蓝湾 *Zongshen jin lan wan*	https://jinlanwanzs.fang.com/
	45.	JINKE JIMEI BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL BAY 金科·集美锦湾 *Jinke Jimei jin wan*	https://jimeijinwanjkxopra.fang.com/esf/
	46.	ZONGSHEN YOUTH INTERNATIONAL 宗申青年国际 *Zongshen qingnian guoji*	https://qingnianguojizs.fang.com/
	47.	HUAYU SMALL SPRING VILLA 华宇小泉雅舍 *Huazi xiao quan yashe*	https://huayuxiaoquan.fang.com/
	48.	DONGXU IMPERIAL RIVER BAY 东旭御江湾 *Dongxu yu jiang wan*	http://cq.fzg360.com/house/home/id/1458.html
	49.	HUANING DRAGON BAY 华宇龙湾 *Huaning long wan*	https://huayulongwan.fang.com/
	50.	QINGNENG SMALL SOUTH-SEA GARDEN 清能小南海花园 *Qingneng xiao nan hai huayuan*	https://xiaonanhaiqn.fang.com/
	51.	RONGSHENG BINJIANG GREAT VILLA 荣盛滨江华府 *Rongsheng binjiang hua fu*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/huxing/416688-266658.html?from=huxinglist_huxing
	52.	PEARL RIVER TOWN 珠江城 *Zhu jiang cheng*	https://cq.esf.fang.com/house-xm3110119742/
	53.	QIANJIANG REACHING THE CLOUDS 千江凌云	https://cq.news.fang.com/house/3110120958_39

		Qianjiang lingyun	13581.htm
	54.	RONGHUI PENINSULA 5ᵀᴴ PHASE - D BLOCK 融汇半岛 5 期–D 区 *Ronghui bandao wu qi D qu*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm911737/ (2009)
	55.	RONGHUI RIVER & MOUNTS - E BLOCK 融汇江山–E 区 *Ronghui jiang shan E qu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611059386580
	56.	LONGFOR MIRROR OF A JOYFUL SKY OVER THE RIVER 龙湖春江天镜 *Longhu chun jiangtian jing*	https://chunjiangtianjinglh.fang.com/
	57.	CHONGQING HENGDA CITY 1ˢᵀ PHASE 重庆·恒大城–一期 *Chongqing Hengda cheng yi qi*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/community/view/199562 (2009)
	58.	CHONGQING HENGDA CITY 2ᴺᴰ PHASE 重庆·恒大城–二期 *Chongqing Hengda cheng er qi*	https://m.anjuke.com/cq/community/825266/ (2009)
Jiangbei (27)	60.	LUNENG CELEBRITY CITY BUND 鲁能星城外滩 *Luneng xing cheng waitan*	https://xingchengwaitanln.fang.com/
	61.	BAIFU GOLF VILLAS 佰富·高尔夫别墅 *Baifu gaoerfu bieshu*	http://gaoerfubieshubf.fang.com/ (2010)
	62.	HONGFAN PHOENIX BAY BIG VILLAS 宏帆凤凰湾大别墅 *Hongfan fenghuang wan da bieshu*	http://cq.esf.fang.com/house-xm3111157688/ (2010)
	63.	VANKE HAPPY BAY 万科悦湾 *Wanke yue wan*	http://wankeyuewan.fang.com/photo/d_other_167422741.htm
	64.	ZHONGHAI PURPLE IMPERIAL MOUNT & RIVER 中海紫御江山 *Zhonghai zi yu jiangshan*	https://ziyujiangshan.fang.com/
	65.	LONGFOR SPRING FOREST IDEAL REALM 龙湖春森彼岸 *Longhu chun sen bi'an*	https://chunsenbianlh.fang.com/
	66.	LONGFOR STARRY STREET - STAR HAPPINESS & ABUNDANCE 龙湖星悦荟 *Longhu xing yue hui*	https://xingyuehuilh029.fang.com/
	67.	PENGHUI STAR LIGHT ON EARTH 鹏汇星耀天地 *Penghui xing yao tiandi*	https://xingyaotiandi.fang.com/
	68.	ZHONGHAI PEACEFUL COUNTRY ALL UNDER HEAVEN EAST RISE MANSION 寰宇天下东昇府 *Huanning tianxia dong sheng fu*	https://dongshengfuhytx.fang.com/
	69.	JINKE SUN SEA SHORE 金科太阳海岸 *Jinke taiyang hai an*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm199506/
	70.	JIULI FRAGRANT DIKE 九里香堤 *Jiu li xiang di*	https://jiulixiangdi.fang.com/ (2005)
	71.	MIDDLE MOUNT MAUVE GARDEN 半山紫苑 *Ban shan zi yuan*	https://banshanziyuan.fang.com/ (2009)
	72.	WRIGHT VILLA 财信赖特与山 *Caixin Laite yu shan*	https://cq.esf.fang.com/house-xm3111169706/
	73.	NATIONAL OLYMPIC VILLAGE VILLA 国奥村别墅 *Guo ao cun bieshu*	https://cq.esf.fang.com/house-xm3110901476/
	74.	DACHUAN BANK WATER TOWN - IMPERIAL RIVER 大川滨水城 – 玺江 *Dachuan bin shui cheng – xi jiang*	http://house.leju.com/cq107369/huxing/h10.shtml
	75.	DACHUAN RIVER BANK VILLA 大川水岸（别墅） *Dachuan shui an (bieshu)*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm908820/ (2004-2005)
	76.	ZHONGHAI NORTH BANK NO. 1 中海北滨一一号 *Zhonghai bei bin yi hao*	https://beibin1haozh.fang.com/
	77.	GUOMEI SKY OVER THE RIVER VILLA 国美江天御府 *Guomei jiangtian yufu*	https://jiangtianyufugm.fang.com/
	78.	JINKE GOLD SAND SHORE 金科金砂水岸 *Jinke jin sha shui an*	https://jinshashuianjk.fang.com/ (2003)
	79.	ZHAOSHANG RIVER BAY TOWN 招商江湾城 *Zhaoshang jiang wan cheng*	https://jiangwanchengzs.fang.com/
	80.	HENGDA IMPERIAL DRAGON SKY PEAK 恒大御龙天峰 *Hengda yu long tian feng*	https://yulongtianfeng.fang.com/esf/
	81.	JINRONG STREET IMPERIAL PALACE 金融街融御 *Jinrong jie rong yu*	https://cq.fang.lianjia.com/loupan/p_jrjryaaaek/
	82.	ZHUJIANG SUN CITY A BLOCK 珠江太阳城 A 区 *Zhujiang taiyang cheng A qu*	https://taiyangchengzj.fang.com/ (2008)
	83.	JIANGBEI ZUI (MOUTH) OUPENG EDUCATION TOWN 江北嘴新鸥鹏教育城 *Jiangbei zui Oupeng jiaoyu cheng*	https://jiaoyuchengxop.fang.com/photo/list_1005_3111203304.htm
	84.	VANKE IMPERIAL WAVES 万科御澜道 *Wanke yu lan dao*	https://yulandaowk.fang.com/
	85.	BAOLI WAVE SIGHT 保利观澜 *Baoli guan lan*	https://baoliguanlan.fang.com/

