Peripheral modernities: Urban imaginaries, housing and informality on the edge of Chongqing

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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感谢所有在重庆提供材料的朋友们。

Abstract

This thesis investigates how rapid urbanisation changed the daily life of residents on the periphery of Chongqing, Southwest China. It examines how the vision of urban modernity promoted by the local state compares to the reality of urbanisation on the edge of the city. It considers how informal practices intersect with rapid state-led urban restructuring, and the implications for how the city is imagined. State discourse justified urbanisation by portraying public housing built on the urban periphery as a form of equitable development. Long-term fieldwork in the recently urbanised district of Dazhulin revealed a space which became home to diverse social groups displaced by urban restructuring. By investigating the tactics these heterogeneous groups use to respond to displacement, access housing and practice informal agriculture, the periphery is conceptualised as a space where new urban lives must be forged in a fragmented and unfinished landscape. Residents use a range of formal and informal tactics to access and transform state-built housing. Informal tactics also extend to the practice of urban agriculture and self-built construction on undeveloped land. This transformation must be understood in the context of the so-called 'Chongqing Model' of urban development, which was portrayed by the local state as enacting an egalitarian vision of spatial justice. In the wake of this model's apparent failure there emerged new inequalities but also new ways of engaging with the periphery, with implications for current debates around the nature of urbanisation, informality and the boundaries of the urban in China and more globally.

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1. Introduction

During the height of Chongqing's growth, they said that every three months you needed to buy a new map.
Jiang and Yu (2016, p. 50)

If China were a magazine, Beijing would be the issue's front cover, and Shanghai would be the back. Chongqing, representing future growth and development, would be an advertisement for the next issue.
Asia Week (2009), quoted in Rithmire (2012, p. 1).

Figure 1: Looking towards public housing from undeveloped land in Dazhulin. Source: author.

1.1 The view from the periphery

Halfway through fieldwork, a local collaborator on a video project suggested that I spend the night sleeping in a patch of undeveloped land on the edge of Chongqing. This patch of land had been formally 'urbanised' a decade previously but had not yet been built upon (Figure 1). As a result it had been returned to informal agricultural use by the residents of the nearby housing which was built to accommodate people displaced by urbanisation. After filming me erecting a tent as night fell, this collaborator asked if I

wanted to return to a hotel with him or stay in the field. I decided to stay in the field. Around midnight I decided to visit a participant who was staying in a shed he had built himself on another part of the undeveloped land. He had invited me to join him earlier that day, and said he'd be sitting up late drinking alcohol. I walked across the field in darkness, tripping over furrows and slipping down hillsides. I found him and his wife still awake, and he invited me to sit with them. Although it was dark, the lights from the windows of the adjacent public housing tower blocks bathed the green field in dim white light, which began to fade as people went to bed and turned off their lights. The sound of music echoing from the karaoke bars and public dance squares on the other side of the road died away, and the relative silence of the surrounding farmland settled in. This was occasionally broken by the whirr of the light rail line which stretched across the land almost directly above us, as empty trains returned to the city centre for the night. My companions talked about the former Secretary of the Communist Party who had built the public housing opposite us and lamented that he had been sent to jail, complaining that the current city authorities did not value ordinary people as he had done. In the small hours I finally left them and walked back to my tent, from where the pale lights of the city seemed much more distant.

1.2 Starting out

This thesis explores the changes in the use of space and daily life brought about by rapid urbanisation. It does this by examining how urbanisation was imagined, how housing was utilised and how informal practices emerged in response to rapid urbanisation on the periphery of Chongqing in western China. I am interested in how people and spaces 'become urban', and I utilise the concept of 'urban modernity' as a heuristic device to explore this idea.

This thesis draws on 14 months of fieldwork which were largely spent conducting ethnographic research in the peripheral subdistrict of Dazhulin. Dazhulin was transformed from rural farmland to an unfinished residential suburb in the decade after the mid-2000s, and provides the main fieldsite for this study. I focus in particular on the legacy of a period of rapid modernisation and growth from 2007 to 2012 which came to be known as 'the Chongqing Model'. During this period, the local state in Chongqing adopted a series of policies which it claimed would produce a more equitable mode of development, and so challenge the neoliberal model of other cities in China. I look at how urbanisation was imagined, housing was utilised, and informal practices emerged in

response to this state intervention. Through these examples I explore the shortcomings of the equitable vision of urban modernity portrayed by the Chongqing Model.

The concepts of urban modernity and the periphery are central to this thesis, because my research looks at a city which was in many ways peripheral to the immense wealth generated in the cities of the Chinese coast since reform, This thesis also looks at the subdistrict of Dazhulin, an area on the periphery of Chongqing largely inhabited by people marginalised in the city's redevelopment, and how they responded to these enormous changes through their own attempts to become urban and modern.

Through analysing the urban imaginary of these changes, I explore how the state portrayed urbanisation as offering a more egalitarian mode of life through the construction of public housing. Examining the way housing was accessed and utilised in Dazhulin allows me to consider how the realities of urbanisation fell short of the promised egalitarian vision of the Chongqing Model. This thesis also investigates the informal practices of marginalised people in Dazhulin, and considers how informality interacted with the spaces of state-led urbanisation. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss relevant literature and research methodology, and so provide the context for the study. Chapters 4 and 5 establish the patterns through which urbanisation took place in Chongqing, analysing the political economy and official discourse of urbanisation respectively. This lays the ground for the ethnographic material of chapters 6 and 7, where I focus on how people utilised housing and informal space to respond to these changes.

In this chapter, I introduce the city of Chongqing and explain its significance within the broader patterns of Chinese urbanisation. I briefly discuss how Chongqing has been represented in Western media and the relative lack of attention it has received in Anglophone scholarship despite its rapid growth. I outline my understanding of contemporary Chinese political economy and the terminology used to analyse it. I pose four research questions which I use to orient this thesis, and provide an overview of the chapter structure.

1.3 Chongqing on the periphery

Chongqing is the largest city in western China, a river port on the Yangtze which has enjoyed some of the highest economic growth rates of any city in the world since the mid-2000s. The urban area has expanded rapidly over this period, occupying a sprawling zone beyond the traditional core of Yuzhong (Figure 2). As a rapidly growing inland industrial hub it has been described as 'China's Chicago' and often discussed as representing the future of China's urban and economic strategy (Kynge, 2006, p. 25; Rithmire, 2012).

At the time of my fieldwork the city had a registered population of nearly 8 million, with an approximate 4 million or more non-registered migrant workers (Chongqing Statistical Yearbook). Chongqing is one of only four directly controlled municipalities in China, and the only one in inland China (the others being Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin). This effectively grants Chongqing Municipality the same status as a province, providing administrative privileges and increased funding from the central state. When talking about Chongqing it is important to distinguish the 'core city' (*zhucheng*) from the directly controlled region of Chongqing Municipality (*zhixiashi*). The wider region of Chongqing Municipality covers an area of 82,000 km^2, including many smaller cities and remote rural areas (Figure 3). Several commentators have misunderstood the wider municipality as constituting a single city, leading to spurious assertions that Chongqing is 'the largest city in the world'. In this thesis my research is focussed on the core city of Chongqing.[1]

Prior to becoming a directly controlled municipality in 1997, Chongqing was the second-largest city in Sichuan province. The traditional urban core lies on a rocky peninsula at the confluence of the Jialing and Yangtze rivers in a mountainous region. It was a relatively underdeveloped inland port until the 1930s. Between 1937 and 1945 it was the wartime capital of the Republic of China during the occupation of coastal provinces by Japan. Throughout this period it acted as a centre of military command and wartime industrial production, and underwent an extensive modernisation and extension with the assistance of planners exiled from the coast (McIsaac, 2000). After the war the region became more closely integrated into the national economy. Chongqing became an inland industrial base as the socialist economy moved production away from the coast to more remote inland regions. By the 1980s, Chongqing was one of the main car manufacturing centres in China. It saw extensive armed battles during the Cultural Revolution which destroyed areas of the city (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2009, p. 217) and small riots in the wake of the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 (Chan and Unger, 1990). The rural hinterland surrounding the city was one of the key 'sending' regions for the huge numbers of migrant workers that flocked to the factories of Shenzhen and other coastal cities in the late 1980s, providing much of the labour which underpinned the economic miracle of Deng Xiaoping's liberal reforms (Davin, 1998, pp. 50-58).

[1] This distinction is often unclear in the primary sources used. For avoidance of doubt I use 'Chongqing Municipality' to refer to the directly controlled municipal region. For a discussion of the widespread misinterpretation of Chongqing's population see Chan (2000).

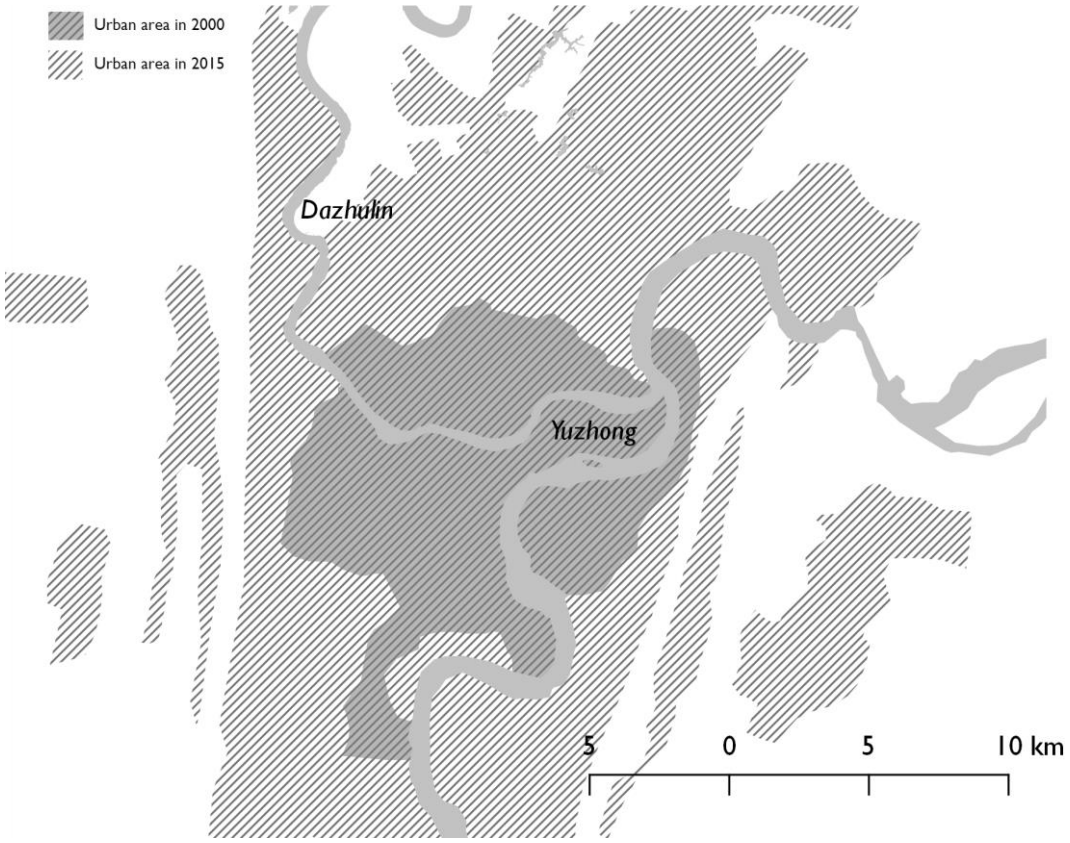

Figure 2: Chongqing's urbanisation between 2000 and 2015, highlighting the traditional core of Yuzhong and the fieldsite of Dazhulin. Source: author.

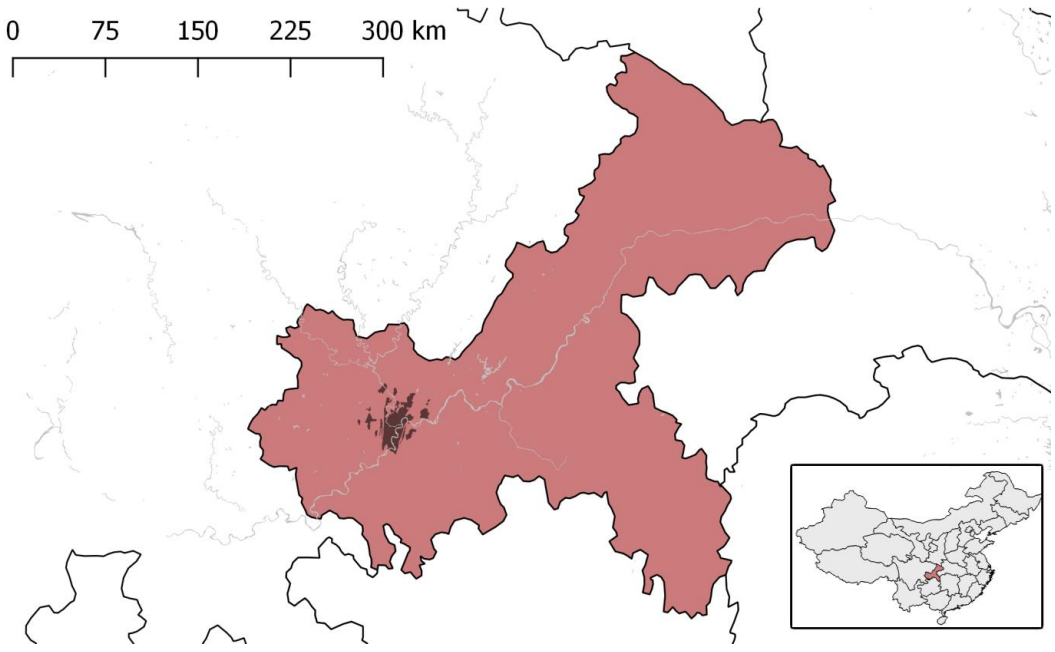

Figure 3: Chongqing Municipality, showing in dark grey the extent of urbanised areas around the core city. Source: author.

The decision to separate Chongqing from Sichuan province in 1997 and establish it as a directly controlled municipality was prompted by the need to manage the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. The flooding of the Yangtze resulted in the displacement of over a million people, most of whom were resettled in Chongqing Municipality (Hong, 2004). Around the year 2000 the national political agenda came to focus on regional inequality and rural poverty, and a range of policies intended to promote the economic development of inland China were beneficial for Chongqing (Li and Wei, 2010). In 2000 the 'Open up the West Programme' (*xibu dakaifa*) led to an influx of central state investment and preferential policies to promote growth in Western regions, including Chongqing (Hong, 2004). The municipality was designated a national experimental zone for urban-rural integration, granting the municipal government considerable freedom in relaxing state regulations to promote growth and relieve rural poverty (Liu, W. et al., 2016). Central state funding, reform of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and increased capital investment brought economic growth to Chongqing in the 2000s. Foreign direct investment increased fivefold between 2006 and 2010, and the expanding manufacturing sector led to a growing population of migrant workers (Rithmire, 2012). The city grew considerably upwards and outwards. The Chongqing World Trade Centre (then the tallest building in Western China) was completed in in 2005. The area of urban land in the municipality as a whole more than tripled between 2000 and 2015 with land expropriated from peripheral townships (Chongqing Statistical Yearbook).

These developments came to coalesce around a period between 2007 and 2012 which became known as 'The Chongqing Model'. During this period Chongqing enjoyed unprecedentedly high rates of GDP growth, averaging 14% per year, and making it by far the fastest growing large city in the country. This occurred in the context of the global financial crisis and more sluggish growth in coastal provinces. The rising cost of labour and land in coastal cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou prompted many manufacturers to move supply chains to Chongqing where labour costs were 50% cheaper (Cai et al., 2012; Bo and Chen, 2009; Yu, 2017). By the time my fieldwork began, two thirds of the world's laptops were assembled there (Zhang, G., 2015). The municipal government established special economic zones with low taxes for high-tech industry, and announced plans to expand the registered urban population by 10 million by 2020 (Rithmire, 2012). This would partly be achieved by the construction of the largest public housing programme undertaken in China since the demise of the socialist housing system, adding 40 million m^2 of state-owned low-cost rental housing by 2020 (Su et al., 2010).

This project of urban restructuring was accompanied by a remarkable propaganda campaign. The government organised mass rallies reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution and required employees to participate in the public singing of revolutionary songs (Mei, 2017). A municipality-wide crackdown on the city's criminal underworld (*hei shehui*) saw many prominent businessmen arrested and their assets confiscated. Much of this campaign was headed by Bo Xilai, the secretary of the municipality's Communist Party and a former Minister of Commerce in the national government. Bo appeared on television advocating the virtues of the Chongqing Model and expressing concern that other provincial leaders had abandoned the ideals of socialism (Mulvad, 2015). A number of intellectuals representing the Chinese New Left[2] praised the Chongqing Model, describing it as an innovative model for 'Socialism 3.0'—an alternative to both socialism and capitalism emerging in the wake of the global financial crisis (Cui, 2012a; Downie, 2014; Wang, S., 2011).[3] Li Xiguang (2011) wrote that what he called 'the Chongqing Dream' had 'deepened our understanding of the Chinese Model and the Beijing consensus, redefined modernity, affirmed that socialist systems have an inherent national advantage and put an end to "the end of history"'(p. 5). David Harvey (2012) profiled Chongqing approvingly as one of the 'rebel cities' in the book of the same name.

The era of the so-called Chongqing Model came to an end in early 2012 when Bo was arrested and charged with corruption and subversion of state power. The propaganda of Bo and the Chongqing Model had been completely removed from the city when I first visited in August 2013, although he remained popular amongst many ordinary residents. Coverage of Bo is still censored on the Chinese internet, and left-wing websites that expressed support for him were shut down shortly after his conviction. When Bo's successor, Zhang Dejiang, took over the leadership of Chongqing he declared that 'the Chongqing Model never existed' (Zhang, D., 2012). This was also the view of the vast majority of academics and journalists I spoke to during my research, who suggested that the whole thing was a branding exercise intended to facilitate Bo's national political ambitions. Nonetheless, Bo Xilai and the successes of the Chongqing Model have been

[2] The terminology of the 'Chinese New Left' is disputed, but it is broadly understood to refer to a group of academics and intellectuals emerging after the 1990s who oppose the deepening marketisation of the Chinese economy and criticise the direction taken by the Communist Party since the mid-1980s, although they continue to acknowledge its governing legitimacy. See Wang H. (2009) for one of the most prominent voices of the movement, and Vukovich (2018) and Connery (2017) for further discussion.

[3] These claims are best understood in the light of the argument made by Wang Shaoguang (2008) that the Chinese state in the 2000s was enacting a 'double movement' as described by Karl Polanyi. Wang understands this to refer to a strengthening of the state and increase in social welfare which would correct the inequalities created by marketisation in the 1990s—resulting in a re-embedding of market mechanisms within the apparatus of the state. See Lim (2014) for further discussion.

frequently referenced by leftist writers on China as indicating the possibility of an alternative to the increasingly neoliberal direction taken by the country as a whole (Zhao, 2012; Vukovich, 2018; Lim, 2019; Cui, 2012a), while others have been more critical (Li, M., 2011; Mulvad, 2015).

The story of Chongqing over this period can be interpreted as a city seeking to challenge its peripheral status in relation to the cultural and economic centres of post-reform growth in Shanghai and Guangdong. McIsaac (2000) argues that during the Second World War Chongqing was seen to represent the broader imbalances of the Chinese nation: Chongqing was perceived to be backwards and 'anti-modern' compared to Shanghai's modernity and Westernised culture (p. 190). There are similarities with the present day, as the recent development of Chongqing is understood to be emblematic of the westward shift of the Chinese economy away from the coast and towards predominately agricultural underdeveloped inland regions (Cai et al., 2012; Liu, W. et al., 2016).

During Chongqing's recent transformation, the territory covered by the city itself expanded enormously. The 2007 master plan pushed the boundaries of the city north and south, encompassing previously rural areas. My research came to focus on the site of Dazhulin, a small industrial and agricultural township beyond the city which was rapidly urbanised after the year 2000. Because of the state's construction of resettlement housing and public housing on previously rural land, Dazhulin became a place in which many of those people displaced in the course of the city's development were resettled. In this sense, positioning my research in Dazhulin allowed me to view the changes taking place in China's cities from the periphery of a peripheral city—a space that I came to think about as a site of 'dual peripheralisation'.

This thesis studies how the transformation of the city over a short period of time was experienced by those living through it. In particular, I focus on the urban poor, migrant workers and urbanised villagers who were displaced to Dazhulin by development. I consider how the reality of urban life on the periphery compared to the image promoted by the government. I do this through three angles, examining the imaginary of the Chongqing Model, access to housing, and informal practices in Dazhulin. From these approaches, I draw out critical insight into the changing relationship between the urban state and the residents of the periphery. In the broadest sense I examine how new spaces emerged in the city, how 'old' spaces became absorbed into the city, and how the use and meaning of these spaces was negotiated between the state and ordinary people.

1.4 'The largest city you've never heard of'

At the outset it is important to note the ambiguous position Chongqing occupies within global urban knowledge. While it has received increased attention in recent years, it remains a relatively under-studied city in Anglophone literature. An article in the Guardian described Chongqing as 'the invisible city' and 'the largest city you've never heard of' (Watts, 2006). Despite its growing importance to the Chinese economy and global supply chains, it has been repeatedly represented in Western media as an unknown or un-discovered place.

Urban discourse in China has generally identified the cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou as the most advanced and 'global' cities in the country (Su et al., 2014). This is reflected in salaries, consumption costs and inequality levels which far exceed those of other regional Chinese cities (Timberlake et al., 2014). In the discourse of 'second tier' cities such as Chongqing these three cities are often referred to by the shorthand of *Beishangguang*—taking the first syllable of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The imaginary of Beishangguang expresses the privileged position of these coastal cities as the cultural and economic capitals of the post-reform era; the centres of urban modernity 'where one ought to live and work' (Hansen and Thøgersen, 2015, p. 3). Beishangguang is imagined as synonymous with urban China, and its image provides a normative model to which lower-tier cities should aspire.

Beishangguang's apparent pre-eminence amongst the large cities in China is reflected in urban studies scholarship. A quick survey of publications in major human geography and urban studies journals[4] since 1999 found over a hundred publications about Shanghai or Beijing, 88 about Guangzhou and 33 about Shenzhen, while inland cities such as Chongqing, Wuhan, Chengdu and Xi'an had less than ten each. While recent years have seen a huge upsurge in the attention paid to urban Chinese in Anglophone scholarship, much of this research remains grounded in a small number of cities which are in many ways likely to be quite unrepresentative of the majority of Chinese urban experiences. Theorisations of urban China are typically made from these relatively affluent and historically privileged cities. Cities outside of Beishangguang remain largely 'off the map' (Robinson, 2002). Kanai et al. (2018) carried out a bibliometric assessment of urban globalisation research, and identified Chongqing as one of the five cities 'all of which had populations of over 10 million in 2015, but were subject to no more than one average annual publication during the study period' (p. 2580). Much apparently 'global'

[4] Environment and Planning A, Environment and Planning D, Urban Studies, Urban Geography, City, Antipode, Cities, Area, IJURR, Geoforum.

research is often 'paradoxically parochial' in its tendency to adhere to particular enclaves of space presumed to be suitably 'worldly' (Bunnell and Maringanti, 2010, p. 418). While undertaking research in Chongqing I was often acutely aware of the difficulty and danger of generalising from the experience of one particular city to speak for Chinese urbanisation more broadly—yet studies of Beishangguang seem to be taken metonymically to refer to Chinese urbanisation in general, irrespective of the real differences between large prosperous coastal cities and the hundreds of smaller provincial cities which have constituted the main bulk of urban growth.

Figure 4: The centre of Yuzhong district, viewed from the North. Source: author.

Despite Chongqing's apparent 'invisibility' to the West, images of the city have proved extremely popular outside of China. The scale and speed of Chongqing's urbanisation and the mountainous topography on which the city sits have produced particularly spectacular urban forms. It has become a favourite subject for photographers trying to represent the scale and speed of Chinese urbanisation.[5] One of these photographers, Tim Franco, described the visual experience of Chongqing from an outsiders' perspective:

> My first week in Chongqing was thrilling! I felt like I was in Blade Runner, walking through dark alleys and getting lost in maze-like streets. Discovering different levels, taking elevators and cable cars to travel from one part of the city to the others. It looked to me like a chaotic and dark mix of Manhattan and Hong Kong. […] It is kind of strange because the darkness and the mess of a city can be quite depressing and violent, but this also gives it a unique style and energy that made me want to photograph it even more. (Franco, quoted in Stott, 2015).

[5] See Ferit Kuyas *Chongqing: City of Ambition* (2003); Tim Franco *Metamorpolis* (2015); Luca Campigotto *Iconic China* (2018).

The impression of Chongqing as something out of science fiction was repeated to me often while I was living there—most frequently by foreigners, but also by Chinese visitors from other cities. The image of Chongqing's skyline appears in unexpected places once you are able to recognise it. While writing this thesis I noted that Chongqing's skyline is one of the images on the homepage of King's College London's urban futures research group (although it appears no research is carried out there). The superlatives used to imagine Chongqing as 'the largest city you've never heard of' (Watts, 2006), 'China's secret megacity' (Perrins, 2018), and 'the most futuristic city in the world' (Philjake, 2018) similarly speak to a techno-orientalist fascination with Chinese urbanisation as a representing an Other urbanism—a glimpse of the Orient as future rather than past. These representations of Chongqing portray the city as a kind of sci-fi cityscape made real, comparable to the descriptions of Tokyo as a city that 'transcends time' identified by Waley (2006, p. 372). The 're-scripting' of Chongqing which takes place in these accounts seems to imagine it as standing in for China becoming urban more broadly—a transformation that can only be communicated in terms of superlative numbers and striking images.

In many representations Chongqing symbolises of the future of the urban. It is a place becoming urban, but also assigned more abstract forms of becoming. For foreign and domestic investors it represents a future front of cheap labour and land to be exploited. For its advocates on the Chinese New Left it represents a more egalitarian urban future. For photographers in the West, the image of Chongqing represents an encounter with a non-Western urban future. Despite this, in many of these accounts the actual city of Chongqing remains invisible. My own interest in Chongqing was undoubtedly influenced by these representations, and I decided to do fieldwork there because I was interested in what Chongqing was becoming. In this thesis I hope to have avoided the clichés of 'invisibility' which have cloaked much writing on Chongqing, and instead demonstrated that it is a city which has much more concrete value in producing urban knowledge.

From my findings in Chongqing, I contribute knowledge from an under-studied context which speaks to a number of debates in urban studies and human geography more broadly. Within Chinese geography, I contribute a sustained critique of the Chongqing Model which excavates the shortcomings of the state's promise of equitable development with ethnographic data. My examination of the propaganda of the Chongqing Model considers it as an example of 'hyperbuilding' (Ong, 2011)—this contributes an atypical perspective to the literature of 'urban futures' (Watson, 2014; Bhan, 2014; Datta, 2018), demonstrating how such discourse utilises a radical egalitarian urban imaginary.

Investigation of housing practices in Dazhulin reveals an under-studied dimension of the interface between formality and informality in Chinese housing (Liu, H. et al., 2018), adding a more critical perspective on Chongqing's public housing programme to existing studies (Zhou, J., 2018; Zhou, J. and Ronald, 2017; Gan et al., 2016b) and contributing towards a growing body of literature on the formal-informal interface more globally (Roy, 2005; 2009b; 2011b; McFarlane, 2012; Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Haid and Hilbradnt, 2019). I link these practices to the challenges of urban life after displacement, adding an under-explored perspective to the study of displacement through urban restructuring and proposing the term 'post-displacement'. My study of informal farming in the undeveloped land of Dazhulin demonstrates an understudied type of informality emerging *after* formal urbanisation rather than preceding it, which I link to Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery in addition to discussions of peripheral subjectivities (Caldeira, 2017; Holston, 2009).

More generally throughout this thesis I consider how the experience of my interlocutors speaks to the contours of urban theory. My study of urbanisation in Dazhulin reveals the highly differentiated process by which state logics of urban accumulation are manifested locally, demonstrating the complexity of imposing any model of 'planetary urbanization' (Brenner and Schmid, 2014, 2017) on understudied urban experiences. My research rejects the notion of a city which is simultaneously consumable as an image, but invisible as a site of knowledge production. I hope to position Chongqing as a place equally modern and potentially important to urban studies as the cities of Beishangguang, with much to tell us about contemporary urban life in China and more globally.

1.5 Political economy of Chinese cities

Given recent debates within urban studies about the appropriate conceptual framework and lexicon for describing not just the junctures of political economy and the urban at the global scale (Brenner and Schmid, 2014) but also specifically in China (Zhou et al., 2019), it is important to clarify my choice of language and point of entry for talking about the political economy of China. The rapid urbanisation and marketisation of land and labour in China since the reforms of the 1980s has often been cited as one of the quintessential examples of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). Without excavating debates about the ontology of neoliberalism within human geography, it is important within the Chinese context to clarify the extent to which the demise of socialist urbanism and rise of an increasingly market-oriented political economy depended upon strong interventions by the state. Lim (2019) argues that understanding China's economic reform as a simple

transition from socialism to capitalism or from centralisation to decentralisation obscures the complex politics which emerge in practice. Within this thesis, I conceive of this interaction between urban state and market according to Wu Fulong's (2003, 2008, 2010b, 2018) theory of state entrepreneurialism. I understand this to refer to the continued hegemony of the local state (principally through the control of land and population through mechanisms derived from the socialist state) in utilising market mechanisms for developmentalist ends. China's urban political economy thus 'shows a hybrid form, combining features of the developmental state with instruments created in the market' in which 'the institutions of land, fiscal policy, and cadre promotion [have] laid down the foundation on which the local state has been incentivised and transformed' (Wu, F., 2016a, p. 345). There are on-going debates about the extent to which such a hybrid political economy can be called neoliberal (Ong, 2007; Zhou et al., 2019; Lin, 2014; Wu, F., 2010b; He and Wu, 2009), but within this thesis I am careful not to refer to 'neoliberalism' as a state of being, but only to neoliberal *policies* which enacted by the local state—that is to say, policies which allow the commodification of land, labour and public assets and expose them to global capital markets.

This clarification must be made in the context of a frank understanding of the extent of exploitation and inequality resulting from state entrepreneurialism at a national and local level. Due to the uneven geography of development from the 1980s onwards (Wei, 1999; Kanbur and Zhang, 1999, 2005) rural populations in Western provinces became migrant labourers in the industrial and commercial cities of the coast. This created a 'floating population' of over 100 million migrant workers who provided cheap labour in construction sites and factories in coastal cities (Brandt and Rawski, 2008; Davin, 1998; Fan, 2007). Restricted from accessing urban services by their rural residency status, these migrant workers (*nongmingong*) have been widely interpreted as constituting a new working class, sometimes conceptualised as a new 'global' proletariat due to the central role of their labour in the global economy (Chan and Ngai, 2009; Smart and Smart, 2001; Li, M., 2009).

China's economic transformation is irrevocably entangled with the simultaneous transformation of European and North American economies, where deindustrialisation, service-based-restructuring and debt-fuelled consumption has been enabled by the exploitation of an unprecedented reserve of cheap Chinese labour (Harvey, 2007; Li, M., 2009; Arrighi, 2008; Wang, H., 2009). The fact that material abundance in London or New York is premised on the exploitation of labour and degradation of the environment in Shenzhen, Chongqing and other Chinese cities is vital context for any discussion of

urban life in China and for that matter in Europe and North America. I recognise the deeply exploitative relationships by which the people of Chongqing are enmeshed with the economies of high-consumption European and Anglo-American territories, whose lifestyle is premised upon the undervalued labour much of much of the globe, but particularly China. The laptop on which much of this thesis was typed was assembled in Chongqing, most likely by migrant workers drawn from the surrounding countryside or unpaid student interns (Zhang, G., 2015; Hodal and Bengsten, 2017; Yu, 2017). Accordingly, discussion of the political economy or daily life of Chinese cities is incomplete without consideration of their relations to broader global networks of trade, production and resource extraction which is captured by the terminology of global capitalism.

Recognising capitalist or neoliberal tendencies within the political economy of contemporary China does not entail pronouncing capitalism or neoliberalism as an endogenous agent within China. However it does draw attention to the contradictions inherent in the political economy of state entrepreneurialism. I follow Shin (2014) in understanding these contradictions as manifesting through the rural-urban divide: the fiscal dependence of the local state on expropriating rural land and leasing its use-rights to the market (Lin, 2014) and the exploitation of rural labour through the figure of the migrant worker (Ngai and Chan, 2012). These contradictions do not preclude the efforts of the state to minimise the inequalities arising from them through the redistribution of social equities, but such efforts nonetheless deserve critical attention (Lim, 2014).

My adoption of state entrepreneurialism as a descriptor of Chinese political economy thus entails a number of additional elements. From Jiang and Waley's (2018) recent intervention I stress the importance of state corporatist urbanism, specifically the role of arms-length quasi-private urban investment and development companies (UIDCs) as an agent of the entrepreneurial state. From Lin (2014) I stress the role of land and land financing in legitimising the urban state. From Zhang and Peck (2016) I take the importance regional variations in political economy: capitalism, as it exists in China, is regionally variegated and often limited in scope. I stress the importance of specificity to geographic context, and the attention of the various ways in which capital appears (or does not appear) in local articulations (Massey, 2005; Hall, 1996).

1.6 Research questions

In this thesis my research focuses on three particular manifestations of the relationship between the city, modernity and daily life. Through analysis of the discourse

of the local state, I look at the urban imaginary that framed Chongqing's transformation. Through ethnography in the peripheral district of Dazhulin, I examine how housing was accessed by various groups. Utilising ethnographic material also allows me analyse how informal tactics by peripheral groups responded to the opportunities and inequalities this state-led transformation presented to them.

The key themes of this study are manifested across different scales and contexts. I employ four research questions to bring together these threads and relate my findings to other contexts, both within China and urban studies more broadly:

1. **How was Chongqing's rapid urbanisation portrayed by the state and experienced by those living through it?** I analyse the image of equitable development portrayed by the local state in Chongqing, and critique it through analysis of the enduring inequalities on the urban periphery.
2. **How is urban life made on a periphery characterised by informality and large-scale state projects?** I examine how informal practices emerged alongside the formality of large-scale state interventions in the city, and investigate the nature of the spaces created by such practices.
3. **What contradictions arise from Chongqing's urban restructuring, and how are they manifested in the space of the periphery?** I link analysis of the political economy of Chongqing's urbanisation to the spaces and practices of ordinary people in Dazhulin, demonstrating how the contradictions of development are reflected on the urban periphery.
4. **What possibilities for different urban modernities emerge from the experience of Chongqing?** I consider the image of Chongqing as a city of the future, and what more grounded insights about the future of cities might emerge from my findings.

Through answering these questions I contribute knowledge from an under-studied context towards a growing body of literature on urban informality, peripheral urbanisation, and the politics of the state in China's urban political economy.

1.7 Chapter Structure

This thesis covers makes use of data drawn from a variety of research methods to investigate these questions. The core of the argument is made in chapters 4 to 7. Chapter 4 and 5 establish the economic and discursive context of urban restructuring, while chapters 6 and 7 provide an ethnography of the impacts of these changes on daily life in Dazhulin. The argument proceeds by 'zooming in' through a range of scales: beginning with regional urban policy restructuring and proceeding down through the discourse of urban imaginaries and social reconfigurations of housing to focus on a detailed study of one informal space on the periphery. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the groundwork for this argument, giving contextual information from existing literature and details on the research methodology.

In chapter 2 I will introduce key terms and important context to the empirical data presented in this thesis, and situate my study within the existing literature of urban studies, human geography and Chinese studies. I explain how I conceptualise 'urban modernity' as a heuristic device for the thesis to investigate, and contextualise the notion of urban modernity within recent Chinese history and urban studies scholarship. I review literature relating to the urban periphery and how urbanisation and informality manifests globally and in the Chinese context.

In chapter 3 I describe the methods I used to gather the data presented in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, and discuss how decisions around positionality and the politics of knowledge production were reached. I discuss the ethnographic and archival methods I used over the course of 14 months of fieldwork, and the analysis and writing-up of data once I returned to the UK. I draw on Chen Kuan-Hsing (2010) to discuss how I experienced various aspects of fieldwork as dislocations, and how making use of such dislocations can assist in producing knowledge which escapes the clichés of the ethnographic imaginary.

Chapter 4 examines Chongqing from the perspective of urban planning and political economy. It analyses how the urban restructuring of the city since 2000 related to the policies of the Chongqing Model, and how these transformed the space of the city. I use this analysis to argue that contextualising the supposed radical policies of the Chongqing Model within the longer perspective of urban restructuring reveals the shortcomings of their egalitarian claims. I also demonstrate that the successive waves of rapid urban restructuring resulted in a fragmented peripheral landscape in the district of Dazhulin where my fieldwork focussed. I suggest that Chongqing's urban restructuring and the fragmented periphery it produced was not a distinct break, but is in fact typical of many cities in inland China.

Chapter 5 follows this by analysing how the propaganda employed in the Chongqing Model accompanied this transformation of space. I analyse how official discourse portrayed the city's urban restructuring, and sought to imagine a different city emerging from the process. I argue that these discourses drew on imagery of global neoliberal urbanism and Maoist egalitarianism side-by-side in order to justify urban restructuring. However I also argue that this discourse and aesthetics were important because they portrayed Chongqing as an alternative to the urban modernity of coastal cities, and articulated spatial justice through the construction of public housing on the periphery.

Chapter 6 focuses on the everyday life of Dazhulin, the peripheral district which was rapidly but unevenly urbanised over ten years and became one of the sites where public housing was constructed. I look at how heterogeneous groups were displaced to the

periphery in the process of urban restructuring, and the various ways in which they access and utilise different forms of housing there. In this chapter I argue that Dazhulin is a space of 'post-displacement'. By using this term I intend to indicate the heterogeneity of displacees assembled there, the creation of new opportunities but also new inequalities. I argue that the tactics used to access and utilise housing which emerge from this space reveal an interplay of formal and informal strategies, which also reveal the limitations of public housing as a policy of spatial justice.

In chapter 7 I narrow the focus again and investigate the ways in which undeveloped land is utilised informally in Dazhulin. I analyse how the fragmented urban landscape which emerged out of urban restructuring created a huge quantity of undeveloped land adjacent to state housing projects, which was subsequently informally farmed by those displaced to the periphery. I call this space the *kongdi*—meaning 'vacant land'—which is the name that those farming it used. I argue that the informal use of this space demonstrated its ambiguously urban state, and use Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery to examine this. I also argue that the informal use of this space reveals the particular temporality of the successive waves of urbanisation through which Chongqing's periphery became urban and modern.

In chapter 8 I reflect back on the findings of the thesis and give answers for the four research questions outlined in this chapter, before considering how the content of this thesis contributes to the wider scholarly literature.

2. Locating modernities and peripheries

When you come back to Chongqing and go to the city centre it looks like it's the future, more modern than Beijing. Then for every five kilometres out of Jiefangbei[6] *it looks like its ten years in the past. By the time you get out to the edge of the city its back to the 1980s.*

Artist visiting from Beijing, fieldnotes, March 2017.

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the key concepts of my research, situating it within the existing literatures of urban studies, human geography and Chinese studies. I seek to establish the contextual information and theoretical coordinates which subsequent chapters will utilise. Subsequent chapters will utilise further brief reviews of relevant literature.

This chapter commences by reviewing the literature on urban modernity. It proposes urban modernity as a general problem space for the thesis which examines how practices of everyday life are negotiated against the normative urban vision of the Chinese state. I review the history of Chinese urbanisation and the associated geographies of modernity. I move on to consider urban modernity in Western urban studies alongside attendant postcolonial critiques, considering how a notion of 'dislocated modernity' could be applied to Chongqing.

The second half of this chapter reviews literature on the urban periphery. I establish an expanded understanding of periphery as referring not just to space but to power relations, and situate my fieldsite of Dazhulin with the global literature of suburbs and peri-urban settlements. I suggest that Dazhulin is a critical site because it combines aspects of planned state-led urbanisation and informal practices within a small geographic area. I review the literature on peripheral informality, arguing for an understanding of informality as a practice, and one which coexists with formality. I finally contextualise this within the Chinese context, introducing literature on suburban enclaves and informal 'urban villages'.

[6] Jiefangbei is the traditional centre of Chongqing, a commercial area in Yuzhong district.

2.2 Locating urban modernity in China

2.2.1 Urban modernity

Modernity remains an active and contentious category in China, a subject of ongoing debate and scrutiny in intellectual circles (Gao, 2011, p. 1; Wang, H., 2009; Rofel, 1999). In this thesis I use urban modernity as a heuristic device to examine the relationship between the state's normative vision of the city and the reality of daily life amidst rapid urbanisation. I use this perspective to explore how modernity has been spatialised in recent Chinese history. I examine how the Communist Party of China (CPC) sought to redistribute modernity across the urban-rural divide, and the post-reform retrenchment of modernity as an exclusively urban. Ethnographic accounts of post-socialist urbanisation have tended to focus on the consumption of space by the new urban middle classes and the retreat of the state (Fleischer, 2010; Zhang, L., 2010) while Hsing's (2010) analysis of political economy places the notion of urban modernity at the heart of state entrepreneurial mechanisms of growth.

The key ideas that I take from this section are: the problem space of urban modernity, the historical structuring coastal cities as the locus of Chinese modernity, the CPC's discourse of spatial justice, the imaginary of urban modernity as a norm, and the central role of housing to post-reform urban modernity.

2.2.2 The problem space of urban modernity

In this thesis I utilise urban modernity as a problem space through which to examine the juncture between the imaginaries and realities of rapid urbanisation in Chongqing. By 'problem space' I mean a heuristic device which allows comparison between the values and meanings assigned to urban life in discourse and images, and the everyday reality of life in the city.[7] I utilise the postcolonial critique of Eurocentric understandings of urban modernity advanced by Jennifer Robinson (2006) and read this against the imaginary of urban modernity in contemporary China as described by Hsing (2010).

Robinson describes urban modernity as 'the cultural experience of contemporary city life and the associated cultural valorisation and celebration of innovation and novelty' (2006, p. 4). This definition refers to a mode of popular creative engagement with urban life, and Robinson argues that within the Western canon of urban studies this practice has

[7] The sense in which I employ urban modernity as a problem space is influenced by Lefebvre's (1991) triad of spatial production—specifically the relationship between representations of space and spatial practice (p. 33)—but tries to avoid the constraints of this theoretical apparatus.

been recognised as being truly urban and modern only when taking place in select cities of Europe and North America. Robinson accordingly argues for an expanded understanding of urban modernity which does not relegate non-European modes of urban creativity, innovation and novelty to the categories of 'developmental' or 'traditional' practice, and instead recognises them as urban modernity in their own right.

Conversely, in contemporary China urban modernity appears as a normative imaginary of the city to which local government (Hsing, 2010), the rural poor (Yan, 2003) and urban middle classes (Zhang, L., 2010; Fleischer, 2010) alike aspire. Understood in this way, urban modernity is a vision of a technologically advanced consumer lifestyle mediated through the consumption of housing and urban spectacle (Hsing, 2010, p. 115; Zhang, L., 2010, p. 83; Roy, 2011a). This image of urban modernity is used to justify urban restructuring and to mute resistance to neoliberalising policies (Wu, F., 2008; He and Wu, 2009; Shin, 2012, 2013, 2009). This image of urban modernity in contemporary China will be explored in the next sections.

In this thesis I bring these two definitions—urban modernity as innovation and novelty in city life, urban modernity as a normative image of city life—into conversation with one another. I make productive use of this apparent dissonance, drawing on Robinson's postcolonial critique of urban studies to animate the tensions within the normative imaginary of Chinese urban modernity.

Urban modernity thus describes an over-arching problem space of the contemporary Chinese city which this thesis will explore: the tension between the promised image of the city and the reproduction of daily life amidst the realities of urban restructuring. It captures the dissonance between an imagined vision of how city life ought to be, and the everyday creative labour of making space in the city. Urban modernity is characterised by a possibility of difference which reflects the rapid transformations of urbanisation: the anticipation that the city can change, and with it change the daily life of its inhabitants. This anticipation is defined against the conditions of the city in the present—especially when those conditions are degraded by the deprivations and exploitations of urban restructuring. Accordingly urban modernity is not a static state of presence or absence, but is always deferred and anticipated, contrasted to the hardships of the present and the past (see Rofel, 1999, pp. 10-13). Urban modernity is thus a mode of *becoming urban* and *becoming modern*; an active and on-going project which is never complete. Moreover, urban modernity is not a singular whole, but appears at multiple scales, constructed in conversation with other places and imaginaries of places, and open to reinterpretation and contestation.