	86.	JINKE VERANDA ON THE SHORE 金科廊桥水岸 *Jinke lang qiao shui an*	https://langqiaoshuianjk023.fang.com/ (2008)
Bishan (8)	101.	ZHONGTIE HEALTHY CITY 中铁任之健康城 *Zhongtie ren zhi jiankang cheng* / LAKESIDE HOSPITAL NO. 6 湖滨 6 号院 *Hu bin liu hao yuan*/ SANDAN LAKE PARK 三担湖公园 *Sandan hu gongyuan*	http://wx.xhfkanfang.com/activity/pcshow.html?id=653
	102.	JINKE CENTRAL PARK CITY WESTERN HOUSING 碧山金科中央公园成洋房 *Bishan Jinke zhongyang gongyuancheng yang fang*	https://zhongyanggongyuanchengbsjk.fang.com/
	103.	JINGHAN BETWEEN LAKE AND CLOUDS 京汉云湖间 *Jinghan yun hu jian*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/437655.html?pi=baidu-cpcaf-cq-spjh-lp&kwid=86035243285
	104.	BEAUTIFUL LAKE HERON ISLAND 秀湖鹭岛 *Xiuhu lu dao*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/249951.html?ifx=p2034a0c20r0m0&from=loupan_lpsy_cntrack1&ifxc=2034
	105.	RONGRUI FARSIGHTED FRAGRANT VILLA NEIGHBORHOOD 融睿香墅里 *Ronghui rui xiang shu li*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/447819.html?ifx=p2034a0c20r0m0&from=loupan_lpsy_cntrack1&ifxc=2034
	106.	ZHONGGUO TIEJIAN ON THE FRAGRANT & SLOW STREAM SHORE 中国铁建香漫溪岸 *Zhongguo tie jian xiang man xi an*	https://cq.newhouse.fang.com/house/web/housedetail_seo.php?citysuo=cq&newcode=3110121700
	107.	HUISEN BRIGHT PEARL PLACE 卉森玥明台 *Huisen yue ming tai*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/437736.html?ifx=p2034a0c20r0m0&from=loupan_lpsy_cntrack1&ifxc=2034
	108.	JINKE RICH GREEN HAPPY DAY 金科博翠天悦 *Jinke bo cui tian yue*	https://bocuitianyuejk.fang.com/
Shapingba (12)	110.	JINKE BRIDGE VERANDA VILLAGE ON WATER - BEAUTY OF THE SCENT STREAM 金科廊桥水乡馥奚美 *Jinke langqiao shuixiang fuximei* / CHONGQING JINKE COVERED BRIDGE VILLAGE ON WATERS 重庆金科廊桥水乡 *Chongqing jinke langqiao shui xiang*	https://cq.focus.cn/loupan/41696/xiangce/21354335.html
	111.	(SUNAC) RONGCHUANG CULTURAL TRAVEL CITY 融创重庆文旅城 *Rongchuang Chongqing wenlü cheng*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/413851.html
	112.	CHONGQING RONGCHENG GREAT VILLA 重庆融城华府别墅 *Chongqing rongcheng hua fu bieshu*	https://rongchenghuafu.fang.com/
	113.	LONGFOR EAST-WEST LONG STREAM BLOCKS 龙湖 龙溪 东-西区 *Longhu long xi dong xi qu*	https://dongqiaojunlh.fang.com/
	114.	OUPENG BOYA BAY SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD VILLA 鸥鹏泊雅湾南区（别墅）*Oupeng bo ya wan nanqu (bieshu)*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm908847/
	115.	GUOSHA FRAGRANT STREAM VILLA 国厦书香溪墅别墅 *Guojia shu xiang xi shu bieshu*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm824040/
	116.	XIEXIN-SINCERE CUBE TOWN 协信城立方 *Xiexin cheng lifang*	https://cq.news.fang.com/2013-05-03/10029970.htm
	117.	SHOUCHUANG JIALING HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE 首创天阅嘉陵 *Shouchuang tian yue Jialing*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/437410.html
	118.	JINRONGJIE HARMONIOUS MANSION 金融街融府 *Jin rong jie rong fu*	https://cq.newhouse.fang.com/house/web/housedetail_seo.php?citysuo=cq&newcode=3110121554
	119.	XINDA RIVERSIDE BLUE HALL 信达滨江蓝庭 *Xinda binjiang lan ting*	https://cq.esf.fang.com/integrate-xm3111210480/k250-h316/
	120.	RONGCHUANG RIVERSIDE MANSION 融创滨江壹号 *Rongchuang binjiang yihao*	https://bingjiangyihaorc.fang.com/esf/
	121.	QIFENG ON THE CLOUDS RESIDENCE 奇峰云邸 *Qifeng yun di*; QIFENG SCENTED MOUNT - SEA OF TREES 奇峰香山林海 *Qifeng xiangshan linhai*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/240568.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
Beibei (18)	131.	XINJING ZIYUN MOUNT INTERNATIONAL HOT SPRING HOLIDAY CENTRE 心景缙云国际温泉度假中心 *Xinjing ziyun guoji wenquan dujia zhongxin*	http://newhouse.cq.95191.com/item-168/xiangce/t1/
	132.	CHONGQING BEIBEI BANYAN TREE VILLAS 悦榕私邸别墅 *Yuerong sidi bieshu*	http://yuerongsidi.fang.com/
	133.	YISHANG MOUNT THERMAL BATH SMALL TOWN	http://www.cqfdcgg.com/project/index-

		VILLAS (1ST PHASE) 颐尚山地温泉小镇别墅（一期）*Yishang shandi wenquan xiao zhen bieshu (yi qi)*	1094.html
	134.	SHOUGANG BEAUTIFUL TOWN ALONG THE STREAM 首钢美丽溪镇 *Shougang meili xi zhen*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/241201.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	135.	YUNENG FINE BAY NO. 1 渝能嘉湾壹号 *Yuneng jiawan yi hao*	http://jiawanyihaoyn.fang.com/
	136.	HONGDING GOLF COMMUNITY 红鼎高尔夫球社区 *Hongding gaoerfuqiu shequ*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/248233.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title (2013)
	137.	ZHONGAN JADE LAKE 中安翡翠湖 *Zhongan feicui hu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3620025232424198/
	138.	JADE PEARL PARK 水天花园 *Shuitian huayuan*	https://shuitianhuayuan.fang.com/ (2011)
	139.	BEAUTIFUL CIRCLE ON THE FRAGRANT STREAM 香溪美林 *Xiangxi meilin*	https://cq.fang.ke.com/loupan/p_xxmlaamts/?utm_source=baidu_xf&utm_medium=alading&utm_term=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_content=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_campaign=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86
	140.	LUNENG NORTHERN CHONGQING CELEBRITY CITY 鲁能北渝星城 *Luneng bei yu xing cheng*	https://bbs.focus.cn/cq/101452/c310e27083fe8a83.html
	141.	HAINING WESTERN LAKE MOUNT & WATERS 海宇西湖山水 *Haining xihu shanshui*	https://www.jia.com/zxq/chongqing/lp-93816/hxt/
	142.	RONGCHUANG MAUVE FOUNTAINEBLEAU 融创紫泉枫丹 *Rongchuang ziquan fengdan*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/251133.html?ifx=p3013a0c20r0m241201&from=&ifxc=3013
	143.	BAOLI A CARPET OF DREAMS LAKE 保利茵梦湖 *Baoli yinmeng hu*	https://yinmenghubl.fang.com/
	144.	ZHONGTIE "MOUNT EXPRESSION TOWN" 中铁山语城 *Zhongtie shan yu cheng*	https://shanyuchengzgtj.fang.com/
	145.	LONGFOR VILLADOM 龙湖紫云台 *Longhu ziyun tai*	https://ziyuntailh.fang.com/
	146.	LONGFOR FEICUI (jadeite) MOUNT 龙湖翡翠山 *Longhu feicui shan*	http://www.sohu.com/a/45979398_123753
	147.	DONGYUAN LIGHT BLUE SKY 东原碧云天 *Dongyuan bi yuntian*	https://cq.fang.lianjia.com/loupan/p_dybytaabsw (2013)
	148.	LUSHANG YUN MOUNT ORIGINAL BUILDINGS 鲁商·云山原筑 *Lushang yunshan yuanzhu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/367144912728213/
Jiulongpo (20)	200.	CHONGQING HAILAN LAKE YUNTIAN HOT SPRING HOLIDAY VILLAGE VILLAS 重庆海兰云天温泉度假区 *Chongqing Hailan yuntian wenquan dujia qu*	https://cq.esf.leju.com/detail/2553256/
	201.	SHANGBANG GOLF COMMUNITY 上邦高尔夫社区 *Shangbang gaoerfu shequ*	https://gaoerfuguojishequsb.fang.com/esf/
	202.	SHANGBANG QUIET VILLAS 上邦静静的墅 *Shangbang jingjing de shu*	http://cq.jiwu.com/loupan/79719.html
	203.	SHOUCHUANG CHONGQING EXPERIENCE 首创渝阅 *Shouchuang yu yue*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/247827.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	204.	BAOLI HARBOUR INTERNATIONAL 保利港湾国际 *Baoli gangwan guoji*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611060504917/
	205.	TIANJIAO BEAUTIFUL CARPET RIVER VALLEY 天骄·美茵河谷 *Tiaojiao - mei yin hegu*	https://meiyinhegutj.fang.com/villa/ (2002)
	206.	PEIXIN CENTURY FRAGRANT MOUNT 沛鑫世纪香山 *Peixin shiji xiang shan*	http://cq.jiwu.com/xq_kfs/164209.html
	207.	LONGXIN - WAVING FLOWER LAKE 隆鑫·花漾湖 *Longxin hua yang hu*	https://huayanghulx.fang.com/ (2008)
	208.	TONGTIAN - AT THE CLOUDS FOOT NEIGHBORHOOD 同天·依云郡 *Tongtian yiyun jun*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/366919010135296 (2010)
	209.	TONGTIAN GREEN SHORE 同天绿岸 *Tongtian lü an*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611099856793/ (2009)
	210.	YUGAO FRAGRANT LAND 渝高香洲 *Yugao xiang zhou*	https://yugaoxiangzhou.fang.com/
	211.	XIEXIN-SINCERE CAIYUN LAKE NO. 1 协信彩云湖一号 *Xiexin caiyun hu yi hao*	https://caiyunhu1haoxx2.fang.com/ (2009)
	212.	JINKE YUN LAKE HEAVENLY CAPITAL 1ST PHASE 金科云湖天都一期 *Jinke yun hu tian du yi qi*	https://yunhutiandujk.fang.com/ (2008)
	213.	GUANGSHA TOWN LUOKA VILLA GARDEN NEIGHBORHOOD 广厦城洛卡庄园小区 *Guangsha luoka*	https://luokazhuangyuangsc.fang.com/ (2009)

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	214.	TIANCHENG BEAUTIFUL LAKE 天成•郦湖 *Tiancheng li hu*	https://yujingtianshuimei.fang.com/
	215.	CSCEC-ZHONGJIAN ROYAL LAKE NO. 1 中建御湖壹号 *Zhongjian yuhu yi hao*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/438756.html
	216.	CHONGQING HENGDA ELEGANT GARDEN 重庆恒大雅苑 *Chongqing hengda ya yuan*	https://news.lianjia.com/cq/xiaoqu/3611059501762.html
	217.	IVY SMALL RED TOWN 常青藤•缇香小镇 *Changqingteng Ti xiang xiao zhen*	https://tixiangxiaozhencqt.fang.com/
	218.	CHONGQING HENGDA GREEN CONTINENT 重庆恒大绿洲 *Chongqing hengda lü zhou*	https://hengdalvzhou023.fang.com/
Jiangjin (8)	300.	PANDA DOUBLE ISLAND LAKE IMPERIAL GARDEN 攀达双岛湖御园 *Panda shuang dao hu yu yuan*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/434141.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	301.	HENGDA GOLD & GREEN WORLD VILLAS 恒大金碧天下别墅 *Hengda jinbi tianxia bieshu*	https://jinbitianxia2023.fang.com/
	302.	CHONGQING SHUOXIN ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD - VIRGIN FOREST WHITE SAND SEA 重庆硕鑫生态农业开发有限公司恒森白沙海 *Chongqing shuoxin shengtai nongye kaifa youxian gongsi Heng sen bai shahai*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/445942.html
	303.	CHISHUI QINGLING REAL ESTATE CO. LTD - GOLDEN TRIANGLE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM COMMUNITY 赤水清灵置业有限公司金三角国际旅游度假区 *Chishui qing lingzhiye youxian gongsi Jin sanjiao guoji lüyou dujia qu*	https://jsjgjlydjq023.fang.com/
	304.	JIANNING YONG MOUNT NEIGHBORHOOD VILLA 建宁•雍山郡别墅 *Jiangning yong shan jun bieshu*	https://yongshanjunjyjj.fang.com/
	305.	PENINSULA BRIGHT PEARL 半岛明珠 *Bandao ming zhu*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm860722/ (2010)
	306.	CHEUNG HO - VICTORIA HARBOUR 祥豪•维多利亚港湾 *Xianghao Weiduoliya gangwan*	https://cq.fang.ke.com/loupan/p_xhwdlygwbidzv/?utm_source=baidu_xf&utm_medium=alading&utm_term=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_content=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_campaign=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86
	307.	BINJIANG SPRING TOWN QI LAKE 滨江春城栖湖 *Binjiang chun cheng qi hu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/ershoufang/c3616408036258164/
Yubei (57)	310.	YORKSHIRE SOUTH REGION 约克郡南郡 *Yuekejun Nanjun*; "Yorkshire Elegant Shore" 约克郡汀兰 *Yuekejun Tinglan*; "Yorkshire Delightful View" 约克郡景悦 *Yuekejun Jingyue*	http://cq.focus.cn/loupan/42359.html
	311.	DONGYUAN CO. LTD - DONGYUAN LAKE AT THE SHADES OF THE MOUNT TREES 重庆东原房地产开发有限公司东原湖山樾 *Chongqing Dongyuan fangdichan kaifa youxian gongsi Dongyuan hu shan yue*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/251337.html?pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	312.	HENGDA IMPERIAL SCENERY PENINSULA 桓大御景半岛 *Hengda yujing bandao*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3616774634680528/
	313.	JINKE HEAVENLY LAKE BEAUTIFUL TOWN 金科天湖美镇 *Jinke tianhu meizhen*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611057273348/ (2005)
	314.	HUTCHISON WHAMPOA PEARL LAKE GARDEN 和记黄埔玥湖园 *Hejihuangpu Yuehu yuan*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611099974450/
	315.	XIEXIN-SINCERE STREAM & MOUNT VILLAS 协信溪山墅 *Xiexin xishan shu*	http://xishangshuxxxdh.fang.com/
	316.	RONGCHUANG VERSAILLES GARDEN 融创凡尔赛花园 *Rongchuang Fanersai huayuan*	http://fanersaihuayuanrc.fang.com/
	317.	HENGDA WASHINGTON DC/GREAT MANSION 恒大华府 *Hengda huafu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611057233762/ (2010)
	318.	PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL GARDEN 棕榈泉国际花园 *Zonglüquan guoji huayuan*	https://cq.fang.ke.com/loupan/p_zlqsdbsaawhs/?utm_source=baidu_xf&utm_medium=alading&utm_term=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_content=%E6%A0%87%E9%A2%98&utm_campaign=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86

319.	LONGFOR BLUE LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD 龙湖蓝湖郡 *Longhu lanhu jun*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/369638749941242/
320.	OLYMPIC VILLAGE 奥林匹克花园 *Aolinpike huayuan*	http://aolinpikehuayuan023.fang.com/ (2010)
321.	BAOLI GOLF RICH GARDEN 保利高尔夫豪园 *Baoli guoji gaoerfu haoyuan*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/sale/rd1/?kw=%E4%BF%9D%E5%88%A9%E9%AB%98%E5%B0%94%E5%A4%AB%E8%B1%AA%E5%9B%AD&pi=baidu-cpc-cq-shantou2&kwid=96043304694
322.	JINKE SMALL TOWN STORY 金科小城故事 *Jinke xiaocheng gushi*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611057237995/ (2009)
323.	JINKE GLAMOR COMMUNITY (NATURAL SOUNDS CITY BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBORHOOD) 金科·天籁城美社 *Jinke tianlai cheng mei she*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611061001380/ (2004)
324.	LONGFOR GARDEN 龙湖花园 *Longhu huayuan*	https://longhunanyuan.fang.com/ (2000)
325.	LONGFOR CAMPHOR TREE FOREST VILLAS 香樟林别墅 *Xiangzhang lin bieshu*	https://longhuxiangzhanglin.fang.com/villa/ (2001)
326.	SHOUGANG BEAUTIFUL MOUNT VILLA NEIGHBORHOOD 首钢美利山别墅区 *Shougang meili shan bieshu qu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611058962643/
327.	LONGFOR BLUE LAKE CHANSON 龙湖蓝湖香颂 *Longhu lanhu xiangsong*	https://lanhuxiangsonglh023.fang.com/ (2007)
328.	RONGKE OAK BAY WAVES 融科橡树澜湾 *Rongke xiangshu lan wan*	https://xiangshulanwanrk.fang.com/
329.	LONGFOR RIVER & CITY HUGE PARADISE 龙湖·江与城天钜 *Jiang yu cheng tian ji*	http://lhjycys.fang.com/villa/ (2010)
330.	XIANGYU LIANGJIANG IMPERIAL MANSIONS 象屿两江御府 *Xiangyu Liangjiang yu fu*	https://cq.focus.cn/loupan/42348.html
331.	LONGFOR BIG CITY SMALL COURT 龙湖·大城小院 *Longhu da cheng xiao yuan*	https://dachengxiaoyuanlh.fang.com/ (2007)
332.	CHANGQING IVY VILLA 常青藤人文别墅 *Changqing teng renwen bieshu*	https://changqingtengrenwen.fang.com/villa/ (2008)
333.	DADING LAKE SHORE IMPRESSION 大鼎·湖滨印象 *Dading hu bin yinxiang*	https://hubinyinxiangdd.fang.com/
334.	HENGYUN BLUE RIVER BAY 恒运·青河湾 *Hengyun qing he wan*	https://hengyunqinghewan.fang.com/ (2004)
335.	VANKE GOLD DISTRICT BLUE BAY 万科金域蓝湾 *Wanke jin yu lan wan*	https://jinyulanwanwk023.fang.com/
336.	DONGYUAN FRAGRANT MOUNT 东原香山 *Dongyuan xiang shan*	https://dongyuanxiangshan.fang.com/
337.	DONGFANG MOUNT & WATERS 东方山水 *Dongfang shan shui*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/community/view/198603?from=propview (2003)
338.	JIULI FRAGRANT DYKE 九里香堤 *Jiuli xiang di*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/prop/view/A1562288318 (2007)
339.	EXPO PARK MEIDI MOUNT VILLA BLOCK 园博园美地山别墅区 *Yuanboyuan meidi shan bieshu qu*	https://cq.lianjia.com/ershoufang/yuanboyuan/sf3/ (2008)
340.	JIANGONG FUTURE CITY 建工未来城 *Jiangong weilai cheng*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3618040007437392/ (2005)
341.	RONGCHUANG JINKAI HARMONIOUS MANSION 融创金开融府 *Rongchuang jinkai rong fu*	https://jinkairongfurc.fang.com/
342.	LIANFA OVERLOOKING THE FRESH WATER VILLA 联发瞰青别墅 *Lianfa kan qing yuan bieshu*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/community/view/366342
343.	VANKE JINKAI HAPPY MANSION 万科金开悦府 *Wanke Jinkai yue fu*	https://wankejinkaiyuefu.fang.com/
344.	YUCHENG GREAT MANSION 御城华府 *Yucheng hua fu*	https://yuchenghuafu.fang.com/
345.	EMBELLISHING WATERS 润丰水尚 *Run fengshui shang*	https://runfengshuishang023.fang.com/
346.	JINHUI CENTRAL OUTSTANDING MARK 金辉中央铭著 *Jinhui zhongyang ming zhu*	https://zhongyangmingzhujh.fang.com/
347.	PALM SPRINGS HAPPY RIVER INTERNATIONAL 棕榈泉悦江国际 *Zonglüquan yue jiang guoji*	https://yuejiangguojizlq.fang.com/
348.	THE VALLEY RESIDENCE 嘉悦江庭 *Jia yue jiang ting*	http://house.leju.com/cq120729/
349.	RONGCHUANG GREEN CINNAMON GARDEN	https://wangjiangfubgy.fang.com/