By defining urban modernity in these terms I seek to open it up as a problem space through which I can investigate the tensions between the visions of city life communicated in policy and official discourse (chapters 4 and 5), and the ethnographic study of everyday life on the urban periphery (chapters 6 and 7).

2.2.3 Urban modernity in China before Reform

This section seeks to contextualise urban modernity, by examining how modernity has been historically understood in relation to the Chinese city. The historical geography of modernity in China can be traced through three modernising currents of the twentieth century: colonialism, nationalism and socialism (Esherick, 2000; Lu, 2006). While the construction of Chinese modernity is too expansive a topic for this thesis to fully describe, this section sketches out an overview of how modernity came to be closely associated with cities such as Shanghai in colonialist and nationalist ideologies, and how the ideology of the CPC responded to this. Chinese modernity thus emerged as a project with a privileged association with the metropolises of the coast, and was subsequently reimagined as a rural and more evenly distributed project of socialist spatial justice.

Discourses of Chinese modernity originated with the late-nineteenth century nationalist reformers, who promoted indigenous modernisation in response to the humiliation that China had suffered following the Opium Wars. Colonial encounter was experienced in China as perception of temporal dislocation and 'lagging behind' the West, and later Japan (Barlow, 1997; Denison and Ren, 2008, 2016). This temporal lag was given spatial representation in the growing developmental gulf between the colonial urban form of coastal treaty ports, and the traditional cities and largely rural spaces of the Chinese interior.

After the inauguration of the Republic of China in 1911, urban coastal centres were imagined as the key sites in which the Chinese nation would become modern, aided by transnational cultural and intellectual connections with large cities in Japan and Europe (Klein, 2014; Denison, 2017). The urban imaginary of the Republican Era was structured around a post-imperial ideology which sought to construct the nation and construct modernity, experimenting with urban forms and ways of life that sought to be simultaneously Chinese and modern (Esherick, 2000; Musgrove, 1999). This challenge was particularly articulated in Shanghai of the 1920s and 1930s. Shanghai stood at the juncture of the influence of European colonial urbanism (through its status as a treaty port and industrial-financial entrepôt) and a vibrantly modernist and consumerist indigenous creative culture (Yeh, 1997; Wasserstrom, 2007; Lee, 1999). In contrast to Shanghai's

cosmopolitan modernity, Chongqing and other regions of inland China were imagined to be backwards and troubled by the persistence of underdevelopment and traditional Chinese culture, and resultantly in need of drastic intervention by Western, Japanese and Chinese urban planners and other architects of modernity (McIsaac, 2000; Denison and Ren, 2016; Lu, 2006). Chinese urban modernity in the Republican Era was thus constructed in conversation with 'other' modernities of Europe and Japan, but also through othering the 'traditional' culture of largely rural and underdeveloped inland provinces. Modernity was located in the cities of the coast, in particular Shanghai.

The creation of the People's Republic of China inaugurated a different geography of modernity, based on a socialist principle of enacting social justice through redistribution between classes and across space. The CPC presented itself as redistributing the proceeds of modernity to those rural peasants and regions previously excluded, a principal which I describe in this thesis as one of spatial justice.[8] It is important to clarify that the CPC was never an exclusively rural or urban movement, but the popular narrative of the revolution placed a strong emphasis on spatial justice for rural residents and undeveloped regions (Knight, 2007, p. 106). The revolution was framed as a righteous rebellion of guerrilla peasantry against urban centres of capitalist and colonialist exploitation (Yan, 2003).

Nonetheless the socialist state introduced legal mechanisms which enforced the partition of rural and urban into a dual economy and maintained inequalities between the two (Chan and Zhang, 1999). By the early 1960s rural land was collectivised and managed by village-level communes (*renmin gongshe*) (Endicott, 1988), while urban land was owned by the state and divided into individual *danwei* (work units) which managed the daily life of citizens (Lu, 2006). Internal migration outside of state planning was made virtually impossible by the introduction of the *hukou* system in 1958. This is a system of population registration which formally restricted citizens to a single locale, and limited rural-urban migration according to a quota (Cheng and Selden, 1994).

Although these mechanisms enforced inequality between rural and urban, the broader economy of the socialist state sought to redistribute the proceeds of modernity more evenly, away from capitalist cities such as Shanghai and towards the rural interior (Lagerkvist, 2010; Ning and Yan, 1995; Gaulton, 1981). Cities were transformed from centres of consumption into engines of industrial production, and the proceeds of this production used to modernise the countryside (Kirkby, 1985; Naughton, 1995). Urban

[8] Using this term is not meant to imply similarity with the terminology of spatial justice the work of Ed Soja (2010) but rather to draw a parallel between the historical project of the CPC to redistribute and reorganise modernity, and the more contemporary project of the Chongqing Municipal State which utilised similar aesthetics and discourse (see chapter 5).

space became relatively insular (Lu, 2006), while the village commune was valorised in socialist discourse as the true locus of modernity (Yan, 2003; Tang, 2000; Landsberger, 2013). This was evidenced during the Cultural Revolution by the compulsory resettlement of young urban residents (classified as 'educated youth'[9]) in remote rural villages where they would learn the revolutionary subjectivity of peasants (Wu, Y., 2014; Bernstein, 1977).

The ideology of the CPC cannot be characterised as purely rural. Figures such as Liu Shaoqi maintained an urban orientation in contrast to the rural focus of Maoism (Lo, 1987; Yick, 1995). Nonetheless, the promise of spatial justice and the redistribution of the proceeds of modernity from the wealthy urban coast to the impoverished rural interior was important to the pre-reform legitimacy of the CPC. This point will be picked up in chapter 5, when I argue that the revival of 'Red Culture' in Chongqing drew upon this history of spatial justice to justify the urban restructuring the local state pursued.

2.2.4 Urban modernity in China since reform

The transformation of urban and rural life under the auspices of Deng Xiaoping's 'Reform and Opening Up' (*gaige kaifang*) from 1978 onwards drastically altered the geographies through which modernity was imagined. In the three decades after the mid-1980s, economic liberalisation transformed the economic and social character of China's cities. Chapter 1 (1.5) framed this transformational through the lens of state entrepreneurialism, whereby a hybrid of market and state actors deployed neoliberalising policies towards developmentalist ends (Wu, F., 2018, 2010b; Wu, F. et al., 2006). This has led growing class and regional inequality as wealth is increasingly concentrated in the property of the emergent middle-classes and in the large cities of the coast.

Two cities in particular have been seen to symbolise China's post-reform modernity. Shanghai has emerged as an icon of post-reform urbanism, restored to its pre-war status as global financial capital and symbol of Asian modernity (Huang, T. M., 2004; de Kloet and Scheen, 2013; Abbas, 2002; Lagerkvist, 2010; O'Connor, 2012). The manufacturing hub of Shenzhen is similarly seen to symbolise the post-reform manufacturing economy (see O'Donnell et al., 2017). The slogan 'Shenzhen speed' was intended to indicate the rapid temporality of post-socialist production, and establish a speed of growth to which other cities should aspire (Cartier, 2002; Roy, 2011a; Bach, 2010).

[9] In Chinese: *zhishi qingnian*. Several of the interviewees making informal use of undeveloped land in chapter 7 had gone through this process.

The rise of Shanghai and Shenzhen as symbols of urban modernity in the 1990s was accompanied by a growing regional inequality, which fuelled the movement of migrant workers from Western provinces to coastal cities where formed a new working class (Davin, 1998; Brandt and Rawski, 2008; Ma, 2002; Chan and Ngai, 2009). Yan Hairong (2003) describes this as resulting in a geographic realignment of modernity. Drawing on interviews with migrant workers, Yan argues that the rural has become a 'spectralised' Other to urban modernity: the countryside is imagined as zone of death and decay, where it is impossible to live a meaningfully modern life. This results in an entrenched dualism which views the urban as the space of creativity, self-realisation and becoming modern, while the rural represents backwardness, tradition, and stagnation. The personal narrative of becoming modern is bound up with becoming urban.

Desiring housing

The theme of urban modernity as an object of desire has been taken up in other feminist ethnographic perspectives. Schein (2001) describes a popular vision of the city amongst rural residents as an almost transcendent 'dreamland'. Thus 'the city, however conceived, [is] an object of increasingly intense desire' (p. 225). The work of Lisa Rofel (1992; 1999; 2007) treats modernity as a gendered object of deferred desire. In the era of market reform, modernity is imagined through the metaphor of capitalist consumption rather than socialist production (Rofel, 1999, p. 219).

The desire to consume urban modernity is reflected in new ways of making life in the city. After the privatization of the *danwei* housing system in the early 1990s, the consumption of 'commodity housing' (*shangpinfang* i.e. private housing) has emerged as a symbol of the 'good life' of urban modernity (Pow and Kong, 2007; Wu, F., 2005; Wang, Jun and Lau, 2009). Fleischer (2010) documents the creation of suburban Beijing by comparing the lifestyles and mobilities of young and affluent homeowners, older residents who still occupy *danwei* housing and precarious migrant market workers. In the creation of suburban space and suburban lifestyles in Beijing, Fleischer identifies a mode of urban life increasingly constructed around the consumption of space itself in the form of a private suburban housing sphere outside the control of the state. This consumption of space creates urban subjects which 'do not just follow blindly the 'lure' of the market, but actively engage in the production of space' (p. 146) resulting in a re-assertion of class stratification in space.

Zhang Li's (2010) ethnography of an emerging middle-class culture centred around commodity housing extends these insights. Zhang uncovers how housing becomes a

metaphor through which junctures of self-worth, political engagement, class differentiation, national identity and desire are articulated. Her conclusion is that while middle-class consumption of space has resulted in the spatialisation of class, this class identity and its spaces are ambiguous and precarious, caught between 'the search for private paradise and seclusion, and the engagement in public activism to defend [this] paradise' (p. 10). Pow (2007) similarly uses walled middle class housing estates to explore the shifting politics of the post-socialist city, finding an anxious sense of 'civilised' urban culture that seeks to guard itself against the dangerous presence of rural migrant labourers.

In these accounts, we see urban modernity manifested as a lifestyle of consuming space which apparently coincides with the normative urban imaginary of a global bourgeoisie. As Zhang (2010) describes 'the vision of modern living is today sold through the construction of properties that claim to adopt authentic foreign architectural motifs and promise to offer an aura with an exotic, modern flavor' (p. 83). Housing thus comes to stand as a proxy for the desired urban modernity of the post-reform city. This insight is important to carry forwards to later sections of this thesis. In chapter 5 I examine how official discourse in Chongqing portrayed the construction of housing for migrant workers as an instantiation of spatial justice. In chapter 6 I examine how in practice residents of Dazhulin employed a variety of formal and informal tactics to access housing, and thus access urban modernity.

The urban imaginary

In her comprehensive account of urbanisation since the 1990s, You-tien Hsing (2010) details how the political economy of urbanisation reflected the urban state's changing relationship with urban modernity. Urbanism is increasingly a project primarily concerned with '[the] physical and ideological construction of modernity' (Ibid., p. 156). For Hsing, the horizontal expansion and vertical aggrandisement of the city reflects not just an influx of capital, or a drive for primitive accumulation, but also a change in the urban imaginary of the local state.

Huyssen (2008) defines an urban imaginary as 'the way city dwellers imagine their own city as the place of everyday life […] the cognitive and somatic image which we carry with us of the places where we live, work, and play' (p. 3) While Huyssen uses this term to investigate the importance of memory in European cities, I use it to refer to the way the future of Chinese cities is imagined. Hsing argues that an 'economy of the spectacle' (*yanqiu jingji*, p. 111) has emerged from the local state's pursuit of urban modernity. Local state officials are motivated to legitimise their authority and territorial

remit by constructing markers of modernisation, most often in the form of large-scale projects in collaboration with private developers which symbolise an increasingly normative vision of urban modernity. Hsing contends that post-socialist urban expansion and aggrandisement should thus not be characterised as 'state-led urbanisation', but rather 'urbanisation of the local state' (ibid., p. 6). The acceleration of the drive to create and publicise urban spectacles results in a Benjaminian phantasmagoria of urban modernity:

> CBDs and their high-rise offices have come to symbolize modern business and global connections far removed from the socialist and industrialist past. The image of dense urbanity also appeals to young, urbane professionals, who aspire to live and work in a milieu of cosmopolitan flair and sophistication. Since it takes years to complete a CBD project, the city government begins to cash in on the project early on by making the plan itself a spectacle. Pictures of the mayor shaking hands with brand-name foreign planners and architects in charge of project design are regularly splashed across the front pages of local newspapers and feature on TV programs, against backgrounds of colorful maps showing the promise of the city's future. Cities also race to build glitzy, room-sized models of urban development plans with future CBDs and skyscrapers as centerpieces. The flashy exhibition centers become a part of the urban spectacle, charging high entrance fees to tourists. (ibid., p. 112)

The centrality of the city to the ambitions and self-image of the local state has altered the tactics of popular resistance to the injustices of spatial urbanisation. Claims to spatial justice within the city are increasingly articulated through a discourse of property rights (see also Shin, 2013; Zhang, L., 2004; Ho, C.Y., 2015; Zhang, Y., 2017), while loopholes in planning regulations are exploited to create 'villages in the city' (*chengzhongcun*) outside of formal urban governance (see also Wu, F. et al., 2013; Song, Y. et al., 2008; Wang, Y.P. et al., 2009). This is one way of applying the problem space of urban modernity: examining how informal tactics make space which disrupts the normative vision of urban modernity. Chapters 6 or 7 make use of this approach when they examine how informal processes emerge in response to state-led formal urbanisation.

The imaginary of urban modernity also relates to westward movement of China's urban dynamics. The local state's entrepreneurial role in urbanisation is facilitated by a rescaling of planning authority from the central to the local (Wu, F., 2018). Prompted by rising prices of land and labour in coastal provinces (Cai et al., 2012; Yu, 2017) and the need to raise domestic consumption (Neilson et al., 2017), industrial capital and state investment has increasingly shifted inland since the early 2000s (Holbig, 2004). This has resulted in the rapid entrepreneurial expansion of many 'second tier' Chinese cities, of which Chongqing is a prime example (Liu, W. et al., 2016). By investigating the

'Chongqing Model' this thesis examines whether inland urbanisation represents an 'alternative', and a chance to achieve a more equitable vision of urban modernity.

By outlining urban modernity as a problem space for this thesis I seek to think between the subjective desire for urban modernity manifested in housing (Zhang, L., 2010; Fleischer, 2010; Rofel, 1999) and the urban modernity central to political economy of the urbanising state (Hsing, 2010). Urban modernity in contemporary China constitutes a deferred imaginary of the future of the city. By tracing how this imaginary is negotiated and differentiated between ordinary residents and the state I seek to think through the experience of spaces and people becoming urban and becoming modern.

2.2.5 Becoming urban

In this section I have outlined my understanding of urban modernity, and how it manifests the pre-reform and post-reform Chinese city. I utilise urban modernity as a problem space through which to examine the juncture between the imaginaries and realities of rapid urbanisation in Chongqing. In situating this concept within the recent history of China I emphasise several points for the reader to take forwards into later chapters: modernity has been historically constructed as an attribute of the large cities of coastal China. A vision of spatial justice that would correct this imbalance was a key element of CPC ideology and propaganda. Imagining and realising a normative vision of urban modernity is central to the political economy of entrepreneurial urban state. At a subjective level, consumption of housing functions as a proxy for urban modernity.

2.3 Dislocating urban modernity

2.3.1 Introduction

This section briefly contextualises the meaning of modernity within contemporary urban studies beyond the specificities of Chinese urbanisation. In doing so it seeks to relate the problem space of urban modernity in China to the debates of urban studies in general and postcolonial approaches to the city in particular. In this section I examine the postcolonial critique of urban studies, and the tendency to locate and valorise modernity in a handful of European and North American cities. Using the metaphor of 'dislocating modernity' proposed by Robinson (2006), I consider how an expanded and dislocated understanding of urban modernity might be applied in this thesis.

2.3.2 Modernity and postcoloniality in urban studies

In this section I discuss how modernity appears in urban studies and briefly consider the diverse ways in which modernity is constructed and contested in urban contexts outside of the West. Anglophone urban studies has generally valorised and identified modernity in the larger metropolises of Europe and North America. Against this, I summarise the literature of postcolonial urban studies, highlighting its relationship with modernity.

Critical urban studies has embraced the supposition of Lefebvre (1991; 2003) that the urban represents a new stage of a notional teleology of modernity and capitalism (Shields, 2005). This is most famously framed in Lefebvre by the possibility of an emerging 'urban society' wherein urban space offers transcendental political and creative potential. The neo-Marxist urban geography that followed Harvey (1975; 1978; 1989) and Castells (1983) translated this theorisation of the urban into a directly political concern with a qualitatively different mode of capitalism and anti-capitalist struggle. For Harvey (2004) modernity is a tool to open up new spaces to accumulation: by positing the modern city as a transcendental break from history, the spaces of the past are opened up to capital. Lefebvre's injunction to explore how the modernity of the urban was unevenly produced and distributed was thus translated into what Merrifield (2002) terms the 'metropolitan dialectic'. This is more recently taken up in the debates around 'planetary urbanisation' and whether the urban society of the 21st century represents an urbanism 'without an outside' (Brenner, 2013; Derickson, 2015; Roy, 2016b; Jazeel, 2018).

This perspective is contested by Latour's (1993) injunction that 'we have never been modern'. The crux of Latour's claim that modernity as a category is an unstable self-appellation is well made, but the uninflected 'we' designates a presumed positionality of a Western technocratic elite. This treats modernity as a normative category of epistemology, rather than a popular practice potentially generative of its own meanings, desires and alternatives. The question should rather be (regardless of the ontology of modernity) how has the desire for urban modernity shaped developments beyond the West's own self-image. This is captured by Wang Hui's critique of Chinese post-modernists who 'don't see modernity as a system with internal conflicts but as a unified goal to be affirmed' (Wang, H., 2009, p. 73).

The continued focus of much Anglophone urban studies on a handful of 'capitals of the modern' means that the discourse of urban modernity is too often located in the Euro-

American city—by implication, if not by explicit choice. I thus turn to examine the 'utopianization of modernity' which Lu (2010, p. 10) conceptualises as 'third world modernism'. The technologies of modernist urbanism are translated into the attempt to create an indigenous 'modern' city, and articulated through local history and culture.

Sometimes this was done through Marxism, and the attempt to construct a socialist modernity that did not replicate the inequalities and liberal Western urbanism (Zarecor, 2011). In other instances it has been negotiated through the specific histories of colonialism and nationalism, in uneasy alliance with non-indigenous urban planning expertise (Prakash, 2002; Perera, 2004). Scholars have documented a negotiation of urban modernity which emerged in tandem with persistent tribal structures in Central Africa (Mitchell, 1969). Alternative modes of becoming-modern are apparent in the critique of Brasilia by Holston (1989), which examines how ostensibly 'modern' spaces were recouped into the daily life of urban Brazil.

Postcolonial critiques have argued that urban studies has failed to engage theoretically with these cases, and often consigned them to the literature of 'development' rather than modernity (Robinson, 2006). Achille Mbembe (1992) described postcoloniality as 'the specific identity of a given historical trajectory, that of societies recently emerging from the experiences of colonization' (p. 2). Postcolonial scholarship has thus examined the patterns of nation-building, cultural hybridity and economics emerging from the legacies of empire (Bhabha, 1994; King, 2000), in addition to examining how colonial and postcolonial categories and epistemologies have been constitutive of Western modernity and capitalism (Hall, 1996; Chakrabarty, 2000; Bhambra, 2007). This has included a critique of how implicit and explicit racism of Western academia has structured the production of knowledge as a colonial enterprise (Robinson, 2003; Radcliffe, 2005). Postcolonial theory is thus a reflexive way of thinking through and inhabiting the problem of Eurocentrism—of interrogating how the history and experience of Europe and the West is narrated to itself—as much as it is concerned with the interrogating history and experience beyond the West (Said, 1978; Gregory, 2004; Roy, 2009a, 2016a).

Postcolonial scholarship in urban studies has thus come to critique the 'geographies of theory' (Roy, 2009a), and how the empirical experience of a handful of Euro-Amercian cities have become the archetypes from which global urban experience is theorised (Robinson, 2006, 2013; Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010; McFarlane, 2008; Connell, 2007). The result is an urban studies which replicates colonial patterns of knowledge production (Jacobs, 1996; Grosfoguel, 2007) and justifies a Western academic myopia which

interprets nominally peripheral cities as unfortunate deviations from models derived from a handful of 'paradigmatic' Western cities (Nijman, 2000), or romanticises and valorises them as an Orientalist urbanism of slums and informality (Varley, 2013; Roy, 2011b). To undo this epistemological myopia means going beyond the Orientalist spectacularism which regards local phenomena as meaningful only when they are determined by global processes, and examining how space is produced through translocal engagements (Perera and Tang, 2013).

To this end, postcolonial critiques have troubled the category of modernity itself, and offered an alternative account of modernity as not a self-evident epiphenomenon of the city, or a discourse emerging from urban writers, but rather an epistemic category which emerges out of the colonial encounter. Osborne (1992) argued that the concept of modernity as a state of being arose out of the historical experience of the West encountering the colonial other and thus coming to understand itself as occupying a qualitatively different historical consciousness which was expressed in terms of chronological rather than geographical difference. Modernity in this sense stands as the inverse of the imagined primitive of orientalism (Fabian, [1893] 2014). Bhambra (2007) furthers this critique and argues that the material and intellectual culture of early modern Europe did not represent an autonomous and detached 'original' modernity, but was already always entangled in Asian and African modernities. The material and intellectual conditions which gave rise to the modern cannot be neatly confined to the West.

The challenge for any scholar wishing to engage with modernity while working within a postcolonial tradition is to consider how Chakrabarty's (2000) injunction to provincialise Europe might be brought to bear on this apparently Eurocentric of paradigm. Gaonkar (2001) uses the term 'alternative modernities' to call for critical engagement with the 'canon' of theory and epistemology inherited from Western philosophy and academia more generally—his suggestion is that Western modernity *can* be provincialized, but 'by thinking through and against its self-understandings, which are frequently cast in universalist idioms' (2001, p. 14).

2.3.3 Dislocating modernity

To advance this critique, I draw on Jennifer Robinson's (2006) metaphor of 'dislocating modernity'. Robinson critiques the privileged position that certain cities in the West have as supposed originators of modernity in much of urban studies. In order to describe a vision for how modernity might be decoupled from the experience of supposedly paradigmatic exemplars such as Paris, New York and London, she argues that

urban studies must resist a temptation to place modernity in contrast to the figurative Other of 'tradition'. She examines how cities outside of the West have been regarded as being 'troubled by tradition' (p. 41), and thus been regarded as incapable of fully embodying urban modernity by virtue of their very difference to the cultural norms of urban life established by exclusively studying the cities of Western Europe and Northern America. Innovative and novel practices are seen to be confined to cities predetermined as 'modern', while similar practices in non-Western cities are understood as purely imitative. Through articulating modernity as a dislocated practice, Robinson proposes a lens through which to approach the urban not as juncture between global modernity and local tradition, but as a potential to articulate new ways of making urban life:

> I envisage a concept of the modern that appreciates that people in many different places invent new ways of urban life and are enchanted by the production and circulation of novelty, innovation and new fashion; a concept that explores the wide variety of ways in which, in Marshall Berman's (1983: 345) phrase, people make themselves 'at home' in a changing, perhaps modernising world. (p. 66)

In light of the problem space of urban modernity I outline at the outset of this chapter, I suggest that Robinson's extension of the postcolonial critique into understanding modernity as a dislocated practice which is not merely imitative is essential for exploring the question of how life is made under conditions of rapid urbanisation.

An important element of this articulation in the context of China is also to understand modernity as a practice of the everyday which takes place in ordinary cities, and not a sphere exclusive to any geographical location or social strata. Arif Dirlik's (2002) work is incisive in illustrating how certain groups and locations have been privileged as sites of modernity in China. Dirlik suggests that typical accounts of modernity in China, even when they embrace the thesis of 'multiple modernities' nonetheless focus on elite practices which conform to Western expectations of how the modern 'should' look, and lack any critique of the structures of colonialism and capitalism which have resulted in such configurations. Accounts of modernity cannot focus solely on Western-facing elite cultures, but must instead foreground 'people who are constantly at work trying to reconcile intellect to passion, utopian desires to everyday life, imagined modernities to the actualities of life, in a society that is in no way ready to satisfy those imaginings' (pp. 33-34). Similarly, Ong and Nonini (1997) see in the Chinese transnationalism of Asia Pacific 'the raw materials for the making of different narrations of modernity' against elite adoption of the disciplinary power of Western modernity (p. 16). Huang (2004) and Chen (2010) similarly see a coherent alternative to Western narratives of modernity arising out of the postcolonial experiences of East Asia. Dirlik thus urges postcolonial

scholars to resist the temptation to regard Chinese modernity as a singular entity, and engage with it on a grounded basis which does not privileging particular classes or locations: 'Chinese modernity *is* modernity, and modernity is inconceivable without reference to its local manifestations' (Dirlik, 2002, p. 34).

To apply an understanding of modernity as 'dislocated' in the context of contemporary Chongqing means resisting 'Western urban theory's close dependence on a contrast between modernity (defined in the West's own image) and its excluded others' (Robinson, 2006, p. 39). However it also requires attention to the real structural inequalities in China which separate urban and rural, inland and coastal. The task which informs my approach in this thesis is to make visible an image of modernity in China which does not privilege the phantasmagoria of downtown Shanghai over that everyday life of urban periphery, or the culture of Western-facing intellectuals over the everyday life of the displaced villagers and migrant labourers of Chongqing.

2.3.4 Towards the periphery

In the first two sections of this chapter I have situated my research within an understanding of urban modernity based on literature from urban studies, Chinese studies and human geography. In the first section I introduced the heuristic device of urban modernity, which I use to situate my study. I discussed the historical geography of Chinese modernity, emphasising the construction of modernity as a category of coastal cities, the CPC's legacy of redistributive spatial justice, the consumption of housing as a symbol of urban modernity, and the role of urban imaginaries in post-reform urbanisation. In the second section I situated my understanding of modernity in relation to postcolonial geography, and explored the notion of 'dislocating modernity' and how it might be applied in China, emphasising modernity as a practice of the everyday. In the next section I turn to examine the periphery as a potential site of modernity.

2.4 Locating the periphery

2.4.1 Introduction

The theory of core-periphery relations was formalised in Wallerstein's (2000) world systems theory, drawing on dependency theory (Ferraro, 2008) and the work of Frantz Fanon (1970). Postcolonial theory does not seek solely to deconstruct the narratives of the metropole, or to interpret the periphery as a site of empirical variation, but rather to empower the periphery as a site from which theory can be made (Ouaissa, 2015).

In human geography the terminology of core and periphery has been used to explore regional and urban uneven development, and has been expanded from an apparent binary to a more complex understanding of the reflexive co-construction of space (Smith, N., 1982; Smith, N., 1989; Smith, N., 2002; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, E.W., 1980). Peberdy (2017) argues for the continued applicability of theories of peripheralisation in a diverse range of multiscalar geographic contexts, considering how spaces and populations are constructed as economically, socially, culturally, politically and ecologically peripheral to a given hegemony or dominant logic. The core-periphery framework is best applied where it is understood that uneven relationships between spaces are subject to reconfiguration, and intersect and overlap in complex historically determined ways (Holston and Caldeira, 2008; Akhter, 2019).

This section considers how urban studies has examined the periphery of the city. I draw on Harris (2010) and Keil (2017; 2018) to criticise how urban studies has typologised 'suburban' and 'peri-urban' settlements, and introduce my fieldsite of Dazhulin as a space which unsettles these conceptual frameworks. Dazhulin is a formally urban area of mixed residential, industrial and informal agricultural use largely inhabited by displaced villagers, migrants and urbanites living in housing provided by the state. I consider other literature relevant to Dazhulin, and review literature on urban informality. I take forwards an understanding of informality as a practice which produces space (McFarlane, 2012), which allows hybrid arrangements between state and public (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019) and which renegotiates values, with the potential to form new political identities (Caldeira, 2017).

2.4.2 The urban periphery

In the broadest terms, the urban periphery describes a zone beyond the density of an urban core which is typically characterised by demographic growth and spatial expansion of city governance (Ekers et al., 2012), and the greater economic integration of recently non-urban spaces into urban economies (Beauregard, 2006; Keil and Young, 2011). It describes a geographical location, defined by its externality to and distance from a nominal core.

The periphery has also been applied in urban studies to represent a zone not just external to the centre of the city, but a space external to the dominant logics and characteristics of the city. This is evident in the work of James Blaut (1987) who argued that the socio-spatial relationships which constituted minority ghettos in US cities paralleled those of global colonial exploitation. As Akhter (2019) suggests 'we can

understand peripheries to exist at multiple scales and in a variety of spatial forms – including enclaves, regions, corridors, countries, and neighborhoods' (p. 67). The urban periphery can be seen not just as a spatial relationship to a centre, but as a space produced by unequal and exploitative relationships.

Pileček and Jančák (2011) argue that in addition to the strictly-geographical 'objective' account of the periphery, peripheries may also be seen to operate at multiple subjective registers: social groups are marginalised through exclusion from the logics and power mechanisms of the core, cultural practices and traditions deemed unsuitable are segregated from the core, political spaces which lie outside the interests of the state are neglected, and ecological approaches regard human land-use as peripheral to the interests of a notionally 'pure' natural space. Pileček and Jančák thus seek to re-focus attention on the study of 'micro-peripheral areas' (p. 47), in particular those constructed through particular inequalities of gender, ethnicity and race. In this sense, peripheries are those spaces which trouble the logics of the urban, and exceed representation in the symbolic order of the core.[10] This is apparent in geographical work which conceptualises the periphery as process of producing space, in particular the scholarship of Teresa Caldeira (2017) and AbdouMaliq Simone (2010), which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.4.3 Typologies of periphery

In this section I briefly trace some of the main currents of literature on the fringes of cities. I come to focus in particular on two terms: suburb and peri-urban.[11] Through this discussion I justify my decision to term Dazhulin as a 'periphery' rather than a suburb, or peri-urban development. Dazhulin is a critical site from which to study the periphery because, as I will discuss, it lies at the intersection of a number of the typical characteristics of these categories, displaying diverse land use, non-voluntary population resettlement, state-led urbanisation and informal practices. This section thus places Dazhulin within a growing literature of diverse global urban fringes, a discussion which the next section will extend through an examination of informality.

Harris (2010) argues that scholarly literature has often adopted a binary approach to the urban periphery, resulting in 'two extensive, but still disparate, literatures on areas

[10] In a Lefebvrian mode it might be said that peripheries constitute the representational space and spatial practice of those marginalised from the hegemonic conceived spaces of the city.
[11] Other diverse local categories such as 'edgelands' (Marion, 2002) and the 44 terms Lang (2003) lists alongside his own 'edgeless cities' are unfortunately excluded as falling outside the scope of this study.

that lie towards the urban fringe in the Global North and South' (p. 16). Studies on the fringes of cities in the USA—and to a lesser extent Canada and Europe—have tended to focus on the planned and marketised 'suburb' as an archetypal form of peripheral urban existence. Conversely, literatures on Latin America, Africa and Asia have tended to focus on the 'peri-urban settlement', often with implications of poverty, informality and a lack of planning. There are obvious inadequacies in this collapsing of the diversity of global experiences of the urban periphery into the dichotomic lens of suburbs of the Global North and peri-urban regions of the Global South (Harris, 2010; Keil, 2018). Among its problems, it risks viewing the creation of planned and gated peripheral settlements for affluent residents in Asia as necessarily indicating 'convergence' with a particular North American and neoliberal mode of city life (Labbé and Boudreau, 2015; Dick and Rimmer, 1998; Pow and Kong, 2007). I utilise the terms 'suburb' and 'peri-urban' to give structure my review of the literature, but by examining Dazhulin through these lenses I build on work which has criticised shortcomings of this dichotomising perspective (Harris, 2010; Keil, 2018).

The terminology of the suburb has historically been associated with voluntary permanent resettlement of relatively affluent residents from the high-density city to the low-density fringes. This is typified by the experience of Anglo-American cities since the 1980s in which 'suburbia' has become synonymous with upper- and middle-class 'outflow' from the urban core (Fielding, 1989; Fishman, 1987, p. 17) prompted by the desire 'to escape urban chaos and find a higher-quality and more "family-oriented" lifestyle in greener, more private and socially exclusive settings' (Hirt, 2007, p. 757). Much suburban studies literature originates with the LA School and risks taking the experience of the suburban USA as archetypal (Harris, 2010, p. 17). Studies of edge cities (Garreau, 1992), exopolises (Soja, E., 1992) and post-suburban currents (Phelps et al., 2010; Phelps and Wood, 2011) sought to reject the modernist valorisation of the urban core and thus 'peripheralize the centre' (Beauregard, 1995, p. 709). Suburbia has been understood as a lifestyle characterised by capitalist consumption (Kenyon, 2004) and as a key element of the second circuit of capital (Fishman, 2008). Critical perspectives on suburbia have linked it to the disinvestment of underprivileged urban cores (Beauregard, 2006), and highlighted practices of settler colonialism (Veracini, 2012), but also discovered emerging diversity (Li, W., 2009). The image of low-density high-consumption secure suburban life as the preferred mode of existence for the wealthy has been influential globally, but manifests through local vernacular processes (Labbé and Boudreau, 2015; Wu, F., 2010a; Ortega, 2012).

During my fieldwork, the subdistrict of Dazhulin gave many signs of becoming 'suburban' in this sense. Large-scale construction projects ate up the remaining agrarian land, and promised to drastically increase the levels of commodity housing in Dazhulin in a few years' time. I attended several presentations by developers which emphasised the area's archetypically 'suburban' qualities, lying just 12km from central Chongqing, and well-connected to nearby business and commercial districts. Advertisements portrayed a tech-facilitated paradise of security and leisure, while developers emphasised that Dazhulin offered the middle-classes of Chongqing a chance to escape to a more green and peaceful 'half city' (see 7.4.1). But the process of making Dazhulin 'suburban' was still incomplete. During my fieldwork most people in Dazhulin lived in state-built housing estates (see chapter 6). These residents had been displaced from their rural and urban homes by the restructuring of the city. Many of them worked in neighbouring factories or as unskilled labourers, others rented out informally constructed spaces and engaged in informal agriculture. Large stretches of undeveloped land were still farmed, despite Dazhulin having been 'urban' for a decade or more (see chapter 7). In addition, the development of the area as a whole had been carefully managed by the state according to a timetable of successive waves of urbanisation (see chapter 4). As such, Dazhulin presented a heterodox image of suburbia, and must be examined through other theoretical frames.

In contrast to the Anglophone pre-eminence of 'suburban' literature, the terminology of the 'peri-urban' is usually applied to the fringes of cities in Latin America (Aguilar, 2008; 2003), sub-Saharan Africa (Mbiba and Huchzermeyer, 2002; Kombe, 2005), South Asia (Dahiya, 2003; Phadke, 2014), and East Asia (Webster et al., 2014; Webster, 2002). Peri-urban settlements are typically characterised by rural-to-urban migration and the use of the urban fringe to house cheap labour (Kombe, 2005). These zones are not yet fully incorporated into an urban economy, resulting in a diversification of land use as previously rural or vacant land comes into urban use (Freidberg, 2001). They are diffuse areas with shifting boundaries, characterised by irregular employment and informal adaptation of space (Winarso et al., 2015). If the classic image of the suburb is one of insularity and stability, the image of the peri-urban is of typically one of 'distance, disconnectedness and desolation' (Pieterse, 2018, p. 2).

The shifting nature of the peri-urban creates different conditions for different actors. It is a zone of arrival for rural migrants, but is also a zone of change for its original rural residents, who might resist peri-urban processes (Li, T.M., 2010) or seek to profit from them (Labbé, 2016). Peripheral residents often diversify activities in response to the urban

economy, engaging in manufacturing (Tuyen et al., 2014; Fanchette, 2012) or rentier capitalism (Gough and Yankson, 2000; Briggs and Mwamfupe, 2000). At other times this changing land-use will be relatively formal, and driven by state initiatives to create land markets (Cowan, 2018; Becker, 2013). Peri-urban land grabs by state or market actors expropriate land from rural populations, often with disastrous consequences (Li, T.M., 2010; Ortega, 2016; Feldman and Geisler, 2012; Harvey, 2003). Areas of informality and relative poverty are sometimes very quickly transformed Western-style suburbia, leading Hudalah et al. (2016) to identify a process of 'gentrifying the peri-urban' (p. 593).

In other instances peri-urban spaces appear relatively unchanging and not under threat from the expansion of capital, but nonetheless represent a significant degree of spatial inequality (Deda and Tsenkova, 2006; Mbiba and Huchzermeyer, 2002) which often serves vital functions of cheap labour and production for the 'formal' urban core (Roy, 2005; Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). These peri-urban settlements can be observed to develop over decades from informal areas beyond the city into fully integrated urban districts (Caldeira, 2017).

The majority of residents of Dazhulin that I encountered seemed to fit the typology of the peri-urban more than the typical image of the suburban: they were migrant labourers, people displaced by redevelopment, former farmers who had been forcibly urbanised. Many of them engaged in informal adaptation of their property to create spaces they could rent out, or informally farmed vegetables and maize in the undeveloped land close to their houses. However, they lived in state-planned state-built high-rise or low-rise apartment blocks (which they had received through redistributive state programmes) and were well served by infrastructure. In the eyes of some, Dazhulin was a model settlement, demonstrating the successful incorporation of marginal populations into the city (see Bonato, 2018). Dazhulin was positioned at the juncture between the characteristics of peri-urban and suburban settlements. In a small area it displayed highly differentiated land use (industrial, residential, as well as informal agrarian), differentiated populations (urbanised villagers, urban poor displaced by development, migrant workers and a growing number of middle-class property-owners), strong elements of informality (adaption of the built environment and informal farming) combined with state planning, state infrastructure, and state-built housing.

This highly differentiated mixing of rural and urban functions calls to mind McGee's (1991) formulation of the *desakota*.[12] The *desakota* represents an attempt to derive an

[12] Coined by McGee combining the Indonesian terms for village (*desa*) and city (*kota*).

endogenous theorisation of the intensive mixing of urban and rural function in the extended metropolitan regions in Southeast Asia, characterised by 'an intense mixture of agricultural and non-agricultural activities that often stretch along corridors between large city cores [and] dense populations engaged in agriculture' (Ibid., p. 7). *Desakota* emerge out of agrarian reform alongside developmentalist industry and transport policy, enabling intensive smallholding agriculture to coexist with industrialisation and urban land uses. Members of the same household will be engaged in agricultural and industrial activities, while the official classification of such regions as 'rural' allows diversification of land use and entrepreneurial development outside of the planning of the urban state. The *desakota* framework has been convincingly applied in Southern China (Xie, Yichun et al., 2007; Guldin, 1996). However, it has also been critiqued on the grounds that over time such regions see a gradual 'squeezing out' of agricultural activities (Kelly, 1999, p. 284) and transition towards more typical suburban functions (Webster, 1995; Dick and Rimmer, 1998; Oretga, 2012, p. 1119-1120).

Dazhulin does not fit the frame of the *desakota*—most importantly because it is a site of extensive state intervention which is already formally incorporated into urban territory.[13] The significance of the *desakota* model for my study is rather to consider whether same critique might be made: in describing Dazhulin, is there a risk of misinterpreting a brief stage in an ongoing process to be a stable state? One possibility would be to see Dazhulin as the final stage of the transition from *desakota* into suburb, witnessing the last elements of agriculture being 'squeezed out' (Kelly, 1999).

A different frame of reference that can be applied more successfully to Dazhulin is that of the high-density state-planned peripheral housing development, typically associated with socialist planning or practices of forcible resettlement. Historically, the vast majority of movement to the periphery both from the city, and the country has been involuntary (Davis, 2006, pp. 95-114). Determining the whether such moves are intentional or not is not straightforward. Moves made out of economic necessity or provoked by state resettlement may be nominally 'voluntary' but structurally impossible to resist (Harris, 2010, pp. 34-37). Many interviewees in Dazhulin were happy to have been resettled there, but their lack of choice and economic duress in resettlement must be differentiated from the decision of middle-class urbanites to buy property there. Historically, state-planned movements of populations to high density peripheries are

[13] However, the history of Dazhulin (and Chongqing's periphery more generally) has some points of similarity with the *deakota*. See, for example, the biography documented in 6.3.3 of a resident of pre-urban Dazhulin in the 1980s, which seems to bear some similarity to *desakotas* mixing of functions.

typified by the example of the Soviet *mikroryaon* in Eastern Europe and the USSR, as a self-contained city-in-miniature (Bater, 1984). These models also influenced the creation of peripheral *danwei* blocks with adjacent industrial facilities in Maoist China (Lu, 2006). In the post-socialist period Eastern Europe has seen the diversification of peripheral public housing estates into commercial developments (Hirt, 2007; Hirt and Stanilov, 2009, pp. 82-89; Rudolph and Brade, 2005) which nonetheless differ profoundly from the archetypal Anglo-American suburb (Waley, 2011; Zarecor, 2011). Similar patterns in the West are evidenced by the French *banlieue* and the transition from modernist dormitory for the industrial working classes to state-planned enclaves of marginalised groups (Dikeç, 2007).

The typology of the state-planned high-density district is relevant to Dazhulin in that it demonstrates the political and ideological content that such projects can carry. As I discuss in chapter 5, the development of peripheral housing in Dazhulin was imbued with a strong ideological message of spatial justice. However this example also highlights the problematic elements of categorising peripheral residence by intention—even in non-authoritarian contexts, 'voluntary' moves to the periphery are structured by state policies and economic imperatives. This is important context for my discussion of displacement to Dazhulin in chapter 6.

Keil (2017; 2018) argues that there has been a consistent epistemological dismissal of peripheral areas by urban studies scholarship, resulting in a failure of urban studies to grapple with the realities of 'planetary suburbanization' outside of the conceptual boxes it has inherited from the past. In outlining some of the coordinates of these conceptual boxes, I do not mean to suggest Dazhulin represents a wholly new urban form. I refer to Dazhulin as a 'periphery' rather than suburb, peri-urban subdistrict, or any other appellation, to highlight the extent to which it intersects with but exceeds these categories. None of these conceptual boxes fit Dazhulin particularly well, and there is little to be gained from trying to fit it into one. By describing Dazhulin as a periphery, I mean to identify it as a place in a process of change, not a static state. This does not mean that Dazhulin is *sui generis*. Dazhulin is an example of the understudied but 'ordinary' juxtaposition of new and old spaces and practices on the periphery (with particular relevance for the Chinese experience of urbanisation as I discuss in 2.5). By researching the periphery I seek to avoid the tendency of Anglophone studies to interpret Asian cities through spectacles of either peri-urban poverty or exclusive suburban utopia (Perera and Tang, 2013, p. 4) and explore Dazhulin on its own terms.

In this section I have positioned my principal fieldsite of Dazhulin within the broad coordinates of global urban peripheries. I use the term 'periphery' to refer to Dazhulin to highlight the inadequacy of the terms 'suburban' and 'peri-urban' in describing Dazhulin. Dazhulin displays many outwards signs of an emerging middle-class residential suburb, yet also exhibits the marginalised and displaced populations and informality associated with the peri-urban. It shows the mixed land-use characteristics of the *desakota*, but only in temporary and small-scale ways. It shares many similarities with the classic examples of high-density state-built socialist housing estates, but also shows profound informality. Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis focus, in part, on how informal practices emerge alongside state-led formal urbanisation, so the following section investigates the relationship between the periphery and informality in more depth.

2.4.4 The periphery and informality

In the last two chapters of this thesis I argue that many of the tactics employed to access housing and make use of undeveloped land in Dazhulin reveal the extent to which informality proceeds side-by-side with formality. In this section I use a discussion of informality to consider paradigmatic cases of peripheral urban research. In chapter 6 I look at tactics used to access housing, drawing on theory of informality as a hybrid interface with formal logics (Roy, 2009b; 2011b; Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019) and a renegotiation of the values of housing (AlSayyad, 2004; Caldeira, 2017). In chapter 7 I understand informality as a practice which produces space characterised by ambiguous relations to urban logics (McFarlane, 2012; Simone, 2010).

Since its conception as a designation of migrant labour markets in non-Western contexts by the International Labour Organisation in the 1970s, 'informality' has tended to be associated with practices taking place outside of Europe and North America, contrasted to a nominal formality of European urban modernity (AlSayyad, 2004, p.10-11; Varley, 2013). Informality is generally viewed in urban planning discourses as a problem to be solved (Porter, 2011; Arabindoo, 2011), with informal peri-urban areas a threat to the formal urbanism of the city-proper (Roy, 2005; Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). De Soto (2001) argues that informal housing represents untapped capital that can be converted towards equitable ends through a process of formalisation. Roy and AlSayyad (2004) are critical of this view and argue for the importance of understanding informality as a product of the contradictions of formal processes which seek to create ordered urban modernity dependent upon informally housed labour. Informality is the inverse of

normative urban modernity, simultaneously designating people and spaces as lying beyond formal urbanism and exploiting their exclusion (Roy, 2005; see also Bayat, 2000).

McFarlane (2012) describes a rough typology of informality as manifested in spaces, organisational forms, tools of government and modes of negotiation. Particular spaces might be beyond the state's ability or will to intervene and allow practices of autoconstruction. Organisational forms might mobilise labour in a way not recognised by state regulation. As a governmental tool, informality can be seen to create domains which allow state intervention, such as the eligibility for accessing services determined by residency length in Mumbai or *hukou* status in China. As a mode of negotiation, Roy and AlSayyad (2004) argue that the distinctions between formal and informal emerge through a process of trying to establish value, often between powerful state-backed actors and marginalised populations: 'If formality operates through the fixing of value, including the mapping of spatial value, then *informality operates through the constant negotiability of value*' (p. 5). The relationship between formality and informality is thus one of hybridity, rather than dichotomising opposition.

To this end, Roy (2011) argues for moving beyond an understanding of informality as habitus, and instead taking informality as 'a heuristic device that uncovers the ever-shifting urban relationship between the legal and illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized […] that serves to deconstruct the very basis of state legitimacy and its various instruments' (p. 233). Yiftachel (2009) sees informal spaces in Israeli/Palestinian urbanism as a 'gray spaces' that 'are usually tolerated quietly, often even encouraged, while being encaged within discourses of […] "public danger" to the desired "order of things"' (p. 89), while arbitrary use of state power is deemed unquestionably legitimate. Kamete (2013) traces how the battle waged against informality by urban authorities in Southern Africa operates on an imaginary of Western urban modernity, and reveals its contradictions and structural failures. In these accounts, informality produces a re-negotiation of value, which disrupts the state's vision of urban modernity (Roy, 2011). Informality lies at the hinge of the problem space of urban modernity, and provides an axis along which to investigate its articulation.

Latin America has been central to theorisations of informal space since the 1970s (Varley, 2013, pp. 7-9). Rio de Janeiro (Fabricius, 2008) and Caracas (Brillembourg and Klumpner, 2005) have been proposed as archetypal cities of informality, and such appellations critiqued on postcolonial grounds by Varley (2013). Research in Sao Paolo has foregrounded the political implications of informality. Peripheral areas which were once dominated by informal settlements have evolved into differentiated zones including

elite and middle-class suburbs, along with business developments (Caldeira, 2000; Janoschka & Borsdorf, 2006). An understanding of the periphery as a mode of political articulation has been advanced by James Holston and Teresa Caldeira (Holston, 1998; 2009; Holston and Caldeira, 2008. Holston (2009) argues from the perspective of Sao Paolo that rapid urbanisation around the globe has created an emergent political class of those who 'live in impoverished urban peripheries in various conditions of illegal and irregular residence, around urban centres that benefit from their services and their poverty' (p. 245). This is a mode of life in which the informal practices of the peripheral citizen within the margins of the city provoke a chance to re-negotiate values: from informality as space and organisation, the struggle to make daily life within the city demands a realignment of political values towards a new militancy which Holston describes as 'insurgent citizenship':

> My point is that it is not in the civic square that the urban poor articulate this demand with greatest force and originality. It is rather in the realm of everyday and domestic life taking shape in the remote urban peripheries around the construction of residence. (Ibid.)

The struggle to access the ordinary benefits of urban modernity in the form of housing provokes a political interpellation of the citizen on the urban periphery, and informal practices which are employed to access such benefits can be read as political praxis. This point is expanded upon by Caldeira's (2017) theory of peripheral urbanisation, which examines how the (typically informal and peripheral) construction of residents' own settlements (*autoconstructions*) provokes certain political interactions between state and citizen: distinct temporalities (whereby spaces are never finished and always being altered); transversal logics (whereby informal practices engage with official logics to facilitate their own ends); political experiments (whereby new coalitions are formed); heterogeneity (whereby space and society are highly differentiated). Caldeira outlines how the ability to alter or amend the spaces in which residents live transforms the daily life and politics of the periphery, problematizing neat divides between formal and informal.

The relationship between informality and the periphery have been theorised from a different perspective in India, drawing more closely on the legacies of colonialism and the developmentalist logic of the postcolonial state (Roy, 2009b). Ghertner (2008) analysed petitions for slum clearances to show how such settlements are identified as a source of 'nuisance' and trace the colonial origins of this designation. He highlights historical depictions of the urban poor as a presence which pollutes and contaminates

urban space, demonstrating the need for state and market intervention to create a sanitised and commodified zone of urban order. Roy (2009b) argues that planning punishes informal peripheral settlements of the poor but cooperates with the informal construction of elite gated communities. Thus informality does not 'lie beyond planning; rather it is planning that inscribes the informal by designating some activities as authorized and others as unauthorized, by demolishing slums while granting legal status to equally illegal suburban developments.' (p. 10). Desai et al. (2015) extend this discussion to bodily practices, and how they are policed in the public spaces of Mumbai. From these examples informality emerges as a tool of government used to divide the city into desirable and undesirable practices and spaces. This also implies a renegotiation of values—by designating certain informal settlements as permitted and others as prohibited, the state advances its own vision of urban modernity over possible alternative values.

A recent trajectory of research has sought to build on Roy's (2009b) criticism that planning logics ignore middle-class and elite practices of urban informality. This line of enquiry uses informality to provincialise European and American cities. The recent intervention by Haid and Hilbrandt (2019) summarises these approaches, and use them to theorise the nature of the state. They suggest that informality scholarship risks portraying the state as a single agency, rather than a multiple and 'porous' collection of different actors and scales (pp.4-5). 'Informality appears neither outside nor beyond the law, but relates to the law through implicit assumptions, limitations and contradictions governing the law's implementation' thus 'facilitating the posing of uncomfortable questions about the state' (p.9). Aucto et al. (2019) likewise suggest that Anglophone approaches are too quick to see informality as essentially linked the retreat of the state implied by (neo)liberalism. This is of particular importance to the case of Dazhulin, where I argue that informality emerged in the wake of largescale state intervention to provide housing, rather than in the absence or retreat of state apparatus from the market.

Emerging out of this discussion I return to McFarlane (2012), and his proposal that informality is best understood as a practice:

> Framing informality and formality as practices means dispensing with both the idea that informality belongs to the poor and formality to the better off, and the associated idea that informality and formality necessarily belong to different kinds of urban spaces. Thinking of informality and formality as practices rather than as pre-existing geographies allows us to understand the ways in which geography helps to determine the particular politicisation of these practices. At the same time, it requires a shift in how we register informal and formal spatialities: they no longer exist in specific territories within the city (whether offices of state and investment companies or markets and community resource

> centres), but instead are involved in the production of space. (McFarlane, 2012, p. 105)

Informality is not a practice which emerges out of necessity on the periphery, but is rather a practice which produces the periphery—that is, which allows the production of peripheral space. I turn briefly to the work of AbdouMaliq Simone on the African and Southeast Asian context to consider how informal practices create the periphery as a space which bears an ambiguous relationship to the urban: as *positional* to a nominal core; as *political* spaces requiring an exceptional to the state; as a *frontier* positioned ambiguously between different logics; as *hybridity* provoking creativity and adaptation.

Simone's (2008) work emphasises the way people collaborate, using each other as infrastructure to build a degree of economic security or opportunity, and access the benefits and opportunities of urban modernity. His work stresses the extent to which improvisations and contingencies constitute the 'governing composites' (p. 30) of urban life, particularly those marginalised citizens who often live through the brunt of rapid urban change. Simone (2010) advances a conceptualisation of the periphery which seeks to set it free from a deterministic relationship with a nominal core, and instead posits it as a heuristic device with which to think through responses to material deprivation in places 'whose character does not yet fully reflect the "stamp" of the city' (p. 39). The periphery is a *frontier* which stands at the interface between different modes of the production of space, in many cases between rural and urban, but also between different functions, political authorities and social contours. Consequently, the periphery is frequently a space of *hybridity* that can be generative of innovation and adaptation, although that same role is often proscribed by authorities.

From Simone's characterisation of the periphery, I take an understanding of the periphery as a space which is ambiguously situated in relation to the city. This means a space which is *questionably urban*, enmeshed with the flows of the city but also produced by practices which stand outside of urban logics. Peripheries are produced by 'the capacity for different people, spaces, activities and things to interact in ways that exceed any attempt to regulate them' (2010, p. 2). In Chapter 7 I make use of this notion of periphery to discuss the space produced by informal practices on undeveloped land.

2.4.5 Summary

In this section I have provided a broad overview of the periphery as a category, beginning with a genealogy of the periphery as analysis, before moving on to consider how the urban periphery has been through frames of suburban, peri-urban, and *desakota*.

I suggest that none of these frames accurately capture the diversity and rapid change evident in my fieldsite of Dazhulin. I examined the relationship between the periphery and informality, drawing on research from the Latin American and Indian contexts to illustrate how global informal peripheries have been theorised.

From this review of literature I want first to highlight that the urban periphery as a category which is moveable in time and space. As the discussion of suburban, peri-urban and *desakota* demonstrates, peripheries are political categories which are mobilised differently in contexts dependent on formality, informality and geographic location. The temptation to see a linear pattern by which *desakota* and peri-urban regions become formalised as suburban risks treating Euro-American suburbia as an inevitable telos of urbanisation. In contrast to such a linear temporality, I suggest an understanding of the periphery as a process (Abramson, 2016).

From the overview of formality I have outlined I follow the understanding of informality as practice proposed by McFarlane (2012), interpreting informality not as confined to particular spaces or organisational forms, but instead as a mode of producing space in the city. Rather than understanding informality as practice that takes place in the absence of formality, I understand it as a hybrid interface which illustrates the multiple agencies of formal urban authorities and their capacity to selectively enforce regulations (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2009b; Haid and Hilbrandt). Informality manifests in the housing practices of middle class suburbs as well as in slums and favelas (Roy, 2011b). I note the recent work of Caldeira (2017) on 'peripheral urbanisation' as a mode of producing space through the autonomous construction and adaptation of residents' housing, highlighting her theorisation that such practices provoke 'transversal engagements with the state' (p.5) as well as new political subjectivities (Holston, 2009). This understanding will form the basis for my discussion of housing and informal tactics in chapter 6.

2.5 The urban periphery in China

2.5.1 Defining the periphery

When introducing the urban periphery in the context of China it is important to highlight the extent to which a variety of categories delineate the legal and economic boundaries of the urban. Inherited from the dual economy imposed during the early years of the PRC, the strict division of rural and urban territory and citizenship remains very much a reality in China—contra the notion of urbanism 'without an outside' (Brenner, 2013). Wu and Li (2018) conclude that this divide is 'a fundamental dualism between

[China's] rural and urban areas' and forms 'an essential feature of its society and governance' (p. 145). Abramson (2016) suggests we should recognise the peripheral urban zone in China to be 'the state (condition) of "becoming urban," where the urban is politically-economically privileged vis a vis the rural, and where the transition of society from rural to urban is seen as the transition from one order to another' (p. 157).

To take the example of Chongqing: all land within the city is the property of the municipal state (or in some cases the national state), with land-use rights leased on a 70 or 50 year basis for residential and commercial properties respectively. Beyond the city, rural land is organised into an administrative hierarchy of towns (*zhen*) and townships (*xiang*) which governed a wide area from a small built-up core. Beneath townships, agricultural areas are governed by villages (*cun*). Within such villages land is formally collectively owned, but de facto based on the private ownership of particular houses with agrarian land under the control of the village cadres.

Transfer of land from rural to urban use is permitted only through expropriation by the municipal state, which grants compensation to the village cooperatives and rural households who have been dispossessed. This land is then processed by the urban state and the land-use rights leased to developers, typically through auction. The municipal state acts as the final arbiter of changing land use, and it is impossible for land to formally enter urban use without passing through the state (Lin, 2014; Hsing, 2010). Similarly, the *hukou* system restricts formal internal migration between country and city to a strict quota system, leading to a large 'floating population' of rural labourers living in cities without access to the rights and privileges associated with urban welfare. The maintenance of a binary system between rural and urban land and labour is vital context for understanding the formation of the Chinese urban periphery. In chapter 4 I describe and critique the limited interventions made by the local state in Chongqing to dismantle this binary system, while chapters 6 and 7 consider the informal practices which emerged in response. Beyond this formal division between rural and urban, the periphery as a social and economic zone is a much more flexible category. Webster (2002) suggests that in much of China it would be appropriate to consider the urban periphery extending as much as 300 km beyond the formal boundaries of the city.

There was limited urban expansion prior to the reform era, and formal suburbanisation is generally seen to have commenced with the state-led creation of peripheral residential zones in the 1980s (Feng and Zhou, 2005). After 1994 the introduction of a housing market encouraged the creation of middle class high-quality residential suburbs and an outwards expansion of industrial and commercial interests

seeking low land prices, facilitated by a land-based state entrepreneurialism (Wu, F. and Phelps, 2011; Feng et al., 2008). Marketisation of urban land has incentivised various forms of unplanned and informal urbanism which will be discussed in the following section.

Given the scale and speed of China's urbanisation it would be a mistake to adopt a narrow definition of the urban periphery. Despite the strict binary between rural and urban land, this boundary can change extremely rapidly over a short period of time, and not reflect practical land use (as chapter 4 will discuss). I aim to capture this change with the terminology of 'the periphery' brought forwards from earlier in this chapter (see 2.4.4). The extent to which Dazhulin sits at the juncture between peri-urban, suburban typologies of the periphery should give an indication of the extent to which the urban periphery is a highly mobile concept under conditions of rapid urbanisation.

2.5.2 Between planned and informal

In this section I introduce literature on both planned and informal peripheries of the Chinese city, and highlight three points coming out of this which my empirical chapter address: the Chinese periphery is a site of state intervention (significantly, in Chongqing, in the form of public housing); it is a site to which people are displaced by urban restructuring, often non-voluntarily; it is a site where informal urbanism blurs the divide between rural and urban land and labour which is fundamental to Chinese society and governance.

Much of the literature on Chinese peripheral urbanisation has repeated the dichotomy between planned suburbs and informal developments apparent in more global literature (Harris, 2010). The suburban residential boom of the 1990s has been interpreted as a diffusion of Western suburban ideologies (Huang, Y., 2005) but demonstrates distinctly Chinese aspects of traditional walled enclaves (Wu, F., 2010a). Pow (2007) describes gated communities in Shanghai as 'civilised enclaves' which are grounded in 'anxious' space. The moral landscape produced by rapid class differentiation is one in which the gated community becomes a symbol of urban civilisation, while migrant workers are seen as an agents of anti-urban disorder. This relates closely to the anxious status of the middle-classes documented by Zhang, L. (2010, pp. 5-8) in Kunming, and their attempts to secure urban status through the built environment. This is taken to extremes in cases such as the 'Thames Town' luxury housing enclave documented by Shen and Wu (2012).

Friederike Fleischer's (2010) ethnography of suburban Beijing sees it as a space produced by a negotiation and spatial stratification between several parties: young

affluent property-owners, migrant workers, and residents of the *danwei* socialist housing who remain in place. While elderly *danwei* owners are seen to retreat behind the last remnants of the socialist state, migrant workers are forced to find a niche within the suburb and their labour is used to reproduce and expand it, ultimately leading to their expulsion. Within the suburbia documented by Fleischer, it is the young affluent home owners, as the consumers of space and the agents of the market, who are ultimately the determinants of the periphery, albeit negotiated with the other groups present:

> More than just functioning as a symbolic marker of stratification, the consumption of housing can be understood as a reflection and constitutive aspect of emerging social relationships and differentiations. In the current state project of modernization in China, aimed at producing consuming citizens through a mix of state and private economy, what emerges are socioeconomic differentiations that are importantly based on communities of consumers. (p. 145)

This also provokes a moment of political interpellation, in the form of housing associations which function as property rights protection groups, seeking to uphold the interests of the consumers of suburban space against the market which has produced it (Shin, 2013; Ho, 2015; Shao, 2013). Where migrant workers and the urban poor are denied the opportunity to partake in such consumption there are few opportunities for the 'insurgent citizenship' described by Holston (2009) in such a periphery.

Scholarship on informality in China has come to focus around a different form of enclave: the 'urban village' (*chengzhongcun*).[14] These are formed by peripheral villages which escape formal urbanisation and retain the legal 'rural' status of a communally-owned village while surrounded by urban land. These enclaves beyond the purview of urban governance develop sophisticated multi-storey informally constructed 'villages' which are typically rented to migrant workers (Hsing, 2010). This housing is often inadequate, but is also generally the only form of affordable accommodation for migrants in the city (Song, Y. et al., 2008; Zhang, L. et al., 2003). It offers an informal alternative path towards becoming urban (Zhang, L., 2001). Shenzhen and Guangzhou have seen the development of sophisticated enclaves of villager-rentier-capitalists (Hao et al., 2011; Bach, 2010; Wang, Y.P. et al., 2009). Tang and Chung (2002) interpret informal rentier economies as a repudiation of the optimism of the *desakota* model, emphasising the exploitation and immiseration of villager-landlords and migrant-tenants alike. Urban villages are subject to demolition and redevelopment, as the position they occupy goes

[14] It should be noted that urban urban villages are not necessarily peripheral. In many of the archetypal case studies of urban villages in Shenzhen and Guangzhou they are relatively close to the urban core.

from being peripheral to increasingly central (Hao et al., 2011). Migrant tenants will then be displaced to the periphery again (Liu, Y. et al., 2018). Wu (2016b) demonstrates that urban villages nonetheless represent good value for migrants compared to renting through the formal private sector.

In looking at processes of urbanisation on the Chinese periphery it is important to go beyond examples of formal middle-class housing and informal migrant housing—to resist the tendency Perera and Tang (2013) identify to focus on either 'high end' or 'low end' developments. Several emerging bodies of literature challenge the formal-informal dichotomy laid out above.

Of particular note is the scholarship on 'small property rights' (*xiaochanquan*) housing. Small property rights housing is similar to urban villages in that it is housing constructed illegally on rural land. It is typically built by peripheral villagers on residential land they own, and sold illegally to middle-class urban residents, seeking the same suburban lifestyle as those inhabiting formal suburbs (Liu, R. et al., 2012). As a result it appears virtually indistinguishable from formal housing, and is often rented by tenants who are unaware of its informal status (Zhao and Zhang, 2018). Sun and Ho (2015) record that up to a third of housing in China might be constructed in this manner. Surveys by Liu, H. et al. (2018) suggest that small property rights housing represents a popular response to the government's failure to construct affordable public housing for urban residents.

The reintroduction of public housing construction since 2008 (under a different policy to the socialist era) represents a distinct form of state-owned residential district generally constructed on fringes of the city. Chen et al. (2014) understand this policy to represent a shift towards alleviating the worst inequalities of the housing market (not repudiating marketisation in general) in order to meet national domestic consumption targets. Chongqing's public housing construction was one the key tenets of the Chongqing Model and has been the subject of considerable research, although such research has tended to focus on tenant choice structure and satisfaction (Zhou, J., 2018; Liu, J. et al., 2017; Gan et al., 2016a, 2016b). Zhou, J. and Ronald's (2017) analysis of Chongqing's public housing raises concerns about the feasibility and sustainability of the municipality's plans, but is cautiously optimistic about its implementation. My research on public housing location (chapter 4) and use (chapter 6) aims to introduce a more critical perspective to this emerging field.

Literature on the processes by which residents are displaced and land expropriated has highlighted the interplay of formal and informal tactics (Chuang, 2014; Zhang, L.,

2004; Zhang, Y., 2018a) and the resulting conflicts between citizenry and the party-state (Zhao, Y. and Webster, 2011; Sargeson, 2013). In the example of the peripheral village of Wukan in Guangzhou—where a militant community of villagers forced a compromise with the state after an armed standoff over the sale of communal development rights (He, S. and Xue, 2014)—we see something closer to the 'insurgent citizenship' of Holston's (2009) urban periphery. Such instances are isolated, however, and the Chinese urban periphery is far more likely to be inhabited by those who have already undergone displacement than those resisting it. Indeed Zhou et al. (2008, p. 156) note that within recent history it was the case that roughly two thirds of moves from the urban core to the periphery were involuntary. While the mechanisms of displacement via gentrification (Shin, 2016; Wu, F., 2016c; He, S., 2012; Wu, Q. et al., 2016; Shao, 2013), ethnic discrimination (Grant, 2018; Wu, Q. and Waley, 2018) or land dispossession (Guo, 2001; Li, T.M., 2010) have been well documented by critical scholarship, the fate and conditions of those displaced to the periphery represents an emerging field (see Jiang, Y. et al., 2018; Li, S. and Song, 2009; Liu, Y. et al., 2018; Zhang, M. et al., 2017b). This thread will be picked up in chapter 6, when I discuss the heterogeneous experiences of displacements that were brought together in Dazhulin.

The Chinese urban periphery illustrates the temporality of rapid urbanisation. Informal changes in land use typically emerge in anticipation of urbanisation (Smith, 2014a). In the case of small property rights housing, informal construction on rural land anticipates the arrival of urbanization and seeks to profit from the urban housing market; similarly, the urban village emerges from a space which is technically rural but surrounded by the city, and so prefigures the future formalization into the city by building a rentier economy to profit from accommodating migrant workers. This mirrors the temporality of many of the more global forms of urban peripheries discussed earlier in the chapter as well. As with Kelly's (1999) critique of the *desakota*, the pattern seems to be that informal spaces emerge in anticipation of urbanisation, only to later be subsumed by urban formality and normalisation as 'typical suburbs' (although as Caldeira's (2017) work on peripheral urbanisation highlights, this is by no means a smooth or apolitical process). This is important to carry forwards for later chapters because the nature of informality as observed in my fieldsite upended this temporality. Rather than urban use of rural land preceding formal urbanisation, the periphery of Chongqing had *already* been formally urbanised. Informal use of land had emerged as a response to state intervention, not in its absence. This thread speaks to the global literature on informality and will be picked up in chapter 7.

2.5.3 Taking the periphery forwards

In this section I have surveyed the literature on the urban periphery in China and related it to the broader themes of urban modernity within this thesis. I follow Abramson's (2016) call to understand the Chinese urban periphery as a condition of 'becoming urban' (p. 156). I have suggested that literature on Chinese peripheries replicates the dichotomy between middle-class suburbs and informal enclaves apparent in other contexts. (Harris, 2010). An extensive literature has documented the politics and subjectivities of planned suburban housing in gated communities (Wu, F., 2010a; Pow, 2007; Zhang, L., 2010; Shen and Wu, 2012). Particularly notable is Fleischer's (2010) ethnography of suburban Beijing, where she identifies a growing spatialisation of class, as older residents of *danwei* housing and migrant workers are pushed to the margins by the influx of a young affluent class of homeowners who are oriented towards the consumption of space through housing. An equally extensive literature has documented the emergence of a distinct informal enclave on the periphery in the form of the 'urban village', a nominally rural area surrounded by the city where informal construction takes place and a rentier economy based on the housing needs of migrant workers thrives (Hao et al., 2011; Wu, F., 2016b; Wu, F. et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2009). There is an growing literature of other forms of peripheral housing which disrupts the formal-informal dichotomy, most notably 'small property rights' housing which is built illegally but typically resembles formal gated compounds (Sun and Ho, 2015; Liu, R. et al., 2012; Liu, H. et al., 2018; Zhao and Zhang, 2018).

In seeking to position my fieldsite within this literature I seek to highlight several understudied points emerging from this survey. Literature on the periphery as a site of state intervention—particularly through equitable policies such as the construction of public housing—has lacked a critical ethnographic perspective. Similarly, studies of the periphery as a space of displacement are relatively few. Bringing these two elements together, I suggest that critical ethnography of the interaction between large-scale state interventions on the periphery and informality is necessary, building on existing work on the formal/informal interface. My study of informal tactics of housing (chapter 6) and informal practices in undeveloped land (chapter 7) contributes towards this emerging field.

2.6 Summary

This literature review has introduced and defined key terms, provided essential context, and situated this thesis within existing literature, in order to make it clear how

my research contributes to urban studies. I have explained my use of the key terms of this thesis. I use urban modernity as a problem space to explore the juncture between the imagined portrayal and actual reality of rapid urbanisation. I refer to my fieldsite as a 'periphery' to avoid interpreting it through the lens of either 'suburb' or 'peri-urban', and draw on the lexicon of informality. By urban imaginaries I refer to the central role the city as a representation of future values and ideology has taken on in contemporary China. I take housing as a proxy for urban modernity in post-reform China, as an object of desire and symbol of secure and prosperous urban life. I treat informality as a practice which does not imply the absence of formality, but an interface with it.

I have introduced important context to discussion of the contemporary Chinese city. The rural-urban divide remains legally and culturally important in Chinese society, as illustrated by the dual land system and the *hukou* system's controls on rural-urban migration. This relates to the construction of the coastal cities of Shenzhen and Shanghai as the locus of Chinese urban modernity, and the historical aim of the CPC redistribute the benefits of modernity more equitably. I have introduced existing literature on suburban enclaves, informal 'urban villages' and 'small property rights housing' in the contemporary Chinese city, and discussed how Dazhulin has characteristics of many of these (and more global) typologies of the periphery. However I have also stressed that Dazhulin is not *sui generis,* and by contextualising it within more global literature on peripheries and informality, I have laid the groundwork for establishing my contribution to urban studies literature in future chapters. I take these coordinates forwards to chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, but first detail my research methodology.

3. Ethnography and dislocation as methods

I spoke to the family [which comprised several interviewees] recently, they still think you are probably a very suspicious scholar wondering around Chongqing looking for something interesting.
Phone call with friend in Chongqing, January 2019.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used to gather the data presented in this thesis, and describes the decisions I made in relation to positionality and the politics of representation during and after my fieldwork. In addition I aim to describe how my ethnographic practice was informed by a critique of Orientalist urban knowledge production.

This chapter first describes the concrete details of data collection, outlining the ethnographic and documentary research methods which produced the data presented in chapters 4 to 7. I reflect on how my research was structured and the timescales involved. I move on to describe the politics of urban knowledge production, firstly outlining a critique of what I call the 'ethnographic imaginary'. I consider how the theory of Chen Kuan-Hsing offers a path to move beyond the ethnographic imaginary by describing knowledge production as a process which necessarily unsettles and dislocates the researcher. I consider how I experienced dislocation in my research methodology, as reflected in issues of ethics, language, working with research assistants and video production. I reflect on my positionality and how dislocation manifested through personal discomforts and failures in fieldwork. Finally I offer some reflections on 'dislocation as methods'.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Fieldwork timeline

The data presented in this thesis is derived principally from ethnographic and document-based research. The collection of this data coincided with an extended period of fieldwork in Chongqing. I lived in Chongqing from October 2015 to June 2017. During this time I spent the first six months improving my Mandarin Chinese language level (supported by a grant from the Great Britain China Council), getting to know the city, and building a network of contacts. The latter fourteen months of fieldwork were largely

engaged in ethnographic research, although it took me some time to select the particular fieldsite from which most of the data in this thesis is derived, and there were many other abortive or irrelevant investigations undertaken during this period. I made three return trips to the UK during this time to visit family and present at conferences, each trip lasting roughly two weeks: April 2016, August-September 2016, and December 2016.

3.2.2 Ethnographic data

The ethnographic portion of data presented in this thesis is derived from interviews, participant observation, photographs, field recordings, and videos made during fieldwork. This is the principal source of data for chapters 6 and 7. I conducted 48 formal recorded semi-structured interviews in Chongqing (see appendix A). Of these, 33 directly concerned my main fieldsite of Dazhulin which formed the basis for chapter 6.[15] I conducted a survey based on a questionnaire of 36 people making use of informal land (with many of these encounters evolving into formal recorded interviews) which formed the basis for chapter 7 (see appendix C & F). This included two go-along interviews (Kusenbach, 2003).

In common with many other Western researchers in China, I discovered that many participants were unwilling to be formally recorded in interview, but happy to talk without recording. As such, the majority of ethnographic data which proved most useful was derived not from formal interviews, but through non-recorded interviews, informal encounters and meetings which were subsequently written up into fieldnotes. As far as possible, these included verbatim quotes of speech and dialogue, often jotted down during conversation. Appendix B records the significant informal interviews and meetings which were of substantive importance to the content of this thesis, totalling 46.

Early in fieldwork I was often assisted by several local research assistants who were able to interpret Chongqing Dialect, recruited from friendship networks and a local university English language translation programme (see 3.4.4). Later, from December 2016, I worked with a local documentary production team to record footage of interviews and daily life in my fieldsite, which generated much of the data that proved most useful and provided access to spaces and contacts which had previously been impossible (see

[15] The formal, audio-recorded interview data (appendix A) presented in chapters 6 consists of: seven recorded interviews with resettlement housing residents (three of which involved groups of people); fifteen recorded interviews with public housing residents (five of which involved groups of people); three recorded interviews with officials (two individuals); six recorded interviews with other residents in the area; one go-along interview; one interview with a prospective public housing applicant. As discussed, the bulk of the data in chapter 6 is taken from fieldnotes, interviews conducted without audio recording and informal interviews (appendix B).

3.4.5). Participants were recruited through randomly approaching residents in the public spaces of Dazhulin, then increasingly through social networks and mutual friends as time went on and I built up a longer list of contacts in the area. Long-term relationships were formed with a number of key informants whom I considered friends.

In a minority of cases I used a rough interview script to solicit initial opinions on public housing (appendix E), or a survey to record data about the informal use of land (appendix F). The vast majority of interviews conducted were semi-structured, based around a list of questions and analytical points which evolved alongside my research practice (Flowerdew and Martin, 1997; Hay, 2005). Even where formal scripts or questionnaires were used, the most useful interviews evolved beyond the bounds of such plans, and became wide-ranging, extended conversations. As such interviews appeared quite different dependent on the participant in question, and my approach and questions were determined by their role. In practice, this led to me categorising interviewees by the rough social groupings outlined in chapter 6: urbanised farmers (resettlement housing residents), migrant workers (public housing and informal housing residents) and relatively highly-educated white-collar professionals (public housing and commodity housing residents). Interviews with those in positions of power (developers, local officials, urban planners, architects) required completely different approaches and generally followed the format of an unstructured conversation (Solinger, 2006).

Non-recorded interviews were often conducted with the assistance of research assistants or other local collaborators; in these instances, our conversation immediately after the interview, summarising what was said, discussing their outlook, clarifying unclear language or dialectic phrases, was recorded and later typed up into fieldnotes. Similarly, meetings and meals with officials where recording was not permitted were typed up into fieldnotes after the fact, as were observations on the daily life of the district.

An ethnographic diary of fieldnotes was maintained irregularly. Emerson et al. (2011) advise spending several hours per evening writing fieldnotes, with a rough guideline of spending two hours writing for every hour spent at the fieldsite. I found this regime extremely difficult to maintain, especially when I felt that research was not going well and I felt as if writing fieldnotes only reflected and compounded my sense of failure. Nonetheless, by the latter half of fieldwork I had abandoned any prescriptive determination to write more than I felt necessary every day, and by the time I left Chongqing I had over 100,000 words of diary entries. Reviewing these I typically found that they were very detailed and extensive during periods when I felt fieldwork was going well, and almost silent for the weeks where I felt that my research was not moving

forwards as I would like. In these periods of minimal diary entries, emails to friends and family provided an alternative source of fieldnotes.

Photographs, video and field recordings which I took daily provided an ample visual and audio diary to supplement a written diary. With much of my fieldwork mediated through my phone (as device for storing contacts, recording interviews, taking photos, making notes, and keeping track of news) I found that an eclectic gathering of digital media formed a natural extension of my ethnographic practice (Coleman, 2010). I took several thousand photos during fieldwork, along with many short videos on my phone, many hours of ambient field recordings, and over twelve hours of video shot with collaborators. I made an album of field recordings made during fieldwork in Chongqing, due to be released in 2019. These visual and audio records were enormously useful in triggering memories, reflections and recording details which I failed to notice at the time. It occurred to me during fieldwork that in contrast to the 'classic' image of the ethnographer wandering around their fieldsite with a notebook (which was extremely obtrusive and treated with suspicion when I attempted it), nothing helped me 'blend-in' amongst residents of Chongqing more than constantly tapping notes into my phone or using it to take photos and videos.

As is common with many Western researchers doing ethnographic fieldwork outside of formal organisational bounds, I discovered many limitations to my planned methods very quickly, and most of the research practice I adopted in my ethnography was quite different to what I had envisioned, in response to the specific dislocations and difficulties I encountered in the field. These are discussed in full in section 3.4.

3.2.3 Documentary data

The document-based portion of my data was derived from analysis of written depictions of the Chongqing Model and Chongqing's urbanisation between the mid-2000s and 2017. This is the principal source of data for chapter 5, and involved gathering data from physical archives and public information displays accessed during fieldwork (Chongqing Library Chongqing University Urban Planning Library, Chongqing Municipal Urban Planning Hall) and digital sources (online records of news media, forums, articles forwarded by contacts etc). GIS data from the Land Resource and Housing Bureau of Liangjiang New Area (chapter 4) was provided by a contact after fieldwork was complete.

The maps of the *kongdi* in chapter 7 (Figure 51, Figure 52, & Figure 53) were produced by recording GPS locations on my phone, cross referencing between

photographs I had taken, maps I sketched by hand while walking through the area, and historical satellite imagery available through GoogleEarth. The plot sizes listed in the survey (see appendix F) are calculated from the resulting map and so should be read as rough approximations.

In analysing the official portrayal of Chongqing's urbanisation I made extensive use of *The Chongqing Model* (Su et al., 2010), a lengthy book which functioned as an unofficial manifesto of the Chongqing Model.[16] Alongside other books, I also read physical archives of the Chongqing Daily (*Chongqing Ribao*; CQD) and Chongqing Morning Post (*Chongqing Chenbao*; CQMP) for the years 2010 and 2011, as well as other key dates.

A great majority of news articles concerning the Chongqing Model (in particular the role of disgraced municipal party secretary Bo Xilai) were deleted from the internet after 2012, and it seems that a variety of other restrictions were in place to prevent free access to information about Chongqing's politics in this era. It took several months of searching Chinese book retailers to find a purchasable copy of 'The Chongqing Model', and other texts describing the Chongqing Model were only purchasable as pirated copies, printed on cheap paper from scanned PDFs with blank covers. Archival research at Chongqing Library was mainly undertaken in the final months of fieldwork, photocopying articles from the physical archives of newspapers and magazines during the Chongqing Model era which had been deleted from publically-accessible digital archives. Gathering of resources continued after returning to the UK, as contacts in Chongqing continued to forward me relevant articles and I learned how to better navigate certain online archives.

Rather than existing separately, I found that my archival research proceeded in tandem with ethnographic research. Access to many documents and archives was granted only through personal relationships formed in the process of ethnography, demonstrating that 'there are archives to be found embedded in the field' (Lorimer, 2010, p. 257).

3.2.4 Structuring research

Typically, qualitative research conducted to the three-year timetable imposed by most funding programmes in the UK is expected to unfold in a three-stage process: literature review, gathering data, analysis of data and writing (see Crang and Cook, 2007; Richardson and St Pierre, 2008). In common with many other doctoral researchers, I

[16] The main author, Su Wei, was a professor of philosophy at the Chongqing Municipality Party School where he headed the department for the Sinification of Marxist Philosophy and edited the journal 'Probe' (*tansuo*).

found that my experience of fieldwork refused this expected temporality and neat division of tasks in a number of ways.

During the initial six months spent in Chongqing, I gathered piecemeal information about the city from a variety of sources and made a few formal attempts at ethnography. In the first four months of ethnographic research following that I pursued a variety of projects with limited success, and became quite disillusioned with the process. Subsequently, in the latter ten months of fieldwork, my focus became more narrowed, I became more confident in conducting ethnography in a less formal and more iterative way. It was during this period that I relaxed more into the slow and often frustrating process of fieldwork, and gathered the bulk of the interview data in my fieldsite of Dazhulin, as detailed in chapters 6 and 7. After that, I returned to the UK, where I continued to gather digital data (online articles about Chongqing's political economy and posts on forums discussing Chongqing's urbanization and particularly problems associated with public housing), and gained access to several sources of data (such as Liangjiang New Area Land Registry) which I had been unable to access in the field. Moreover, picking through data gathered during fieldwork (including interviews but also materials gathered from the archives of Chongqing Library) it became apparent that various assumptions made at particular stages of fieldwork had been false, or so misguided as to be useless. Several important themes in the eventual text of the thesis developed only long after fieldwork had ended, while other areas which I considered vital to my research while in Chongqing have disappeared from the eventual text completely.

In common with many other researchers, I found the clear separation of fieldwork and writing artificial and untenable (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Throughout my fieldwork I was anxious to sketch out nascent forms that this thesis would eventually take, and anticipation of how I would be able to write about Chongqing undoubtedly influenced decisions taken in the field. For example, I abandoned an early avenue of enquiry and fieldsite (looking at demolition and informality in the district of Shibati in central Chongqing) after it became apparent that I could not make such research speak to the theoretical themes which had initially sparked my interest. Similarly, the shifting scope of my research required me to undertake much 'retrospective' reading to make sense of the empirical circumstances I encountered in the field. Unable to reliably access my university's library website from China, I was reliant on accessing pirated PDFs of books through a number of digital portals.

This blurring of the formal divides between reading, writing and fieldwork was repeated in the process of analysis. The ethnographic and archival data gathered during

and after fieldwork was coded in Nvivo in the months after I returned to the UK. The experience of coding as a process of abstracting 'the chaos of brute observations' into the discrete abstractions helped me to begin to conceptualise how frameworks and arguments would arise from my data (Cope, 2010, p. 284). However, with the large and varied dataset I had gathered during fieldwork, I was quickly forced to make decisions as to which areas to prioritise, and which elements to abandon. Much of the data gathered in the field concerned the aesthetics of the peri-urban, the policy of 'ecological civilisation' (*shengtai wenming*) and the ways in which housing marketing projected an image of 'Sino-futurism'. The decision to leave these strands largely absent from the thesis was partly informed by the richness of the data I had gathered on other topics, but also by an explicit sense that I needed to decide how to 'pitch' the thesis, how it could be presented at conferences, and to consider the academic career prospects which would stem from it. This likewise informed my decision as to how to direct my reading and gathering of digital archival materials while in the UK.

My experience was that the intellectual process of coding, re-viewing and classifying disparate and confused snatches of conversation, observation and photographs was far more useful to me than the eventual database produced on NVivo, which was rarely used during writing. Rather, in common with the Deleuzean approach to coding proposed by MacLure (2013), I found that the slow process of abstracting data gathered across nearly two years of my life served as a valuable reflective exercise: 'a matter of actively *making* sense yet also accommodating to something ineffable that is already 'there'' (p. 174).

Accordingly, my experience was that in practice the temporality of research swiftly broke down the expected neat division of labour and knowledge production implied by viewing 'fieldwork' as a discrete stage. The production of this thesis has thus not proceeded in isolation, but been undoubtedly impacted by the conditions and dislocations under which it was produced: the difficulties of undertaking fieldwork in a foreign country, the desire to resist colonial tropes in knowledge production, and the context of the broader economic precarity of academic careers.[17] I wish to consider how my experience of ethnographic knowledge production as a process of dislocation disrupted the ethnographic imaginary of fieldwork as a discrete, smooth and ordered process of knowledge acquisition. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to unpacking these

[17] In terms of economic precarity, I received ESRC funding for 3.5 years of study for this thesis, and was only able to complete writing it up because I was lucky enough to have a partner who was able to subsidise my rent and living expenses for the last year. My general experience of post-graduate research culture in the neoliberal academy was that it left little room for failure or sub-optimal behaviour for any researcher hoping to find secure academic employment in the future. These factors contributed to an on-going sense of impostor syndrome, and exacerbated anxiety that I was falling behind schedule at all stages of research.

dislocations in greater detail and considering how they influenced the decisions taken while gathering data and producing this text.

3.3 The politics of urban knowledge production

3.3.1 The ethnographic imaginary

Ethnography is typically defined as the research practice of interpreting a community through their own understanding and knowledge of themselves, typically through rendering a textual account of daily life (Geertz, 1983). Ethnography is a research method, but also a particular mode of representing and producing 'knowledge' about a community, culture, practice or space, which entails certain political choices and compromises which have often not been explicit in academic accounts of the practice (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). The politics of ethnography are particularly heightened when research is conducted across cultural boundaries, where an unequal power dynamic exists between researcher and subject.

In the context of human geography, ethnography is generally associated with long-term fieldwork, unstructured interviews, participant observation and the gathering of data from a wide variety of sources, often (but not always) based around a discrete fieldsite (Crang and Cook, 2007). In recent decades ethnographic methods in human geography have also typically entailed an engagement with feminist epistemology and methods which take 'everyday life experience as the material of research' (Roseneil, 1993, p. 178) and critiques of the politics of representation which seek to map 'native' ideas and practices onto Western categories of understanding (Tambiah, 1990). Often human geography as a discipline has been slow to recognise the implication of its legacies as a colonial instrument of knowledge production in its contemporary practice, and this is particularly apparent in the context of ethnography (Katz, 1994). As many scholars have attested, contemporary ethnographic practice must navigate a complex terrain which foregrounds the positionality and potentially unequal power relations of knowledge production, but does not do so at the expense of the voices of those subjects and empirical conditions in which the researcher finds themselves (Crang and Cook, 2007; Kapoor, 2004; Madison, 2011).

Encountering the dislocations, disappointments and difficulties of ethnographic fieldwork first-hand, I came to understand many of the ethnographic texts (which had inspired me and shaped my perception of how knowledge was produced) to be inadequate. I found very little in them which spoke to the frustrations, sense of failure and

dissatisfaction which typified much of my experience. I came to think of the failure to openly and honestly explore the compromises and difficulties of ethnographic knowledge production as representing an 'ethnographic imaginary' which elided the dislocations and uncomfortable experiences of fieldwork in the name of staging knowledge production as a smooth and untroubled process.

I was conscious of two particular points of dissatisfaction with the 'ethnographic imaginary' as I perceived it. On the one hand, I wanted to reject the naturalistic epistemology of much ethnographic work done by Westerners in China, whereby ethnography was presented as a process of synthesising factual statements from the often-elided voices of participants, with the figure of the (typically white, typically male, typically bourgeois) anthropologist as a monovocal authority existing at a remove from the field they surveyed, while simultaneously apparently able to move seamlessly between field and academy. Such accounts seemed to trend too easily towards the 'old' assumptions of ethnography as a science of rational deduction from irrational non-Western cultures, and the portrayal of the European academic as solitary interpreter and authority on the Orient (Said, 1978; Vukovich, 2012; Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

On the other hand, I likewise was uncomfortable with autoethnographic accounts which foregrounded the subjective experience of the (again, typically white, typically male, typically bourgeois) ethnographer and reduced the experience and subjectivity of those people and spaces beyond themselves to be mere backdrop in an academic solipsism. Such accounts ceded too much ground to a different Orientalist myth, of the apparently 'unknowable' and 'inscrutable' nature of the Chinese city, which Westerners in Chongqing frequently told me was 'crazy', 'impossible to understand' and 'the wild west'.[18] This is analogous to the danger Jazeel (2019) identifies as 'reaching for the non-representational where we simply do not understand, where we cannot read' (p. 6).

The work of Shu-mei Shih (2005) on the feminist ethics of transnational encounter perfectly captures the oscillation between naturalism and solipsism of the ethnographic imaginary:

> The concept of cultural difference usually takes the form of one of two poles: reified absolutism or a been-there, done-that superiority complex. Either the Other woman is frozen in absolute difference (too difficult, too *time-consuming* to understand fully) or

[18] I am reluctant to cite by name examples of scholarship which I perceive as falling into either of these errors. I was struck while attending the LSE Field Research Method Lab on fieldwork in China that presentations tended to either speak with total authoritative knowledge of the field, or emphasise the unsteady subjectivity of the researcher in the face of the 'unknowability' of China. It seemed that either the field swallowed the researcher, or the researcher swallowed the field. My impression of the ethnographic imaginary was formed from these experiences.