		RIVER VILLA 融创碧桂园望江府 *Rongchuang bi gui yuan wang jiang fu*	
	350.	HUAQIAO TOWN HEAVENLY WAVES BEAUTIFUL VILLA 华侨城天澜美墅 *Huaqiao cheng tian lan mei shu*	https://chongqing.anjuke.com/community/view/ 823318?pi=Alading-bdpc-esf-jingzhun-title
	351.	LONGFOR LIANGJIANG NEW VILLA (IMPERIAL PALACE) - JIA IMPERIAL SEAL 龙湖两江新宸嘉玺 *Longhu Liangjiang xin chen Jia xi*	https://liangjiangxinchenlh.fang.com/esf/
	352.	LONGFOR MAUVE VILLA (IMPERIAL PALACE) 龙湖紫宸 *Longhu zi chen*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm925011/
	353.	LONGFOR REMOTE MOUNT NEIGHBORHOOD 龙湖·悠山郡 *Longhu you shan jun*	https://youshanjunlh023.fang.com/
	354.	LONGFOR YU LAKE NO. 1 龙湖昱湖壹号 *Longhu yu hu yi hao*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/418576.html? pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	355.	HUANING IMPERIAL WAVES BAY 华宇御澜湾 *Huaning yu lan wan*	https://yulanwanhy023.fang.com/
	356.	RONGCHUANG ROSE GARDEN 融创玫瑰园 *Rongchuang meigui yuan*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611064074016/
	357.	JINKE JIUQU RIVER 金科九曲河 *Jinke Jiuqu he*	https://jiuqiuhejk.fang.com/
	358.	LONGFOR EMBRACING THE PLACE 龙湖揽境 *Longhu lan jing*	http://house.leju.com/cq137019/
	359.	LONGFOR JIULI CLEAR RIVER 龙湖九里晴川 *Longhu Jiuli qing chuan*	https://www.anjuke.com/chongqing/cm914201/
	360.	LONGFOR NEW RIVER & CITY - OVER THE SKY 龙湖新江与城·天越 *Longhu xin jiang yu cheng tian yue*	https://xinjiangyuchengtianyue.fang.com/
	361.	JINKE PARK VILLA 金科公园王府 *Jinke gongyuan wangfu*	https://gongyuanwangfujk.fang.com/
	362.	XIEXIN-SINCERE & HARROW INTERNATIONAL (CHINA) TEACHING SMALL TOWN 协信·哈罗国际教育小镇 *Xiexin Haluo guoji jiaoyu xiao zhen*	https://go.cqmmgo.com/forum-314-thread-47331536144673901-1-1.html
	363.	LUNENG STAR CITY 鲁能·星城 *Luneng xing cheng*	https://lunengxingcheng.fang.com/ (2010)
	364.	JINKE BEVERLY HILLS (RICH & POWERFUL PEOPLE'S GARDEN) 金科比华利豪园 *Jinke Bihualihao yuan*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3620020399009538 / (2004)
	365.	DONGYUAN VICTORY PARK (CENTRAL BEAUTIFUL LAND) 东原·中央美地 *Dongyuan Zhongyang mei di*	https://cq.lianjia.com/xiaoqu/3611056786326/ (2006)
	366.	HUANING HEAVENLY PALACE FLOWER TOWN 华宇天宫花城 *Huaning tiangong hua cheng*	https://tiangonghuachenghy.fang.com/
Nanchuan (1)	400.	ZHONGHAI LAKE BLOSSOM - LANDSCAPE DISTRICT 中海黎香湖风景区 *Zhonghai Lixiang hu fengjing qu*: 1) Zhonghai Lake Blossom - Geneva District 中海黎香湖日内瓦 *Reneiwa*, and 2) Zhonghai Lake Blossom - Lucerne District 中海黎香湖卢塞恩 *Lusaien*	http://cq.loupan.com/loupan/6162019.html
Dadukou (6)	700.	RONGHUI PENINSULA AMUSEMENT PARK 融汇半岛乐园 *Ronghui bandao leyuan*	https://cq.news.fang.com/2014-09-04/13695064.htm
	701.	HENGDA MOUNT FOOT LAKE 1ST PHASE 恒大麓山湖 1 期 *Hengda lu shan hu yi qi*	https://lushanhuhd.fang.com/
	702.	HENGDA MONEY & MIND LAKE BAY 恒大贝蒙心湖湾 *Henga bei meng xin hu wan*	https://cq.focus.cn/loupan/42922.html
	703.	HUANING GUANLAN [LAKE] GREAT VILLA 华宇观澜华府 *Huaning Guanlan(hu) hua fu*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/428619.html? pi=Alading-bdpc-xf-jingzhun-free-title
	704.	JINYU GREEN JOYFUL FOREST BORDER 晋愉·碧怡林畔 *Jinyu bi yi lin pan*	https://biyilinpanjy.fang.com/ (2010)
	705.	HUARUN (China Resources) DEVELOPER CHONGQING PHOENIX CITY 华润置地重庆凤凰城 *Huarun zhidi Chongqing fenghuang cheng*	https://cq.fang.anjuke.com/loupan/415385.html? from=ajk_pc_dy_lpbd_rx
TOTAL:	**204**		

Appendix II. Online sources for Tables 5.15-5.17

The original bulletins in Table 5.15 and Table 5.16 are the following:

序号	土地位置	用途	土地面积(m²)	总计容建筑面积（㎡）	土地出让综合价金（万元）	备注	报名截止时间
				重庆市拟供应地块公告			
1	南岸区茶园组团M分区M23-1/02（部分）号宗地（详情请点击名称进入）	物流仓储用地	88234	≤1.5	5824	环保要求详见重庆市南岸区环境保护局《关于重庆经济技术开发区经济发展局拟出让M23-1/02号地块挂牌条件的复函》（南环建函（2016）06号）。	2017年6月9日 12：00
2	巴南区李家沱组团G分区G14-2/03、G15-3/03、G16-3/03号宗地（详情请点击名称进入）	二类居住用地、商业用地	179607	≤419754	209877		2017年6月9日 12：00
3	巴南区李家沱组团G分区G21-1/03、G21-3/03、G22-1/03号宗地（详情请点击名称进入）	二类居住用地、商业用地	113365	≤340095	153043		2017年6月9日 12：00
4	巴南区李家沱-鱼洞组团Q分区Q21-5/01、Q22-1/02、Q23-1/01号宗地（详情请点击名称进入）	二类居住用地	134793	≤322793	161397		2017年6月9日 12：00
5	巴南区李家沱-鱼洞组团O分区O20-3/02、O20-4/02号宗地（详情请点击名称进入）	二类居住用地	24736	≤72305.35	25307		2017年6月9日 12：00

URL: http://jyzx.cqgtfw.gov.cn/com/default.asp

接受社会监督的公告

渝地监告字[2017]9号

重庆市国土资源和房屋管理局对以下宗地予以公告以接受社会监督。公告时间为2017年4月30日9：00—2017年5月9日17：00。若有疑问，请与重庆市国土资源利用事务中心联系。电话：63654101、63654102、63654105（FAX），联系人：朱先生
重庆市国土资源和房屋管理局

序号	土地位置	规划用途		土地面积（m²）		规划部门确定的总建筑规模（m²）		规划部门确定的地上或计容规模（m²）		应补交出让（综合）价金起始价（万元）	原土地使用人	调整依据
		原用途	现用途	原面积	现面积	原规模	现规模	原规模	现规模			
116	巴南区李家沱倒建村宗地	商业、车库	商业、车库	2109.86	2109.86	4900.98	4900.98	2226.89	2226.89	146	重庆赵季房地产开发有限公司	该项目为经济适用房项目，已竣工验收。现土地使用权人申请将该项目计容商业2226.89平方米和该项目计容商业2674.09平方米分摊的2109.86平方米土地的取得方式由划拨转为出让，补缴地价款。
117	江北区大石坝组团B分区B3-2、B3-4号宗地	二类居住、商业、金融业、防护绿地用地	二类居住、商业、金融业、防护绿地用地	224378	224378	940761.94	1253976.93	940761.94	940761.94	1559	重庆嘉逸房地产开发有限公司	根据规划部门核发的《建设工程规划许可证》，计容建筑面积未增加；新明确不计容建筑面积313214.99平方米（其中车库238543.02平方米、配套设施6422.57万米、设备用房386.16平方米、架空层1689.43平方米不计征地价款），补缴剩余地价款。
118	江北区大石坝组团A分区A3-1/01、A3-2/01、A4-1、A5-1/01号宗地	综合用地	综合用地	263341.6	263341.6	674069.85	831416.52	633914.22	633914.22	141	重庆宏帆实业有限公司	根据规划部门核发的《建设工程规划许可证》，计容建筑面积未增加，涉及部分用途比例转换；新明确不计容建筑面积157846.67平方米（其中车库142438.28平方米、配套设施5594.46平方米不计征地价款），补缴剩余地价款。

URL: http://jyzx.cqgtfw.gov.cn/news/news1411.asp

The company logos and Chongqing local government slogan in Table 5.17 have been retrieved from the following websites:

SECTOR	NAME	LINK
Propaganda	Slogan "Five Chongqing"	https://baike.baidu.com/pic/%E4%BA%94%E4%B8%AA%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86/5431109/0/18d8bc3eb13533fa6a156549acd3fd1f41345b32?fr=lemma&ct=single#aid=0&pic=ac4bd11373f08202e46683b241fbfbedaa641b42
Investors & Constructors	CCCIC	https://www.baidu.com/s?rsv_idx=1&wd=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86%E5%B8%82%E5%9F%8E%E5%B8%82%E5%BB%BA%E8%AE%BE%E6%8A%95%E8%B5%84%E5%85%AC%E5%8F%B8&usm=2&ie=utf-8&rsv_cq=&rsv_dl=0_top_relation_28310&cq=%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86%E9%AB%98%E9%80%9F%E5%85%AC%E8%B7%AF%E9%9B%86%E5%9B%A2%E6%9C%89%E9%99%90%E5%85%AC%E5%8F%B8&srcid=28310&rt=%E7%9B%B8%E5%85%B3%E4%BC%81%E4%B8%9A&recid=21102&euri=1815da7fc38346deb2fabb305dd58439
	Citic Holdings Co Ltd 中国中信股份有限公司	www.citic.com
	Chongqing Building Materials Co Ltd	http://www.cqbyjc.com/index.aspx
	Chongqing Communications Planning Survey & Design Institute	http://www.ccpsdi.com/
	Chongqing Expressway	http://www.cegc.com.cn/gw
	CSCEC 中国建筑西南勘察设计研究院有限公司	https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E5%BB%BA%E7%AD%91%E8%A5%BF%E5%8D%97%E5%8B%98%E5%AF%9F%E8%AE%BE%E8%AE%A1%E7%A0%94%E7%A9%B6%E9%99%A2%E6%9C%89%E9%99%90%E5%85%AC%E5%8F%B8/7694429?fr=aladdin
	State Grid/CQ branch	http://www.cq.sgcc.com.cn/
	Suez Environment	https://www.suez.com/en
Developers	Agile Property Holdings Ltd 雅居乐地产控股有限公司	http://www.agile.com.cn/
	Poly Development Holdings Co Ltd 保利地产集团股份有限公司中信地产	http://www.polycn.com/index.aspx
	CapitaLand Singapore CC Land Holdings Ltd	http://www.capitaland.com/ http://www.ccland.com.hk/eng/global/home.php
	Citic Real Estate	https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E4%BF%A1%E5%9C%B0%E4%BA%A7/4226826?fr=aladdin
	Country Garden Holdings Co Ltd 碧桂园地产	www.bgy.com.cn/
	Evergrande Group 恒大集团	http://www.evergrande.com/
	Greenland Holdings Corp Ltd 绿地集团重庆	http://www.baidu.com/s?ie=utf-8&f=8&rsv_bp=1&rsv_idx=1&tn=baidu&wd=%E7%BB%BF%E5%9C%B0%E9%9B%86%E5%9B%A2%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86&oq=%25E7%25BB%25BF%25E5%259C%25B0%25E9%259B%2586%25E5%259B%25A2&rsv_pq=9aebfefa00008af3&rsv_t=dae56QoACHTQGAFmc8Xsj4rOaU049EHlHz2rEK%2F3mKNHk%2BEUs%2FB90zWuSqk&rqlang=cn&rsv_enter=1&inputT=4380&rsv_sug3=22&rsv_sug1=6&rsv_sug7=100&bs=%E7%BB%BF%E5%9C%B0%E9%9B%86%E5%9B%A2
	Greentown China Holdings Ltd 绿城房地产集团有限公司	http://www.chinagreentown.com/
	Hopson 合生创展集团有限公司	http://www.hopson.com.cn/
	Jinke jituan 金科集团	www.jinke.com
	Longfor Properties Co Ltd 龙湖地产有限公司 ING Groep NV	http://www.longfor.com/about/ https://www.ing.com/web/show
	R&F Properties 富力地产	www.rfchina.com

	Rongxin Group	http://www.rongxingroup.com/
	Shimao Group 世茂集团	http://www.shimaogroup.com/
	Shui on Land	http://www.shuionland.com/
	Sunac China Holdings Ltd 融创中国控股有限公司	http://www.sunac.com.cn/
	Vanke	www.vanke.com
	Wanda	http://www.wanda-group.com/
	Zhongguo Xintiandi	http://www.shuionland.com/en-us/about/XintiandiCom
	Zhonghai Co Ltd 中海地产集团有限公司	http://www.coli688.com/
	ZhongYu Development 中渝發展	http://www.zywycq.com/
Street Advertising Billboards & Web Promotion Platforms	AnJuKe 安居客(上海瑞家信息技术有限公司)	www.anjuke.com
	Baixing.com Holdings Ltd 百姓网股份有限公司	chongqing.baixing.com
	Corporate Apartments China	http://corporateapartmentschina.com/
	Daojiale 重庆到家了网络科技有限公司	www.daojiale.com
	Fang DD 深圳市房多多网络科技有限公司	http://www.fangdd.com/chongqing/
	Fang Tianxia 房天下(北京拓世宏业科技发展有限公司)	www.fang.com
	JCDecaux	http://www.jcdecaux.com/
	JiWu Holdings Co Ltd 深圳市吉屋科技股份有限公司	http://www.jiwu.com/
	Leju Holding Co Ltd 乐居控股有限公司	www.leju.com
	Maxxelli	www.maxxelli-blog.com
	QQ	www.qq.com
	Sohu.com Inc 搜狐公司	http://house.focus.cn/
	Weixin	https://wx.qq.com/
	YouBian/Fang 中国邮科网络集团	http://www.youbian.com/
	Zhongguo Wang Dichan Zhongguo 中国网·地产中国	http://house.china.com.cn/
	ZhuJiaYi 筑家易	http://www.zje.com/

Annex I.
Map of Chongqing Municipality with the main urban districts in evidence
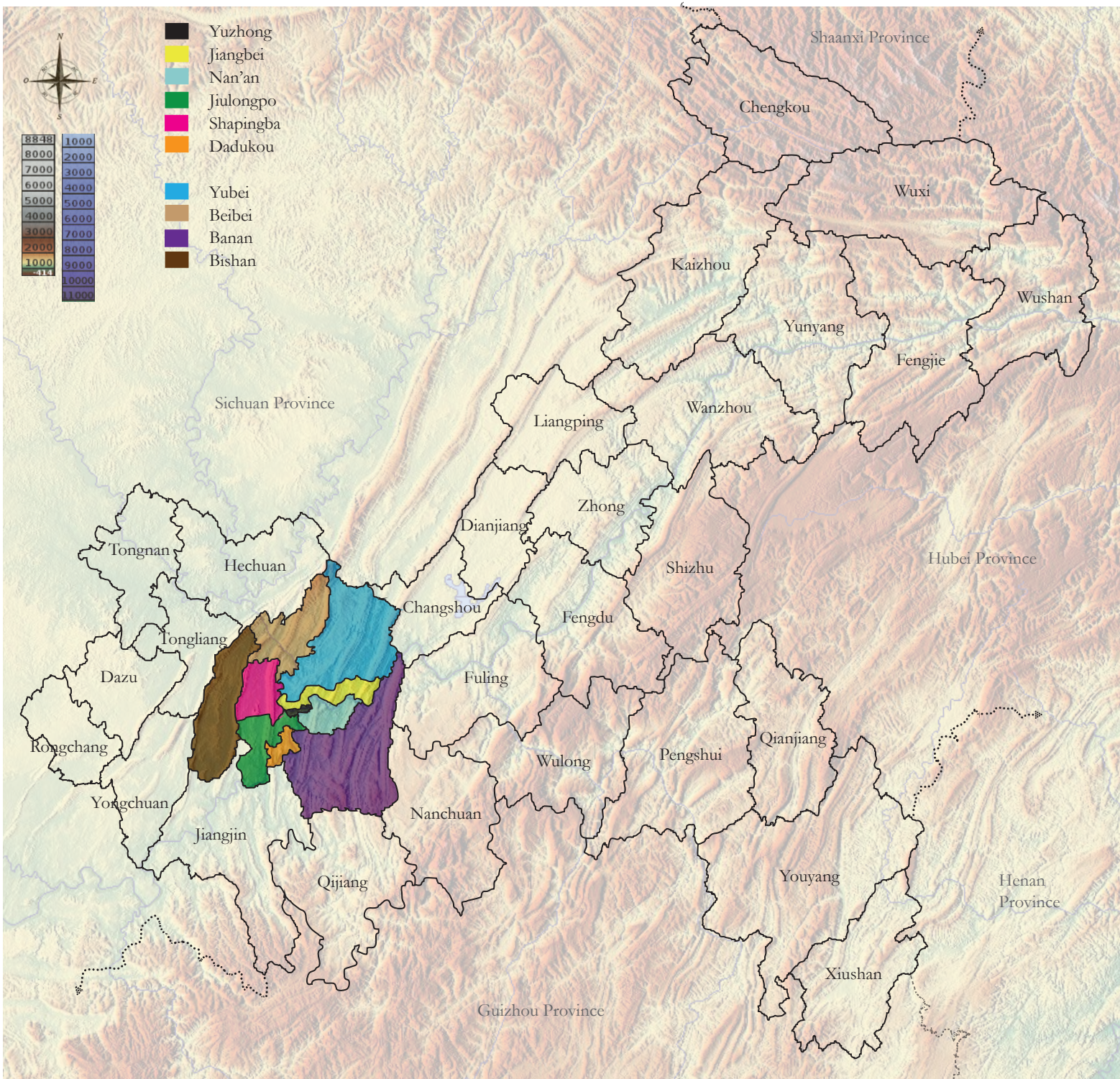
Legend:

Color	District
■	Yuzhong
■	Jiangbei
■	Nan'an
■	Jiulongpo
■	Shapingba
■	Dadukou
■	Yubei
■	Beibei
■	Banan
■	Bishan

Shaanxi Province

Chengkou

Wuxi

Kaizhou

Wushan

Yunyang

Fengjie

Wanzhou

Sichuan Province

Liangping

Zhong

Hubei Province

Dianjiang

Shizhu

Tongnan

Hechuan

Changshou

Fengdu

Tongliang

Fuling

Dazu

Qianjiang

Rongchang

Wulong

Pengshui

Yongchuan

Nanchuan

Jiangjin

Youyang

Henan Province

Qijiang

Xiushan

Guizhou Province

Annex II

(rough map retrieved from
http://gaode.com, and
modified by Bonato, 2019)

enclave with no water
elements

enclave with waterscape

thermal site, park
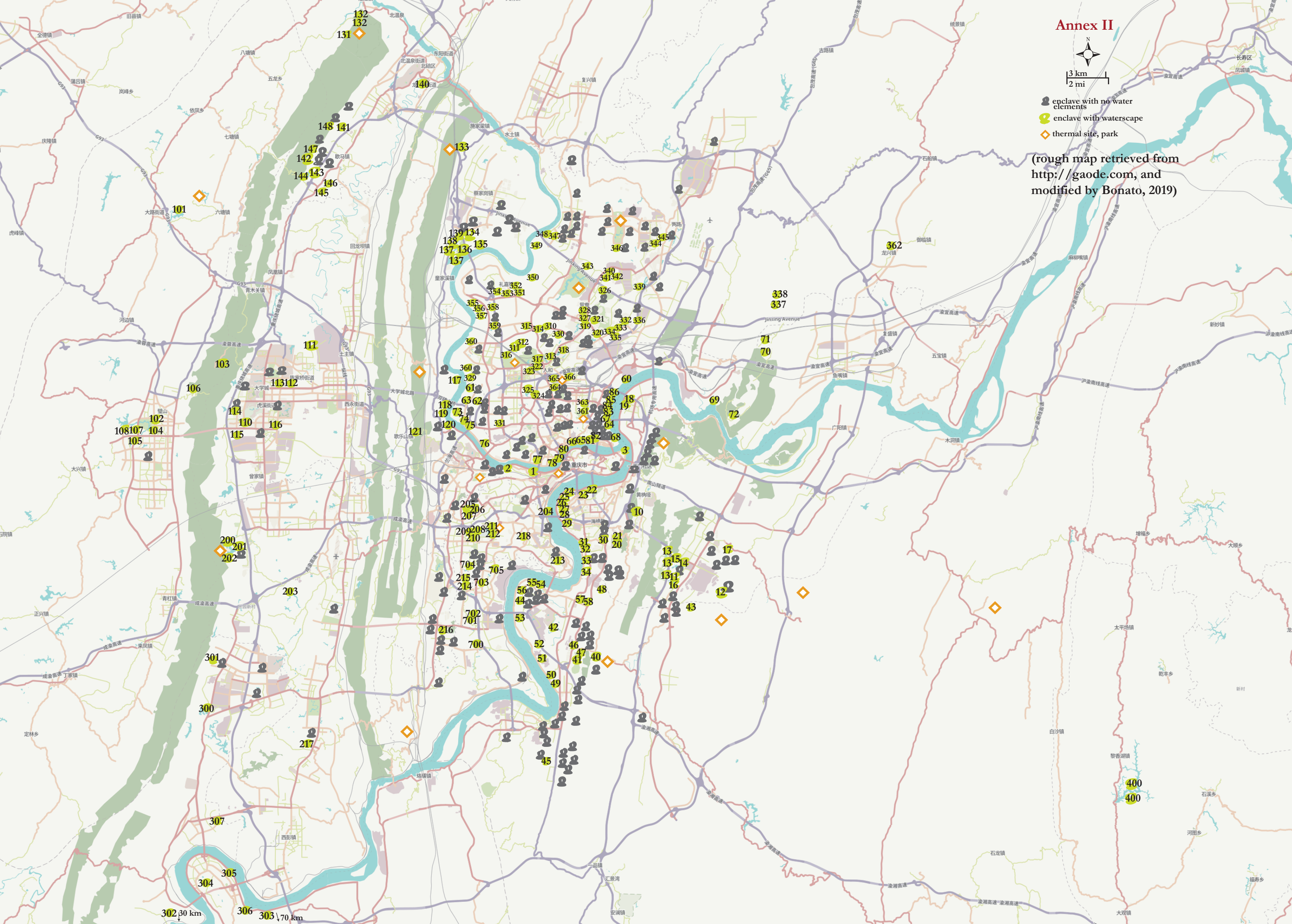
Glossary

A		
安居乐业	ānjū lèyè	"live and work in peace and contentment"
安住房 / 保障性住房	ān zhùfáng / bǎozhàngxìng zhùfáng	security housing / low-income housing, social security housing
B		
巴郡	Bājùn	Ba prefecture
霸	bà	despot, tyrant, feudal lord; hegemony; to rule by force
棒棒军	bàngbàngjūn	workers carrying stuff in a bamboo pole on their shoulders
保甲	bǎojiǎ	Baojia system of social defense and control introduced during the Song dynasty (960-1279)
北府城	běi fǔchéng	"northern prefectural seat"
北碚模式	Běibèi móshì	Beibei model
备水	bèishuǐ	preparation against inundation (Ch. in *Mozi*)
比喻	bǐyù	metaphor, analogy
碧	bì	jade
标语	biāoyǔ	slogan on poster, shibboleths
C		
漕运	cáoyùn	"tribute grain" system
长江经济带	Chángjiāng jīngjì dài	Yangzi Economic Belt
常住人口	chángzhù rénkǒu	permanent resident population
超大城市	chāodà chéngshì	Super-Megacity
宸	chén	great mansion; imperial palace
成语	chéngyǔ	traditional Chinese idiomatic expression
诚	chéng	honesty, moral authenticity
城市	chéngshì	city
尺	chǐ	ruler; a Chinese foot, ca. ⅓ metre
重庆的前途，上海的后影	Chóngqìng de qiántú, Shànghǎi de hòuyǐng	"Future of Chongqing, rear view of Shanghai"
重庆二环线上的璀璨明珠	Chóngqìng èr huánxiàn shàng de cuǐcàn míngzhū	"the bright pearl of Chongqing second ring route"
重庆市国土资源利用事物中心	Chóngqìng shì guótǔ zīyuán lìyòng shìwù zhōngxīn	Chongqing Centre for Territorial Natural Resources' Use Affairs (local gov. office)
《重庆市水资源管理条例》	Chóngqìng shì shuǐ zīyuán guǎnlǐ tiáolì	"Chongqing Regulation on Water Resources Management"
重庆自来水公司	Chóngqìng zìláishuǐ gōngsī	"Chongqing tap water company"
重庆万达城 / 重庆万达文化旅游城	Chóngqìng wàndá chéng / wénhuà lǚyóu chéng	"Chongqing Wanda City" / "Chongqing Wanda cultural travel city"
重台天井楼	chóngtái tiānjǐnglóu	basement-set house with courtyard
川东道	Chuān dōng dào	Eastern Sichuan Circuit
传统	chuántǒng	tradition
船闸	chuánzhá	ship lock
创新	chuàngxīn	to innovate, bring forth new ideas
创造中国现代化奇迹	chuàngzào Zhōngguó xiàndàihuà qíjì	to make the miracle of Chinese Modernization
纯洋风	chún yángfēng	pure foreign style
D		
大禹	Dà Yú	Yu the Great, founder of Xia dynasty (ca. 2200-2101 BCE)
(京杭)大运河	(Jīngháng) dà yùnhé	Grand Canal, artificial river linking the Yellow River to the Yangzi River (Beijing-Hangzhou). Built