> she is trapped in the earlier phase of development of feminism (too familiar and thus either dismissed or condescendingly told what to do next). (pp. 4-5)

The same logic is at work in the ethnographic imaginary of the Chinese city: either too different and unknowable to serve as anything other than a colourful backdrop for the psychodrama of the ethnographers' own subjectivity; or instantly rendered familiar, knowable, shorn of difference and fitted neatly into theoretical categories readily digestible to a Western academic audience. The question of how to deal with real difference, and the radical difference that is encountered in ethnography, is thus elided:

> With the power to arbitrate difference and similarity in such reductive terms, the Western subject can thus simply *ignore* that which otherwise needs to be learned from time and effort, namely, the history, experience, and representation of the Other woman in multiple contexts. […] The discourse of anti-Orientalism, meant to deconstruct Western universalism, often ends up instead becoming an alibi for the West's resistance to looking elsewhere for paradigms of cross-cultural understanding that are able to attend to local contexts in more complicated and substantive ways. (Shih, p. 5)

Meaningful ethnographic knowledge production across cultural contexts cannot elide the responsibility to deal with this double-bind of representation, and must take political responsibility for the decisions made in the process.

The politics of this paradox in the specific context of China are explored in the recent work of Daniel Vukovich (2012), who describes the historical and contemporary role that the figure of 'China' has played in the production of knowledge in the Western academy. Vukovich argues that Western analysis of China maintains a detached self-reflexive system of analysis that examines modern Chinese history as a failed process of 'becoming-sameness' and results in a revived colonial Orientalism which attributes China's failure to become 'like us' to its failure to fully embrace liberal capitalism. Western knowledge of China thus takes on the simultaneously naturalistic and solipsistic character of Orientalism—the analytic superiority of Western theory over Chinese reality is already assured, and analysis becomes a self-referential process of explaining essential difference:

> China is still not "normal" (and has been tragically different) but is engaged in a "universal" process such that it will, and must, become the same as "us." Whether it wants to or not. (p. 2)

The risk is that in trying to render the difference of Chinese cities legible to a non-expert Western academic audience researchers repeat this Orientalism, and represent the Chinese city as a project which is inherently flawed and compromised by its relationship with the Chinese party-state, rather than undertaking the careful and complex work of differentiation.

In the following section I will consider the decolonial critiques of knowledge production which influenced my decisions to attempt to avoid the double-bind of the ethnographic imaginary.

3.3.2 Decolonial dislocations

In considering how to navigate the terrain of the ethnographic imaginary and avoid either a naturalistic or solipsistic approach to knowledge production, I found it useful to draw on the notion of ethnography as a process of 'dislocations' advanced by Mark Hobart (1996). For Hobart, ethnography is necessarily an encounter between two different epistemologies, and so demands that ethnographic practitioners experience a sense of dislocation as they attempt (and often fail) to move between the two. As such the accidents, mistakes, disappointments of encounter through dislocation should not be explained away as abstractions of a 'deeper meaning'; rather, they are exactly what ethnography *is*. The role of the ethnographer, for Hobart, is then to record this dislocation in text, and so use dislocation to articulate difference.

The metaphor of ethnography-as-dislocation can be utilised the alongside decolonial approach to knowledge production advocated by Chen Kuan-Hsing. In *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (2010) Chen draws on a diverse range of post-colonial and anti-colonial perspectives to construct his call for a renewed movement for decolonisation and deimperialisation of critical thought. He advances a position which engages with the decolonial thought of Frantz Fanon (1963), Stuart Hall (1996), and the Subaltern Studies Collective, but also introduces discussion of East Asian writers seldom featured in the canon of post-colonial studies: Lu Xun, Chen Yingzhen and Yuzo Mizoguchi. The argument made by Chen thus remains critically engaged with a diverse range of decolonial and anti-capitalist thought, but also grounded firmly in the current material junctures of East Asia at the outset of the 21st Century.

Chen's argument is that critical thought in an Asian context must minimise the West as a reference point, and in doing so multiply its reference points within Asia. Rather than remaining caught in narrow geographical and disciplinary boundaries which take Western theory and experience as the baseline of comparison, he calls for a process of 'interreferencing' across contexts and scales which acknowledges that there is no wrong place from which to start to theorise:

> First, to study a place anywhere on earth, be it India, Ethiopia, Palestine, or Brazil, is simply one route toward an understanding of world history. To understand any place is a way to understand an aspect of the contemporary world.

> Second, the purpose of a renewed understanding of the world is to perceive ourselves differently in relation to our new vision of the world. Through this process, the self can be understood differently and hence transformed. In this sense, to do area studies is not simply to study the object of analysis but also to perform a self-analysis through a process of constant interreferencing. […] Third, relativizing the understanding of the self as well as the object of the study is a precondition for arriving at different understandings of the self, the Other, and world history. (Chen, 2010, p. 253)

In making this argument, Chen draws upon the essay 'China as Method' by Mizoguchi ([1989] 2016), in which Mizoguchi analyses how the subjective image of China in Japanese Sinology has historically reflected Japan's own identity more than it has the specific reality of China. Mizoguchi calls for attention to how the subjectivity and presumptions of the self are disrupted by encounter with cultural Others, and how this disruption offers a pathway to reject Western modernity as a universal episteme and attend to the specificity of particular spatio-temporal logics in different contexts.

This is reflected in Chen's argument that any decolonial practice of analysis must also proceed through *self-analysis*. The production of knowledge is not a stable process undertaken by an objective analyst, but an unsettling encounter with difference. Chen argues that if one is serious about knowledge production as a decolonial project, one must necessarily undertake an honest and unsettling examination of themselves and their precepts:

> Decolonization is the attempt of the previously colonized to reflectively work out a historical relation with the former colonizer, culturally, politically, and economically. This can be a painful process involving the practice of self-critique, self-negation, and self-rediscovery, but the desire to form a less coerced and more reflexive and dignified subjectivity necessitates it. (Chen, 2010, p. 3)

The experience of encounter with a cultural Other which goes beyond the tropes of Orientalism and resists either naturalism or solipsism is necessarily a process which dwells upon the experience of dislocation. In making such an argument, Chen's work touches on the same ground as recent interventions by postcolonial geographers, such as Roy's (2016) advocacy of the 'disjunctures' of ethnography as a tool to reshape social and spatial categories of understanding, and the injunction by Perera and Tang (2013) to work 'inside-out' (p. 17), beginning with the act of listening to a story rather than rushing to apply theoretical categories.

An ethnographic practice which resists the ethnographic imaginary must then foreground dislocation, and work across different scales and contexts to transform dislocation into articulation. Foregrounding the subjective experience of dislocation

serves an ethical purpose: it recognises the ethnographer's positionality as a compromised agent, whose preconceptions and entanglement in networks of power and cultural milieus makes them an imperfect medium for the production of urban knowledge (Madison, 2011; Jankie, 2004). As a bare minimum of decolonial politics, researchers concerned with minimising the colonial dynamics and problematics of cross-cultural research should be prepared to be unflinchingly honest and self-critical of their practice, if only to prevent future researchers from having their expectations of fieldwork shaped by the naivety of the ethnographic imaginary. But dislocation also serves as an important tool of knowledge production in itself—many of the insights presented in this thesis emerged out of experiences that were personally embarrassing, uncomfortable, difficult and unpleasant. To elide the dislocations that gave rise to these insights, or to portray them as insignificant or incidental, would be intellectually dishonest, and a disservice to my interlocutors in the field who patiently assisted me in navigating such experiences.

The remainder of this chapter considers the various forms that dislocation was experienced in my research, both as difficulty in conducting research and as personal discomfort around my positionality.

3.4 Dislocations and research difficulties

3.4.1 Research difficulty

The difficulty of conducting ethnographic or otherwise 'unstructured' research in China has been well documented. The LSE Field Research Method Lab conference (June 2013) provided me with an insight into the difficulties typically faced by researchers working in China, assisted by the work gathered in the edited volume *Doing Fieldwork in China* (Heimer and Thøgersen, 2006), in particular the account of interviewing by Solinger (2006), the account of state discipline and surveillance by Yeh (2006) and the account of 'fieldwork as coping and learning' by Sæther (2006, p. 43).

Despite these preparations, I discovered early on that fieldwork was more difficult and prone to failure than I had anticipated. For example, even the process of scheduling formal interviews was significantly more difficult than the impression of the ethnography I had taken into the field. Especially in the early stages of fieldwork, arranging single interviews took many days or sometimes weeks of work, particularly when working with research assistants who had their own schedules. Often after days of planning, interviews were cancelled at the last minute as I was travelling to them. A particular example of this was an incident that occurred mid-way through my fieldwork, when I spent several weeks trying to follow up on contact details provided from an earlier visit to the resettlement

housing. About a dozen phone numbers produced just one firm agreement to interview, which required another week of scheduling and arrangement with a research assistant. After meeting the man who agreed to be interviewed and spending half an hour trying to find a quiet place in the resettlement housing where the interview could take place, the prospective participant stopped the interview after two minutes and explained that he had to leave, promising to return soon. He never returned or answered subsequent phone calls (fieldnotes, October 2016).

I had anticipated that interviews would not go smoothly, and participants would change their perspectives or wish to withdraw as time proceeded. What I had not anticipated was the sense of uncertainty and doubt which underscored such experiences. I had no idea what I was 'doing wrong' in such instances, or even how to understand or classify what had taken place. Even where formal recorded interviews had taken place, I often felt that they produced little data which was relevant to the research questions I was interested in. This was partly due to me asking the wrong questions, but also due to an unrealistic expectation of what kind of data interviews would produce (and how quickly this production would happen).

As my language ability improved I became more aware that several of the research assistants I worked with early in fieldwork were steering the conversation away from sensitive topics, or misrepresenting aspects of the responses participants provided. Throughout this period, when I shared my doubts about how fieldwork was going with friends or research assistants in Chongqing, I was told that this was because my approach was simply impractical and I was advised to change my approach and refocus on something more readily graspable. One frequent suggestion was to conduct surveys through apps such as WeChat, or abandon an ethnographic approach and work with a small amount of publically available data published by the municipal government.

In common with other ethnographic researchers of China, I found that my fieldwork separated into two distinct strands of a 'formal' agenda and plan which I shared with my host institution and authorities, and an 'informal' agenda which I pursued on my own, without official approval (Yeh, 2006; Hansen, 2006). I initially sought to construct a comprehensive research plan that would receive official approval, but found that no local institutions would support my plans. I was later told by other researchers that this was probably because my plans touched on too many politically sensitive topics (namely, the construction of public housing) and utilised language which was regarded as a 'red flag' for university administrators: 'neoliberalism', 'civil society' and 'critical scholarship'. I attribute this failure (and the many other failures during fieldwork) to my own naivety,

and misunderstanding of my position within the society and political culture that I was approaching.

Later, with assistance from collaborators, I found I was able to achieve approval for my research agenda from local officials. This was achieved partly by presenting my plans in a non-critical light, making clear that I had no interest in the formal politics of the city or in embarrassing particular officials. More important in securing their approval, though, was the formation of relationships with them through eating meals, drinking alcohol and presenting gifts from the UK.[19] This approval was never more than a verbal agreement to proceed with research, backed by an offer of assistance and provision of some documents and data, most of which proved to be irrelevant to my research questions.

Despite this verbal approval, many lower-level local officials refused interviews, and threatened to call the police on me. At one point men working for local officials sought to disrupt a video shoot that my collaborators and I were working on. On one occasion I was invited to 'drink tea' with a police officer, a common tactic of monitoring and intimidating researchers and journalists (FCCC, 2015). Several times during interviews I was accused of being a spy, after a cartoon was published in the Chinese press warning of the dangers of Western spies posing as research students and asking for access to sensitive information (Ye, 2016). These incidents further encouraged me to focus my interviews on ordinary people, rather than seeking directly to explore the politics and power mechanisms of the local state.

As described in Pollard (2009), I frequently felt that research assistants and interviewees alike pitied me. Even when recorded interviews went fairly smoothly, I came away with the impression that interviewee and assistant viewed me to be so obviously out of my depth and uninformed about what was going on around them that they felt obliged to humour me and go through the motions of this bizarre formal process I ascribed to. The production of knowledge was not only far less smooth and untroubled than the ethnographic imaginary seemed to suggest, but moreover was basically unreliable and alienated from the reality it purported to represent. In the process of these early interviews I found out a handful of useful points about the nature of urbanisation in Dazhulin, but came away with far more thoughts and reflections on my own positionality, the problems with my research questions and the imbalances of power that made the experience so uncomfortable, both for myself and (as was my impression) for my participants.

[19] This was one element where existing ethnographic literature proved very useful. See Loubere (2014), Yang (1994) and Gros (2010), along with many others in Heimer and Thøgersen (2006).

3.4.2 Ethics and consent

The detailed information sheets and consent forms which I had spent weeks preparing and translating into Chinese with the assistance of my teacher quickly proved an obstacle to research. While more educated, secure and generally 'powerful' participants, such as journalists, developers and urban planners were happy to engage with the documents I had prepared, the vast majority of working-class and poor residents of the urban periphery were instantly alienated by the appearance of any formal documentation, or the suggestion that they should sign something. Indeed, many of the older participants interviewed from a rural background were not fully literate, and struggled with the formalistic language of the material I had prepared.

The ethical implications of this impasse were considerable. I did not want to restrict my study to only those relatively powerful participants who had no anxieties about signing consent forms, neither did I want to follow the advice of local researchers, who encouraged me to pay participants for interviews and record them without consent. My language teacher and research assistants refused to assist in drafting less formally-worded documentation, insisting that such an approach was pointless and 'unscientific' (*bu kexue*). Local researchers and research assistants encouraged me to forgo all ethical documentation, directly pay informants for interviews, and even engage in covert recording. In the end I adopted a more pragmatic and iterative approach which I adapted to suit the situation. In more 'formal' settings there was a full discussion of my research and verbal consent was acquired; in less formal settings, with less powerful interviewees who had more reason to fear documentation and implication in foreign research projects, information sheets (see appendix D) were provided. In many cases these sheets were nonetheless refused, as they seemingly implicated the interviewees more formally than they would like. In common with the experience of many researchers working with people with low levels of formal education outside of Europe and North America, I found that many participants were unwilling to be recorded in interview (Solinger, 2006; Kjellgren, 2006; Crang and Cook, 2007). In these instances I stated my reasons for being in Chongqing and the topic of my research, and asked if they would be willing to talk while I made notes. I mirrored the practice of the Chinese researchers I observed and offered a business card with my contact details. In these instances it was also helpful to clarify that I wasn't working for the Chinese state, and that any information they told me would only be published if it was anonymised and there was no prospect of any harm to them coming from it. As Crang and Cook (2007) describe, the result was 'a messier, ongoing, impure

and continually updated set of ethics that develop over time and through experiences' (p. 32).

The question of consent for the video and photography undertaken by visual ethnography practice is complex (Pink, 2014, pp. 52-61). The advice given by published handbooks (e.g. Crang and Cook, 2007, pp. 113-128) and in the visual ethnography training I attended prior to fieldwork was that best practice was to seek consent from all participants who would appear on camera, but that when filming in a manner which was non-covert and obvious to passers-by in a public place this was generally not necessary. All video filmed with my research collaborators (described in section 3.4.5) was overt in this sense, often with a small team of people stood behind one or two cameras plus extra lighting and boom microphones when needed. All those filmed were made aware of the purpose of the video we were making, and provided with contact details if they wanted them. I was assured by my collaborators that this was standard practice when filming documentaries in China, and that any more complex mechanism of consent would be impractical. Indeed, many participants in the video filmed with my collaborators actively demanded to be included in our shots, and reflexively filmed us back with their phones. In other instances, participants requested not to be filmed or appeared obviously uncomfortable with the way the conversation or scene was developing, in which case we ceased filming. Negotiation of ethical practice and consent in visual methods thus proceeded iteratively, responding to the wishes of participants and changing situations, and negotiating a sometimes unclear path between Western academic practice and local expectations (Shaw, 2016). In line with Western ethnographic practice in this thesis I have been careful to reproduce only photos in which the faces and other identifiable features of participants are obscured (Wiles et al., 2012).

3.4.3 Language and translation

Chongqing Dialect (*chongqinghua*) is a colloquial term used for the dialect spoken in Chongqing city and much of the surrounding municipality which is more-or-less inseparable from Sichuan dialect. While it is a dialect of Mandarin which is in theory mutually intelligible with speakers of Beijing-accented 'Standard Mandarin' (*putonghua*), I found that in practice it was often difficult for people unfamiliar with it to understand.[20]

[20] The politics of what distinguishes a dialect from a language are fraught, particularly in the Chinese context (Dwyer, 1998; Zhou and Sun, 2006). Yuen Ren Chao (1943) wrote that 'a speaker of one group of Mandarin, say a native of Harbin, can converse freely with a speaker of another group, say a native of Chungking [i.e. Chongqing], without misunderstanding each other' (p.66). In practice I found that misunderstandings were common between Chongqing natives and unfamiliar Mandarin-speakers from elsewhere.

I had studied Standard Mandarin formally for several years before arriving in Chongqing, but quickly found my classroom Mandarin was completely inadequate for navigating conversations in Chongqing-accented Mandarin, never mind Chongqing Dialect itself.

Language barriers—in particular the use of the Chongqing Dialect—severely restricted the scope of my research, both by slowing and complicating the process of gathering data and limiting the extent of interpretation I could trust myself to draw from interviews and documents. This was a problem because many participants, particularly those from rural backgrounds, struggled to speak the Standard Mandarin I had learned. This was particularly the case amongst the informal farmers interviewed for chapter 7, who were often only partially literate and with almost no formal education due to the disruptions of the Cultural Revolution. But similarly, many younger participants also evidently found free expression in Mandarin somewhat clumsy or overly formal. By the end of fieldwork, with the assistance of patient and forgiving friends and teachers, I had learned a few basic phrases in Chongqing dialect, and could readily understand discussion of familiar topics conducted entirely in dialect. Joking about my faltering attempts to speak Chongqing dialect became a good way of 'breaking the ice' with potential participants.

Nonetheless, I enlisted a professional transcription service to transcribe the recorded interviews I conducted in order to minimise misinterpretations due to my own language shortcomings. This proved difficult, as the transcription service struggled to find staff capable of understanding the dialect of many interviews. This resulted in a delay of several months in producing the transcriptions. I used a UK-based transcription service which employed a range of measures to guarantee anonymity, since I was advised by other China researchers that mainland-based transcription services could not be trusted to handle sensitive and potentially identifiable data.

The translation of Mandarin and Chongqing-dialect into English presented further difficulties. The challenges of translating spoken Mandarin and Chongqing-dialect are considerable given the profound grammatical divergence of English from the sentence structures and construction of concepts employed colloquially and formally in contemporary China. Single sentences of spoken Chinese may be translated in multiple different ways, giving an exceptional leeway and responsibility to the role of translator (Zha and Tian, 2003).

The colonial origins of ethnographic translation practice have been criticised as central to the construction of the 'native' subject as an orientalised Other (Niranjana, 1992). As Sturge (1997) describes, Anglophone ethnography has typically adopted an

approach which either 'normalises' other languages into English prose readily legible and minimally disruptive to readers, or deliberately 'estranges' (p. 31) the language, often out of a commitment to maintaining the fidelity of the speech of the subaltern subject. As Dines (2018) describes, key terms in Anglophone urban ethnography—such as the evocation of 'the street'—can have profoundly different meanings and implications in non-English languages, a contextual diversity which Anglophone scholarship typically fails to capture. This has particular importance in the context of China, where the implications of different nomenclatures of urban and rural hierarchy and space take on profound political and cultural implications: for example the difference implied by 'urban-rural periphery' (*chengxiang jiehebu*) versus 'suburb' (*shijiao*).

In seeking to address an audience beyond China specialists, this thesis adopts a broadly 'normalising' approach, with all its faults, and seeks to render speech written in the rough phrasing of conversational English. As such, this thesis relegates discussion of the implications and differences of key categorisations of space in Chinese to a handful of examples, employing several 'native categories' where no equivalent English term captures the full implications of the term (see appendix G). This judgement is of course purely subjective on my part, and inseparable from my own agendas and presuppositions, both conscious and unconscious. In making this judgement and translation, I reluctantly reassert my authorial privilege and the resulting violence of representation (Churchill, 2005).

3.4.4 Research assistants

An early phase of my fieldwork focussed on conducting interviews with residents of Dazhulin. These interviews formed the basis of chapter 6, dealing with informality and access to housing, and life after displacement. Initially these interviews were conducted with the assistance of a research assistant, typically a student or recent graduate recruited through a friend's WeChat group of translation students, capable of interpreting Chongqing dialect.

In Dazhulin, residents sitting in public spaces, commuting, or working in shops were approached and asked if they had time to talk about their experience of the changes in the area. Many of those approached—not surprisingly—rebuffed my interest, or were unwilling to talk. However a number of people, initially in particular older people, were curious or interested to talk. From these initial contacts a number of formal recorded interviews were conducted, but more commonly people would state that they were happy to talk but not be recorded. In those cases where informal and non-recorded interviews

took place, I often had difficulty understanding much of what was spoken, since my own level of Mandarin was still poor, and the residents (particularly older ones) spoke in strongly accented Chongqing dialect. In such instances the research assistant made notes during the conversation, and then we immediately found another location to discuss the interview which had just finished. These clarificatory conversations were conducted in a mixture of Mandarin and English, correcting misunderstandings I had made, explaining the workings of the local dialect, and noting particular turns-of-phrase or verbatim quotes used by the interviewee. These conversations with the research assistant were recorded and subsequently transcribed in fieldnotes. Formal and informal interviews conducted with the help of a research assistant were conducted throughout the latter half of my fieldwork, although they became less frequent, and my reliance on the role of a research assistant as interpreter became less necessary as my language skills improved.

I learned from research assistants the modes of address used to break the ice with potential participants, the way of explaining my project in terms which were readily understandable and not interpreted as threatening or authoritative. Nonetheless, I found that, with a few exceptions, the presence of a research assistant seemed to prevent more natural flows of conversation, and often appeared to give participants the impression that I was in a position of authority or importance. This reflects the problematic nature of working with research assistants and collaborators in China observed by Thunø (2006). Essentially, I found that the presence of a research assistant made it significantly harder to form relationships with participants, rather than conduct isolated interviews. As fieldwork progressed, I became more confident in engaging in such interviews on my own, and found that it was much easier to form more lasting relationships as a result.

Regardless of the difficulties and dislocations associated with conducting interviews with research assistants, it is doubtless the case that my collaboration with local research assistants made the collection of data much more successful in the early stages. I preserve the anonymity of the research assistants by not naming them in this thesis, but recognise the formative role they played in my research. Amidst the dislocations that occurred in my collaboration with research assistants, their time and patience doubtlessly formed a constitutive element of my encounter with the field as a process of learning and coping (Sæther, 2006). As Turner (2010) observes, the contribution of research assistants and collaborators to monographs is all-too-often elided, and this oversight is essential to the colonial mentality of knowledge production in the ethnographic imaginary.

3.4.5 Video production

Key to the latter half of my ethnographic practice in Chongqing was the formation of a working relationship with two documentary film makers. This developed into an extended collaboration with two people, together forming a team of three working on video production in Dazhulin. One of these collaborators was X, a Chongqing-born documentary maker who was in the process of shooting a number of documentaries and video projects about Chongqing's urbanisation. The other was Carlo, a European dramatist and activist who was working with X on several productions.[21] After being introduced to this team, I initially hoped that they would be willing to film a handful of interviews and ambient footage of my fieldsite, which would be a valuable resource to accompany my own photographs and recordings. After becoming acquainted with the landscape of Dazhulin, they decided to engage in a long-term project of documenting my research there.

The project, as conceived by this team of three (myself, X and Carlo) would record both the changing landscape of Chongqing's urban periphery, and the faltering attempts of a foreign research student (myself) to investigate it. Collectively we shot upwards of twelve hours of footage, over several months, of conversations, interviews, travel and daily ambience around Dazhulin. X was hugely instrumental in the success of my later fieldwork. He was able to arrange meetings with officials and gaining access to other spaces I had previously failed to access. Moreover, working with X made me a much more confident and competent researcher, both independently and in a team. Observing the tactics that X used to approach people, break the ice, establish trust and broach the topic of interviews became a vital learning experience for me. Early on in our collaboration I felt embarrassed at what I thought of as the pitiful state of my own ethnographic practice, and worried about how it would be represented on camera. By emulating the research approach taken by X—down to body language and the phrases of Chongqing dialect which he used—I felt I was undertaking a comprehensive apprenticeship in ethnographic practice. By the end of our collaboration I was an immeasurably more confident and competent researcher.

[21] I use the real name of my European collaborator and give the pseudonym 'X' to my Chinese collaborator, as they requested.

Figure 5: A shot from the documentary footage showing me talking to residents engaged in informal meat-smoking, January 2017. Source: X.

An important decision taken early in our collaboration was that the video we were working on should not conform to the naturalistic epistemology of much Western documentary-making in China whereby the role of the Western researcher (myself) was elided, giving the viewer the impression of facts, perspectives and scenes as being readily presented by the city, and talking-head interviewees. Rather, we wished to keep the researcher in front of the camera, and document the messy, often embarrassing, inadequate and contingent process by which knowledge of China's cities was generated (Figure 5). At the start of our collaboration I stated the importance of this approach as a tactic of seeking to explore how the colonial power imbalance of video as a research medium might be disrupted, and found that my partners agreed this was an important message to convey. My advocacy of this mode of documentary-making was strongly influenced by my frustration with the ethnographic imaginary which elided the dislocations inherent in research across cultural and political boundaries. In Carlo and X I was lucky enough to find enthusiastic and critical collaborators and friends who shared this perspective on how we might use video to explore and problematise the difficulties and presumptions of the ethnographic imaginary. Our practice sought to disrupt the representation of the production of urban knowledge as a naturalistic and objective exercise in documenting facts and opinions, and to instead demonstrate the often uncomfortable and imperfect conditions under which academic knowledge is produced.

In some instances, when filming interviews, X stepped in to clarify when I had phrased a question poorly, or misunderstood a response, as he was able to fluently speak

and understand Chongqing dialect. Several times, X effectively took over interviews, posing questions and responding to interviewees directly, while I was reduced to a fellow participant in the conversation. In writing the thesis I have tried to avoid quoting directly from such interviews in order to maintain a clear authorial position, although these examples certainly reveal the fiction of the notion of the 'mono' in monograph. One interview conducted by Carlo and X and filmed in my absence (with residents I was later introduced to) is also quoted in this thesis.[22]

3.5 Discomfort, failure and positionality

Extending a consideration of the dislocations involved in research methodology also entails a degree of self-examination. Following the substantive literature on academic positionality in ethnographic research (Madison, 2011; Fisher, 2015; Moser, 2008), it is important to recognise that all knowledge produced in ethnography is 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1991) in which the researcher does not act as a transparent conduit of knowledge, and even in the face of critical self-reflection will be implicated and affected by biases they will not be conscious of (Rose, 1997). Knowledge production can thus not be separated from personal experience, and it is essential to offer a fully embodied and situated account of the experience of the researcher.

My experience of fieldwork was that it was generally a stressful and difficult process, although rewarding in time. These difficulties were not limited to the practical concerns of gathering data, but also extended to the general reproduction of selfhood. Certainly, this has long been an acknowledged as a part of ethnographic practice. Bennett and Shurmer-Smith (2001) argue that 'ethnographic research should transform the researcher and it certainly is not for people who are unwilling to take risks with themselves' (p. 260). I do feel that elements of my sense of self were transformed by fieldwork, and not always in positive ways. Much of my experience of fieldwork was 'intensely lonely, boring and/or frustrating' (Crang and Cook, 2007, p. 56). In the midst of such experience I found great comfort from the study of British doctoral students engaged in long-term ethnographic fieldwork produced by Amy Pollard (2009), who identifies common themes of embarrassment, stress, guilt, regret and disappointment amongst her 16 anonymous interviewees. I re-read this essay regularly during my fieldwork, and found much of my experience replicated in it. To that end I offer a few brief reflections on my experiences of ethnography as structured through various more personal dislocations.

[22] See A22, appendix A.

As described by many of the students interviewed by Pollard (2009), discomfort in fieldwork was not limited to data collection, but also reflected a sense of anxiety and difficulty in going about daily life. Often this anxiety manifested in response to my material living conditions and sense of vulnerability in the field. Early on in my fieldwork my apartment had a persistent cockroach and rat problem. My landlord would arrive without prior warning, wanting to take photos of the interior of my apartment or introduce me to his friends and family. Security guards and police came to my door and demand to see my visa. I felt very isolated, blocked from making friends in the city by my lack of language skills. Unreliable internet and VPN connections made it difficult to communicate with friends and family in the UK.

I was absolutely determined to face these difficulties alone, and not become the typical Western 'expat' who was reliant on friends and unpaid contacts to sort out their problems for them. After several months my language and cultural fluency had improved to the point where I was able to navigate the city more easily, and I built up a network of friends, particularly amongst the artists based around the Sichuan Fine Arts Academy. After perhaps a year of living in Chongqing, I was able to navigate all of these situations with a degree of confidence and independence.[23]

Undoubtedly, these experiences are not unique. Reading them written down, they appear minor and petty complaints, and are undoubtedly broadly similar to the account of any middle-class Westerner living outside of their immediate comfort zone. As one friend reflected to me, the difficulty of these experiences was precisely that of 'having your white male privilege unsettled by just the tiniest amount' (fieldnotes, March 2017). Indeed, it is undoubtedly the case that researchers occupying a less privileged subject position would and do face considerably more discomfort daily. It would however be dishonest to claim that such experiences did not impact my mindset during fieldwork, and I struggled to maintain the self-image of an impassive researcher engaging objectively with the field. As Pollard (2009) describes, many of my interviews and participant observation exercises in Dazhulin felt like desperate attempts to do 'what I am here to do' (i.e. gather data) slotted in haphazardly between the stuff of everyday life.

[23] In recounting these experiences I don't mean to suggest that my experience of fieldwork was uniformly negative. I found many friendships and alliances which were (and continue to be) hugely valuable to me, and was extremely sad to say goodbye to many of my partipants and friends in Chongqing. However, these experiences rarely coincided with a sense of professional identity. Honestly, these friendships were valuable to me precisely because they offered an escape from the sense that I was falling behind on my research and failing to complete my plans, by reminding me that there was life beyond the academy.

I became vividly aware of the violence of representation through writing, and the unequal power assigned to the researcher when it came to writing up my fieldnotes. The encounters and interviews which had often been characterised by feelings of inadequacy, humiliation, desperation for things to 'go right' transformed once written down in English into poised vignettes which conformed again to the ethnographic imaginary of the detached expert researcher. I found it felt more honest to keep fieldnotes which were jotted in a stream of consciousness of quotations, descriptions, reflections and (often) complaints and frustrations that reflected the dislocated nature in which I encountered 'the field', rather than flowing prose which obscured the tensions under which such knowledge was produced.

These difficulties contributed to a self-perception that I was 'failing' to perform ethnography, by failing to embody the image of the ethnographer as universal citizen blending seamlessly into the field (see Crang and Cook, 2007, pp. 26-31). As with Pollard's (2009) interviewees, these embodied and material discomforts compounded a more general sense of anxiety and imposter syndrome. For a great majority of my fieldwork, and indeed after my return from the field, I felt on some level that my research was in the process of failing, or could already be described as a failure. Much of my correspondence with friends, family and even those research participants who had become friends concerned this sense of imposter syndrome, and attendant economic precarity.

In such instances, skype calls with supervisors were immensely helpful, and I never felt more like I was 'on track' with research than in the hours after these conversations. However they also felt like relatively isolated moments of calm and clarity in amidst a more general sense of on-going crisis. I found it hard to communicate honestly the difficulties I was going through with supervisors and friends, partially because the context seemed so different to the relative security of a UK university, but also because I felt embarrassed and that I would be disappointing people if I admitted to the difficulties and feelings of dislocation I was experiencing.

A few months after returning from fieldwork I had the opportunity to contribute a video essay to an anthropology conference[24] which reflected on how I experienced this sense of failure. As I say in that video:

> I spent a long time ruminating on whether [my] failings were professional or personal, and what failure meant for my place in the academy. Rather than the

[24] The 2018 conference for the Association for Cultural Anthropology was a digital conference in which all participants contributed short videos and 'attended' remotely via a livestream.

> 'blank canvas' of the impassive ethnographer, I could not stop thinking about the personal history which had brought me here. Before beginning the PhD I had spent years in unemployment or low-paid temp work, and still felt I was an interloper in academic space, undeserving of the opportunities I had been given and soon to be outed as a mediocre fraud. Within the three-year timetable to PhD completion, I had been repeatedly told I had one chance to 'do this right'. I found myself imagining the scene of me returning to the temp agency I had worked for previously after returning from fieldwork and dropping out. Choosing the right research subject felt like the last chance at legitimating my place and delaying my return to economic precarity by a few more years. (Roast, 2018)

Producing this video gave me an opportunity to reflect on the fact that texts cannot be separated from the context in which they're produced. The production of this thesis is necessarily intimately bound up with the political economy of my own life, and the institutions of higher education which enabled this text to be produced. As Jazeel (2017) identifies, the political economy of the neoliberal university is frequently opposed to the patience, persistence and failure required of long-term qualitative research, especially when conducted across cultural boundaries.

3.6 Dislocation as methods

In this chapter I have sought to provide a detailed account of the methods through which I gathered the data presented in this thesis, and to consider materials towards a critique of the positionality and politics of representation engaged in urban knowledge production through ethnography. Avoiding the ethnographic imaginary of knowledge production which treats the field as an objective reality to be read naturalistically or a backdrop to personal solipsism requires an acknowledgement of the dislocations which arise from research.

Reflecting on my time in Chongqing I feel that the bare minimum owed by any researcher engaging in ethnography is be open and honest about the dislocations they experience during fieldwork. This is something owed to the interlocutors in the field, to displace the singular voice of the monograph and illustrate the many people and experiences that are made to speak through ethnographic writing. It is also something owed to other researchers, to avoid reproducing the ethnographic imaginary of knowledge production as an obscure practice of detached expertise or metaphysical conjuring. Following Pollard (2009) I hope it might act as an account of ethnographic research at the doctoral level in which the dislocations required by ethnography are articulated into knowledge production rather than being obscured.

4. 'The world can be restructured': the Chongqing Model as urban restructuring

> *You might ask us: how is Chongqing able to achieve all of this? We need to clarify again what we mean by adopting the perspective of 'restructuring'. Firstly, any process of restructuring requires us to examine the situation, seize opportunities, and act decisively. Secondly, restructuring proceeds by bringing together those who have power with those who have resources. […] The world can be restructured. This is not a slogan, and it is not idle rhetoric for us to chat about. It represents a worldview: a philosophical view, and a methodological one. Restructuring will lead us out of the financial crisis, and allow us to seize opportunities that will enable our businesses and our society to develop faster.*
>
> Huang Qifan (2010), mayor of Chongqing 2010-2016.

> *The people follow industry, and the [price of] land follows them.*
>
> Huang Qifan (2018).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates how the urban space of Chongqing was transformed over the fifteen years which preceded my fieldwork. It introduces and contextualises the fieldsite of Dazhulin on the periphery of Chongqing. In order to position the material presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7 within the context of rapid urban restructuring, I advance two arguments about Chongqing's political economy and urban planning. Firstly I argue that viewing Chongqing's urbanisation from a longitudinal perspective reveals the extent to which the city pursued a typical model of state entrepreneurial urbanism. Placing the equitable policies of the so-called 'Chongqing Model' within the context of broader urban restructuring troubles the image of a distinct and radically egalitarian alternative urbanism that its proponents on the left claimed. Secondly, I argue that the successive waves of urbanisation enacted during this period—based on land financing and state-owned development companies—created a fragmentary landscape on the periphery of the city, exemplified by the subdistrict of Dazhulin.

This chapter adopts a city-wide perspective, examining what the key policies of the so-called 'Chongqing Model' were and how they were implemented. Whereas other

scholarship has focussed on the abstract political content of these policies, I examine them as a programme of urban policy and seek to highlight how they were manifested in space. I analyse how the urban space of Chongqing changed as a result of these policies since 2000, focussing in particular on northern urban fringe (the 'New North Zone') which included my fieldsite of Dazhulin (see Figure 6). I aim to clarify the processes underlying Chongqing's urban restructuring and to provide the context of policy, political economy, and spatial transformation necessary to interpret subsequent chapters.

This chapter begins by discussing how the Chongqing Model is typically defined. I suggest that by confusing the long-term urban restructuring of the municipality since 2000 with the brief period of hyperbolic growth and Red Culture campaigns overseen by the leadership of Bo Xilai (2007-2012), it becomes easy to miss the extent to which Chongqing followed a typical mode of state entrepreneurial development. To rectify this I suggest distinguishing the restructuring of political economy from the propaganda-driven restructuring of the city's urban imaginary; I refer to the former as the *Chongqing Project* and the latter as the *Chongqing Dream*. This chapter addresses the Chongqing Project, and the next chapter will address the Chongqing Dream. I examine how the leadership of Chongqing and the timeframe of development demonstrates this distinction. I move on to analyse the broad policies underlying the restructuring of the municipality's political economy, focussing on the founding of urban investment development companies, establishment of a land financing system and the creation of the Liangjiang New Area special economic zone. I also examine in detail two equitable policies: the reform of the *hukou* system and the construction of public housing. These were policies which proponents of the Chongqing Model regarded as marking a decisive break with existing state entrepreneurialism and neoliberalising policy. I discuss how these policies were indeed an attempt to deliver some social dividend to lessen inequalities within Chongqing, but must be placed in the context of the deepening marketisation of land and labour which produced such inequalities. I move on to describe how these policies manifested in the northern periphery of Chongqing across three waves of development (urbanisation, investment, leasing), and analyse how these resulted in a fragmented landscape in the district of Dazhulin where my ethnographic research took place.

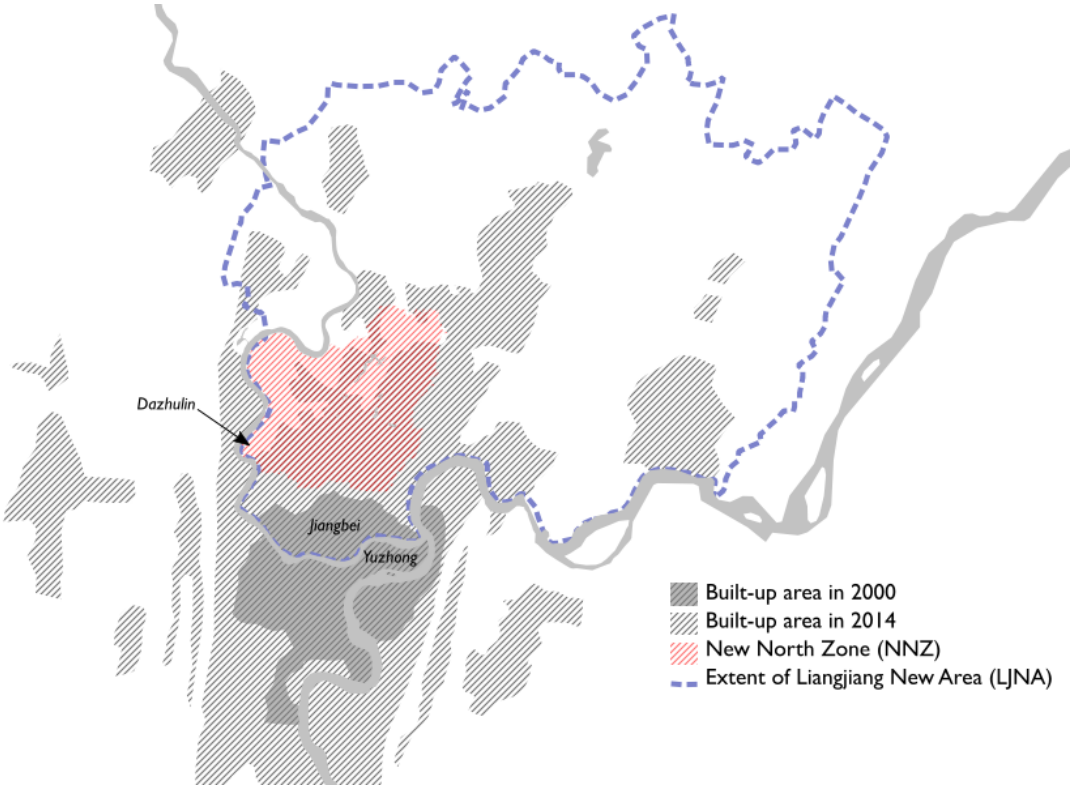

Figure 6: Map of Chongqing showing the main areas of urban restructuring in the northern periphery of the city. Source: author, utilising data from Liangjiang New Area Land Registry.

4.2 Defining the Chongqing Model

4.2.1 Chongqing Project vs Chongqing Dream

The premise for my argument is that the Chongqing Model is an imprecise term which collapses two distinct and non-contiguous phenomena (urban policy and urban propaganda) into one. In doing so it takes the story of the city as an abstract ideological one, and ignores the urban character of the Chongqing Model as a transformation of space and spatial imaginaries. As such, I argue that we should distinguish between the *Chongqing Project* and the *Chongqing Dream*—the former referring to the long-term strategy of governance underpinning urban restructuring; the latter to the ideological spin this governance was given in 2007-2012.

As described in chapter 1, the Chongqing Model was the subject of a great deal of hyperbole, both originating within the local state itself and among academic supporters, in China and abroad. The speech given by mayor Huang Qifan (2010) quoted at the start of this chapter captures the spirit of this moment. In Huang's speech, Chongqing stood poised on the verge of a new world that would be brought into being through the urban restructuring of this inland city: it had won lucrative manufacturing contracts from Silicon Valley firms, streamlined its unprofitable state-owned enterprises into highly profitable financing vehicles, announced plans to increase its population by ten million in the next

decade, and maintained the fastest economic growth in of any large Chinese city after the global financial crisis. Moreover the profits accrued by the state enterprises working in tandem with the private economy would be funnelled into large-scale infrastructure projects intended to benefit the poorest: keeping the price of housing low through the management of a state-owned land reserve and the construction the largest public housing scheme since the early 1990s.

This programme won the Chongqing Model admirers, in China and elsewhere. Academics from the Chinese New Left offered their enthusiastic support (Cui, 2011; 2012b; Wang, S., 2011). Li, X. (2011) coined the term 'Chongqing Dream', announced that the city would 'redefine modernity' (p. 5) and reaffirm socialism with Chinese characteristics as offering the genesis of a new global order. The model likewise attracted considerable attention in the West, and was profiled by David Harvey in *Rebel Cities* (2012).

Beyond these claims, there is an emerging body of literature which seeks to examine the meaning of the Chongqing Model, and assess its ideological consistency and viability as a leftist political project (Cheng, Jospeh Y.S., 2015; Huang, P.C.C., 2011). Downie (2014) examines discourse amongst the Chinese left to suggest support was distributed amongst a moderate 'centre left' and explicitly Maoist 'left' who saw the city as offering a counterstrategy to American imperialism. Mulvad (2015) concludes that despite the rhetorical trappings Chongqing's political-economic model offered only minimal differentiation from that of explicitly neoliberal Guangdong. Lim (2014) offers an examination of Chongqing's policy experimentation as representing a Polanyian counter-movement to the neoliberal tendencies of post-reform development. Zhao (2012) sees the legacy of Chongqing as imperfect, but deserving of support against right wing and liberal criticism. Zakharzhevskaya (2017) notes that the Chongqing Model was more consistently characterised as 'of the left' by pro-capitalist factions in China than by self-proclaimed leftists, but concludes that it was ultimately 'more socialist than other provincial models' (p. 250).

However, the vast majority of these analyses rely upon consideration of intellectual discourse, policy, and broad regional economic indicators. The figure of Chongqing as an actual *place* and city in which people live vanishes in these accounts, in favour of Chongqing as rhetorical object.[25] In this sense, they take the Chongqing Model as an

[25] Lim (2014, 2019) is the exception, having conducted fieldwork with the economists and planners involved in constructing Chongqing's public housing program. Amongst the other scholars there is no indication that any of them have ever visited Chongqing.

abstract ideological and economic programme, not as a transformation of urban spaces and urban imaginaries.

In chapter 5 I examine the Chongqing Dream—that is, the Chongqing Model as a project of discourse and aesthetics which sought to restructure the city's urban imaginary. In this chapter, I examine how and why the space of the city was transformed during this period, examining the long-term political economy of urban restructuring which I term the Chongqing Project. In doing so, I seek to detach the reality of the Chongqing Model as an economic programme from the ideological spin given to it between 2007 and 2012, and ground my analysis in the changes taking place within the city rather than the discourse of intellectuals and policy makers.

Figure 7: Bo Xilai (left) and Huang Qifan (right) pictured at the National People's Congress, March 5 2012. Source: Getty Images.

4.2.2 Leadership: Bo Xilai and Huang Qifan

While my analysis in this chapter is principally concerned with urban political economy, it is important to introduce in more detail two figures from the leadership of Chongqing's local government: Bo Xilai, the secretary of the municipal CPC from 2007 to 2012; and Huang Qifan, who was deputy mayor and later mayor of the municipal government between 2001 and 2016.

The relationship between these figures is important, in that it demonstrates the brief period of neo-Maoist propaganda which characterised Bo's leadership in contrast to the longitudinal policies of capitalist development pursued by Huang over nearly two decades. The Chongqing Project can thus be seen as restructuring of urban political economy

overseen by Huang, while the Chongqing Dream represents a short-term restructuring of the urban imaginary of the municipality. In the most general terms, Bo presented an image of populist politics with a leftist slant that drew on the radical history of the CPC and his own personal charisma. Huang, conversely, represented the pro-capitalist legacy of the reform era, concerned with constructing a market socialist economy and accelerating development.

Bo Xilai was for a time one of the most powerful figures in Chinese politics, a rival to those in the highest ranks of leadership. His father was one of Mao's lieutenants, and he had been a teenage Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution, making him typical of the 'princeling' (*taizidang*) faction that rose under the patronage of their fathers during the 1980s. He oversaw the modernisation of the port city of Dalian and was Minister of Commerce in the early 2000s, and viewed as a potential rival to Xi Jinping as candidate for the presidency. By contrast Huang came from a poor family and worked in a coking factory during the Cultural Revolution. He joined the party and studied economics and finance at the start of the reform era, emerging in the 1990s as typical of the 'technocrat' (*shuji guanliao*) wing of the party (He et al., 2013; CQnews).

Bo was popularly interpreted as a charismatic, humane leader, a 'man of the people' with a taste for power and aptitude at navigating the realpolitik of the CPC—up until his arrest for corruption in 2012. After 2007 his increasingly 'red' public image earned him support from leftists in the party, including the academics of the Chinese New Left. In his long career prior to moving to Chongqing Bo had shown no particularly leftist tendencies. Huang, conversely, was seen to be an effective bureaucrat, committed to economic reform and modernising the political-economic architecture of the post-socialist local state. He had pioneered the state entrepreneurial model of land financing in Pudong SEZ, at the forefront of pro-market policies in the 1990s, later transferring these policies to Chongqing (Huang, P.C.C., 2011). For his role in the restructuring of Chongqing between 2001 and 2016 and weathering the political scandals of Bo's leadership, he was nicknamed the 'CEO of Chongqing' and 'the Stockbroker Mayor' (Xu, 2015).

The spectacular and highly publicised nature of Bo's rise and fall is significant. As party secretary of Chongqing he appeared regularly on national television advocating redistributive economics and calling for a revival in 'Red Culture' (Mulvad, 2015). He promoted an image of himself as a hard-line gang buster and friend of the working classes, compared by Chinese media to a young John F Kennedy (Li, M., 2005). Liberal voices in the Chinese public sphere worried that his approach represented a return to the days of the Cultural Revolution, and accused him of using illegal force to remove political rivals

(Eberlein, 2012a; Chen, Y., [2012] 2017). His fall from power and arrest in February-March 2012 was seen as the most serious political crisis to affect the CPC since the Tiananmen Square massacre. He was imprisoned in September 2013, accused of accepting bribes totalling 20 million yuan, while his wife was convicted of the murder of a British business partner. Rumours abounded of his extravagant personal fortune, ruthless use of violence to eliminate rivals and extra-marital affairs, accused by his former chief of police of being 'the greatest gangster in China'. Maoist and leftist websites voiced support for him after his arrest, and were quickly shut down (Downie, 2014; Li, M., 2011). He remains a popular figure amongst the working classes of Chongqing (Zhao, Y., 2012; Eberlein, 2012a). Shortly after my fieldwork concluded in 2017 the party's anti-corruption bureau reported that party officials in Chongqing had failed to 'resolutely eliminate the evil legacy of Bo and Wang' and arrested his successor for corruption (CQD, 2018/04/02).

Scholarly assessment, even amongst ostensibly leftist scholars, of Bo Xilai has tended to read him as a political opportunist rather than as an ideologue.[26] Yet his ideological positioning within the discourse of 'Maoist revival' and spatial justice attracted genuine ideological followers, both from the intellectual New Left and amongst the ordinary citizens of Chongqing. In the course of fieldwork I found that Bo Xilai was generally regarded by interlocutors as a good man overcome by ambition. The vast majority of working-class people I encountered on a daily basis in Chongqing spoke enthusiastically about him, explaining that unlike other politicians 'he looked after us ordinary people'.

4.2.3 Timeframe

The difficulty in defining the Chongqing Model emerges out of a conflation of the economic policies implemented by Huang Qifan since 2001 with the short period of leftist propaganda that emerged under Bo's leadership between 2007 and 2012. Whereas the term 'Chongqing Model' initially referred to Huang's state entrepreneurial restructuring of the city towards developmentalist ends, after Bo's arrival it became associated with a revival of radical leftist politics. My distinction between the Chongqing Project and Chongqing Dream aims to articulate this differentiation, and disentangle these timelines.

[26] Certainly it is likely that the much of the politics underlying the story of Bo, his rise, downfall, and subsequent 'evil legacy' should be understood in terms of factional rivalry rather than ideological disagreement within the CPC, although the fallout of his failure may have genuinely damaged leftist factions within the Party (see Zhao, 2012).

Figure 8: Publications referring to 'the Chongqing Model'. Source: cnki.net.

The term 'the Chongqing Model' was initially used in reference to the municipal government's road-building programme of the early 2000s. After the ascension of Bo Xilai to municipal secretary of the CPC in 2007, the term became increasingly associated with his leadership and the ambitious policies adopted under his direction. Since the dramatic downfall of Bo, the term has been typically used to refer specifically to the period of his leadership, 2007-2012. In contrast, earlier accounts of the political and strategic model which backed-up Chongqing's urbanisation tend to not treat the Chongqing Model as a discrete time period, but rather an approach to urbanisation that emerged slowly in the course of the 2000s and was crystallised under Bo Xilai's leadership around 2009 (Huang, P.C.C., 2011; Cui, 2011; Bo and Chen, 2009). By 2010 a number of policies had crystallised in association with the city, and the book *The Chongqing Model* (Su et al., 2010) formalised a variety of initiatives and ambitions around the term. This book was a celebration of the model and tried to contextualise its meaning within the broader history of China's reform and CPC theory. The China National Knowledge Infrastructure database (CNKI) recorded a rapid increase in academic publications and press coverage relating to the Chongqing Model after 2008, peaking in 2011 and dropping to almost zero by 2013 (see Figure 8). [27]

This collapsing of the long-term economic policy of the Chongqing Project into a discrete model inseparable from Bo neglects the policy continuities throughout this period. As I demonstrate later in this chapter, the rapid urbanisation and construction of public housing was preceded by a decade of careful expansion of urban territory into the city's northern periphery. The groundwork for most of the policies espoused in *The Chongqing Model* (Su et al., 2010) had been laid almost a decade before under the influence of Huang Qifan, when inefficient state owned enterprises (SOEs) were reformed and large tracts of

27 CNKI is a project owned by Tsinghua University which aggregates information from academic journals, dissertations, newspapers and media, and is the most comprehensive and commonly used publishing database in China.

peripheral agrarian land expropriated by the municipal state. Similarly, many of the flagship policies of the Chongqing Model continued long after 2012, although with less hyperbolic coverage. In the next section I will analyse these policies and argue that did not represent a meaningful break from typical post-reform state entrepreneurial urbanism, and enabled facilitated further exploitation through deepening marketisation of land and labour.

4.3 Chongqing Model as urban policy

4.3.1 Urban policy

This section overviews the limits and content of the Chongqing Model as an urban project, manifested in policies intended to restructure the city's political economy. It examines five elements of the restructuring of Chongqing which became associated with the Chongqing Model in detail: the creation of Urban Investment and Development Companies (UIDCs), the land financing system, the creation of Liangjiang New Area SEZ, the reform of the *hukou* system, and the construction of public housing. Taken together these policies demonstrate that the long-term restructuring of the political economy of Chongqing is broadly identical to state entrepreneurial urbanism elsewhere in China. In chapter 1 I described how Fulong Wu's (2018; 2003) theory of state entrepreneurialism understands the political economy of Chinese cities as a hybrid form of market and state, where the state employs neoliberalising policies towards developmentalist ends. This leads to the deepening marketisation of land and labour, and creating rising levels of inequality and necessitating the on-going exploitation of migrant workers, peripheral farmers and the urban poor (Hsing, 2010; Shin, 2014; Ngai and Chan, 2012).

In the case of Chongqing, the local state pursued some redistributive and egalitarian policies—most notably *hukou* reform and construction of public housing—but these must be understood as essentially entrepreneurial strategies to provide a cheap and secure workforce and deepen the marketisation of labour and land. In this analysis I concur with Lim (2014) that such policies represented a 'counter-movement' to the emerging capitalist economy, facilitating the deepening of market reforms and alleviating their worst inequalities, but failing to challenge the basic contradictions of the state entrepreneurial economy.

This section draws upon a number of contemporaneous accounts of the political-economy of the Chongqing Model, utilising chiefly English-language sources supplemented by Chinese texts.[28]

4.3.2 Urban Investment and Development Companies

Early in the 2000s, then deputy mayor Huang Qifan oversaw an ambitious programme to reform the municipality's extensive public sector. This reform resulted in the creation of several Urban Investment and Development Companies (UIDCs) which would act as arms-length bodies responsible for carrying out much of the city's urban restructuring. This was described at the time as an innovative model of urban economics which combined elements of state socialism with elements of market liberalism (Huang, Q., 2003; Cui, 2011), but was broadly similar to patterns of state entrepreneurial urbanism elsewhere in China (see Jiang and Waley, 2018).

Huang described the economic policy of Chongqing as one of 'riding three horses': making state capital, private capital, and foreign capital work in concert for the development of the city (Su et al., 2010). The city had been relatively slow to begin the process of privatizing the state-owned economy during the 1990s.[29] The early years of Huang's tenure in Chongqing were concerned with transforming the state-controlled economy into an instrument of state entrepreneurial urbanism. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) were converted from an instrument of mass employment and production into UIDCs which would serve to restructure the city in order to attract domestic and foreign capital investment.

In 2003 the municipal State Owned Asset Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC; *guoyou zichan guanli jiandu weiyuanhui*) supervised 60 SOEs, chiefly heavy industry conglomerates. More than half of them were being outcompeted on the emerging market economy and operating at a loss, whilst occupying prime plots of land in the city centre. Chongqing's five major local banks had more than 50% of their capital tied up in non-performing loans to insolvent SOEs, severely limiting the financing options of more profitable SOEs.

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[28] The figures and policies gathered are largely referenced from several sources: the overviews of economic restructuring provided by Rithmire (2012), Huang (2011), Cui (2011), Zong and Cai (2018) and Liu, Dunford et al. (2016); the analysis of Liangjiang New Area by Li (2015); the description of the land financing system by Xie and Zhou (2017) and Li et al. (2016); the analysis of transport development policy by Martinez (2014); national overviews of development banking by Sanderson and Forsythe (2012) and tech manufacturing by Yu (2017).

[29] In the late 1990s, the then mayor of Chongqing had described the municipality as one of 'two great planned economies in the world today [alongside North Korea]' (quoted in Hong, 2002, p.69).

Huang's solution to this problem became known as the 'Yufu Model'. The Yufu Asset Management Corporation was founded in 2004 with 1 billion RMB in assets. Along with eight smaller UIDCs created around the same time, Yufu acted as a leveraging tool for SOE reform. Yufu took loans from a state-owned bank to purchase 15 billion yuan of bad assets belonging to underperforming SOEs. Insolvent SOEs were closed down and the land they occupied was seized by Yufu; more capital was borrowed against the future profits of this land; the capital and assets acquired by Yufu were then injected into high-performing SOEs (Rithmire, 2012). Smaller enterprises were agglomerated into a handful of larger enterprises, often moved from prime plots of land in the city centre to peripheral locations. This valuable central land could then be leased to developers at a high price. Between 2003 and 2009 the SASAC went from managing 60 enterprises (in addition to 1,500 subsidiary enterprises) with total asset value of 170 million RMB, to overseeing just 30 SOEs with assets amounting to 1.05 trillion RMB. These streamlined SOEs capable of competing in the market economy contributed between 15-30% of their profits back to the municipal state.

Huang Qifan described the success of this model as being the centralisation of profits from SOE marketisation, rather than allowing the leadership of individual SOEs to profit from selling off their assets:

> I can now say that after 2002, when the government revealed this trick, many people discovered their livelihood had been cut off. Lots of people hated my guts! Think about it. There were so many directors of small factories who had already signed an agreement with the boss of a real estate company. These people knew they were sitting on maybe billions of yuan in land value, but then with just one sheet of paper the SASAC steps in to take it back! (Huang Qifan quoted in Deng, 2013).

The UIDCs created through the Yufu Model were tasked with creating the infrastructure which would enable the expansion of the city. Individual UIDCs were given a wide range of roles facilitating the expansion and upgrading of the city, including creating transport infrastructure (Martinez, 2014), construction and management of public housing (Lim, 2014), and expanding electricity provision. Infrastructure investment in Chongqing increased by 200% between 2001 and 2006, and continued to grow consistently into the 2010s (Sanderson and Forsythe, 2012).

4.3.3 Land Financing

Supported by these newly created UIDCs, under Huang's leadership Chongqing's adopted a land finance-based process of urbanisation. This was essentially identical to

policies of land-based state entrepreneurialism adopted elsewhere in China (Hsing, 2010; Wu, F., 2018; He and Wu, 2009; Lin, 2014). Indeed, Huang had been at the forefront of implementing the 'Pudong Model' in Shanghai during the 1990s, which had set the blueprint for state-led land financing model that much of China followed (Huang, P.C.C., 2011; Wu, F., 2003, 2000). In this section I briefly overview the land financing model at work in Chongqing, and how it leveraged state-owned land in order to expand the territory of the city and enable to the leasing of land-use rights to private developers. In particular I highlight the extensive role of the state-owned land reserve in this model, which was important to the successive waves of urbanisation experienced by the urban periphery and the fragmented landscape created in Dazhulin.

The system of land financing is one in which the local state leverages its formal ownership of all urban to land to act as a monopolistic 'socialist land master' (Hsing, 2010, p. 36). Land acquired at a low price (expropriated from the peripheral villages or relocated SOEs) is used as collateral to raise funds from state-owned development banks. This capital is used to finance the construction of urban infrastructure through UIDCs. The price of state-owned land is thus raised, and this land is leased to developers for profit.[30] This process is referred to through the metaphor of cooking: newly acquired cheap land was 'raw' (*sheng*). Once it had been provided with full urban infrastructure and reached its maximum value it was thought of as 'cooked' (*shu*) and leased to developers. The process as a whole was one of 'cooking land' (*chaodi*) (Hsing, 2010, p. 35).

The state-owned land reserve (*guoyou tudi chubei*) occupies a central role within this process, as the collateral for raising finance, the site in which finance is realised through investment in fixed assets, and allowing the eventual marketisation of these assets through lease to developers. In Chongqing the municipal state was able to create a state-owned land reserve which was significantly larger and better financed than comparable cities (Li, Q. et al., 2016; Liu, W. et al., 2016; Huang, P.C.C., 2011; Deng, 2013).[31] While the state-owned land reserve was partially supplied through the liquidation or relocation of SOEs

[30] The work of Fulong Wu (2003; 2010; 2016) serves well to document the rescaling of the state which led to this system. After tax reform of 1994, the municipal state received drastically reduced central tax revenue, and leasing land to developers became the primary source of extra-budgetary revenue which enabled the local state to balance its books.

[31] Huang Qifan acknowledged the importance of the land reserve in Chongqing: 'In just ten years we were able to invest 6 billion in Chongqing's infrastructure. The secret of how to do it is the land reserve. […] Chongqing's land reserves are still far from exhausted, and now our financial capacity is constantly improving, so it's fair to say we're the most relaxed of the twelve western provinces and autonomous regions' (quoted in Deng, 2013).

and the demolition of slum housing, the chief source of land was the territorial expansion of the urban state and expropriation of surrounding rural areas for relatively low cost (Liangjiang New Area land registry).

When the land reserve system was introduced in 2002, state-owned land assets stood at over 270 km^2 (Li, Q. et al., 2016). Ownership of the land reserve is divided between the municipal-level state (*shiji*), district-level state (*quji*) and various UIDCs. As of 2007, the Yufu Corporation owned over 24 km^2 in land reserve (Xie et al., 2017). Li, Q. et al. (2016) estimate that 50% of land from the state-owned land reserve was used for state infrastructure construction, 45% for the secondary circuit private development for profit.[32]

The land held was typically in peripheral areas, meaning that a large portion of land on the edge of the city stood idle while it was 'cooking' (Figure 9). During this process it was subject to infrastructure investment summarised by the phrase 'seven connections, one flattening' (*qidao yiping*). This referred to provisioning land with connections to the road network, water supply, sewer network, power network, internet and telecommunications network and heat supply, and finally flattening the site so it is primed and ready for construction (Xie et al., 2017). Often this would take several years, and the state deliberately limited the supply of land in an attempt to prevent property prices from rising sharply. This led directly to the fragmented landscape that I encountered in Dazhulin (as described in chapters 6 and 7), as large areas of land were left idle and became the site of informal practices.

Similar to other entrepreneurial local states around China, the land reserve allowed the urban state to transform its role into a monopolistic land master, and earn revenue from leasing state-owned land to developers. Developers who acquired the land through auction would hold development rights for between 40 and 70 years (Ho, P., 2001).[33] The land was zoned for specific purposes prior to lease based on the municipal master plan, although in practice this use could be changed through negotiation between the developer and the state (as per the example of the undeveloped land in chapter 7).

[32] Xie and Zhou (2017) describe this as a process of two interrelated circuits of land financing, whereby some of the state-owned land reserve was used for state infrastructure construction projects ('reserve – finance – construct') and some of it used for leasing for private development ('reserve – renovate – transfer').

[33] Residential property rights are renewed after 70 years, while 50 year leases are for industrial, educational and cultural use and 40 years for commercial purposes.

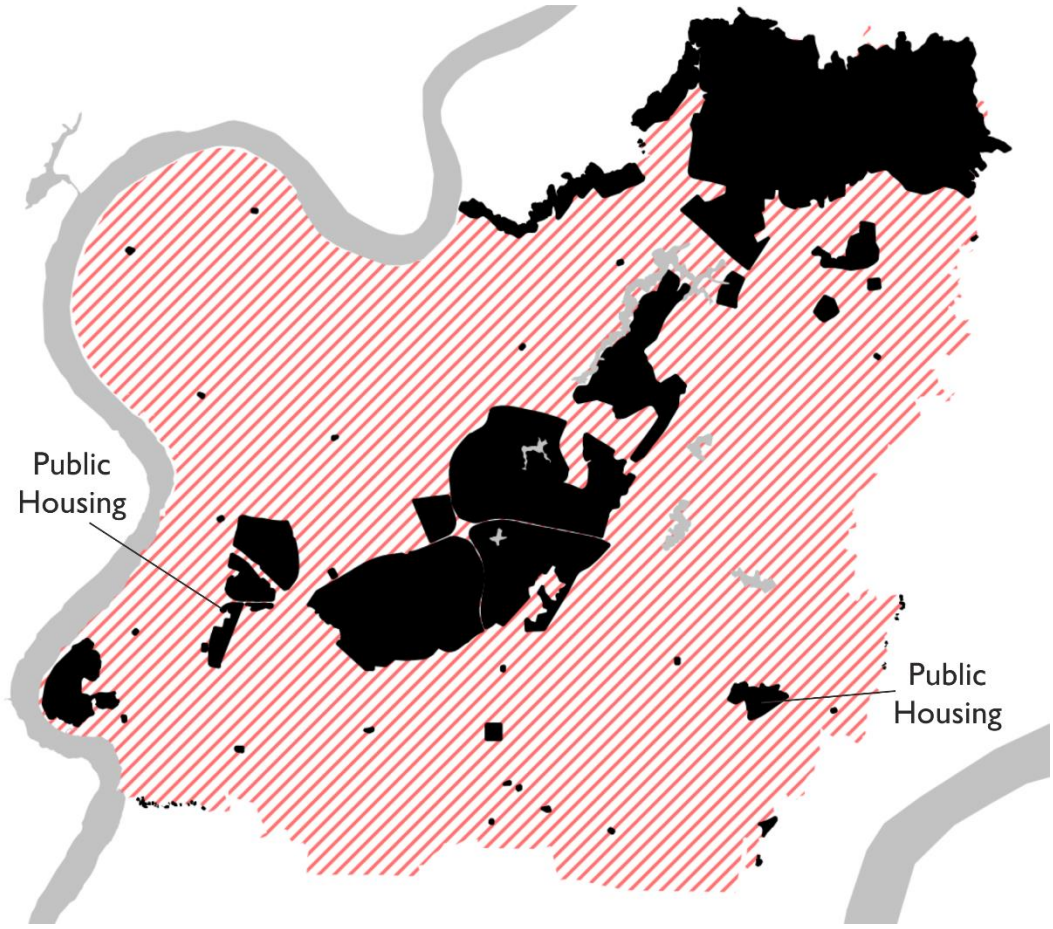

Figure 9: State-owned land reserve (black) in the northern Chongqing in 2014. Source: author, using data from Liangjiang New Area Land Registry.

In 2001, annual municipal government revenue from leasing state-owned land stood at 0.2 billion RMB. This rose to 2.2 billion in 2003, and again to 98 billion in 2010 (Li, Q. et al., 2016).[34] The revenue from the lease of land-use rights was divided equally between the district-level government (*quji zhengfu*) and municipal-level government (*shiji zhengfu*). Between 2006 and 2013 the income from leasing land had increased from 22% of total municipal revenue to 37% (CMBS). This corresponds to the patterns of income from land financing recorded by Lin and Zhang (2015) in their study of 'emerging spaces of neoliberal urbanism', in which they note that Chongqing is one of the only inland cities where commodification of land approaches the levels seen in coastal cities.

Alongside the land financing system, the municipal state introduced a policy known as the 'land ticket' (*dipiao*) system. This was essentially a development-rights transfer

[34] This was partly due to a new pricing system implemented by Huang in 2002, which stated that all urban land leased in Chongqing should be at least 10 yuan per square metre more expensive than equivalent land in Chengdu, to reflect the greater work required by the state to prepare Chongqing's mountainous terrain for construction use. Huang stated that when it came to land newly acquired by the local state and converted to urban usage, the object of planning should be to actively develop the potential of the land, with the goal of increasing the eventual price of transferring land use rights by between 30% to 100% (quoted in Li, Q. et al., 2016, pp.137-138).

scheme, which allowed villagers living far from the city to 'sell' the development rights for remote land to urban developers (via state intermediaries), offsetting the depletion of agrarian land as urban territory expanded. This was portrayed as another example of Chonqing's more equitable development policy in many accounts (Huang, P.C.C, 2011). However, Zhang's (2018b) recent assessment highlights the limited scope of the policy and material benefit to villagers, arguing that it disguises the state's land-grabbing agenda behind a rhetoric of equitable development. One of the interviewees in chapter 6 found they were unable to benefit from this scheme when it was enacted in their home county (see 6.3.2).

4.3.4 Liangjiang New Area

Liangjiang New Area (*Liangjiang xinqu*; LJNA) is a special economic zone (SEZ) established in June 2010 which covers 1200 km^2 north of the centre of Chongqing. It incorporates the northern fringe of the city (including the fieldsite of Dazhulin) as well as more remote rural areas (see Figure 6). The creation of LJNA follows patterns of state entrepreneurialism elsewhere in China, in that it seeks to attract foreign and domestic capital investment by subsidising construction and infrastructure costs, in addition to offering tax incentives. Examining LJNA reveals the state entrepreneurial tactics pursued by the local state in Chongqing over a long-term period, and highlights how the supposedly equitable policies of public housing construction can be interpreted as another attempt to attract capital investment by subsidising labour costs.

LJNA is a 'national new area' (*guojiaji xinqu*) combining state-led infrastructure investment with preferential policies for selected enterprises. It was the first of SEZ of its kind created in inland China (although as of 2019 there have been seven more designated. At the time when it was created its territory included the northern periphery of the city which had already been formally urbanised in the preceding decade under the direction of the New North Zone (*Beibu xinqu*; NNZ). This included the area of Dazhulin, which is the focus of chapters 6 and 7. The creation of LJNA provided infrastructure investment to integrate this peripheral zone into the city, with a view to transforming it into a suburb of mixed residential and high-tech industrial use.

Huang Qifan stated at the opening of LJNA in 2010 that the area would act as 'a sheet of blank paper, onto which something completely new can be drawn' (quoted in CQMP 2010/06/18 p. 6). LJNA would provide an expanse of new territory into which capital investment could be fixed, where land could be offered to international and

domestic investment at discounted prices, with readily available state-subsidised infrastructural amenities.

The municipal state aggressively courted investment from international and domestic tech manufacturers. Senior municipal leaders persuaded Taiwanese manufacturer Foxconn to relocate a planned laptop factory from Beijing to Chongqing by offering drastically reduced land prices. Huang Qifan travelled to Silicon Valley to negotiate the relocation of Hewlett-Packard supply chains to LJNA. It was this upending of supply chains, and the relocation of major manufacturing capital investment from coastal cities such as Shenzhen and Beijing to LJNA which Huang aimed to capture with the slogan 'the world can be restructured'.

The LJNA was attractive to capital investment because it incorporated considerable pre-existing transport infrastructure such as Jiangbei Airport and Chongtan River Port. Plans were announced to invest in additional rail and road infrastructure. The LJNA would also be the starting point of the Yuxinou line, an 11,179km long rail route running from Chongqing through the far-western province of Xinjiang across Russia and Eastern Europe to Duisberg in Germany (Brautlecht, 2014). As a result, LJNA would be the centre of Chongqing's strategy for expanding global supply chains and trade links, later tying into the Belt and Road Initiative.[35]

Between 2005 and 2007 120,000 residents living within the area that would become LJNA were displaced, along with 180 existing enterprises. UIDCs invested 10 million yuan into the area to 'cook' the land and ready it for lease to new enterprises and developers. Much of the 'cooked' land was leased at a reduced rate to enterprises favoured by the municipal state. The state was particularly keen to attract high-tech investment away from Shenzhen and other coastal cities with the creation of automobile, IT, pharmaceutical and biotech clusters. The cost of gas and electricity for new enterprises was subsidised, and building fees for factories waived (Huang, P.C.C., 2011). Corporate income tax was set at 15% (compared to 33% nationally) and VAT was reduced to 25% (compared to 50% nationally) for the first two years. Moreover, the managers of enterprises based in the area would receive a refund on their personal income tax. By 2012, Liangjiang New Area accounted for 15% of the GDP of the municipality, and 40 million RMB of private capital had been invested in construction in the area (Rithmire, 2012).

[35] The plan was that Chongqing would export to 'three oceans' via river (Shanghai) and rail routes across the border to Myanmar and to Germany. The Myanmar rail connection was cancelled after years of uncertainty in 2018.

The total population of the area was expected to grow from 2.2 million in 2012 to 5 million by 2020. One investment brochure boasted that the most attractive aspect of Liangjiang New Area was Chongqing's vast under-utilised army of cheap labour: 'Chongqing has 8 million migrant workers, 4 million of whom are temporarily living in coastal areas. They can return to Chongqing anytime' (quoted Rithmire 2012, p. 10). The construction of public housing complemented this strategy because it provided a supply of labour close to industrial zones. The state moreover subsidised the cost of labour's social reproduction by reducing housing costs, allowing enterprises to pay lower wages. When the CEO of Foxconn was asked why the company had decided to relocate so much of its production to Chongqing he replied that the construction of public housing would 'alleviate the burden on our company and allow us to concentrate on doing business' (Wu, B., 2011).

4.3.5 Public housing and *hukou* reform

The substantial transformations in the built environment facilitated by land financing and UIDCs were several policies of state equity. Proponents of the Chongqing Model saw these as redistributive measures which would provide concrete benefits to those typically disadvantaged by neoliberal urban policies (Cui, 2012b; 2011; Huang, P.C.C., 2011; Li, X., 2011). The most significant of these equitable policies were the construction of an unprecedented quantity of state-owned public housing and the reform of the *hukou* system of household registration.

These supposedly equitable aspects of Chongqing's urban restructuring are given more attention here, as they are further interrogated in chapter 5 and closely related to the ethnographic material of chapters 6 and 7. These reforms were explicitly portrayed as being for the benefit of rural-urban migrants: *hukou* reform would make it easier for migrants to transfer their residency status from 'rural' to 'urban' and gain access to the social welfare granted to urban residents. Public housing would provide a state-subsidised place to live, preventing migrants from being forced to occupy informal and inadequate residences such as 'urban villages'. In this way, these policies sought to address the inequalities emerging from the basic contradictions of the neoliberal elements of the state entrepreneurial model Chinese cities had pursued since reform: the exclusion of migrant workers from accessing urban services (Ngai and Chan, 2012; Chan and Ngai, 2009) and the housing inequalities generated by commodification of land and property (Logan et al., 1999; Huang, Y., 2012; Wu, F., 2016b, 1996).

These policies were thus interpreted by some as offering a serious leftist alternative which marked a decisive break with the logics of neoliberalism (Wang, S., 2011). David Harvey (2012) wrote that Chongqing's public housing policy in particular showed 'a purportedly radical shift away from market-based policies back onto a path of state-led socialist redistribution—backed, interestingly, by a great deal of Maoist-inspired rhetoric' which would 'reduce the spiralling social inequalities that have arisen over the last two decades' and act as 'an antidote to the private developer-led projects of gated communities for the rich' (p. 64). A closer examination of the realities of these policies reveals that their apparent radical egalitarian nature must be qualified, both as they existed on paper and in practice.

The reform of the *hukou* system manifested itself as an expanded quota for conversion of rural to urban registration. Whereas larger coastal cities placed strict limitations on the number of migrants able to convert status in a given year, the municipal government planned to allow the conversion of ten million migrant *hukou* statuses with reduced fees by 2020. These required migrants to prove they had stable residency, 5 years' employment history in the city, and had paid into the urban pension scheme for 1 year (Zhou, J., 2018). Those converting *hukou* status were expected to be migrants from the rural hinterland of Chongqing already resident in the city proper, so as an added incentive they were allowed to retain property rights over agricultural land in their hometown for three years after conversion (Huang, P.C.C., 2011).

Nonetheless Chongqing (like many other inland cities) has struggled to attract migrants to fill these quotas, with many preferring to retain rural *hukou* status and live informally in the city (Chen and Fan, 2016). Lin and Song (2013) found one third of 'urbanised' migrants in Chongqing earned less than they had as informal migrants and 40% lived in poverty. Smith (2014b) discovered that migrants in Chongqing were reluctant to convert status due to distrust of urban government, reliance on informal rural networks of mutual aid and a perception that owning agrarian land constituted a better 'safety net' than reliance on urban welfare.

The construction of public housing has been more widely cited as demonstrating the egalitarian intent of Chongqing Model but assessments such as Harvey's (2012) brief overview reveal little insight into the actual mechanics of the policy.[36] The public housing constructed in Chongqing was 'public rental housing' (*gongzufang*), a relatively new

[36] For example see Zakharzhevskaya (2017), Goldstein (2012), and Chambers (2017). Vukovich (2018) offers a more contextualized perspective which highlights the strategic importance of what Chongqing's public housing provision demonstrates about the state in China: namely that it still has the power to act in redistributive, socialist ways.

form of state-supplied housing welfare introduced by national law in 2008. Chongqing's announcement of a program of public housing construction in 2010 remains the largest investment in this new housing form in China, and has often been seen to compare favourably to other cities (Zhou, J. and Ronald, 2017). To understand this policy, however, it has to be placed in the context of housing difficulties inherited from the demise of the socialist housing system just twenty years previously.

At a national level, public housing was intended specifically to cater to the needs of a so-called 'sandwich class' (*jiaxinceng*). As Ying et al. (2013) describe, this term 'refers to the lower middle class that is 'sandwiched' between the poor masses and a small number that make up the affluent population', specifically 'households whose income is beyond the eligibility threshold of any public assistance, but there is no room for them to purchase a decent home at full price' (p. 1871). The term thus applied to many of the lower-middle classes who had suffered from increased housing inequality, but not to the urban poor and migrant workers of the 'poor masses' necessarily.

The demolition of the socialist *danwei*-based housing system has drastically increased housing inequality in urban China since the 1990s (Wu, F., 2010b, 1996; Logan et al., 1999; Wang, Y.P., 2004; Yang et al., 2014). Often this inequality has cleaved towards the lines drawn by *hukou* status, with rural migrants being forced to seek accommodation in informal 'villages in the city' (Wang, Y.P. et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2009; Wu, F. et al., 2013). Housing inequality has also increased amongst urban *hukou*-holders, as commodity housing has become the norm, leading to a retrenchment of differentiation that Zhang, L. (2010) describes 'the spatialisation of class' (see also Pow, 2007; Fleischer, 2010; Tomba, 2014).

The state introduced limited forms of state-subsidised housing in the 1990s, but the efficacy of these forms was restricted because they were restricted to those with urban *hukou* status, built only in small numbers, and often subject to rent-seeking behaviour by local authorities and middle-class tenants who sought to profit from them (Huang, Y., 2012; Tomba, 2014).[37] Evidently, the urban housing market after socialism did not just disadvantage a 'sandwich class' caught between state welfare and purchase of commodity

[37] Low-rent housing (*lianzufang*) was introduced in 1994. It is housing owned by the local state, rented at an extremely low cost to the very low-income urban *hukou* holders. Often the housing stock is old communal housing. It was abolished and merged with public housing in 2014. Affordable housing (*jingji shiyong fang*) was introduced in 1998 as a mechanism which required private developers to construct cheap homes which would only be purchasable by means-tested groups. In practice, both of these forms have been troubled by severe shortages motivated by the land financing system (Cao et al., 2008; Yao et al., 2014). Moreover, Tomba's (2014) ethnography of housing provision discovered endemic corruption in the allocation of affordable housing, which was commonly occupied by those with connections to the local state or by developers who already owned property elsewhere.

housing, but was troubled by under-supply of state-subsidised housing generally and the near total exclusion of migrant populations from any form of housing security.

Initially, the Chongqing Model's public housing policy sought directly to redress this issue. Unlike other forms of state-subsidised housing, public housing in Chongqing would be accessible to urban and rural *hukou* status alike. Regulations were intended to prevent better-off citizens from occupying public housing: applicants would have to have a household income of below 2,000-1,500 yuan per person per month, and must not own other property within the city (CQMP, 2010/05/25 p. 3). This compared extremely favourably to other forms of state-subsidised housing available in Chongqing at the time.

Chongqing thus adopted an expanded definition of the sandwich class which included migrant workers (Long, 2010). Huang Qifan claimed that the sandwich class in Chongqing consisted of 'the new generation of urban residents, recent university graduates and migrant workers' (quoted in Li, Z., 2011), and other academic accounts repeated this expanded definition, stating that 50% of tenants would be migrants (Liu, J. et al., 2017; Zhang, Z., 2011). In chapter 5 I describe how the construction of public housing was accompanied by a propaganda campaign which portrayed migrant workers as the chief beneficiaries, and as an instantiation of a radical vision of spatial justice.

In practice, the implementation of public housing has not realised this vision. In chapter 6, I describe in detail the shortcomings of the actual use of public housing: regulations were subsequently relaxed to allow wealthier residents to occupy apartments, units were used as dorms rented out to neighbouring factories, and some middle-class tenants occupied apartments under false pretences while owning property elsewhere. Based on discussion with local academics and planners, it appears likely this change was due to fears that Chongqing's public housing would become a 'slum' (*pinminkun*). Early studies showed upwards of 40% tenants were unemployed, and 80% fell below the average income levels in the city at the time (Kaifeng Foundation, 2011; Gan et al., 2016b). There was a perception that encouraging a 'social mix' of wealthier tenants in public housing would help to incorporate migrants into the urban economy and thus 'serve the goal of absorbing migrants who will be conducive to enhancing domestic consumption and demand' (Zhou, J., 2018, p. 10). The findings from Dazhulin which I present in chapter 6 problematise this image.

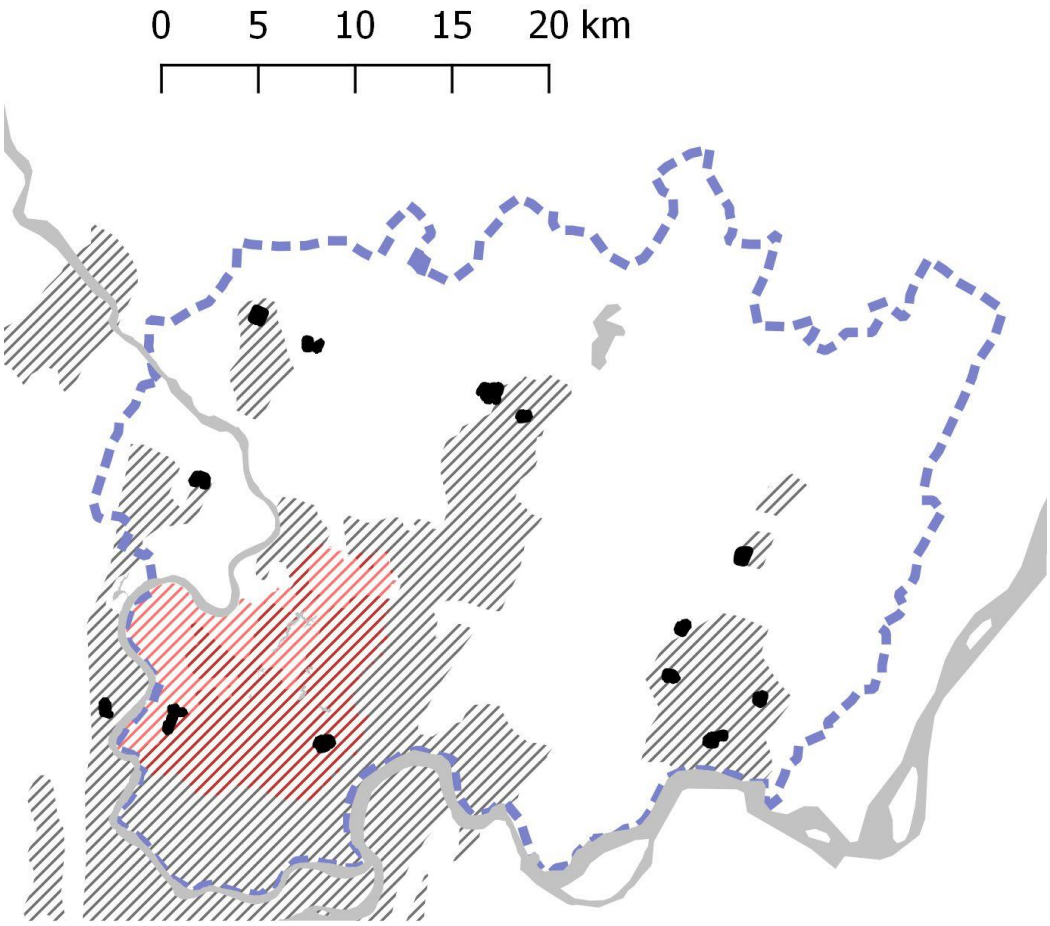

Figure 10: Public housing estates (black) in northern Chongqing, in relation to the extent of urban development in 2016. Red hatching indicates the New North Zone (est. 2000), the blue dashes show the limits of LJNA (est. 2010). Source: author, using data from Liangjiang New Area Land Registry.

Public housing construction has been slow, and generated significant debt in the process (Zhou, J. and Ronald, 2017). The first two public housing estates were built relatively close to existing infrastructure, but subsequent construction tended to be in remote and peripheral sites where employment options and transport facilities were severely limited (See Figure 10). Public housing has been constructed in concert with local manufacturing concerns, often acting as workers dormitories for industrial parks. One such example is the public housing constructed at Longxing Industrial Park. 117,000 square metres of new public housing (amounting to 1,296 houses) was transferred directly to the control of the neighbouring automobile factory in March 2017. The Chongqing Daily reported that this new form of 'company-oriented public housing' (*xigongsi dingxiang peitao gongzufang*) represented a significant innovation in public housing design, with apartments constructed based on the needs of migrant industrial workers, meaning they would only have to walk five minutes from their housing to the factory next door (Chen, Jun, 2017).

Lim (2014; 2019) offers a detailed assessment of the rationale of *hukou* reform and public housing in Chongqing. He argues that the integrated market-state approach initiated in Chongqing problematized any model which viewed state and market as fundamentally opposed—rather, they demonstrate how the state utilises UIDCs to deepen market reforms. As he writes, 'the very raison d'etre of [Chongqing's] rural-urban integration is to facilitate socio-spatial absorption of peasant migrant workers that would in turn support the incoming industries' (2019, p. 191). Lim thus concludes that 'the overarching objective of the Chongqing reforms is more accurately to perpetuate and proliferate market exchange without exacerbating the socio-spatial inequality that already exists at the national scale.' (2014, p. 475). This was supports the observation of the CEO of Foxconn that the public housing policy essentially transferred the cost of housing workers from the private sector to the state, allowing manufacturing enterprises to keep wages low. These observations illustrate the extent to which the supposedly equitable reforms of the Chongqing Model were chiefly geared towards pursuing state entrepreneurialism, and intended to facilitate the commodification of state-owned land and migrant labour.

4.3.6 'The people follow industry, and the price of land follows them'

From this analysis of the policies associated with the Chongqing Model, there are several important points to draw out. The most important is my argument that when viewed longitudinally—as a programme of urban policy implemented as part of a strategy of urban restructuring over more than a decade—it is necessary to qualify the apparent radical nature of Chongqing's economic policy. This can be illustrated by separating the urban policy of the Chongqing Project from the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream. The apparently equitable elements of the Chongqing Model must be placed in the context of a broader and more sustained move to pursue a path of state entrepreneurial urbanism which deepened marketisation of land and labour. Viewed in this context, we must question the extent to which the Chongqing Model marked a distinct break from the neoliberal tendencies of state entrepreneurial urbanism as its advocates suggested (Wang, S., 2011; Cui, 2011; Harvey, 2012).

To explicate this point in more detail, it is necessary to stress that the great majority of policies of the Chongqing Model were not unique. The use of UIDCs, the establishment of a land financing system with an extensive state-owned land reserve, and the creation of the LJNA were all archetypal characteristics of state entrepreneurial urbanism which sought to attract international finance and realise the commodity value of land and labour.

The fact that a small proportion of the dividends of this commodification were used to pursue more equitable ends does not constitute a meaningful break. Moreover, the implementation of the equitable projects of *hukou* reform and public housing construction had shortcomings, and was problematised by the same contradictions between the rights assigned to rural and urban land and labour. This does not negate the extent to which these policies represented a more equitable use of public funds, but it would be a mistake to view any of these elements as a radical break from state entrepreneurial urbanism. These are important points to carry forwards to chapters 6 and 7. The remainder of this chapter will examine how these policies were manifested in space and created the fragmented landscape of Dazhulin which formed my principal fieldsite.

4.4 Locating Dazhulin in the periphery

4.4.1 Restructuring the northern periphery

In this section I trace the development of the northern periphery of Chongqing from the early 2000s through to 2016, in light of the changing policies outlined above. In tracing the changing use of land, I move focus from policy in the abstract to the actual re-ordering of space and re-structuring of political economy which took place in Chongqing. I examine three waves of development (expropriation, investment, and leasing). I argue that the piecemeal urbanisation of the northern periphery created a fragmented environment in Dazhulin, combining urban and rural forms in a peri-urban environment.