		between 486 BCE and 1327 CE
大自然	dàzìrán	nature
单位	dāngwèi	work unit
道德经	Dàodéjīng	*the Classic of the Way's Virtues*, Taoist canon
德	dé	moral virtue
得利	délì	"making-profit" principle
地票	dì piào	land certificate
地质	dìzhì	geology
帝	dì	emperor
[叠墅] 主要面向社会"中坚"阶层，是购房者梦想中的私属领地	[dié shù] zhǔyào miànxiàng shèhuì 'zhōngjiān' jiēcéng, shì gòufángzhě mèngxiǎng zhōng de sìshǔ lǐngdì	"[the semi-detached villa] is mainly oriented to the elite class, representing this house typology the customer's dream for a private living space"
东方文明的复兴和崛起	dōngfāng wénmíng de fùxīng hé juéqǐ	the renewal and rise of Eastern civilization
都市发达经济圈 – 主城	dūshì fādá jīngjì quān-zhǔchéng	Developed Metropolitan Economic Circle
城市发展新区	dūshì fāzhǎn xīn qū	Newly Developed Urban Area
都市功能核心区	dūshì gōngnéng héxīn qū	Core Metropolitan Function Area
都市功能拓展区	dūshì gōngnéng tuòzhǎn qū	Extended Metropolitan Function Area
E		
恶劣的时期	èliè de shíqī	an era of misfortune
F		
法	fǎ	method; standard; law code
法治	fǎ zhì	"rule of law"
翡翠	fěicuì	jade
分税制	fēnshuìzhì	system of tax distribution
风调雨顺	fēngtiáo yǔshùn	perfect climate, good weather for the crops
封闭住区	fēngbì zhùqū	gated community, enclave
峰，峯	fēng	peak, crest
讽刺	fěngcì	satire, to satirize
浮图关	Fútú guān	"passage of the Buddha"
府	fǔ	prefecture, seat of government (Tang-Qing dynasties)
府文庙	fǔ wénmiào	prefecture Confucian temple
复古主义	fùgǔ zhǔyì	"doctrine of returning to the ancients"
(文化)复兴	(wénhuà) fùxīng	(cultural) renewal, Renaissance; to revive, rejuvenate
富人出财，穷人出力	fùrén chū cái, qióngrén chū lì	"to have the wealthy paying the money and the poor providing the labor"
G		
改革开放	gǎigé kāifàng	"reform and open-up"
高雅	gāoyǎ	elegance
干群众志成城	gànqún zhòngzhì chéngchéng	"Party officials and ordinary people 'united are an impregnable stronghold'"
公署督办	gōngshǔ dūbàn	government office supervisor
恭州	Gōngzhōu	ancient name of Chongqing (Tang dynasty)
共产党是鱼，老百姓是水；水里可以没有鱼，鱼可是永远也离不开水	Gòngchǎndǎng shì yú, lǎobǎixìng shì shuǐ; shuǐ lǐ kěyǐ méiyǒu yú, yú kěshì yǒngyuǎn yě líbukāi shuǐ	"The Communist Party acts like fish, people as water. In water there could be no fish, but fish cannot live apart from water"
谷	gǔ	valley, gorge
关心	guānxīn	to be concerned about, care for, express interest in
观今宜鉴古，无古不成今	guān jīn yí jiàn gǔ, wú gǔ bù chéng jīn	"The sight of the present should mirror the past, without the past there is no present"
管子	Guǎnzǐ	Guanzi, a legalist-Confucian work attributed to the legalist politician Guan Zhong 管仲, Spring and Autumn period (ca. 720–645 BCE)

规划经济	guīhuà jīngjì	regulated economy
鲧禹治水	Gǔn Yú zhìshuǐ	Great Flood, or Gun-Yu myth
国进民推	guó jìn mín tuī	"State advances, private retreats"
国际慢城	guójì mànchéng	"international slow town"
国家级新区	guójiājí xīnqū	National-level New Area
过渡性	guòdùxìng	transitional nature
H		
海底沟地下水库	hǎidǐ gōu dìxià shuǐkù	Haidigou underground water reservoir (lit. "ditch to the undersea")
韩非子	Hánfēizi	Han Fei (or Han Feizi; ?-233 BCE), legalist theorist
和谐社会	héxié shèhuì	"Harmonious society", socioeconomic vision promoted by Hu Jintao (2002-2012)
和家人一起亲近大自然	hé jiārén yīqǐ qīnjìn dàzìrán	"Get close to nature with your family!"
河殇	hé shāng	*River Elegy*, a 1988 TV documentary
河长	hé zhǎng	river supervisor
宏观的战略目标	hóngguān de zhànlüè mùbiāo	macro strategic goal
湖	hú	lake
华侨	huáqiáo	overseas Chinese
化凶为吉	huà xiōng wéi jí	"transform a bad omen into good luck"
划拨土地(土地证)	huàbō tǔdì (tǔdìzhèng)	land transfer certificate
画地为牢	huàdì wéiláo	"draw a circle on the ground to serve as a prison"; limit, constrain
黄河	Huánghé	Yellow River
黄金水道	huángjīn shuǐdào	valuable waters
皇舆全览图	Huángyú quán lǎntú	"Overview of Emperor's Lands" map
活动坝	huódòngbà	movable dam
J		
计划经济	jìhuà jīngjì	planned economy
技术国家主义的自上而下	jìshù guójiāzhǔyì de zìshàng ér xià	top-down technological statism
建筑美学的自然主义	jiànzhù měixué de zìránzhǔyì	naturalism of architectonic aesthetics
江州	Jiāngzhōu	Jiangzhou, ancient name of Chongqing ("*zhou*" means prefecture)
街道办事处	jiēdào bànshìchù	Neighborhood/Street Office
借代	jièdài	metonymy
经济适用住房	jīngjì shìyòng zhùfáng	affordable housing
精神文明	jīngshén wénmíng	spiritual civilization
军政合一	jūnzhèng héyī	army and administration merged in a whole
K		
开埠	kāibù	to open treaty ports
考工记	Kǎogōngjì	*Book of Diverse Crafts*, compiled toward the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (approx. 771-476 BCE)
孔子	Kǒngzǐ	Confucius (551-479 BCE)
库区明珠、中国戛纳	kùqū míngzhū, Zhōngguó Jiánà	"a treasurable reservoir, the Chinese Cannes"
L		
蓝本	lánběn	chief source of a literary work
揽	lǎn	to embrace; to monopolize
琅	láng	jade
离尘不离城	lí chén bù lí chéng	"leave the dust but not the city"
黎香湖(土溪水库)	Líxiāng hú (Tǔxī shuǐkù)	Blossom Lake in Nanchuan District, Cq (also called Tuxi water reservoir)
(市)里	(shì)lǐ	traditional unit of length, ± 0.5 km)
理	lǐ	structure, structural pattern
历史商业名街	lìshǐ shāngyè míngjiē	historically famous commercial street

利用城市中的自然山势与水体来活化建筑环境	lìyòng chéngshì zhōng de zìrán shānshì yǔ shuǐtǐ lái huóhuà jiànzhù huánjìng	"make use of the mountainous topography and the body of waters within the city to activate the architectural environment"
连续的整体	liánxù de zhěngtǐ	a continuous whole entity
两	liǎng	two; *tael*, ancient unit of weight for silver (± 50 gr)
临坎吊脚楼	lín kǎn diàojiǎolóu	plumps anchored to rocky shores
领导人是怎样炼成的	lǐngdǎorén shì zěnyàng liànchéng de	"how leaders are made"
流量站	liúliàng zhàn	river discharge station
六件小事、都是大事	liù jiàn xiǎo shì, dōu shì dà shì	"The six small issues together make a big issue"
六书	liù shū	the six categories of Chinese characters
龙门山断层	Lóngménshān duàncéng	Longmenshan Fault
M		
美丽中国	měilì Zhōngguó	"Beautiful China" campaign
孟子	Mèngzǐ	Mengzi (372-289 BCE)
墨子	Mòzǐ	Mozi (ca. 470-391 BCE), founder of Mohism
亩	mǔ	traditional unit of area (≃0.000666 sq.km)
N		
南城	nánchéng	"southern walled citadel"
P		
牌坊	páifang	old-style memorial archway/ gateway
陪都	péidū	provisional capital
普通城市	pǔtōng chéngshì	a common, ordinary city
Q		
奇峰香山林海	Qífēng xiāngshān línhǎi	"Qifeng Scented Mount - See of Trees"
奇峰云邸引领慢生活风潮	Qífēng Yúndǐ yǐnlǐng màn shēnghuó fēngcháo	"Qifeng Residences on the Clouds lead to the 'slow living' wave"
奇迹	qíjì	miracle, wonder, marvel
气	qì	vital breath, creative potential
强化红线意识，促进安全发展	qiánghuà hóngxiàn yìshi, cùjìn ānquán fāzhǎn	"Strengthen the Red Line consciousness, promote a safe development!"
区	qū	area, district
R		
人类是一路栉风沐雨	rénlèi shì yīlù zhìfēng mùyǔ	"mankind is constantly combed by the wind and washed by the rain"
人治	rén zhì	"rule of man"
仁	rén	Confucian principle of benevolence
认同	rèntóng	to identify oneself with, approve, endorse
S		
三个代表	sān ge dàibiǎo	Three Represents (Jiang Zemin)
三民主义	sān mínzhǔyì	Three People's Principles (Dr. Sun Yat-sen)
三养	sān yǎng	"three cultivations"
山地建筑	shāndì jiànzhù	hilly architecture
山顶	shāndǐng	hilltop, hillcrest
上下城	shàngxià chéng	the lower and the upper city
社会隔离	shèhuì gélí	social exclusion
社会资本	shèhuì zīběn	social capital
社区居民委员会	shèqū jūmín wěiyuánhuì	(Community) Neighborhood Committee
深改的力量	shēn gǎi de lìliang	"The Power of a Profound Transformation"
生态文明	shēngtài wénmíng	civilized behavior towards nature
失忆之城	shīyì zhī chéng	"city struck with amnesia"
湿地是"地球之肾"	shīdì shì dìqiú zhī shèn	"the wetlands are the earth's kidney"
诗经	Shījīng	*The Book of Songs*, one of Confucian "Five Classics"