Urbanisation of the northern periphery initially proceeded through the creation of the New North Zone (NNZ), a sub-municipal authority which preceded the creation of LJNA and incorporated Dazhulin. The NNZ was established in December 2000, covering an area of 158 km^2 to the north of the main city (see Figure 6). In the early 2000s the northern periphery of Chongqing encompassed several industrial townships and more developed areas adjacent to the airport to the northwest, but was mostly agrarian land farmed by villages.[38] According to the 2007 master plan, this area would provide residential suburbs from the main city as well as significant industrial space (which would later be incorporated into the industrial strategy of the LJNA) and small commercial zones (Figure 11).

[38] In 2001 the territory covered by the NNZ extended over seven township-level settlements (*xiang*): Yuanyang, Renhe, Dazhulin, Lianglu, Huixing, Yuelai and Lijia. Each township was surrounded by small villages (*cun*) under their administrative purview.

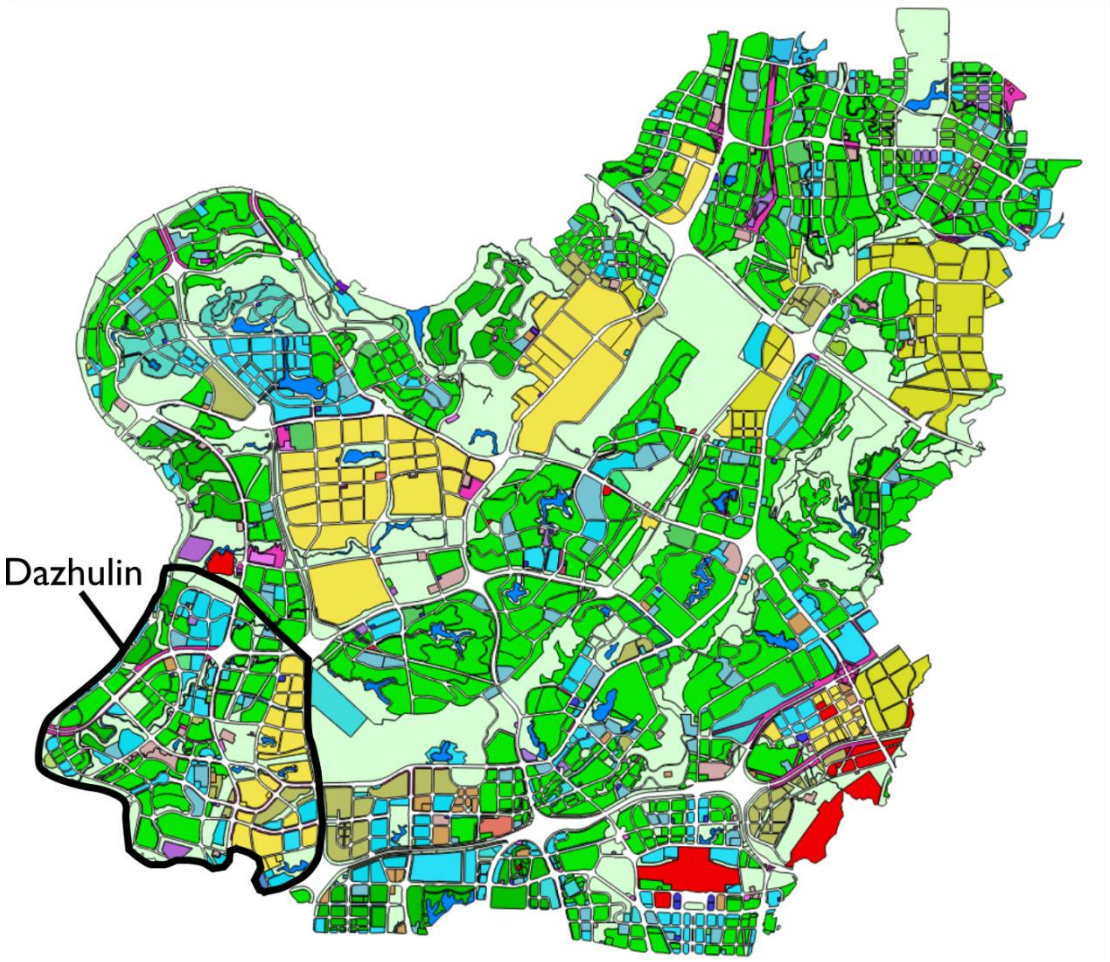

Figure 11: Planning of the northern periphery of Chongqing according to 2007 master plan. Green: residential use; pale green: parkland; yellow: industrial; light blue: commercial. Source: Liangjiang New Area land registry.

The land covered by the NNZ was expropriated by the municipal government on a piecemeal basis, proceeding roughly from the south-east to north-west of the zone between 2001 and 2010 (Figure 12). Villagers were 'urbanised', given urban *hukou* status and awarded compensation in the form of resettlement housing (*anzhifang*).

After 2007 there was significant infrastructure investment in the area by UIDCs, outfitting the NNZ with a new highway system and light rail infrastructure, in addition to electricity, gas, water and communications connections. The establishment of LJNA in 2010 led to the development of industrial parks, and the construction of public housing. The first two flagship public housing estates were founded Yuyuan and Dazhulin subdistricts in 2010.[39]

[39] Minxin Jiayuan ('people's heart garden') Kangzhuang Meidi ('healthy village, beautiful land'). Minxin Jiayuan would be the flagship public housing site, located close to existing infrastructure in Yubei district and surrounded by established urban neighbourhoods and nearby commercial zones. Kangzhuang Meidi would was established in the peripheral Dazhulin district, which had only been formally urbanised a few years prior. At the time, Dazhulin's only inhabitants were the residents of the resettlement housing nearby who had farmed the land or worked in the old township until the mid-2000s. All subsequent public housing estates would be constructed in much more remote districts (see Figure 10).

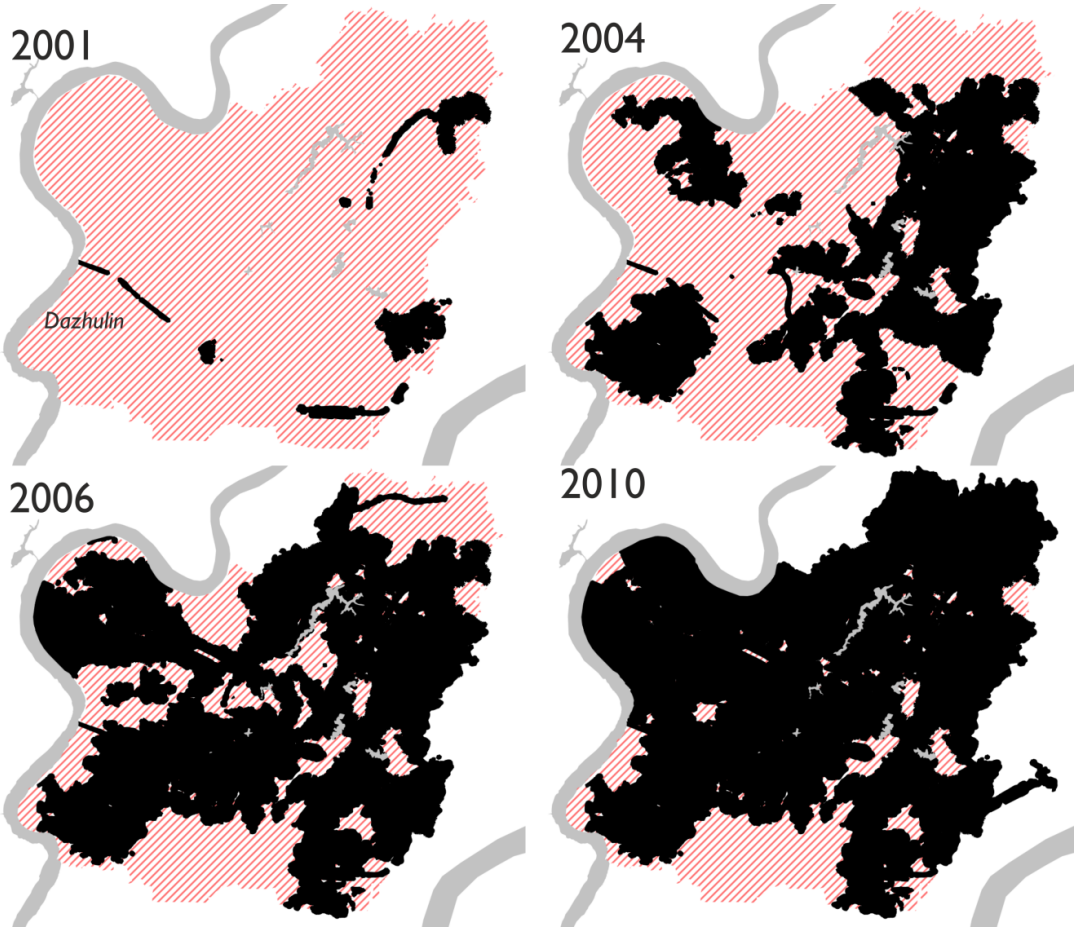

Figure 12: Expropriation of land from 2001 to 2010. Source: author, using data from Liangjiang New Area land registry.

The state's marketisation of land likewise developed roughly from south-east to north-west, only reaching Dazhulin around 2012 (Figure 13). The value of state-owned land was raised by the infrastructure investment provided by UIDCs, and then leased to private developers. However, this process was slow, and many areas of land remained undeveloped. Many developers leased land, but then delayed construction as they waited for house prices to rise. When I first visited this area in 2015 there were few finished commodity housing estates, and much of the land in the north of the NNZ had not yet been built upon and still retained its rural character.

This began to change in 2016 when Chongqing underwent a minor property boom, as investors from coastal cities began to look inland to Chongqing as a potential site of property speculation (Yang, H., 2017; Sito and Li, 2017). Developers who had already leased land in Dazhulin and elsewhere on the northern periphery rushed construction to meet this new demand (fieldnotes March 2017).[40] As a result, the landscape was

[40] The volume of homes sold in Chongqing increased by over 50% from an average of 14,562 per month in 2015 to 27,538 per month in 2016 (WIND financial data). The price of housing in Chongqing had been relatively stable since 2011, but jumped 24% in 2017 (Chongqing Statistical Yearbook). While the state introduced a number of measures to control housing prices and limit speculation (see Shepherd, 2016), this

transformed from one which appeared largely rural (despite being formally 'urban' for over ten years) into that of an emerging luxury suburb. Construction of new roads and parks accompanied units of single-occupancy 'mansions' (*bieshu*) and high-rise luxury flats backed by nationally renowned high-end property developers (Daiqin, 2016).

These three waves of urbanisation (expropriation, investment, leasing) had begun the transformation of Chongqing's northern periphery into a fully urbanised zone. However, as the example of Dazhulin demonstrates, this process was unfinished and had created a fragmented landscape of mixed rural and urban forms.

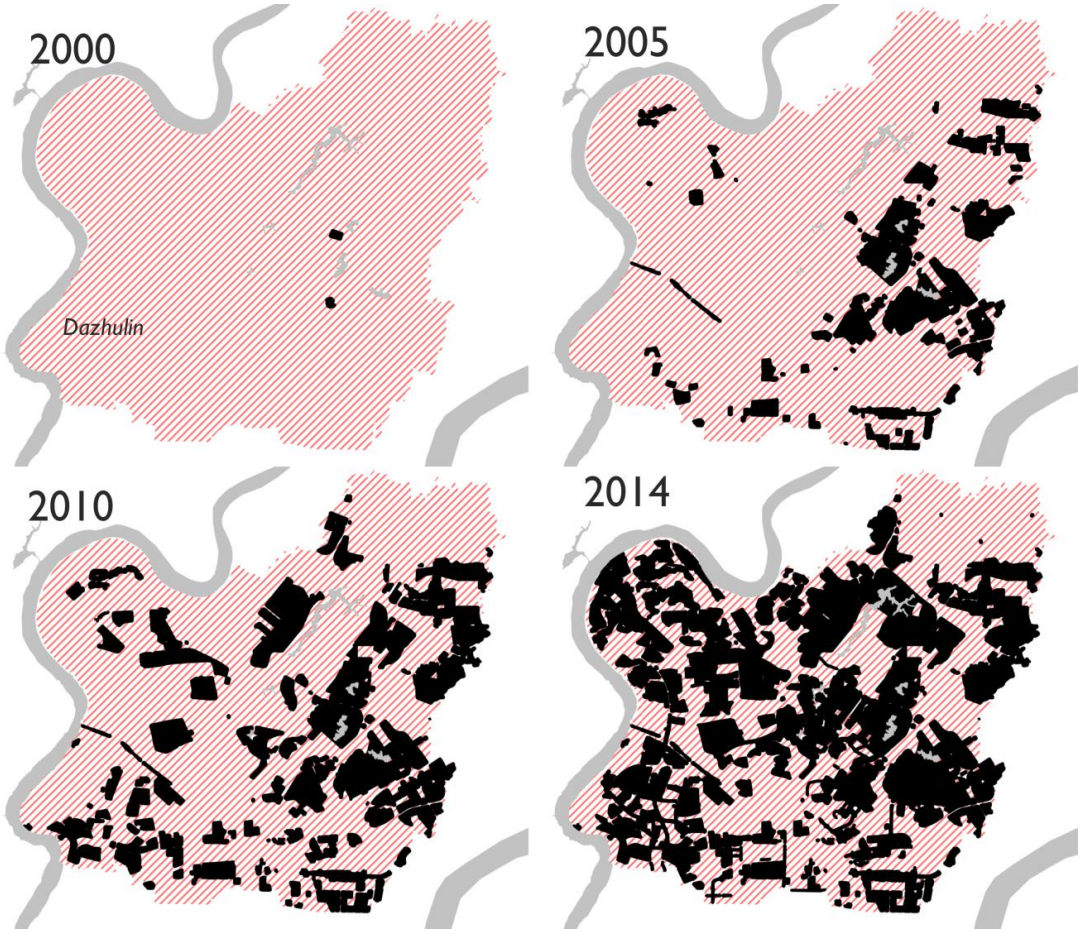

Figure 13: Land leased to developers from 2000 to 2014. Source: author, using data from Liangjiang New Area Land Registry.

minor property boom proved timely for the developers in NNZ looking to capitalise on the land they had already leased.

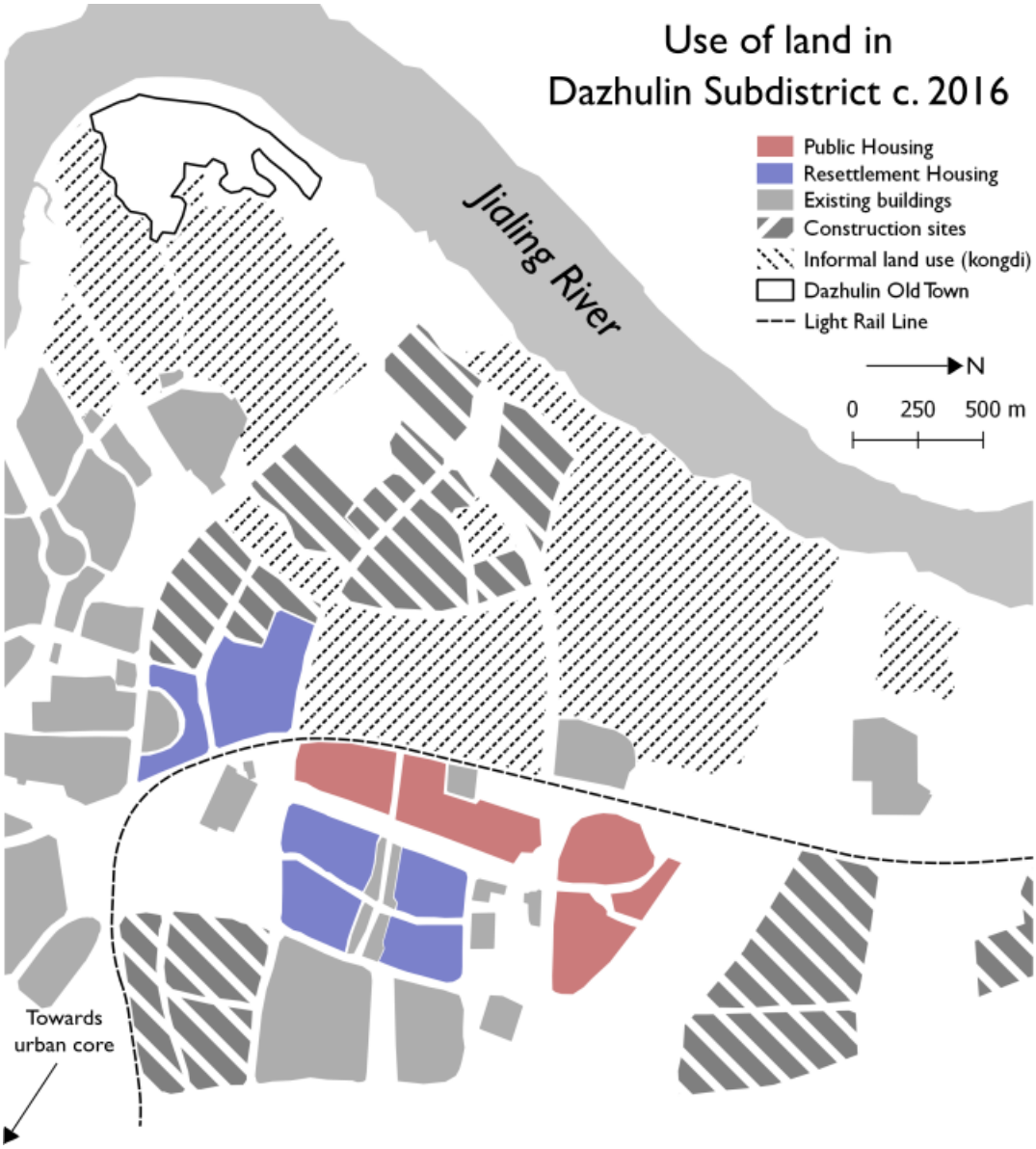

Figure 14: Use of land in Dazhulin in 2016. Source: author.

4.4.2 It all comes together in Dazhulin

The subdistrict of Dazhulin lies in the bend of the Jialing River, on the western edge of the peripheral area covered by LJNA. Prior to urbanisation it consisted of a small industrial township on the shores of the river (labelled Dazhulin Old Town in Figure 14) and an extensive hinterland of small villages and farms.[42] Over ten years the area went from being a largely rural township to a peripheral zone of mixed rural and urban forms, following the three waves of development laid out above.

In 2003 all agrarian land and rural residential land in Dazhulin was expropriated by the municipal state and added to the state-owned land reserve. Between 2006 and 2008

[42] The main employer in Dazhulin was Chongqing No. 2 Brick and Tile Factory, a state-owned enterprise which expanded in the 1980s like many town and village enterprises (see Naughton, 1994).

the inhabitants of Dazhulin were given urban *hukou* status and re-housed in low-rise resettlement housing (see Figure 16a & 16b). These displaced and 'urbanised' villagers were given subsidies to set up small businesses, but many of those that I met during my fieldwork were economically reliant on state welfare (*dibao*) or renting out property. The area had continued to change in the decade since the resettlement housing was created, with an influx of commercial restaurants and supermarkets taking business from the smaller restaurants and shops (fieldnotes, July 2016).

The urban infrastructure investment facilitated by the creation of LJNA in 2010 had accelerated this change. Across the road from the resettlement housing Chongqing's second largest public housing estate had been constructed. This housing estate was named 'Kangzhuang Meidi' and provided 1.2 million square metres of subsidised living space (see Figure 17). Around the same time a new light rail line had linked Dazhulin to the urban core. By the time I first visited Dazhulin, the built-up area around the public housing appeared to have all the amenities of an urban zone: international chain restaurants, convenience stores and supermarkets lined the large plaza where the older generation of public housing tenants gathered to dance in the evening. The light railway was full of public housing tenants commuting into the city, and privately-owned expensive cars lined the street (fieldnotes, July-August 2016).

Most of the remaining undeveloped land in Dazhulin had been leased to private developers in 2012, but construction was slow and there were relatively few completed commodity housing estates in the area (Liangjiang New Area land registry). This began to change over the course of my fieldwork, as Dazhulin became the focus of the city's next round of real estate speculation (Figure 15). In 2015 three leading property developers announced investment exceeding 7 billion yuan into luxury developments in Dazhulin (Fangtianxia, 2017).[43] During my fieldwork more and more property showrooms appeared, attracting the middle-classes of Chongqing (and further afield) to Dazhulin to purchase apartments in the new developments (Figure 18). Outside the light rail station young men and women holding flyers advertising new property developments in the area mobbed anyone getting off the train, promising to bundle them in a taxi and take them directly to a showroom so that they could pre-purchase an apartment.

[43] One real estate commentary stated that 'in 2015, the development of several plots of land was launched with the encouragement of the state. On June 29th, Dongyuan Real Estate joined up with Xu Hui to invest 2.329 billion yuan in Dazhulin. On July 14th, Longhu invested a further 2.44 billion yuan in Dazhulin, and Jinke followed with 2.432 billion yuan. […] Today we can see that Dazhulin will gradually become the core area of the next stage of Chongqing's development'. (Fangtianxia, 2017)

Despite this, large amounts of nominally 'urban' land in Dazhulin remained undeveloped. Approximately a third of the land in the subdistrict had seen no dramatic change in use over the preceding decade, and was used for informal practices (mostly agriculture) by nearby residents. If one stood in the light rail station at the centre of Dazhulin and looked to the east once could see the high rises of the public housing and the lights of cinemas, karaoke bars, supermarkets; looking to the east, the view was of green fields, bamboo thickets, farmers tending crops, while construction sites sprouted on the horizon (Figure 19). The city had still not yet fully arrived.

Walking around Dazhulin it was apparent that the fragmented landscape reflected the successive waves of state and market intervention that had taken place in the course of Chongqing's urban restructuring. In the process Dazhulin saw massive dispossession of its original rural population, the construction of public housing and state infrastructure as a form of state redistribution, and the bringing of state-owned land to market as it was leased to private developers—moreover this had all taken space within fifteen years. The dramatic nature of this change did not mean the transformation had been complete, and indeed had produced unevenness: parts of the subdistrict that appeared to have become fully integrated into the city and came close to embodying the urban modernity promised by urbanisation; other areas seemed to be remnants of a rural past which had not yet fully disappeared, but had lingered into the present in the spaces overlooked by development. Dazhulin was a landscape of half-formed shapes, incomplete projects, shifting absences and presences. By describing Dazhulin as a periphery I mean to capture the transience of this development. The fragmentary landscape that was apparent in Dazhulin during my fieldwork was typical of the northern periphery of Chongqing, and reflected the manifestation in space of the model of land finance-driven state entrepreneurial urbanisation adopted by the municipal government since the year 2000.

Figure 15: Update on the housing market in Dazhulin received via WeChat, January 2018. "The houses over there [increase emoji]". Source: author.

Figure 16a and 16b: Low-rise resettlement housing in Dazhulin. Source: author.

Figure 17: Public housing in Dazhulin. Source: author.

Figure 18: Commodity housing developments in Dazhulin. Source: author.

Figure 19: Undeveloped land in Dazhulin as viewed from the light rail station. Source: author.

Figure 20: The fragmented peripheral landscape of Dazhulin: resettlement housing in the foreground, public housing on the right, commodity housing construction on the left, informally farmed undeveloped land in the middle. Source: author.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described and critiqued the political economy of urban restructuring in Chongqing since 2000, and examined how this restructuring manifested in space. In doing so it lays the groundwork for chapter 5, which will examine the discourse and aesthetics which accompanied these changes. It also provides essential background for the ethnographic material discussed in chapters 6 and 7, in which I examine how the residents of Dazhulin responded to these changes. In the process I have made an argument in two parts: firstly, that when viewed in the context of longitudinal urban restructuring, the egalitarian content of Chongqing's urban policies must be limited—the approach taken by Chongqing in this period represented a slightly more progressive iteration of the state entrepreneurialism pursued elsewhere in China. Rather than marking a clear break with state entrepreneurialism, Chongqing's urbanisation displayed the same contradictions instantiated in the urban-rural divide, and relied on similar processes of exploiting migrant labour and commodifying rural land. Secondly, I argued that the piecemeal nature of this urban restructuring resulted in a fragmented landscape on the urban periphery. This was particularly apparent in Dazhulin, which showed evidence of three successive waves of urban intervention, resulting in an environment which blended urban and rural forms.

In the first half of this chapter I analysed the urban policy of the Chongqing Project (which I delineate from the discourse of the 'Chongqing Dream'), while in the latter half I sought to animate how these policies manifested in changing space of Dazhulin since 2000. In doing so I highlighted the extent to which the equitable policies pursued by Chongqing actually served to facilitate continued urban restructuring and the marketisation of land and labour. The construction of public housing and the reform of the *hukou* system can be interpreted as another form of state intervention designed to attract capital with cheap labour and raise the value of expropriated land. Just as other UIDCs supplied the periphery of Chongqing with energy and transport infrastructure, the construction of public housing supplied it with cheap labour. Any claim that the Chongqing Model represented a direct refutation of the neoliberal tendencies of state entrepreneurialism—let alone a return to socialism—must be questioned in this context.[44]

[44] My aim in critiquing the political economy of the Chongqing Model's egalitarian claims is certainly not to dismiss them altogether, or the aspiration of a more equitable urban settlement, but to stress that when viewed from an urban perspective the limitations of such claims are apparent. Chongqing's urban restructuring should certainly not be regarded as a break with state entrepreneurial urbanism or neoliberal policy tendencies more broadly, and reproduces the same contradictions and inequalities as elsewhere in China. If Chongqing's political economy over this period does represent a marginally more progressive use of state funds in the face of deepening marketisation, then the question is to what extent this represents the

This is important to later chapters, where I look at how these policies were represented in state discourse, and the reality of their implementation in Dazhulin.

The second half of this chapter examined how these changes manifested in Dazhulin. The northern periphery of Chongqing was envisioned as a 'blank sheet of paper' into which the city could expand, and through three successive waves of urbanisation the area was partially urbanised, resulting in a fragmentary landscape. An important conclusion to bring forwards into later chapters is the relationship between the political economy of urbanisation and the landscape in Dazhulin. While development had proceeded rapidly, the persistent contradictions in the state entrepreneurial pattern of urbanism were manifested in a highly differentiated landscape. The resulting peripheral environment is a fragmentary blending of forms which we might typically consider distinctly urban and rural, combined with a growing social differentiation as previously public land was leased to private developers: high rise public housing, luxury suburban apartments, industrial zones, existing in close proximity with large tracts of state-owned land reserve, the majority of which were still informally farmed (Figure 20). Chapters 6 and 7 will investigate the resulting social and spatial formations of Dazhulin. Prior to that, chapter 5 investigates how this transformation of the physical space of Chongqing was accompanied by a transformation of its urban imaginary as portrayed in official discourse.

pragmatic limits of a leftist politics in an authoritarian state. That question, thankfully, lies outside the scope of this thesis.

5. Red Hyperbuilding: The Chongqing Model as urban imaginary

> *Chongqing, a historical city with three thousand years of culture and civilisation, is now playing out the soaring rhythm of a modern metropolis on a daily basis, and every day creating new wonders and miracles. To live in the mountain city of "Old Chongqing" these days is to be confronted with surprises both strange and familiar. Every time you step out of the house you find that the sediment of decades of memory has been replaced with modern architecture and all the fully-formed amenities of a metropolis.*
>
> Chongqing and the World magazine, 2006/09 p. 3

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the urban imaginary which the state promoted alongside the urban restructuring of Chongqing between the early 2000s and the mid-2010s. I make two arguments about how the municipal state sought to articulate a vision of urban modernity for Chongqing. First I argue that this urban imaginary served to justify urban restructuring by mobilising a dissonant and often contradictory mix of capitalist, socialist and Maoist images of urban modernity. Then I argue that this restructuring of Chongqing's urban imaginary was nonetheless meaningful, because it responded to the inequalities associated with Chongqing's peripheral relationship to modernity during the post-reform period. This was because it imagined an alternative vision of urban modernity premised on spatial justice. The urban imaginary of the Chongqing Model envisioned Chongqing as moving from the periphery to the core of urban modernity, and creating a more egalitarian urban modernity as it did so.

This chapter excavates how official discourse and propaganda associated with the Chongqing Model sought to re-imagine the city itself. It builds on chapter 4 to illustrate how the extensive urban restructuring of Chongqing was presented to those living through it. It identifies several 'protocols' at work in this re-imagining of the city. These protocols acted as metaphors to justify the urban restructuring described in the previous chapter. This chapter thus addresses the Chongqing Model as a kind of popular mythology, treating it as a narrative which could give meaning to the urban restructuring described in the previous chapter. Whereas chapter 4 was concerned with the urban policy of the Chongqing Project, this chapter explores the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream.

It further demonstrates the importance of public housing construction on the periphery of Chongqing in the imaginary of urbanisation, which leads into the subsequent chapter's examination of the reality of this housing.

This chapter begins by discussing the discourses and aesthetics of urbanisation in Asia and related urban imaginaries focusing on Aihwa Ong's (2011) term 'hyperbuilding'. It discusses the imaginary of underdevelopment by which Chongqing was perceived to be a space on the periphery of China's post-reform urban modernity which 'lagged behind' coastal cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. I then describe the protocols of the Chongqing Model, first giving an overview of the 'Five Chongqings' Bo Xilai pledged to construct, before then examining how protocols of acceleration, Red Culture and spatial justice were deployed to justify urban restructuring. In the concluding section this chapter argues that these protocols illustrate contradictory and dissonant visions for the city, characterised by engagement with global capital and heightened consumption but also a radical redistributive agenda. This agenda was represented by the policy of public housing construction, which was portrayed as producing spatial justice on the periphery of the city. Most importantly, these visions represented Chongqing as a place providing an *alternative to* the inequalities typical of post-reform state entrepreneurialism. This proved widely popular with the poorer residents of Chongqing, even if not borne out by the reality of policy.

The findings of this chapter contribute an urban perspective to the emerging scholarship on the Chongqing Model, which hitherto has emphasised the politics of government rather than the popular imaginaries and propaganda of the city. The story of Chongqing's urban imaginary of an egalitarian city resisting neoliberal policy also contributes to the urban studies literature on 'worlding cities', urban futures and fantasies. Unlike other visions of the future of the city, the local state in Chongqing imagined a city which was explicitly *alternative to* neoliberal narratives, and articulated through imagery of spatial justice.

5.2 Discourses and aesthetics of hyperbuilding

In this chapter I carry forwards the distinction established in chapter 4 (4.2) between the *Chongqing Project* (referring to the extended period of urbanisation after the early-2000s to characterised by a local state entrepreneurialism) and the *Chongqing Dream*, by which I refer to the particular modes of state propaganda, official discourse and urban spectacle that took place during Bo Xilai's leadership (2007-2012). The Chongqing

Dream is a project of aesthetic and discursive urbanism, concerned with constructing a new urban imaginary of Chongqing.

I understand the term urban imaginary to refer to 'the way city dwellers imagine their own city as the place of everyday life […] the cognitive and somatic image which we carry with us of the places where we live, work, and play' (Huyssen, 2008, p. 3). While this term was originally applied in the context of European cities and the 'imaginary' of history, in the Asian context it can be extended to talk about the way urban authorities try to imagine the urban *future* more generally. In China the imaginary of urban modernity has become increasingly central in the local state's policy intervention and self-image (Hsing, 2010). The imaginary of Chinese urbanisation is mediated through a discourse and aesthetics of the urban which stresses sweeping skyscrapers, urban order and an aspiration to closer integration into global networks of trade and communication. Often this imaginary has been dismissed as representing an abstract to a 'generic' world city status, an attitude which belies the more complex renegotiation of how the city is imagined through images, text and architecture (de Kloet and Scheen, 2013). Similar phenomena have been discussed as 'worlding' cities (Roy and Ong, 2011), anxious urbanisations (Kusno, 2010), urban spectacles (Huang, T. M., 2004), urban futures (Datta, 2018) and urban fantasies (Bhan, 2014) in other Asian contexts.

In this chapter I make use of the terminology of 'hyperbuilding' proposed by Aihwa Ong (2011). Hyperbuilding occurs when the city itself is used to 'play an aesthetic role in promoting future values and new political orientations' (p. 209). Hyperbuilding in this sense refers to the cultivation of future values and political orientations through spectacular urban aesthetics, characterised by inter-city competition, global ambition and real estate speculation.

> Hyperbuilding as a verb refers to the infrastructural enrichment of the urban landscape in order to generate speculations on the city's future. Hyperbuilding as a noun identifies a mega-state project that transforms a city into a global hyperspace. (p. 224)

Ong stresses that such projects, although trading in the aesthetic language of a global neoliberal urbanism, should not be understood simply to be symbols of global capitalism, but as grounded in local contexts. Hyperbuilding practices seek to transform the urban imaginary and speculate on the city's future, but do so in terms drawn from the locality as much as global capitalism. Ong discusses Rem Koolhaas's CCTV tower in Beijing as a hegemonic claim on 'the spectacular presence and power of Chinese sovereignty' (ibid, p. 208). Other instances of hyperbuilding in China might include the creation of 'eco-city'

projects (Hoffman, 2011; Caprotti et al., 2015), the 'pirated' skyline of Pudong (de Kloet and Scheen, 2013), the utopian satellite suburbs of Shanghai (Lin, Z., 2012), the theme-park-like mimicry of Western vernacular architecture (Bosker, 2013) and the representation of ethnic difference (Grant, 2018). The state's use of aesthetic and discursive projects in urban China has proved important as a 'technology of government' for local states to manage potentially unruly space (Oakes, 2017, p. 5).

The hyperbolic representations of Chongqing's urbanisation by its own municipal government are another example of hyperbuilding. As discussed previously, during Bo Xilai's leadership sections of the Chinese New Left believed that Chongqing's development represented an unprecedented new era of Chinese urbanisation which would restructure the global economy and redefine modernity (Cui, 2011; Wang, S., 2011; Li, X., 2011). These claims were matched by an equally vivid campaign of official propaganda and aesthetics in the city itself. Much of the content of this campaign was similar to the boosterism of other entrepreneurial cities seeking to attract investment (Wu, F., 2003). However, Chongqing's hyperbuilding diverged notably in the future values and political orientations it promoted. The Chongqing Dream portrayed urban restructuring as marking a political transformation and a return to the redistributive economics and radical egalitarian politics of the Maoist era. The Chongqing Dream established a 'myth' through which the city's changes could be interpreted and understood.[45] The spectacular portrayal of Chongqing as 'neo-Maoist' metropolis (Branigan, 2012) in the West helped bring its policies to the attention of a Western leftist audience. Within China, the municipality was portrayed as being implicitly opposed to the neoliberal tendencies of state entrepreneurialism in Shenzhen and other coastal cities (Mulvad, 2015).

Indeed, amongst the liberal civil society of China's cities there was a genuine fear that the Chongqing Model represented 'a reversal of the last thirty years' and a return to Maoism (Chen, Y., [2012] 2017). In particular, Bo Xilai's popularity and role as figurehead of the Chongqing Model was seen to indicate a return to a Maoist cult of personality. Eberlein (2012a) describes the continued support Bo received from the working classes of Chongqing after his imprisonment; this is something that I also encountered during my fieldwork. [46] Many of the poorer residents of Dazhulin viewed Bo Xilai as a friend of the 'ordinary people' (*laobaixing*) whose legacy had been betrayed by

[45] The hyperbuilding of Chongqing's urban imaginary can be understood as a 'myth' in the dual sense of the word employed Ferguson (1999) in his ethnography of Zambian modernities: a false belief which has become widespread, and a narrative which seeks to assign meaning to experience (p. 13).
[46] Notably, one of the anonymous academics interviewed by Eberlein claims that 'the poor don't know that Bo looks down on them in his bones' (p. 2)

subsequent leaders of the municipality. This occurred despite the continued vilification of Bo in official media, and the censorship of positive coverage of him and his slogans from the internet. The 'myth' of the Chongqing Dream was evidently still widely popular and perceived to be successful. This is important to bear in mind in chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 4 established that there are many reasons to be sceptical about the extent to which Chongqing represented a meaningful break with the typical post-reform model of state entrepreneurialism and its tendencies to deepen marketisation and exacerbate inequality. Many of the academics and 'elites' who I spoke to while on fieldwork concurred with the assertion made by Bo Xilai's successor that 'the Chongqing Model never existed' (Zhang, D., 2012). In recent years a growing body of literature has analysed the ideological content of the Chongqing Model by tracing intellectual debates and differentiations between leftists, liberals, Maoists and Dengists (Mulvad, 2015; Lim, 2019; Lim, 2014; Downie, 2014; Cheng, J.Y.S., 2013; Vukovich, 2018).

I situate the analysis in this chapter by turning away from the abstraction of such debates, and focus instead on the historical and geographical situated-ness of Chongqing as a city, and the Chongqing Dream as an urban imaginary. From this position I argue that the Chongqing Dream was an example of hyperbuilding which responded to peripheral status of Chongqing, a city imagined as undeveloped and un-modern compared to coastal cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. This understanding builds upon the heuristic device of urban modernity established in chapter 2, examining how a vision of an urban future is negotiated within a rapidly changing city.

In order to explore the specific metaphors employed in the discourse and aesthetics of the Chongqing Dream, I distinguish different 'protocols' at work (Rojas and Litzinger, 2016).[47] The protocols of the Chongqing Dream fulfil the function of providing categories, meanings and metaphors through which the experience of urbanisation can be understood. They describe how the resident caught up in urban restructuring might be interpellated into the new narrative of the Chongqing's transformation. The protocols of the Chongqing Dream make explicit the promise of urban modernity which urban restructuring seeks to fulfil.

[47] 'Protocols' refer to the metaphors, narratives, aesthetic and discursive tactics by which people make sense of China's urban transformation: 'We approach economic development as the result not of a set of ineluctable historical imperatives (as imagined within Marxism) or deliberate economic strategies (as imagined within capitalism), but rather as discrete practices and procedures, or what we call here "protocols." The product of overlapping institutional strategies, political procedures, legal regulations, religious rituals, and everyday practices, these protocols are significant for their real-world implications as well as for the ways they may help shape a public imaginary'. (Rojas, 2016, pp. 6-7)

The text, images and video analysed in this chapter are drawn from a number of documentary sources, including academic commentary and popular discourse in Chongqing's daily newspapers (as described in 3.2.3). A particularly important text in this chapter is *The Chongqing Model* (Su et al., 2010), a book describing the political, economic and cultural logics which underpinned the municipal state's strategy.[48] In the absence of any comprehensive writing by Bo Xilai or Huang Qifan, this text has come to be regarded as a semi-official manifesto of the Chongqing Model (Cheng, J.Y.S., 2013) and so plays a central role in this chapter, alongside other 'popular' texts and images. I treat these sources as representing an insight into the official imaginary of the city but also the popular imaginary, following Cheek's (1998) observation that in China 'the party *is* civil society and its propaganda system *is* the public sphere' (p. 237).

5.3 The imaginary of underdevelopment

5.3.1 Chongqing and underdevelopment

In chapter 1 I gave a brief history of Chongqing and its relative underdevelopment in comparison to the advanced metropolises of China's coast. In chapter 2 I outlined how this corresponded to a broader geography of urban modernity after reform, which was imagined to be located in the wealthier and more urbanised coastal provinces, particularly around the Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta. This section extends this discussion to consider how Chongqing was imagined as a place on the periphery of urban modernity, perceived to be troubled by underdevelopment and 'lagging behind' cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. This provides important context for understanding the discursive terrain that the Chongqing Dream responded to. The Chongqing Dream sought to transform the city's urban imaginary, from a place on the periphery of urban modernity to a place capable of articulating a new vision of urban modernity.

The fact that I examine Chongqing's underdevelopment as a discourse of 'lagging behind' does not indicate that the relative underdevelopment of Chongqing was somehow immaterial or socially constructed. Disposable income for urban residents in Chongqing around 2010 was approximately half that of urban residents in Shanghai (Cai et al., 2012). For much of the reform period, the rural area surrounding Chongqing was one of the key areas from which migrant workers moved to the coastal factories of Shenzhen, seeking to escape rural poverty (e.g. 6.3.2). Much of the wealth concentrated in coastal cities (and

[48] The main author, Su Wei, was a professor of philosophy at the Municipal Party School where he headed the department for the Sinification of Marxist Philosophy and edited the journal 'Probe' (*tansuo*).

the material prosperity of the West) is premised on the persistence of an undervalued class of labourers drawn disproportionately from inland China (Li, M., 2009; Chan and Ngai, 2009; Zhao, Y., 1999; Chan, A., 1998). The desire for urban modernity and the drive to improve material conditions should not be understood as merely a function of developmental ideology, but it is nonetheless important to understand the protocols through which this desire is given urban shape and political form.

5.3.2 Lagging behind

Historical perceptions of Chongqing as a peripheral site of underdevelopment predate the uneven development of the twentieth century, and conform to a broader cultural geography of China. Dykstra (2014) recounts that the idea of Chongqing as city that was remote and perceptibly 'other' in relation to the coastal heartlands of Chinese culture dates back centuries, to pre-Qing Dynasty perceptions of Sichuan as a border province on the periphery of Chinese civilisation. McIsaac (2000) details the underdeveloped state of the city in the late 1930s when the government of the Republic of China was moved there in the face of advancing Japanese invasion. Shocked refugees from Shanghai described a city which appeared to consist of 'row after row of tumbledown inadequate old wooden rooms and grass shacks, leaning all over and askew. When new arrivals see this they wonder how Chongqing, the [largest] city in southwest China, can have fallen into such a state' (quoted in McIsaac, 2000, pp. 175-176).

Anxiety over the perception of Chongqing was reflected in contemporary discourse. Chongqing occupied an ambiguous place within the administrative and figurative hierarchy of Chinese cities. Because of its status as a directly controlled municipality, Chongqing occupied the same administrative tier as Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin. Yet in the eyes of many of its citizens it was still unable to shake the image of being an obscure inland river port. Residents of Chongqing seemed anxious that the city still had only a peripheral relationship to the urban modernity of the coastal provinces.

In July 2016 the Guangzhou-based magazine New Weekly (*xin zhoukan*) held a salon in the centre of Chongqing featuring visiting writers from other cities, as well as local journalists and academics. They discussed the concept of Chongqing as China's "nth" city—certainly not its first, second, third, or fourth city, but occupying the ambiguous position of "n". This metaphor implies a city undeniably important but difficult to understand, advanced in many ways but still 'backwards' and peripheral in many others. The ambiguity of Chongqing in the post-reform geography of China's modernity translated into a sense of civic anxiety over its status.

The fieldnotes of my early months in Chongqing are dotted with reflections which capture this sense of anxiety. One friend described how she had burst into tears when foreign visitors had described Chongqing as a place which was 'not a real city' and was more like the countryside than the city (fieldnotes, February 2017). There was a recurrent discourse of 'slowness' and 'backwardness' about Chongqing. This was often captured by the term 'lag' (*luohouxing*) which was frequently used to contrast the city to the slogan of 'Shenzhen speed' associated with the industry and commercial dynamism of the Pearl River Delta. Much of this discourse was typical of any 'second-tier' city in China: comparing Chongqing's GDP and house prices to those of other regional cities, bemoaning the city's lack of an international theme park, boasting of how the construction of subways was now proceeding more rapidly than in any coastal city. This is similar to the ambivalent and insecure space occupied by middle-class residents within the post-reform city (Zhang, L., 2010, p. 9), and was allayed by the construction of symbols of urban modernity through the city itself (Hsing, 2010). The background noise of my fieldwork was the buzzing anxiety of a second tier city trying to become suitably modern and urban.

A popular explanation for the reason that Chongqing 'lagged behind' was the topography of the city. Several of the friends I made during my first months in the city told me that Chongqing was too mountainous and uneven a place for 'normal' city to exist (fieldnotes, July 2016). The traditional layout of the Chinese administrative city as an ordered grid on a river plain could not be followed in Chongqing. A meme shared on WeChat compares the experience of travelling in Chongqing with that of nearby Chengdu (Figure 21). While Chengdu is depicted as a neatly ordered grid, a journey in Chongqing appears as an illogical mess, implying the doglegs, bridges, stepped alleyways and tunnels that anyone seeking to navigate the metropolis must contend with. As a result, prior to modernisation of the transport system the municipality was jokingly referred to as 'three day Chongqing' (*san tian Chongqing*) referring to the amount of time it could take to travel from one side to the other (Martinez, 2014).

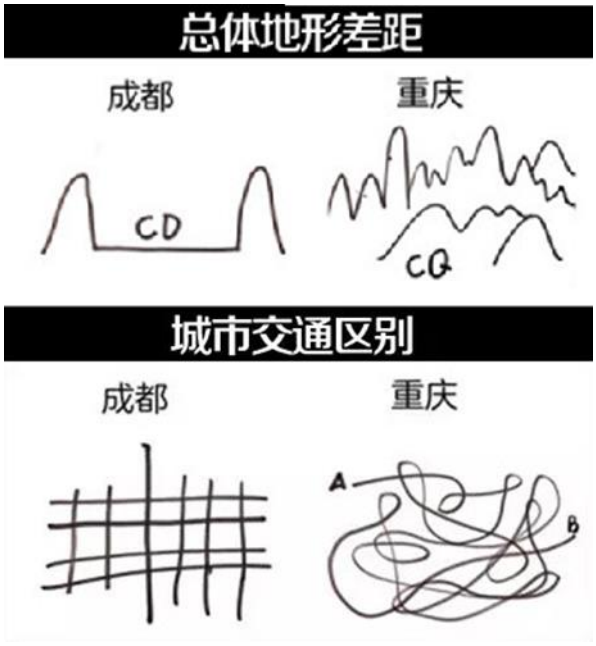

Figure 21: Meme shared on WeChat demonstrating the difference in topography and transport between Chengdu (left) and Chongqing (right). Source: WeChat.

As a result of this apparent lack of urban logic, Chongqing was seen to be characterised by the term *jianghu*. Although this word is commonly translated as 'wilderness' it conveys a complex cultural and social meaning derived from classical Chinese literature to convey a spirit of lawlessness and camaraderie formed in isolation from urban civilisation. *Jianghu* culture was repeatedly cited to me by friends and interviewees as an essential element of the character of Chongqing (e.g. A36, A46). The participants in the Modern Weekly salon discussed the term in relation to Chongqing at length, and it was used by used by participants to explain Chongqing's public housing and social culture more broadly. Li Shiqing (2014) has written about the concept in relation to his theory of the Chinese city:

> *Jianghu*, through the absence of care, is a place of self-sufficiency and a place for the possibilities of justice. Instead of a Western triad of utopia, dystopia and reality, it is a Chinese terra non grata. In its real and imagined forms, *jianghu* is on the one hand dangerous and filthy, on the other rewarding and enticing. (Li, 2014, p. 112)

Li argues that spaces of *jianghu* lie beyond city walls, so beyond the sedentary order of the urban. For Li, *jianghu* constitutes a form of deterritorialisation of place: a space of transition and disorder that rejects the Confucian social order of urban society, but in doing so rejects the niceties of the city for a more horizontal (yet less secure) ethic of social relations. The invocation of Chongqing as a space of *jianghu* clearly identifies it as a space with a peripheral relationship to the urban 'civilisation' of the coastal provinces.

5.3.3 Questionably modern, questionably urban

This brief discussion has served to demonstrate that there was a long-standing urban imaginary of Chongqing as a site on the periphery of urban modernity in China. In chapter 2 I recounted that postcolonial critiques of urban studies have argued that certain Western cities have been privileged in scholarly discourse as sites of urban modernity (Roy, 2009a; McFarlane, 2010) while cities beyond the West are seen as 'troubled by tradition', and thus atemporal, backwards, and languishing in a state of eternally deferred modernity (Robinson, 2006). In the case of Chongqing, the city is 'troubled' by a perception that it is lagging behind the urban modernity which is happening somewhere else—typically in the coastal cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou identified in the concatenated term Beishangguang.

Chongqing's urban imaginary as a peripheral city envisioned a place troubled by backwardness, underdevelopment and a state of *jianghu*—a place existing outside the order of urban civilisation. Tu Weiming (1991) described the imagined structure of the 'Sinosphere' in the late twentieth century as one in which the entrepôt metropolises of the coast were 'proudly marching towards an Asia-Pacific century, [while] the homeland remained mired in perpetual underdevelopment' (p. 12). Chongqing's status as peripheral to development can be seen as representing the underdevelopment and regional inequality of inland China more broadly.[49]

The importance of this urban imaginary lies in the context it provides for the Chongqing Dream. Chongqing is imagined as a city marginalised by the state entrepreneurialism and uneven development that emerged after reform. In this sense Chongqing could be seen as a symbol of the underdevelopment of Western China as a whole. The perception that Chongqing was 'lagging behind' the urban modernity of the coast provided the premise through which dramatic state intervention could be justified.

[49] This is the situation McIsaac (2000) describes during the Second World War, when coastal refugees arrived in a city they perceived to be a backwater river port: 'By reducing Chongqing's (and by extension China's) extraordinarily complex population into [coastal modernisers versus inland natives] and suggesting that together they represented the entire nation, wartime discourse on Chongqing helped to establish a dichotomous relationship between the "modernizing and westernizing" coast—represented by "downriver" refugees from cities such as Shanghai—and the "backwards" and "antimodern" interior—represented by prewar Chongqing.' (p. 190)

5.4 Protocols of the Chongqing Model

5.4.1 Introduction

In this section I discuss the official discourse of the local state in the Chongqing Dream. This builds on the previous section which established a popular urban imaginary of Chongqing as a place 'lagging behind', troubled by a non-urban status, and peripheral to urban modernity. I argue that the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream constituted an attempt to restructure the city's relationship to regional underdevelopment, moving it from the periphery to the centre of Chinese urban modernity. I use the term 'protocols' to describe the metaphors and ideological frameworks through which the official discourse and aesthetics of the Chongqing Dream sought to give meaning to and justify urban restructuring. I examine three protocols at work in Chongqing: acceleration, Red Culture and spatial justice.

These protocols allowed the Chongqing Dream to perform a normative function. By invoking a vision of urban modernity they induced consent for the disruptions of urban restructuring. This responded to the city's perceived backwardness and peripheral status in order to both justify the work of urban restructuring, and to illustrate a vision of an urban future that would be instantiated through this process. The discourse and aesthetics of the Chongqing Model thus proceeded from and responded to the presumption of Chongqing as a space which was already peripheral, backwards and underdeveloped, and that urban restructuring would solve such problems. To this end the Chongqing Dream mobilised a wide range of protocols in its discourse and aesthetics: drawing on contemporary liberal, capitalist, and 'world city' protocols, but also on a history of socialist and Maoist discourses.

5.4.2 Five Chongqings

Figure 22： Construct Five Chongqings: Liveable, Healthy, Unimpeded, Peaceful, Forested. Source: 58pic.com.

The slogan which above all others came to define the Chongqing Dream was 'Five Chongqings' (*wuge Chongqing*). The slogan was so closely linked to the leadership of Bo that it was completely eliminated from the city in the days after his arrest (B01). The project of 'Constructing Five Chongqings' envisioned the city as a clean and modern place (Figure 22), laying out five principles which would justify urban restructuring and establish a new urban imaginary of the city (Su et al, 2011, pp. 117-144).

1. Liveable Chongqing (referring to public housing construction, slum demolition, increased standards of living).
2. Healthy Chongqing (referring to improved health provision for rural areas and improved air quality).
3. Unimpeded Chongqing (referring to transport infrastructure and improved connections with other regions).
4. Peaceful Chongqing (referring to a crackdown on organised crime and increased police visibility).
5. Forested Chongqing (referring to an urban beautification programme of tree-planting and a rural reforestation scheme).

Much of the content of this vision coincided with the common aesthetics of Asian imaginaries of modern urban life and 'world city' status, and closely resembles other projects of recent Chinese hyperbuilding described earlier in this chapter (5.2). The city was aesthetically reimagined as a green space and healthy space through the planting of

over 500 km^2 of gingko trees (locally known as 'Xilai trees' after Bo Xilai) by CPC cadres in under a year (CQMP 2010/03/26, pp. 2-3).[50] Under Bo's leadership the municipal government employed imagery of law and order and the aesthetics of the smart city, as demonstrated by the construction of three hundred high-tech 'police platforms' around the city, supposedly at a cost of 5 million yuan each (Eberlein, 2012b). Many of these initiatives are similar to other practices of 'worlding' Asian cities through urban spectacles (Roy and Ong, 2011). Because of this within the limited space allowed I have chosen to focus on those more idiosyncratic elements of the Chongqing Dream.[51] I limit my analysis to the most ostensibly 'urban' of the discourses and aesthetics gathered under these terms: the protocols of acceleration, Red Culture and spatial justice.

5.4.3 Acceleration

On October 14th 2010, a gala was broadcast on the CQTV-Chongqing channel to celebrate the city's road construction programme. The 'Opening of the two-rings eight-trunks celebratory gala' consisted of a series of song and dance routines and poetry recitals celebrating the imminent completion of the municipality's ambitious road-building programme, framed Bo's slogan of 'Unimpeded Chongqing'. The most notable performance was that of nationally famous singer Han Lei, who performed a song called 'Chongqing Speed' (*Chongqing sudu*). Han was surrounded by young dancers dressed in white who jogged, leapt and pirouetted back and forth across the stage. Behind him three large LED screens showed images of Chongqing's new highways and transport infrastructure. Rainbows arching across steep valleys transformed into bridges, helicopter views showed highway intersections bustling with traffic, the camera plunged through tunnels and across bridges.

> You are the pioneer of the city
> As fast as the wind
> Countless heroes one after another
> Filled with marvel and glory
>
> Speeding up with you
> A broad blue sky ahead

[50] This re-visioning of the city intersected with discourses of 'ecological civilisation' (*shengtai wenming*). The gingko trees favoured by Bo Xilai are not native to Chongqing, but to the Northeastern region which Bo came from. It is supposedly possible to identify which areas of the city were constructed during Bo's leadership by the presence of trees. See the photography of Yan Wang Preston for more details.

[51] Given a wider scope and more time fascinating insights could be drawn about the biopolitical governance, evocation of 'ecological civilisation' and disciplinarian tendencies of the Healthy, Peaceful and Forested Chongqings. Within this chapter, however, I mainly concern myself with the policies brought under the label of Liveable and Unimpeded Chongqing.

> The world applauds us
> Speeding up with you.[52]
> (Han, 2010)

In this section I argue that a key protocol of the Chongqing Dream was the use of metaphors of speed and acceleration to justify and promote urban restructuring. This contrasted with the imaginary of underdevelopment which envisioned Chongqing as metaphorically 'lagging behind' the cities of the coast and beset with obstacles which prevented flow and made the city appear slow. As the city began to expand outwards from the urban core of Yuzhong into the surrounding rural area, the municipal government employed metaphors which stressed the undoing of the slowness of 'three day Chongqing' and portrayed the city instead as an increasingly rapid site of circulation and exchange, plugged into global networks of consumption and production.

The relationship between speed and the urban imaginary has been well documented (Harvey, 1989; Hubbard and Lilley, 2004; Sýkora, 1994; Qian, 2015). To interpret the urban imaginary of Chongqing as a city of speed I employ the concept of 'dromology' used by the Paul Virilio (2006) to describe patterns of governance which attempt to re-order the city in into an arrangement of 'mobile trajectories'. The dromological discourse of the Chongqing imaginary can be read as responding directly to the perceived slowness and lag of the city in popular discourse.

In *The Chongqing Model* Su et al. (2010) asserted that if the city was to accelerate to a pace of life which would match the pace of the coast it would have to embrace 'movement' (*dongli*) but also 'pressure' (*yali*):

> Only if we become "unimpeded" can we accelerate the pace of metropolitan life to fully embody the values of the metropolis. […] Right now we are standing on the base that has been built by Reform and Opening Up over the past 30 years. Having achieved the status of directly controlled municipality, we must now build an "Unimpeded Chongqing" that conforms to the standards expected of us. But beyond this, we must set even loftier goals to aspire to. Bo Xilai has said that the people of Chongqing are diligent, motivated and no longer willing to "lag behind" (*bugan luohou*). (Su et al., 2010, p. 127)

In this account metropolitan values are equated with speed, and the author links the call for acceleration to the populist politics of Bo. Urban restructuring is justified as a matter of pride, evoking an image of the people of Chongqing as a population long excluded from the benefits of metropolitan life who are now no longer willing to 'lag behind' the cities of the coast. In response to the imaginary of Chongqing as slow and

[52] Video available online, last accessed 14 February 2019: http://v.yinyuetai.com/video/h5/139203.

backwards, urban restructuring is imagined as a project which will allow the city to accelerate its development and lifestyles.

The slogan of 'Chongqing Speed' first appeared in the mid-2000s when it was associated with a project of transport infrastructure investment. A 2006 editorial in the magazine 'Chongqing and the World' encouraged readers to 'Bear witness to Chongqing Speed' and imagined the city as a landscape undergoing dromological acceleration:

> Since becoming a municipality, the speed with which Chongqing has changed its face has far surpassed that of previous decades. This tremendous change has not only raised our city's standing and made our citizens proud, but has also allowed the common people to experience real benefits, making their lives ever more comfortable, convenient and colourful. New commercial centres enable residents to enjoy the convenience of shopping and leisure close to their homes. Domestic and international shopping malls and supermarkets flock to the city, and the public feel the benefit of cheap and high quality goods. A bridge across the Yangtze is completed in an instant, like a rainbow that scoops up and brings together distant points of the city, making life more convenient. Light rail tracks emerge, so that people in Chongqing can enjoy the flow of modern traffic and direct access to the city. […] The city's material abundance and its constantly changing face are a passionate expression of Chongqing speed, while the changing face of Chongqing's ideology adds further meaning to the city. (Chongqing and the World, 2006/09 p. 3)[53]

The image of the city conjured by this short passage is reminiscent of high modernist evocations of speed as the essence of modern urban life. The restructuring of the city—the disruption of the built environment and the erasure of the memories associated with it—is represented not as a moment of loss, but as a moment of excitement, and as evidence in itself of Chongqing's modernisation. The destruction of 'the sediment of decades of memory' is presented as a cause for celebration, a ridding of the urban landscape of the illogical and disordered structures which rendered it a space of slowness and immobility.

This passage also demonstrates a strong connection between speed and an emerging culture of the consumption of space (Fleischer, 2010; Zhang, L., 2010). The city's improved public transport is presented primarily as a way of accessing leisure and commerce, enabling citizens' lives to be 'ever more convenient, comfortable and colourful'. The figurative image of foreign shopping malls, supermarkets and international brands flying to the city imagines Chongqing as a place no longer geographically remote and underdeveloped, but linked into global flows of capital and

[53] 'Chongqing and the World' [*Chongqing yu Shijie*] is a glossy magazine published by the municipality department for foreign affairs, to promote the 'worlding' of Chongqing.

consumption. Moreover, the restructuring of the city as a space of dromology rather than a space of slowness envisions not just a material change, but a change in ideology. The image of Chongqing Speed evoked by this editorial is of a place no longer troubled by 'lagging behind' on the exterior of the urban modernity enjoyed by coastal metropolises. Rather, Chongqing would become a cosmopolitan city of 'open-minded and inclusive' citizens integrated into the global economy.

The imagery of 'Unimpeded Chongqing' sought to imagine a version of Chongqing freed from the specificities of place which rendered Chongqing a space of slowness and temporal underdevelopment, and in doing so aimed to construct a new imaginary landscape of the city.

Figure 23: 'Unimpeded transport projects, try the "New *Chongqing* Speed" for yourself'. CQD 12/01/03

Figure 23 shows a 2012 feature in the Chongqing Daily which urges readers to 'try the new "Chongqing Speed" for yourself'. This article demonstrates how the benefits of dromological restructuring would be distributed to ordinary citizens. The text focuses on praising the opening of new road and rail links which will enable residents of the city's rural hinterland to access public transport for the first time. It features photos of smiling farmers waving from the windows of buses, a migrant worker couple holding their child up to the window of a train and interviews with rural entrepreneurs who could now easily take their produce to market in the city. It is important to highlight that the metaphor of

'Chongqing Speed' was not purely an abstraction. There was a significant increase in the extent to which the time-space of the municipality was compressed as a result of the accompanying improvements in transport infrastructure. As Martinez (2014) describes, 'three day Chongqing' slowly became 'eight hour Chongqing' (*ba xiaoshi Chongqing*), and areas to the north of Chongqing such as Dazhulin—which had previously been agricultural peri-urban townships—now found themselves increasingly integrated into the rhythms and urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream.

In this section I have demonstrated that a key protocol of the Chongqing Model was the metaphor of acceleration. The discourse and aesthetics of acceleration were chiefly mobilised in relation to transport infrastructure, but also more broadly applied to an increased pace of life, rate of exchange and circulation, and the speed with which the built form of the city itself was transforming. The protocol of acceleration is significant in that it specifically responded to the popular imaginary of Chongqing as a backwards and questionably modern city. The urban restructuring of the city was justified because it was seen to accelerate the city out of the state backwardness, and lagging behind in relation to coastal provinces. Chongqing was seen to be converging with the 'global space of unhindered flows, exchange values and economic integration' that is envisioned by 'neoliberal fantasies' (Ortega, 2012, p. 1123). In so far as speed and acceleration were equated with urban values, they were equated with values that appeared ostensibly neoliberal. I mean this in the sense that they were characterised by an urban imaginary which saw the expansion of the market creating a space of convenience and consumption of space—an acceleration towards apparently 'typical' neoliberal values (Fleischer, 2010; Kipnis, 2007; Zhang, L. and Ong, 2008). Chongqing's aspiration to become a metropolis would thus require a thoroughgoing embrace of the 'movement' and 'pressure' of the urban restructuring, if it was to enjoy the eventual urban future of global capitalist modernity.

5.4.4 Red Culture

In May 2009 Bo Xilai appeared at a press conference to launch a new initiative. It would be a key part of the city's programme to renew the grassroots activism of the CPC, reorient the party mechanisms towards achieving egalitarianism, and attract a new generation of dedicated cadres. Standing on a stage next to a two-metre-tall mobile phone, he announced the commencement of the muncipality's 'Red Text Messaging' (*hongse duanxin*) campaign, which would encourage citizens to write their own aphorisms and slogans relating to the CPC's mission, Mao Zedong Thought and the municipality's

modernisation. These slogans could be sent as text messages to a dedicated number, from where a select few would be forwarded to all mobile phones within the city. The authors of the selected texts would also receive a cash prize. Bo set an example by composing a text message which was instantly sent to all 13 million phones within the municipality:

> My favourite quotes from Mao Zedong: 'The world is ours, we must all work together', 'The world is afraid of being serious, and the Communist Party is the most serious of all', 'People need to be strong-spirited!' These sayings are words that raise our spirits and inspire capability and realism! Bo Xilai. (CQMP, 2009/04/29)

In launching the campaign, Bo Xilai stated that its aim was to ensure that the youth of Chongqing would continue to understand the spirit of the party, 'to create an environment for young people to grow up in which is clean, healthy, passionate, and wise, and to cultivate their morale'.

This event set the tone for what became known as Chongqing's 'Red Culture' (*hongse wenhua*) campaign. Red Culture dominated the local state's propaganda between 2009 and 2011. This period was marked by the adoption of an aesthetics and discourse which emphasised an egalitarian message at odds with the increasing inequalities of post-reform urban China, and an explicit nostalgia for the aesthetics and politics of pre-reform Maoism. In this section I argue that this protocol marked out the Chongqing Model as distinct from other comparable attempts to articulate urban modernity through hyperbuilding, and constituted an attempt to imagine Chongqing as an alternative to existing models of post-socialist urban development.

As discussed in chapter 4, much of the portrayal of Bo Xilai as an alleged 'neo-Maoist' was hyperbolic and bore little relation to the actual policies enacted by his administration, which were broadly in line with other varieties of Chinese state capitalism (Mulvad, 2015), with a particular emphasis on redistributive state infrastructure (Lim, 2014). The invocation of Mao as a rhetorical and aesthetic device and source of legitimacy occurs frequently in the discourse of the contemporary CPC, often in justification of avowedly un-Maoist policies (Cheng, J.Y.S., 2013; Brady, 2009). Dirlik (2012) describes this as the 'phantom' presence of Mao as a depoliticised signifier. Within China, however, there was widespread perception that the Chongqing Model's use of Maoist imagery and discourse went beyond the typical boundaries of depoliticised use, and represented a more meaningful disruption of the post-reform settlement. Interpreting the Chongqing Model as an urban imaginary prompts us to ask what function the discourse of egalitarianism and the aesthetics of Red Culture played in articulating a vision of an urban future.

The emphasis on egalitarian values implied in the Red Culture campaign seems to contradict the dromological discourse of 'Chongqing Speed'. In *The Chongqing Model* Su et al. (2010) repudiated the senseless chasing of speed that he saw as characterising the last thirty years of development. He described how Chongqing aspired to an alternative form of speed, differing from the headlong acceleration which characterised developed coastal cities like Shenzhen. He claimed that rather than a focus on 'efficiency' (*xiaolü*), Chongqing instead sought to orient its development towards 'livelihood' (*minsheng*):

> The typical characteristics of being oriented towards efficiency are embodied in the famous slogan of Shenzhen: 'time is money, life is measured in drumbeats'. In a past era of widespread scarcity and inefficiency, this slogan was revolutionary. Focusing solely on money and results became the essence of 'efficiency orientation'. […] However, efficiency alone is incapable of solving the many problems of livelihood. Therefore, the model of "efficiency orientation" has already been surpassed and must be transcended. The Chongqing Model is precisely about how we can transcend 'efficiency orientation', whilst also learning from it. Thus, the Chongqing Model represents an innovation, and a brand new path of development. (Su et al., 2010, pp. 203-204)

By invoking the metaphor of livelihood, characterised the path pursued by Chongqing as being distinct from the model offered by Shenzhen. In place of Shenzhen's focus on economic growth through labour exploitation and primitive accumulation, Chongqing was portrayed as offering an alternative mode of development which did not place GDP growth above human wellbeing. The protocol of acceleration was thus contradicted and framed as being distinctly 'red'.

The discourse of 'livelihood' was often explicitly framed as a continuation of revolutionary politics. In an address which quoted Mao's 'Serve The People' in the summer of 2010, Bo Xilai reminded the residents of Chongqing that Mao had operated on the principle that all state plans should proceed from five words—'people's clothing, food, shelter, transport' (*ren shi yi zhu xing*). Inspired by this message of egalitarian provisioning, Bo laid out his own proposal of 'Ten Real Improvements to Livelihood' that the municipality could achieve through increased infrastructure investment and expansion of the city (CQD 10/06/08, p. 2). This discourse stressed the necessity of urban restructuring for the improvement of the material conditions of ordinary citizens, and framed such a project as a continuation of the radical egalitarianism of Mao. This vision of an urban future was substantially different from the typical developmental progressive narrative of the globalising Asian city. In contrast to the market-oriented rhetoric of Chongqing as a city of speed, the discourse of egalitarianism envisioned a city in which

urban restructuring was mobilised for the good of ordinary people, with special attention paid to the poorest.

Moreover, in *The Chongqing Model* Su et al. (2010) argued that the relative underdevelopment of Chongqing and the resulting poverty of many of its residents was a direct outcome of the single-minded pursuit of economic growth which they saw as characterising China's post-socialist political settlement. The underdevelopment which afflicted Chongqing was not simply a problem of lagging behind Shanghai, but a reflection of an unbalanced economic system (Su et al., 2010, p. 141). If left unattended, the problems of uneven development could themselves become a threat to continued economic growth:

> Although in absolute terms the basic living conditions [of poor people in China's under-developed regions] have improved, in comparison to elsewhere they are very far behind. Coupled with the current structural contradictions in China's economic and social development, this means that many vulnerable groups can't afford housing, medical care, or basic education. The elderly go without pensions, the unemployment rate is high, and livelihood problems grow larger and larger. (Su et al., 2010, p. 203)

The Chongqing Model suggested an alternative metric of development which would measure the success of the city's urban restructuring. Since the early 1990s, competitive rankings of GDP growth have become a key instrument through which cities and provinces measured their success, with important implications for the careers of politicians. Although Chongqing consistently topped national rankings of city regions by GDP in the late 2000s, Bo Xilai rejected such metrics, arguing that 'we cannot accept GDP that has been taken in exchange for the life of ordinary people' (CQD, 2009/07/19). In its place Bo proposed the concept of 'Red GDP', pledging that the municipality's Gini coefficient would be brought down from 0.45 to 0.35 by 2020.[54] He warned that if the country as a whole's Gini coefficient rose above 0.46 the socialist project would've failed: 'If only a few people hold all the wealth, then we've gone over to a capitalist society. We've failed' (quoted by Wen, 2012).

The communication of this egalitarian imaginary from the political elite to the population living through urban restructuring took place through a variety of channels. National media attention was attracted by the so-called 'Cake Debates', where Bo Xilai sparred with Wang Yang (the CPC secretary of Guangdong Province) in a series of

[54] The Gini coefficient is a statistical measure of income distribution often used to measure inequality. A coefficient of 0.35 would represent a return to the level of income inequality last seen in China in the late 1980s.

television appearances in 2011. Wang Yang was seen as one of the leading figures of the liberal wing of the party at the time, promoting pro-market reforms and neoliberalising policies in Guangdong. Bo Xilai appeared on a Hong Kong news channel in which he used the metaphor of distributing a cake to explain his political outlook, asserting that the most important thing was to 'divide the cake properly, before making a bigger cake' (quoted in Yang, Y., 2011, p. 5). A week later Wang Yang retorted that his priority was to make the cake bigger before worrying about how it would be divided. Mulvad (2015) argues that this symbolic clash helped to frame a national debate which pitched the Chongqing Model against the prevailing pattern of capitalist development in the popular imagination.

Within Chongqing itself the Red Culture campaign emerged as the chief tool through which the vision of a more egalitarian urban modernity was communicated to the population, both through urban space and media representations of the city. This principally took the form of a revival and repackaging of CPC propaganda dating from prior to reform and opening. The 'Red Text Messaging' campaign was one of a number of initiatives, which included the compulsory singing of revolutionary songs, organisation of mass rallies, and a discursive and aesthetic nostalgia for the Cultural Revolution. These campaigns dominated the physical space of the city, and the urban media landscape. The campaign for Red Culture was launched in a series of measures in 2008 and 2009, all of them personally promoted by Bo. These measures outlined a four-stage cultural programme for the population of Chongqing. Citizens were encouraged to sing revolutionary songs, to read the classics of Chinese literature, to discuss the history of the CPC, and to spread revolutionary slogans by text message.

The creation of revolutionary song and dance troupes was the most successful of these projects. A huge number of red song choirs and dance troupes were formed in the city, many in public institutions under the duress of the party. Public performances and competitions proliferated. Many citizens gave up large amounts of free time to volunteer in such projects. The Chongqing Daily reported approvingly on one successful red song troupe that had been established by a woman who had recovered from cancer after she discovered that singing 'The Battlesong of the People's Liberation Army' had given her the strength to endure chemotherapy (CQD 11/06/22).

Figure 24: Red Song rally in June 2010. Source: renminbao.com 12/02/02.

Figure 25: Bo Xilai attends a Red Culture performance, September 2010. Source: cntv.cn.

The aesthetics of the Red Culture campaign clearly echoed the visual language of pre-reform propaganda, and evoked the atmosphere of the mass rallies of the Cultural Revolution. The largest events in the city were held in the renovated People's Square outside the Municipal Government, or in the newly built Olympic Stadium. These events brought together red song troupes from across the municipality to mark the passage of particular anniversaries or holidays. The image was of an ordered sea of red-shirt-wearing choirs, while other participants waved flags bearing the hammer and sickle and Maoist slogans adorned the stage dressings (Figure 24). On June 30th 2011, 100,000 participants gathered in the Olympic Stadium to sing red songs and listen to speeches to commemorate

the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CPC. Henry Kissinger was a visiting guest of honour, and gave a short speech extolling the work that Bo Xilai had done in Chongqing. Bo Xilai and Huang Qifan together led the representatives of the Chongqing municipal government in singing red songs (CQD 11/07/01). Photographs appearing in the Chongqing Daily regularly showed Bo Xilai participating in the singing of red songs, often surrounded by smiling children wearing the red scarf of the young pioneers (the CPC youth wing) or the uniform of Cultural Revolution-era red guards (Figure 25). Importantly, these events were centred on the public spaces of the city, and accompanied by media campaigns which extended into the private spaces of the city.

This is documented in the video essay 'China Concerto' by Wang Bo (2012). The camera captures the dazzling imagery of the mass rallies which occupied the public spaces of the city, and the prevalence of Red Culture events on CQTV. News footage shows ordinary people recording their reactions to the Red Culture campaign. A college student expresses his approval for the decision by CQTV to eliminate advertising from their channel and replace it with videos of red songs 'leaving only a clean red screen'. One resident of Yuzhong District reports that 'Now Red Culture is in dominance it is deeply inspiring and educational for us.'

There is evidence that the appeal to Red Culture was received with scepticism by a large portion of the population of Chongqing. Many members of the city's educated middle-classes mirrored the attitude described by Eberlein (2012a) and regarded the Red Culture campaign as a superlative overstretch of the CPC's propaganda which deserved no attention. During fieldwork, it was often speculated to me that all of those attending Red Culture rallies or performing in the public spaces of the city were paid 'actors' employed by the municipal propaganda department. Mei (2017) provides a detailed dissection of the Red Culture campaign based on fieldwork with participants in the city's mass campaigns. Mei interprets the Chongqing Model's emphasis on Red Culture as a performative simulation of a genuine Maoist mass campaign—an exercise in political power where the signifier of revolutionary red 'was stretched to such an extent that it stopped making reference to specific values' (p. 112). However, Mei also argues that this was not simply an exercise of authoritarian power. Individuals chose to participate enthusiastically in the campaign for diverse reasons, including Maoist nostalgia, career advancement, and genuine dissatisfaction with the materialistic culture of post-socialism. Participants in the campaign thus found space to act creatively and in ways which challenged the monolithic power of the CPC. Ultimately, Mei describes how individuals participating in the campaign were able to express doubt about the sincerity or efficacy

of many of the official slogans and campaigns, while simultaneously engaging sincerely with the principles underlying them, or tactically re-appropriating them to further their own objectives.

Nonetheless, the popularity of the Chongqing Model—as a perceived *countermovement* to the growing inequalities of the period since reform, and a protest against the uneven concentration of urban modernity on the coast—was readily apparent. After Bo Xilai's sentencing to life imprisonment in February 2013, photos circulated the Chinese internet of homemade banners strung outside Chongqing's public housing expressing support for him (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Banner in public housing reading 'Bo Xilai is the people's good official!' Source: WeChat.

It is evident that the construction of Chongqing as a space of egalitarianism played a central role in the Chongqing Model's urban imaginary. I argue that the protocol of egalitarianism and its expression through the aesthetics of Red Culture form an important point of departure from the typical urban imaginary of China's local state entrepreneurialism. By emphasising livelihood over efficiency, the Chongqing Model sought to distinguish its developmental path from the neoliberalising approach adopted by other Chinese cities. Most notably, this protocol of the Chongqing Model opposed the relentless focus on efficiency and speed symbolised by Shenzhen, the coastal champion of market-led development which Chongqing defined itself against. The fact that this aspect of the Chongqing Model is profoundly dissonant with the protocol of acceleration and the neoliberal imaginary reflected in it is significant, and reveals the extent to which the aesthetics and discourse of Chongqing's urban imaginary lacked a coherent political metanarrative.

The discourse of the Chongqing Model identified the relative underdevelopment of Chongqing and other regions of Western China as not being merely evident of a

developmental lag, but of a fundamental imbalance in the economy which had created an increasingly unequal society. Rather than focussing solely on GDP, the Chongqing Model proposed a set of alternative values based around reducing inequality and improving material provisions against which the success of its urban restructuring would be judged. The communication of this alternative set of values to the people of the city was conducted through mobilising the discourse and aesthetics of Maoist populism, stressing grassroots party activism and continuity with the radical egalitarianism of the Cultural Revolution. It implied a message of spatial justice and egalitarian provisioning which drew directly on the cultural and ideological legacy of Mao, and promised an urban future which would be defined by an increasingly egalitarian distribution of the benefits of urban modernity.

The categories and meanings inscribed in such discourse and aesthetics provided a framework for interpreting and justifying urban restructuring for the ordinary people of the city, in contrast to the discourse of underdevelopment and backwardness which had previously characterised the city's popular imaginary. I argue that the performance of Red Culture in Chongqing is best understood as a response to the historical and geographical peripheralisation of the city in comparison to the increasingly capitalist modernity of the coast. The imagery of egalitarian spatial justice performed in the Chongqing Model recalled a historical Maoist politics which had sought to re-order the geographical distribution of modernity in Chinese society. In this way, it reflected a genuine resentment of the patterns of uneven development which had accelerated certain social strata and geographical regions towards global modernity while consigning others to the apparent 'backwardness' of life in Chongqing. Chongqing's urbanisation was thus imagined as *more egalitarian alternative* to the neoliberalising developmental path taken by Shenzhen. The protocol of Red Culture was thus a formative element of the discourse which justified the process of urban change and projected a vision of an urban future. The construction of Chongqing as a site of spatial egalitarianism thus sought to evoke an image of urban modernity which was *altered* and *alternative to* the image of market-led global urban modernity typical of post-socialist Chinese urbanism.

5.4.5 Spatial Justice

Figure 27：Bo Xilai visits public housing in Dazhulin, July 2011. Source: house.qq.com.

In July 2011 Bo Xilai visited the recently opened unit of public housing constructed in Dazhulin, in the New North Zone. The public housing estate had been named Kangzhuang Meidi (‘healthy village, beautiful land’) by Mayor Huang Qifan some months previously, and over 800 households had moved into the housing the previous week. Bo praised the importance of providing high quality housing for the lowest income groups of the city, and reiterated the importance of constructing 40 million square metres of housing in three years as a key principle of integrating urban and rural development. As reported in the Chongqing Daily:

> ‘Hurray for Bo Xilai!’ ‘Hurray for Bo Xilai!’ Seeing Bo and his entourage, the residents gathered round to greet him warmly. ‘You were the first to be assigned housing here, so you must be truly lucky!’ Bo Xilai sent his warmest wishes to the assembled crowd, who smiled happily beside him. ‘What’s the quality of the houses like? Are you satisfied with the environment?’ Bo and the residents chatted like old friends. An elderly man with grey hair named Liang Xiuying held Secretary Bo’s hand and said ‘This public housing is just as good as commercial housing. The elderly can live in such a fine house and thank the city for their wonderful policies.’ A man barely in his twenties, Hu Yongquan, said: ‘I came to the city seeking odd jobs, my income has never been high, but now I have a house, I feel that life is something to look forwards to.’ Many of the residents were too choked with emotion to speak, but could not stop applauding and sending their thanks. (CQD, 2011/07/14)

In this section I explore the importance of two images in this protocol of the Chongqing Model: public housing and the migrant worker. I examine these figures through the metaphor of rural-urban integration and spatial justice which was a key protocol of the Chongqing Model. This was a principle which was described by Su et al. (2010, p. 145) as ‘undoing the binary equation’ (*jie eryuan fangchen*) between rural and

urban which had been fundamental to Chinese economic and social life since reform. This discourse again drew on the legacy of the socialist project, and the promise of a re-ordering of the geographies of modernity and inversion of relationships between core and periphery which had been key to the Maoist promise of spatial justice in the revolutionary era.

Besides the often abstract idealism of the Red Culture movement, the construction of public housing and measures to improve the life of migrant workers performed a more concrete commitment to bringing 'real improvements to livelihood' for ordinary citizens of Chongqing. This was part of a wider project of public infrastructure investment and related projects, as detailed in chapter four. Yet the commitment to public housing construction and 'urban-rural integration' (*chengxiang tongchou fazhan*) formed a particularly prominent part of this vision, and were significant for the fact that they spoke to the 'questionably urban' status of Chongqing.

Figure 28: Chongqing city logo. September 2005. Source: xinhua.com

The municipality's new logo (Figure 28) was formally announced in April 2008 and given the name 'Chongqing for everyone' (*renren Chongqing*). It was a visual metaphor for the apparent values of urban-rural integration, and the partnership between city and country which would massage away the divide between rural and urban:

> The two joyful figures together form the character meaning 'celebration'. In addition to representing the people-oriented spirit of Chongqing, they are formed out of a combination of the characters meaning 'broad' and 'big', thus representing Chongqing's open-mindedness and outward-looking attitude but also conveying a large hand guiding a small hand. This symbolism connotes that

> urban and rural people go hand-in-hand, welcoming the future, and seeking the common development of Chongqing. (Zhang, Z., 2011, p. 1)

In his first speech in Chongqing in 2007, Bo Xilai stated that the greatest task facing him was to deal with the divide between rural and urban, and to ensure that the two proceeded in integrated development. Much as had been the case historically, Chongqing's urban core and sprawling rural hinterland was imagined as a microcosm for the urban-rural divide within China as a whole. Chongqing's status as an experimental policy zone for urban-rural integration enabled the municipality to enact a number of policies which were promoted as removing the institutional and economic disadvantages which structured the countryside's relationship with the city. As referenced in chapter 4 (4.3.3), the 'land ticket' system was introduced. This allowed remote peasants to marketise and transfer development rights for under-utilised land and was modest in its scope, but was announced with great fanfare as a project that directly brought modernity to the country from the city:

> The land ticket system will not only directly promote the transfer of surplus rural labour into the city, but also allow remote rural areas to directly benefit from urbanisation and industrialisation. This is the most direct way in which 'the city supports the country'. (Huang Qifan, quoted in Su et al., 2010, p. 224)

The figure of the rural-urban migrant worker, as a physical representation of the rural-urban divide, was central to much of the discourse of the Chongqing Model. The speeches of Bo Xilai frequently made reference to the millions of migrant workers within the municipality and the great responsibility of the CPC to improve their living standards (see Su et al., 2010, p. 221).

The plight of migrant workers entering the city was a common theme of cartoons in Chongqing media. Figure 29, a typical example, shows migrant workers as poor figures approaching, yet dwarfed by, a basket of eggs which represents the benefits of urban life, stacked high with the fruits of urban modernity, labelled 'health insurance', 'decent housing', 'social welfare' etc. The cartoon accompanied an announcement that *hukou* restrictions for migrant workers would be relaxed, and that the government would soon consider extending other structural privileges of urban life to migrants as well, and so it shows an egg labelled '*hukou*' lying at the feet of the workers. The cartoon renders the urban modernity that the city represents as a concrete object, which state intervention will distribute to the structurally disadvantaged class of migrant workers.

Figure 29: 'After farmers have entered the city, the problems of social benefits, housing and education are the most pressing issues.' (CQMP 10/03/25)

Li, X. (2011) argued that the Chongqing Model aimed to achieve an act of displacement and inversion between rural and urban, arguing that Chongqing was the first place in China to become 'a city that embraces peasants' (*yi zuo yongbao nongmin de chengshi*) and in doing so had solved the 'dual personality problem' of the rural-urban divide which had structured Chinese space since reform and opening (p. 5). This aspect of the Chongqing Model imagined the rural-urban migrant as a figure who would benefit from urban restructuring through the enactment of spatial justice, which would extend the privileges of city life and access to urban modernity outwards into the countryside, or eliminate the barriers which constituted them entirely.

In *The Chongqing Model*, Su et al. (2010) closed their discussion of rural-urban integration with an assertion of the function of the city in creating spatial justice:

> The city should not be just for the people within its walls to blow their own trumpets. In essence, it should reduce the number of peasants, by turning them into urban people.[55] (Su et al., 2010, p. 222)

[55] This sentence contains an idiom which is hard to translate directly into English. Su states that the city should not be the people within the city's *zilazichang*. This idiom conveys an image of someone playing the erhu while singing to accompany themselves. It is intended to portray a sense of self-satisfaction and 'singing one's own praises', but also a false belief in one's own autonomy and self-sufficiency without the need for others. It is very difficult to adequately translate the meaning contained within this idiom while maintaining the direct slogan-like assertion of the sentence in Chinese. Likewise, the urban-rural dichotomy it criticizes social dichotomy it criticises is one of 'inside-city people' (*chengliren*) and 'peasants' (*nongmin*), which is not adequately conveyed by translating as 'citizens' and 'rural people'. The spatial designation of the city as dividing those within its walls from those outside is however readily apparent, and gives the slogan its force.

The concrete instantiation of this spatial justice would be the construction of public housing. As in the case of Bo Xilai's inspection of the public housing in Dazhulin, representations of public housing construction frequently framed the project in terms of assisting rural-urban migrant workers recently arrived in the city. The construction of 40 million square metres of public housing was announced at the height of the Red Culture movement in early 2010. Initial attention focussed on the first two housing sites to be announced: Minxin Jiayuan and Kangzhuang Meidi (see 4.3.5). This project was portrayed as a concrete solution to the problem of rural-urban migration, which would 'bring great joy to all poor people under heaven' (Su et al., 2010, p. 216). This was also significant because it aimed to solve the inadequate and informal living conditions of the 84% of migrant workers who used work sheds or collective dormitories for housing, as the director of the Chongqing Bureau of Land and Housing Management described in the press:

> The root problem is the living conditions of migrant workers. [… They] have made great contributions to the city, but their living environment is terrible. Many have no heat, no shelter from the rain, no ventilation. Some have no natural light, or no security to prevent theft. Some people even survive living in sheltered passages or under highway bridges. […] The decision to include migrant workers in the scope of the city's public housing protection got the green light at the highest level of governance in Chongqing. This represents a huge change in the philosophy of urban development—allowing migrant workers to contribute to the population dividend and at the same time enjoy the benefits of urban welfare. This is absolutely necessary to build a harmonious society! (Quoted in Xinhua, 2010/09/08)

To this end, the municipality established 'Chongqing Migrant Workers Day' in 2006. In November 2010, the fourth Migrant Workers Day event was framed around a celebration of new social welfare policies, of which the recently announced construction of public housing took pride of place. Several migrant workers were dressed in sashes and awarded prizes and bouquets of flowers for their contributions to the city's development, stood on a stage beneath a banner reading 'new citizens, new life' (*xin shimin, xin shenghuo*).

> 'Since I entered the city housing has been the biggest problem' said Zhang Chengfu. The migrant worker had moved from Wuxi County to the main city of Chongqing two years ago with his wife, and since then had been forced to move house three times. Lately they live in a decrepit building where the rent of 500 yuan per month takes up a whole quarter of their income. But today, Zhang and his wife made a special trip to the 'Chongqing Migrant Workers Day' to discover more about the procedures for public housing application. They hope to apply

> for a unit of public housing with cheap rent and convenient transportation. Hundreds of migrant workers in a similar position to Zhang and his wife surrounded the public housing consultation desks, crowding around them layer upon layer. These consultation points were almost crammed to bursting. According to the staff of the consultation point, Chongqing's Minxin Jiayuan public housing has been officially launched, and many migrant workers come to inquire about their rent and application process.' (Xinhua, 2010/11/08)

Throughout the rest of 2010 and 2011, the pages of the Chongqing Daily and Chongqing Morning Post closely followed the ongoing construction of public housing estates around the city. The pages of the newspapers and screens of CQTV were filled with the stories of the joy that this new housing form was bringing to poor families in Chongqing.

> Recently, this reporter visited the showroom and admired the plans of the new public housing estate in Minxin Jiayuan. It's verdant and lined with trees, and well placed for public transport. It's equipped with supermarkets, education facilities and sports fields, and the properties are comparable to medium-sized commercial houses. 'It's like a dream!' said Liu Jia, a migrant worker who works nearby. He often comes here to "seek his dreams" (*xun meng*). He said 'I earn less than 2,000 yuan a month so I'm eligible to apply for public rental housing.' (Xinhua, 2010/09/08)

> Back in her hometown of Dianjiang, Li Kailan's family of six were crowded into an 80-square-metre single-storey house. Six years ago, she and her husband came to the city. […] Sometimes when she has a moment of rest, she will imagine that she will one day be able to buy an urban house and have a cosy home in the main city. 'But the prices are so high at the moment, I know it's still a long way off.' In the second half of last year, her employer sent her and her husband to work at the construction site of the new public housing estate. 'At first, I thought that it must be a commercial house like any other developer's site.' When she chatted with other workers later on, Li Kailan discovered that this was the 'home' that the government had constructed for those people who could not afford to buy a house. This news moved her greatly. […] Every day that she works here, Li feels more and more excited. 'The rent is so cheap, I really want to rent one for myself!' Now she feels that every day her fortunes are improving, even though she works in the freezing winter air, shaking from the cold and with her nose running. 'I have been thinking, maybe I can apply to live here. Then I can live in a house that I have helped to build myself'. (CQD 2011/01/25)

I quote these passages in full because they demonstrate that from the outset the construction of public housing was portrayed in popular discourse and aesthetics as a solution to the housing shortages affecting migrant workers. As chapter 4 (4.3.5) described, the policy itself was rather less obviously egalitarian, and geared towards

middle-and-lower income groups who had stable employment and had lived in the city for many years. Moreover, after the initial two projects constructed in the New North Zone, subsequent public housing units were constructed in satellite towns and industrial parks. The aesthetics and propaganda that surrounded their construction nonetheless sought to closely associate them with a radical agenda of spatial justice.