十三五之歌	shísānwǔ zhī gē	"The 13 WHAT"
实事求是	shí shì qiú shì	"to seek truth from facts"
实用主义	shíyòng zhǔyì	utilitarianism
示体惜	shì tǐxī	"demonstrate compassion for the people"
势	shì	power; influence; potential; momentum; conditions
疏解人口	shūjiě rénkǒu	to disperse the population
術	shù	method; technique
水尺	shuǐchǐ	water gauge
水电站	shuǐdiànzhàn	hydropower station
水利所 / 水付管	shuǐlì suǒ / shuǐfǔguǎn	water management office
水库	shuǐkù	water reservoir
水排	shuǐpái	water-powered pusher
水文	shuǐwén	hydrology
私家化	sījiāhuà	private property reform
思	sī	personal introspection, to think
思改革，谋改革，抓改革学习贯彻党的十八届三中全会精神	sī gǎigé, móu gǎigé, zhuā gǎigé – xuéxī guànchè dǎng de shíbā jiè sān zhōngquánhuì jīngshen	"Think the reform, plan the reform, seize the reform! Study and implement the essence of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CCP Central Committee"
思想	sīxiǎng	thought, ideology
思想意识	sīxiǎng yìshi	consciousness of thought, ideology
四个全面	sì gè quánmiàn	"The Four Comprehensives"
四海	sìhǎi	"four seas", physical boundaries of China
梭屋	suōwū	house built on a terrace
T		
梯级	tījí	stair, step; terraced water conservation project, system of irrigation dams
提法	tífǎ	formulation, wording; viewpoint (on an issue)
天道	tiāndào	The Way of Heaven
天命	tiānmìng	Mandate of Heaven
天下	tiānxià	All under Heaven (the entire world/China)
厅	tīng	governmental department, sub-prefecture
通景画	tōngjǐnghuà	illusion painting (*tongjing*: "moving through scenes")
同志	tóngzhì	comrade; gay
统筹	tǒngchóu	to plan as a whole
统筹安排	tǒngchóu ānpái	comprehensive plan, arrangement
统筹城市规划	tǒngchóu chéngshì guīhuà	overall urban planning
突破	tūpò	to make a breakthrough
土地出让	tǔdì chūràng	land transfer
土地交易所	tǔdì jiāoyì suǒ	land exchange market
土地使用权转让	tǔdì shǐyòng quán zhuǎnràng	land-use right transfer
土地出让转让金	tǔdì chūràng zhuǎnràng jīn	land allocation and land transfer fees
土地资源网	tǔdì zīyuán wǎng	Land Resources website
土豪	tǔháo	nouveau riche (slang); local tyrant
W		
湾	wān	gulf, bay
完整的排水系统	wánzhěng de páishuǐ xìtǒng	integrated drainage system
王	wáng	lord; sovereign
王城	wángchéng	capital city, as described in *Kaogongji*
（王）府	wángfǔ	high official mansion
维护社会稳定	wéihù shèhuì wěndìng	to maintain social stability
微电园	wéidiànyuán	micro-electronics plant park
伪	wěi	rational activity, experience; fake, false (cf. Xunzi)

为市民建设一个"慢生活"的桃源世界	wèi shìmín jiànshè yī gè "màn shēnghuó" de táoyuán shìjiè	"Establish an idyllic world where the citizens can 'live slowly'"
为人民服务	wèi rénmín fúwù	"Serve the People!", CCP political slogan
为土地提升价值	wèi tǔdì tíshēng jiàzhí	"to promote the value for the land"
文脉 / 文化	wénmài / wénhuà	cultural vein, culture; civilization
无为	wúwèi	non action
五大功能区域	wǔ dà gōngnéng qūyù	five functional areas
物联网	wù liánwǎng	internet of things
X		
西部大开发	xībù dà kāifā	"go West campaign"
溪	xī	stream, rivulet
袭击	xíjī	to make a surprise attack; raid
先治坡后治窝"的大寨精神，"先生产后生活"的大庆精神	xiān zhì pō hòu zhì wō de Dàzhài jīngshen, xiān shēngchǎn hòu shēnghuó de Dàqìng jīngshen	"First adjust the slope, then embellish buildings (Dazhai spirit); first produce, then live (Daqing spirit)" – slogans of the Great Leap Forward
县	xiàn	county
县署	xiànshǔ	county governmental office
消费传统的现代旅游	xiāofèi chuántǒng de xiàndài lǚyóu	"the contemporary tourism that consumes tradition"
小康社会	xiǎokāng shèhuì	a Confucian near-ideal state of society in which the material needs of most citizens are adequately met
小面积、高品质	xiǎo miànjī, gāo pǐnzhì	"little surface, high quality in furnishing"
孝母泉	xiào mǔ quán	"spring of filial piety"
协调	xiétiáo	to coordinate, harmonize
新常态	xīn chángtài	"New Normal"
信	xìn	confidence; to believe
刑名 / 形名	xíngmíng	denomination of a function (lit. shape and name)
性	xìng	original human nature; natural tendency
学	xué	to study, learn, emulate
血统	xuètǒng	blood relationship, lineage
荀子	Xúnzǐ	Xunzi, Confucian philosopher (ca. 313-238 BCE)
Y		
崖洞	yádòng	cave on the mountain precipice
扬弃	yángqì	develop what is useful/healthy and discard what is not
洋房	yángfáng	a house built according to foreign aesthetics and standards (Western-style house)
洋货热	yánghuò rè	fever for foreign goods
扬子江	Yángzǐ Jiāng	the Yangzi/Yangtze River (i.e. the Changjiang River)
扬子江整理水道委员会	Yángzǐ Jiāng zhěnglǐ shuǐdào wěiyuánhuì	The Yangzi River Water Management Committee
养生	yǎngshēng	welfare, care for life
一带一路	yī dài yī lù	"One Belt One Road"
一座满目疮痍的城市	yī zuò mǎnmù chuāngyí de chéngshì	a devastated city
宜居理念	yíjū lǐniàn	livable ideas
以德行仁者	yǐ dé xíng rén zhě	to govern in a "humanitarian" manner through the implementation of the moral virtues (Mengzi, 2A3)
以力假仁者	yǐ lì jiǎ rén zhě	to pretend governing in a "humanitarian" manner by the use of the brute force (Mengzi)
以人为中心	yǐ rén wéi zhōngxīn	anthropocentric
义	yì	justice; righteousness
永宁生态园	yǒngníng shēngtài yuán	Eternal Peace Eco-Park

有机建筑	yǒujī jiànzhù	organic architecture
"有天有地"的庄院生活	"yǒutiān yǒudì" de zhuāngyuàn shēnghuó	the "villa with sky and land" lifestyle
渝国土房	Yú guótǔ fáng	Yu Reign houses
渝西经济走廊	Yúxī jīngjì zǒuláng	West Chongqing Economic Corridor
禹迹图	Yǔjitú	"Map of the tracks of Yu the Great" (12th c.)
御制耕织图	Yùzhì gēng zhī tú	"Imperially Commissioned Illustrations of Agriculture and Sericulture", book (dated 1696)
云	yún	clouds
苑	yuàn	imperial enclosed garden
院	yuàn	courtyard; official place
悦生活	yuè shēnghuó	a pleasant life
Z		
闸口盘车	zhá kǒu pán chē	water-powered pusher or reciprocator
招标、拍卖、挂牌	zhāobiāo, pāimài, guàpái	public bidding, auctions, and the stock market
正名	zhèngmíng	Confucian principle of "rectification of names"
正绅	zhèng shēn	"upright gentry"
知识青年上山下乡	zhīshi qīngnián shàngshán xiàxiāng	rusticated, sent-down urban educated youth
殖民建筑	zhímín jiànzhù	colonial architecture
制度化	zhìdùhuà	systematization, institutionalization
治理	zhìlǐ	to govern; governance
智慧能源	zhìhuì néngyuán	smart energy
智慧信息系统	zhìhuì xìnxī xìtǒng	smart information system
中国	Zhōngguó	China
中国何以强缘有共产党	Zhōngguó héyǐ qiáng yuán yǒu Gòngchǎndǎng	"China is strong thanks to the Party!"
中国梦	Zhōngguó mèng	"China Dream", slogan made popular by Xi Jinping starting from 2013; a set of individualistic and nationalistic values
中国特色	Zhōngguó tèsè	Chinese characteristics, distinctive features
中华民国	Zhōnghuà mínguó	Republic of China (ROC)
中梁镇：发展生态游 打造 重庆市首座"慢城"	Zhōngliáng zhèn: fāzhǎn shēngtài yóu – dǎzào Chóngqìng shì shǒuzuò "màn chéng"	Zhongliang Town: developing eco-tourism – creating Chongqing first 'slow town'
中体西用	Zhōngtǐ Xīyòng	adopting Western knowledge for its practical uses while keeping Chinese values as the core
中性的'地皮'	zhōngxìng de dìpí	"neutral building lots"
重要门口	zhòngyào ménkǒu	important gateway
庄园	zhuāngyuán	mansion, estate, villa and park; feudal land
庄子- 庄周	Zhuāngzǐ - Zhuāngzhōu	Zhuangzi (ca. 369-286 BCE), Taoist philosophy
自下而上的大众创业、万众创新	zì xià ér shàng de dàzhòng chuàngyè, wànzhòng chuàngxīn	innovative down-top path led by the massive creative industries
资质	zīzhì	credentials, natural endowments
宗藩	zōngfān	tributary system; hierarchy
综合项目	zōnghé xiàngmù	integrated project
综合研究	zōnghé yánjiū	comprehensive study
走马转角楼	zǒumǎ zhuǎn jiǎolóu	turret-shaped caravanserai
坐标	zuòbiāo	coordinate (geometry)

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Index