Figure 30： Public housing promotion (showing original income restrictions imposed on applicants which were later lifted, see 6.4.2). Source: cq.people.cn.

Figure 31: Public housing promotion. Source: cqgzfl.com.

This was likewise reflected in the visual material produced to promote public housing. Figure 30 shows elderly urbanised peasants admiring the high-rise apartments which will soon tower over them, and depicts the construction of public housing as a disembodied pair of hands delivering fully-formed housing to tiny people who rush forwards to embrace it. The website from which public housing applications were submitted (Figure 31) likewise imagined the urban future promised by public housing: a pristine green field dotted with yellow sunflowers and grey high-rise public housing blocks, served by a speeding metro line. It also shows the mix of people anticipated to inhabit this new vision of the city: an elderly man, a young student, a hard-hat wearing engineer, and foremost among them a smiling shirtless farmer in a straw hat.

This mode of spatial justice would be created on the peripheries of the city. Coverage of public housing focussed on the construction of units in the rural land expropriated by the municipal state, as described in chapter 4. As Huang Qifan said, this area would provide the 'blank piece of paper' on which the municipal government could create a new city (quoted in CQMP 2010/06/18 p. 6). The urban imaginary of spatial justice would be realised as an egalitarian suburbia, combining natural beauty with the speed of the city, urban economy with rural labour, a city with the figure of the migrant labourer at its core.

In this section I have demonstrated that the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream focussed upon public housing construction and the figure of the rural-urban migrant as two key images. The migrant worker was seen to represent the inequalities and uneven development of the neoliberal tendencies of post-reform urbanisation. By contrast, the creation of public housing was seen as an intervention by which the local state could put an end to growing inequalities, and instead realise spatial justice. The protocol of spatial justice drew on the history of radical egalitarianism in common with the Red Culture movement, but looked instead to the local state institution of public housing to enact it. The migrant worker was framed in discourse as a figure uniquely disadvantaged in China's post-reform economic settlement—a figure whose labour is exploited in the construction of new urban space, but who received few of the benefits of urban modernity. The urban imaginary of the Chongqing Model portrayed public housing as the concrete instantiation of spatial justice owed to the migrant worker. Public housing acted as a socio-technical imaginary through which the marginalised migrant worker would be transformed into the citizen of the new Chongqing, able to enjoy the benefits of urban modernity. Moreover, this spatial justice was located not in the core of the city, but on the expanded periphery of the New North Zone, Liangjiang New Area and other newly urbanised zones. The urban imaginary of spatial justice required urban restructuring, because it sort to envision a new form of urban future, and so demanded new land on which to build.

5.5 Conclusions

The evidence surveyed in this chapter demonstrates the idiosyncratic nature of the discourse and aesthetics which accompanied Chongqing's urban restructuring, providing necessary context for the urban transformations described in chapter 4, and allowing understanding of the vision of urban modernity promised to the ordinary citizens who are the subjects of the ethnography of chapters 6 and 7.

The argument that I make about the nature of the Chongqing Dream proceeds in two parts. Firstly, I argue that the protocols of official propaganda drew on dissonant imaginaries of the city. The protocol of acceleration employed 'global' imagery of consumer culture, cosmopolitanism and integration with international trade and communication. Simultaneously, the protocol of Red Culture presented the city as returning to an era of Maoist nostalgia, and the protocol of spatial justice imagined a return to a state socialist provision of housing which would undo the inequalities of state entrepreneurialism. By drawing on these dissonant protocols, official propaganda sought to respond to the urban imaginary of Chonqging as underdeveloped and backwards. These protocols justified the disruptive urban restructuring which would allow the city to become a space of urban modernity. Secondly, I argue that the dissonant 'myth' of the Chongqing Dream portrayed Chongqing as creating an alternative urban modernity which differed from that of coastal cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen. This alternative urban modernity based upon spatial justice would be created on the periphery of the city, with the construction of public housing.

I characterise the restructuring of Chongqing's urban imaginary as a project of 'red hyperbuilding', utilising Aihwa Ong's (2011) concept to root the Chongqing Model in local history and responses to uneven development. By describing this hyperbuilding as 'red' I also seek to illustrate how superlative Asian experiments in urban spectacle can articulate radical egalitarian themes as well as those of global urban convergence.

The three protocols emerging from Bo Xilai's slogan of 'Five Chongqings' illustrated the extent to which the Chongqing Dream was a dissonant and often contradictory mixture of capitalist, socialist and Maoist logics. To contextualise these visions of the city it is necessary to understand the popular narrative which envisioned Chongqing as peripheral to the modernity of China's coastal metropolises. From its perception as a barely-urban backwater during the war, through to the reputation of 'three day Chongqing' and the status as China's 'nth' city, Chongqing has been seen to 'lag behind' coastal cities. Through its uneven topography and perception as a space of *jianghu* beyond urban civilisation, Chongqing was perceived to be questionably urban, questionably modern and peripheral. I excavate how the slogan of 'Five Chongqings' and associated discourses and aesthetics responded to this apparent backwardness, and tried to re-imagine the city as a zone of urban modernity. Through the protocol of acceleration, the city was reimagined as a zone of commerce and consumption, increasingly networked into global rhythms of global cosmopolitanism and convergent with a neoliberal consumption of space. Through the protocol of Red Culture, the city utilised a revival of Maoist nostalgia to articulate a mode of modern urbanism where the CPC would return

to its historical mission of egalitarian redistribution of the benefits of modernity. Finally, the Chongqing Dream promised that the urban periphery would be the site of this spatial justice, which would be created through the construction of public housing.

The hyperbole and superlative nature of these tactics for re-imagining Chongqing sought to dispense with the image of a semi-urban peripheral port city, and articulate Chongqing as a space in which simultaneously embraced a global cosmopolitan convergence and a deeply local response to 'lagging behind'. In performing this reimagining of Chongqing, these official protocols justified the upheaval and displacement of urban restructuring. However, this dissonant urban imaginary demonstrates that rather than being 'discrete' as Rojas and Litzinger (2016) suggest, the protocols of urban restructuring in contemporary China can employ overlapping and contradictory images of neoliberal cosmopolitanism and Maoist nostalgias of egalitarianism to the same ends of justifying restructuring. This adds clarity to the argument made by Lim (2019) that the Chongqing Model was not properly Maoist because it was based on affirmation, without any element of negation. The protocols of the Chongqing Model affirmed contradictory goals of increased consumption, egalitarian redistribution, integration with capitalist economies, revivals in Red Culture, deepening marketisation and spatial justice all alongside one another, without any suggestion of dialectical negation.

However, it would be a mistake to dismiss the vision of urban modernity articulated by the Chongqing Model as a result. For all its dissonance, the Chongqing Dream constituted a popular narrative which demonstrated the desire for an *alternative to* the typical market-fundamentalist narrative of post-socialist Chinese urban modernity. Chapter 4 illustrated the extent to which the Chongqing Model did not offer a meaningful break from state entrepreneurial modes of development, relying on the same logics of land financing and deepening marketisation of land and labour. However, it is important to call attention to the extent to which the discourse and aesthetics of the Chongqing Dream nonetheless presented a vision of urban modernity which defined itself by being an alternative to the inequalities of urbanisation. The imaginary of the Chongqing Dream responded directly to the perception that Chongqing was geographically and economically marginal to the coastal capitals of post-socialist urban modernity. By invoking the radical legacy of the CPC as an agent of spatial justice, the Chongqing Dream was imagined as provoking another re-ordering of the geographies of modernity in China, whereby Chongqing would be at the core, rather than the periphery, of the project of urban modernity. The important thing to draw out of this vision of urban modernity is the extent to which the 'myth' of equitable development and spatial justice resonated and responded to the inequalities of post-socialist urbanisation. At the centre of

this dream lay the image of the public housing unit inhabited by the migrant worker, a physical instantiation of this vision of egalitarian urban modernity. These elements are important to carry forward to chapters 6 and 7 where we explore the daily life of the periphery, and how the realities of making life in a changing city compare to the promises of urban modernity.

6. Dazhulin: post-displacement and informal housing practices

> *A long time ago Dazhulin was a village. There were no urban people living there and all the land belonged to the peasants. There were no developers to build new houses, there was only a small hospital nearby, and the medical care you received there wasn't very good. There weren't many banks nearby, and there was no convenient public transport or roads. There weren't many schools, since rural people don't value that kind of thing. Because of the construction of the public housing this place began to transform from a very small township into a prosperous and busy place.*
>
> WeChat message from public housing resident (male, 20s, June 2017).

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I argue that the periphery of Chongqing is a space formed by heterogeneous experiences of displacement, and that the tactics used to access housing on the periphery move between practices of informality and formality. I demonstrate that rapid urbanisation brought together various displaced people in the fragmented landscape of Dazhulin, producing new opportunities but also new inequalities. This is exemplified by the tactics used to access and utilise housing, which renegotiate the value of housing during urbanisation. These findings demonstrate that the state's intervention to provide housing in Dazhulin provoked informal practices in response, producing persistent inequalities and revealing the shortcomings of the state's claim to bring about spatial justice. I use the term 'post-displacement space' to capture the heterogeneity of displacements assembled in Dazhulin and the shifting opportunities and inequalities of those living through displacement.

Following the analysis of the urban restructuring of the Chongqing Project and urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream in chapters 4 and 5, this chapter moves to a local scale to examine how life is made in the periphery created by the rapid transformation of the city's edge. This responds to and builds upon the literature introduced in chapter 2. Specifically it considers Dazhulin as a space where housing is accessed and leveraged by marginalised populations moving between formal and informal tactics, contributing to a growing body of literature on the practice of informality in relation to peripheral housing in China (Sun and Ho, 2015; Wu, F. and Li, 2018; Wu, F. et al., 2013) and more globally

(Roy, 2009b; 2011b; Caldeira, 2017; Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019). This chapter also seeks to contribute to displacement literature by suggesting the term 'post-displacement' to capture the diverse experiences of displacement brought together in state-built housing on the edge of the city, and consider the informal and formal tactics which respond to displacement.

Firstly I outline the theoretical positions which inform this analysis, and how my findings speak to existing literature. I then use the biographies of three residents of Dazhulin to illustrate the diverse experiences of displacement brought together on the periphery. I analyse these and suggest that the common characteristics of displacement constitute Dazhulin as a space of 'post-displacement'. The latter half of the chapter extends this discussion to consider how tactics used to access housing move between formality and informality. I compare three different experiences of housing in Dazhulin, and the informalities and inequalities of each: resettlement housing, public housing, and the spaces occupied by migrant workers. This chapter closes by re-stating its findings, demonstrating their original contribution to existing literature within China and more globally.

6.2 Thinking the Periphery

In this chapter I approach Dazhulin as a periphery through which people and spaces 'become urban' (Leaf, 2016, p. 157). In chapter 4 I analysed the way in which the state successively intervened in order to urbanise the northern periphery of Chongqing, resulting in a fragmented landscape in Dazhulin. In chapter 5 I analysed the discourse of the state, which portrayed the urban periphery as a site of spatial justice, where public housing would facilitate a more equitable distribution of urban modernity. In this chapter my focus switches to examine how these interventions were manifested in everyday life. I examine how the residents of Dazhulin sought to 'become urban' and 'become modern' through formal and informal tactics.

I focus on housing as a proxy for urban modernity. This reflects the literature addressed in chapter 2, where I demonstrated that urban housing has emerged as a symbol of urban modernity in post-reform China (Zhang, L., 2010; Huang, Y., 2005), reflected in the desire of the middle-class to consume suburban property (Fleischer, 2010; Wu, F., 2010a) and the marginalisation of migrant workers and urban poor without equal access to housing (Huang, Y., 2012; Wu, F., 2004). This is also reflected in chapter 5, where I analysed how official discourse portrayed the provision of low-cost public housing for

migrant workers as an act of spatial justice that marked a clear break with the inequalities of post-reform urbanism.

Public housing in Chongqing has been studied previously. Surveys have found migrant workers to be moderately satisfied with the housing itself, but frustrated by the poor management of attached facilities and remote location (Gan et al., 2016b). Other studies have indicated that—much like the *hukou* reform that accompanied it—there has been limited uptake of public housing by the poorest migrant workers, while it has been moderately successful in attracting more educated and skilled migrants (Zhou, J. and Ronald, 2017; Zhou, J., 2018). More critical perspectives have interpreted public housing provision as a state-led attempt to minimise the inequalities of marketisation (Lim, 2014, 2019) or to transition from a welfare regime to a neoliberal workfare regime (Wang and Li, 2018). I contribute an ethnographic perspective to these more critical assessments, emphasising the informal practices that state housing provision provoked through an examination of public housing in the context of Dazhulin as a whole. While the public housing certainly provided some material benefit for marginalised citizens, taking the perspective of informality allows some insight into how the spatial justice promised by the Chongqing Dream failed to materialise.

In addition, I contribute an analysis of informality in the tactics used to access state-built housing. Following McFarlane (2012) I understand informality as a practice—it is not confined to particular spaces or organisational forms, but instead is a way of producing space. From my literature review in chapter 2 I carry forward two related insights into informality which I apply to the use of housing in Dazhulin: informality as hybrid interface with formality, which allows a critique of the state (Roy, 2009b, 2011b; Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019) and informality as renegotiation of values, which provokes new political arrangements (AlSayyad, 2004; Caldeira, 2017).

As described previously, postcolonial scholars have long called for attention to the hybrid arrangements prompted by the interfacing of informality and formality (Roy and Alsayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005; 2009a). I thus approach informality not as a separate sphere beyond formal state activities, but as a continuum that adapts and expands the way space is produced. This necessitates attention to informality not just as a practice associated with poverty, but also as a practice of the middle-classes and the state (Roy, 2011b; Yiftachel, 2009) and as a way of critiquing the multiple agencies of the state (Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019). I draw on AlSayyad's (2004) argument that 'informality operates through the constant negotiability of value' (p. 5). I use the recent work of Caldeira (2017) on 'peripheral urbanisation' to consider how informal adaptation of housing prompts a

re-negotiation of the meanings and values assigned to spaces, leading residents to 'engage transversally with official logics' (p. 4) and form new political subjectivities (see Holston, 2009).

Chapter 2 noted that the literature on Chinese urbanisation has tended to dichotomise between middle-class suburbs and informal enclaves (Wu, F., 2016a; Wu, F. and Li, 2018; Harris, 2010). An extensive literature has documented the politics and subjectivities of planned suburban housing in gated communities, and the desire for commodity housing (Wu, F., 2010a; Pow, 2007; Zhang, L., 2010; Shen and Wu, 2012). Fleischer's (2010) ethnography of suburban Beijing identified a growing spatialisation of class, as older residents of *danwei* housing and migrant workers are pushed to the margins by the influx of a young affluent class of homeowners oriented towards the consumption of space through housing. By contrast, an equally extensive literature has documented the emergence of a distinct informal enclave on the periphery in the form of the 'urban village', a nominally rural area surrounded by the city where informal construction takes place and a rentier economy based on the housing needs of migrant workers thrives (Hao et al., 2011; Wu, F., 2016b; Wu, F. et al., 2013; Wang, Y.P. et al., 2009). There is an emerging literature on other forms of peripheral housing which disrupts the formal-informal dichotomy (Sun and Ho, 2015; Liu, R. et al., 2012; Liu, H. et al., 2018; Zhao, P. and Zhang, 2018).

By bringing an understanding of informality as a practice of producing space which is not confined to any one location (McFarlane, 2012) and as existing in hybrid arrangements with formality and state interventions (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2009b), I demonstrate that housing built and distributed by the state is also accessed and utilised through informal tactics. I analyse how the state's formal interventions on the periphery (even for ostensibly redistributive and equitable purposes) provide opportunities for a mixing of formal and informal practices. The goal of these practices is to utilise housing as a path to become modern and become urban—that is, to secure the benefits of urban modernity. However, such hybrid arrangements also reproduce existing inequalities, and demonstrate the shortcomings of the state's claim to bring about spatial justice through equitable housing policies.

In chapter 2 I also touched on the urban periphery as a space of displacement. Relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the Chinese urban periphery as a space that people are displaced to. Zhou et al. (2008) suggest that two-thirds of those people who move from the core to the periphery of the Chinese city do so involuntarily. Geographical literature on displacement has tended to focus on the processes of urban

restructuring which give rise to struggles, deprivations and disruptions which ultimately result in the displacement of marginalised populations (Slater, 2009; Lees, 2012; Lees et al., 2015; Smith, N., 2002; Harvey, 2003). In the context of China, scholarly attention to gentrification struggles has focussed on the long-term expulsion of low-income groups by rising prices (He, 2007, 2012; Song, W. et al., 2010), the destruction of cheap migrant accommodation through development of 'urban villages' (He and Xue, 2014; Wu, F. et al., 2013; Wu, F., 2016c; Liu, Y. et al., 2018), in addition to other diverse mechanisms of residential displacement (Shin, 2010; Wu, Q. et al., 2016; Iossifova, 2009).[56] Similarly, scholarship of accumulation by dispossession has tracked the land grabbing processes by which the urban state expropriates communally held rural land in order to lease it for profit (Webber, 2008; Li, T.M., 2010; Hsing, 2010; Guo, 2001), highlighting the parallels between Chinese urbanisation and global patterns of rural displacement. These accounts have focussed on the often violent displacement of marginalised residents and farmers in the process of urban restructuring, but relatively little attention has been paid to the aftermath of displacement, and to questions of how urban life is re-made in the wake of rupture. On occasion, scholars have argued that living conditions for many residents in the Chinese city actually improve through displacement (Li, S. and Song, 2009).

As Liu et al. (2018) describe, displacement in Chinese cities can often appear 'invisible' due to the difficulty of tracking the places which people are displaced *to*. This was something I encountered in the early months of my research. When talking to residents who were resisting the demolition of their old houses in the city centre they described how their neighbours had already 'been sent off to some public housing outside of the main city' (fieldnotes, August 2016). The periphery appeared as a blank space that followed displacement—similar to Huang Qifan's description of the northern periphery of Chongqing as a 'blank piece of paper onto which something entirely new can be drawn' (quoted in CQMP 2010/06/18 p. 6). I examine how informal and formal practices in Dazhulin sought to access housing in this supposedly 'blank' space.

6.3 Post-displacement

6.3.1 Displacement and urbanisation

This chapter suggests that Dazhulin is a space of 'post-displacement'. By this I mean that it is a space in which a heterogeneous group of people have been brought together

[56] Many scholars have urged caution when applying the concept of gentrification in the Chinese context, and stressed the importance of critical localisation of Western theory rather than its wholesale 'import' to Chinese cities (see Pow, 2012; Waley, 2016; Ren, 2015)

through diverse displacements as a result of urban restructuring. As a newly urbanised space created by state intervention, almost all of its inhabitants can be seen to have been displaced in some sense. Some of these displacements have been spatially and temporally extensive, beginning decades prior as they have been compelled to migrate long distances in search of work. Others have been more confined, as residents of a village have been incorporated into a city and rehoused on the land they previously farmed. There is no prospect of undoing these displacements—for many, the space which was previously their home no longer exists. The fragmented landscape of the periphery becomes the terrain on which they must make a home and become urban. This results in a highly differentiated experience of urbanisation, characterised by the emergence of shifting opportunities in the aftermath of displacement but also new inequalities.

Chapter 4 discussed how urbanisation in Dazhulin occurred in three waves corresponding with the expropriation of rural land, the raising of the value of the land through infrastructure investment, and lease of land to private developers. Moving our perspective to the everyday life of Dazhulin, these waves of development corresponded with displacements. Firstly, the original residents of Dazhulin were displaced from their homes and rural life by the expropriation of land undertaken by the municipal state. They were given urban *hukou* status and moved into resettlement housing. Secondly, the construction of public housing in 2010 facilitated the state's displacement of urban poor and migrant workers to the periphery of the city. This was necessitated by the redevelopment of the central city and the need for cheap labour in the newly created industrial zones of Liangjiang New Area (LJNA). Finally, the large areas of undeveloped land in Dazhulin were gradually leased to private developers. The construction of luxury housing finally moved middle-class residents into Dazhulin and displaced the people who had previously been informally farming the undeveloped land (this occurred after my fieldwork concluded and is discussed in chapter 7).

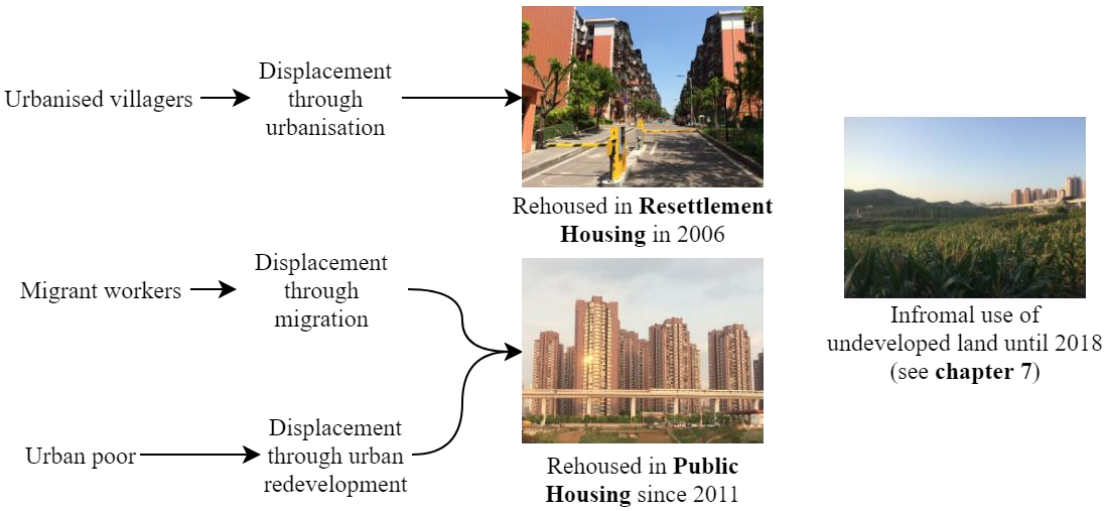

Figure 32: Diagram demonstrating the co-location of displacements in the housing of Dazhulin. Source: author.

In this section I present the biographies of three residents which reflect the heterogeneity of displacements found in Dazhulin's resettlement housing and public housing (see Figure 32). These housing estates were constructed by the state as a form of equitable compensation for displacement. I analyse three forms of displacement brought together in Dazhulin: migration, urbanisation and redevelopment. These biographies are synthesized from interviews and fieldnotes into ethnographic life histories (Plummer, 2001).[57] I consider how the stories of these three individuals reveal differing trajectories of displacement produced by different elements of urban restructuring, which ultimately led to all the subjects living in state-built housing within a few minutes' walk of each other.

By proposing the term post-displacement to describe the social configuration of Dazhulin, I wish to examine how displacement moves from being a discrete struggle to a common disjuncture after which new forms of urban life and politics are made. Attention to the tactics employed after displacement allows insight into how new relationships and opportunities emerge, how existing inequalities persist and new inequalities are produced. Post-displacement seeks to investigate how life continues in a fragmented environment, and what agency exists in the spaces created by the state's formal urbanisation. However, attaching the prefix 'post-' is certainly not intended to valorise displacement, or celebrate innovative responses to the often brutal deprivations of urban restructuring. Rather I seek to emphasise the extent to which displacements are a constituent reality of life in Chongqing. By examining the highly differentiated experiences of displacement I illustrate how global patterns of displacement manifest locally, revealing the

[57] Pseudonyms are used and some details altered in order to maintain anonymity.

heterogeneous articulations of urbanisation (Cowan, 2018) amidst planetary processes (Brenner, 2013).

6.3.2 Displacement through migration: Li Yangyang

Li Yangyang was born in 1968 in Kaizhou county, in the far eastern rural hinterland of Chongqing, around 200km from the city. She remembered working alongside her parents in the village collective when she was very young: 'Back in the time of the work team I was still a child, but I remember a little. When our parents went to work we went to work with them. They'd tell me to go and look after the pond, take care of the fish we were raising. We would leave the house before sunrise and not return home until after dark. It used to be very hard. Everything depended on the allocation of work points (*gongfen*).' During her adolescence the rural economy changed rapidly, with the gradual implementation of agricultural markets and the steady ebb of young people away from the villages towards the factories and building sites of the coastal cities. Around 1990 Li married and gave birth to a son. Deng Xiaoping's 'Southern Tour' in 1992 announced the creation of new Special Economic Zones (SEZ) on the coast of China with low tax and corporate regulations, facilitating the rapid influx of foreign capital. Li and her husband left their son behind with his grandparents and joined the flow of young people moving to the newly established SEZ of Shenzhen. During this period, the underdeveloped western provinces of Chongqing and Sichuan supplied a large proportion of the migrant labour which kept the factories of the coastal SEZs running, and Li and her husband were in many ways archetypal migrant workers of the 1990s. They spent almost two decades working in Shenzhen, and later in Hangzhou, sending money home to family in Kaizhou, where their son was raised by his grandparents. Li typically worked in factories, while her husband worked on building sites and learned carpentry.

In the late 2000s they decided to move back West to the urban core of Chongqing, having heard that the urban economy was booming. Around 2010 they rented a spare room in the attic of the seventh floor of one of the new commercial properties built in Dazhulin, an informal arrangement in sub-par housing. Upon their arrival on the peri-urban edge of the city it looked like they had returned to the countryside: 'When we first arrived here none of these houses had been built. It was all hills and vegetable fields.' Initially unsure how long the booming economy of the city would last, they considered returning to Kaizhou. But Li's husband warned that the only work which they would be able to get if they returned to their hometown in their forties would be sweeping streets or planting trees for the local government. Instead, he established a small carpentry business with his (now grown-up) son, taking advantage of the construction boom that the city was undergoing.

While working in the city, they missed out on a round of compensation offered by the local government of Kaizhou, under a scheme related to the 'land ticket'

project mentioned in Chapter Four. This scheme would have paid them compensation money to demolish their unoccupied rural homestead and return the land to agrarian use. Li estimated they could have made between 100 and 200 thousand yuan in compensation money if they had been in the countryside to take advantage of the policy. Despite this setback, in 2014 they had finally saved up enough to be able to buy property in the city. They moved into a vacant apartment in the adjacent estate of resettlement housing for a cost of 290 thousand yuan. Their son had married and given birth to their first grandson. The son and his wife could not afford to move out, and needed their parents close by to provide childcare while they worked, so they lived together, along with the father of Li's son's wife; in total six people in a one bedroom apartment. Li now looked for odd jobs, but was tired of working after two decades of factory labour, and spent most of her time minding her grandson or tending a vegetable plot she had dug in the adjacent undeveloped land.

She described how she had recently taken her grandson to visit the showroom for one of the luxury housing estates which had arrived in Dazhulin, looking in on the mock-ups of expensive apartments which would soon be built on the state-owned land. 'Those kinds of houses would cost several million yuan. One day I took my grandson there to have a look. We walked around, and I have to agree that it's truly an upper-class place to live. But after building such upper-class houses, who can afford to buy them? Unless they're big bosses, or some foreigners, who might be able to afford it. But honestly, if you take a person who has gone out to work, whose money is all earned from sweat and blood, how are they meant to afford it?'

(A24, January 2017)

6.3.3 Displacement through urbanisation: Chen Yi

Chen Yi was born in the mid-1960s and raised in one of the villages which made up Dazhulin commune at the time. In her late teens the household responsibility system was introduced, liberalising the rural economy. The village collective opened a small-scale dairy enterprise. As a result, by the time she had married and had her own children in the mid-1980s, Chen Yi and her husband did not just farm vegetables and corn, but also kept five cows. By that time, Dazhulin had been upgraded to a township, and had expanded the state-owned enterprise of Chongqing No. 2 Brick and Tile Factory. A man from this factory was sent every day to collect milk from each household, and as a result alongside the income from selling agricultural produce on the nascent free market, Chen Yi was paid a monthly wage by the collective enterprise 'just like a city person'. This income allowed her to upgrade their dwelling, demolishing their single-storey mud-brick hut and building a two-storied house in its place.

In 2002, her house became one of the first in Dazhulin to be demolished, with the land expropriated by the state and added to the state-owned land reserve. The village officials had advised her, like all households in the village, to file for divorce prior to expropriation, in order to maximise the compensation she would

receive from the state. At that point, the resettlement housing had not yet been completed, so the local government provided her and her husband with a monthly subsidy of 100-150 yuan each to rent accommodation from those prosperous farmers elsewhere in the township who had spare rooms. By this time, Chen Yi was nearly forty, and knew that her options in the urban economy would be limited; most likely she would be able to get a job as a cleaner, or doing low-paid unskilled work in one of the new factories. So she turned back to the land, and for four years made her living selling vegetables in the city, continuing to informally farm the same plot of land.

In 2006, the resettlement housing was completed, and she and her (ex-) husband were allocated two apartments. These were around 60m^2 in area, of which 20m^2 was allocated as compensation, with the remaining 40m^2 needing to be bought up-front at a rate of 900 yuan per m^2. Moreover, with her changing status from rural to urban *hukou*, Chen Yi had to pay 18,000 yuan (a subsidized rate equivalent to fifteen years of continuous payments) into the urban social security system. Collectively, these costs of urbanization ate up what remained of the compensation she and her husband had received from the demolition of their house and expropriation of their land.

Nonetheless, Chen Yi was now an urban property owner, entitled to receive the urban guaranteed minimum income (*dibao*) which would just cover her living costs, and determined to make the most of the urban economy. In early 2007 she bid to rent one of the small commercial spaces within the resettlement housing, and opened a cornershop. She was successful, and was able to make a decent income in the years immediately following urbanisation, due to the tight-knit community of urbanised farmers and the shop's position on the interior of one of the largest resettlement housing estates, facing onto a pedestrian street frequented by local residents. It was just a small single room with a shutter that opened onto the pavement and bare concrete walls, but it made money. The only competing shops were other neighbourhood community stores, and the fresh vegetable and meat market up the road.

However with the arrival of the public housing in 2010 there was also an influx of commercial development, and an up-market supermarket chain opened in the new commercial plaza. 'This was a horror for me!' Her profits dropped sharply. After 2011, when the public housing began to accept tenants, it was even worse. The influx of new residents had no community connection with the resettlement housing, and would rather use the big supermarket or 24-hour convenience stores than the somewhat shabby open-air stores such as hers. By 2016, she was earning almost nothing from the shop. Meeting the rent on the space ate all the profits from selling cigarettes, alcohol and snacks to the few neighbours who still visited. Her fear now was that if business got worse she would be forced to abandon the store and become a street sweeper. She would earn about the same money she earned from the shop, but would be on the street all day moving around, stooping low, in the heat of the summer and cold of the winter. If she

could continue to make a tiny profit for the shop, she could continue to run it for another ten or fifteen years, she thought.

Chen Yi felt that she the promises of urban life had turned out rather more meagre than expected. 'I have benefited nothing; I haven't made any real money from the process.' She made the choice to try and make her own living, and not to just be content to scrape by reliant on *dibao*, but felt that she had been effectively abandoned by the state after urbanisation. 'But there's no alternative. When this is state policy, there's just no alternative. If they tell you to move, you have to move.' While speaking with Chen Yi on a damp Wednesday morning, she pulled the heated electric fan closer to her seat and broke off conversation occasionally to sell small bottles of *baijiu* liquor and cigarettes to solitary middle-aged men who emerged from the nearby mahjong parlours.

(B21, November 2016).

6.3.4 Displacement through redevelopment: Zhang Zhigang

Zhang Zhigang was born in the late 1960s in downtown Yuzhong district, close to the centre of Chongqing. He lived in one of the run-down neighbourhoods of privately-owned housing that were built after the war on the steep mountainous slopes leading down to the river. These were poverty-stricken slum-like districts, often built in contravention of building regulations and existing somewhat outside the socialist land system, deep in the centre of the city with little green space. Zhang recalled occasional visits to the countryside as a child, in particular trips in the weeks before Spring Festival, when his family would visit relatives who lived in the city's rural hinterland to partake in the traditional collective activity of smoking *larou*—pork sausages and offal smoked in large drums with tangerine and spices added to the fire. In the 1980s, with the arrival of economic liberalisation, many of the central districts of private housing began to flourish as zones external to the socialist economy. They provided small private hotels where the earliest rural-urban migrants could live, market zones where clothes and imported consumer goods could be bought and sold freely. More importantly, Zhang found himself as a young man surrounded by a booming leisure economy—the private housing districts became widely known as zones of transgression, home to karaoke bars, sex workers and drug dealers. Zhang made a living in various ways through this grey economy for a number of years, and was evasive when asked about the precise details of his life at this time. One way or another, he got involved in some trouble and ended up in prison, where he remained for nearly ten years.

Upon leaving prison, he discovered that the re-structuring of the city had placed skyscrapers where his home had once stood, and demolished the old neighbourhood which had been the locus of his social and economic networks. 'I returned from prison to find no family, no house, no wife.' Zhang struggled to re-establish his life. Eventually he remarried, had a daughter, and scraped by for a decade or more in poverty, living in the state-provided low cost housing (*lianzufang*), which often placed him in dilapidated and crumbling buildings

dotted around the city. In 2010 he discovered he was eligible to apply to live in the public housing newly announced by Bo Xilai. His family were assigned an apartment in Dazhulin, and upon moving in discovered that a good number of their new neighbours were also displaced former inner-city residents, prioritised for public housing allocation as part of the expropriation deal they struck with the local government.

For Zhang the move to peripheral public housing represented a second chance at life, a chance to abandon the life of vagrancy (*liulang*) that he had previously had and build a home. 'Once a man has a home, he can exert himself, find something to put his mind to. You won't become a vagrant in society, you won't become the rubbish of society, you won't get involved in crime.' Zhang was able to find unskilled work on an ad-hoc basis as a manual labourer in the brewery which opened adjacent to the public housing. His daughter got a job working in the city centre, renting an apartment downtown.

In his spare time Zhang crossed the road to the unused land opposite the public housing which had laid idle for years, marked out a small plot for himself, and constructed a small makeshift shed out of leftover pieces of corrugated metal, plastic signs and wooden posts. In the summer months he and his new friends in the public housing would bring their furniture down to the shed and sit outside into the evening, drinking alcohol and eating sunflower seeds. In the weeks before Spring Festival, Zhang collected oil drums, adapted them into smoking furnaces and established a new business—'Brother Zhang's Smoked Sausages'—in the shed he had built on the wasteland. He would sit up all night monitoring the flames, while other households from the public housing brought him boxes of sausages and offal to smoke. With the profits made from smoking sausages, he could take a month off work after Spring Festival and spend his days drinking alcohol and playing cards, before returning grudgingly to the brewery to look for work. When reflecting on his movement through restructuring Chongqing, Zhang was clear on what a turning point the movement to peripheral public housing had been: 'So they say I should buy a house—where am I going to earn the money to buy a house? But now, thanks to Bo Xilai, I will live in a new house for the rest of my life. And that's why, even under pain of death, I'll still say that Bo Xilai was good. It was his policies that led us to this day.'

(A27, A28, B27, B28, B29, January-February 2017)

6.3.5 The Periphery as post-displacement

The diverse origins, motives and trajectories of these experiences of displacement demonstrate the heterogeneous social composition of Dazhulin. Mapping the hometowns of all interviewees in Dazhulin (including these three) reveals the distinct regional character of this space of displacement (Figure 33). The vast majority of residents of Dazhulin were drawn from a fairly small geographic area—indeed, of the life histories

detailed above, two of the three had moved only a short distance from the places they were born. The stories of these displacements are bound to the history of Chongqing's restructuring, from sub-provincial city to an emerging industrial centre of Western China.

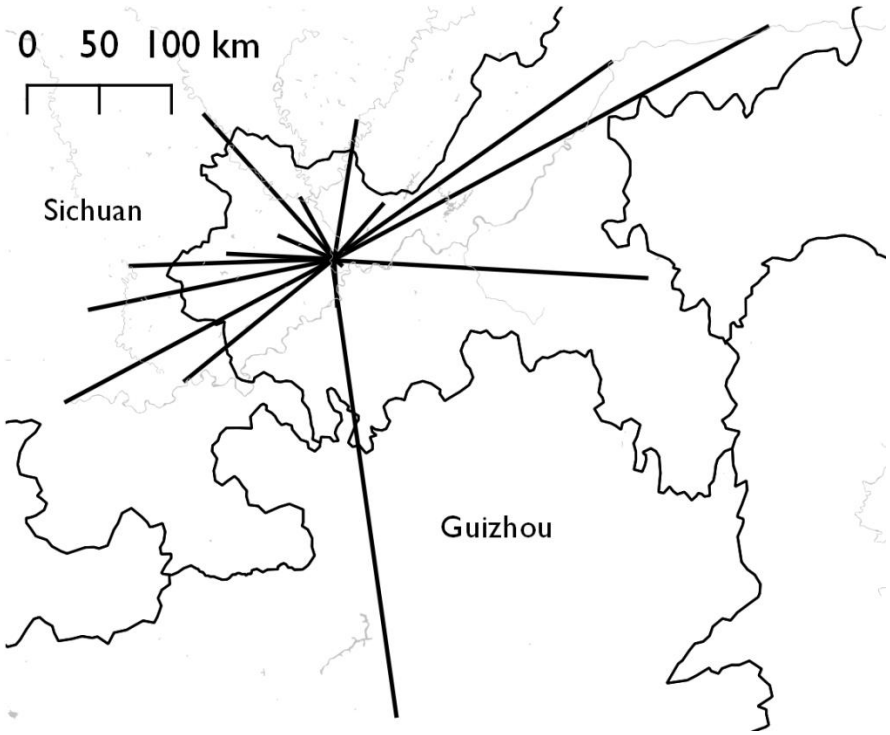

Figure 33: Hometowns of Dazhulin residents. Source: author.

The life stories of these three residents illustrate how people have sought to navigate the shifting boundaries between rural and urban since reform. They reveal the changing way in which the rural-urban duality of political economy has been manifested in state entrepreneurial development since the 1990s (Hsing, 2010; Wu, F., 2003; Wu, F., 2018). The economic imperative to leave the countryside and seek work in cities (initially on the coast, later in Chongqing Municipality) reflects the fundamental geographical unevenness of Chinese development. The entrepreneurial local urban state expands its territory by expropriating adjacent townships, forcibly urbanising, displacing and dispossessing peripheral rural residents in the process (Lin, 2014; Hsing, 2010). The aggrandisement of the urban core led to the displacement of old residential neighbourhoods (Huang, Y., 2012; Logan et al., 2009; Wu, W., 2004). Almost every resident in Dazhulin was likely to have undergone some form of displacement which had led to them being housed on the urban periphery.[58]

Although the experience of displacement was shared, the form it took was highly differentiated. Place of origin, *hukou* status and family relationships affected the nature,

[58] The exception being the growing number of middle-class urbanites purchasing commodity housing in the area.

extent and duration of displacement. Li Yangyang, as a migrant worker, had faced the most extensive and far-reaching displacement—it was nominally voluntary, but her choice was compelled by uneven economic restructuring and her desire to provide access to the benefits of urban modernity for her family. Chen Yi had barely moved geographically, but had effectively undergone displacement-in-situ, having her land expropriated and being 'urbanised' into resettlement housing. Zhang Zhigang's home had also undergone destruction in the drive for redevelopment, after which he had been removed to the periphery. These differentiated displacements reflect different economic and state mechanisms of restructuring and how they compel differently located groups to move to the periphery. However they also reflect enduring legal differences inherited from the socialist system; those holding urban *hukou* (either from birth or from urbanisation) had been provided housing on the periphery by the state (through compensation or allocation) while Li Yangyang, as a migrant worker, had worked for a lifetime for the right to live there.

Urban restructuring also created new opportunities for those displaced. These came about as a result of the state's projects to provide social equity through housing provision but also from less obvious spaces created by urban restructuring. Li had displaced herself in pursuit of promised opportunities—searching for places which would offer her and her family the benefits of urban modernity. This had taken her to the coast and back inland seeking employment. In the process she had missed out on the chance to benefit from compensatory policies in her hometown. Zhang and Li had both found that they were able to make use of the undeveloped land of the periphery. Zhang had constructed a small business, and was insistent that displacement to the periphery was the best thing to happen to him, providing him with employment as a casual labourer in neighbouring factories and a secure home in the public housing. It was a precarious existence, and certainly not the urban modernity promised by the Chongqing Dream, but nonetheless constituted a stability which he had never had in his old life of 'vagrancy' (*liulang*). Chen had at first benefitted from the opportunities presented by urbanisation, starting her own successful business amidst the community of displaced farmers. These opportunities had diminished as subsequent development had disrupted the commercial economy of the resettlement housing, and she now faced a second bout of displacement-in-situ. The opportunities arising after displacement emerged from the uneven and fragmented terrain created by urban restructuring, so were shifting and unstable.

The experience of displacement reproduced existing structural inequalities and created new ones. These inequalities reveal the shortcomings of the state's attempt to

create spatial justice and urban modernity on the periphery (as described in chapter 5). Longstanding inequalities inherited from the legal mechanisms of socialism and uneven economy of the reform era persisted: urban *hukou* was privileged over rural, and opportunities were mediated through pre-existing community networks. New inequalities emerged out of urbanisation. As Dazhulin became more integrated with the city's economy Chen found her customer base disappearing, and that despite her formal status as an 'urban' citizen she struggled to participate in the urban economy. Conversely, many of the younger migrants in the public housing without urban *hukou* were able to participate relatively successfully, with several working as delivery drivers in the city core (e.g. B33). Urbanisation had created a variety of housing rights in Dazhulin, with inequalities between them. Chen and her husband had become owners of two urban properties by virtue compensation for land expropriation, Zhang rented directly from the state with no chance to buy his own home. Li had rented for many years, and eventually been able to purchase a single property in which six people now lived. Urban restructuring had solved housing problems for some, but the results were uneven and often compounded structural inequalities.

By describing Dazhulin as a space of post-displacement I hope to capture the heterogeneity of experiences emerging from different processes of urban restructuring: a plurality of legal statuses, communal ties, economic opportunities, engagements with informal space, housing rights and relationships with the city. The articulation of displacement across these various trajectories reveals a complex social landscape emerging from urban restructuring. Recalling the discussion of Dazhulin's peripheral status in chapter 2, post-displacement illustrates how rapid urbanisation creates spaces which exceed the conceptual boxes of 'suburb' and 'peri-urban'. Viewing Dazhulin as a space of post-displacement also problematises the idea that peripheral settlements can be typologised by intention, as suggested by Harris (2010, pp. 34-37). Amidst the rapid structural changes in the economy, restructuring of the city, transformation of space and active intervention of the state, it becomes impossible to neatly divide the displacements to Dazhulin into either voluntary or non-voluntary. Understanding Dazhulin as a space of post-displacement contributes to an emerging body of literature which examines how claims of planetary urbanisation manifest locally, and emphasises the highly differentiated experience of urbanisation contra any thesis of urbanisation-as-homogenisation (Cowan, 2018).

6.4 Housing the periphery

6.4.1 Housing and becoming urban

In this section, I use ethnographic observation and interviews conducted around the issue of housing in Dazhulin to explore the social configurations emerging out of urbanisation on the periphery. I demonstrate that the tactics used to access and leverage housing move between formal and informal in response to the continuing changes of urban restructuring. I consider how this relates to Caldeira's theory of 'peripheral urbanisation', and the question of how informality emerges in response to state intervention. I treat informality in housing as a heuristic device for investigating the state reveals the multiple agencies of the state, and the tactics with which the displaced respond to it.

I extend the discussion of post-displacement which formed the first half of this chapter to consider how the differentiated experiences, shifting opportunities and new inequalities of the periphery led to a diverse range of tactics deployed in relation to housing. I take housing as a proxy for urban modernity, reflecting the centrality of residential space to the desire for becoming modern in post-reform China (Zhang, L., 2010). In particular, I seek to critically assess the use of public housing, which (as discussed in chapters 4 and 5) was central to the municipal state's claim to provide spatial justice for migrant workers, and so overcome the contradictions of state entrepreneurial development.

I draw upon the literature on informality introduced in chapter 2, to consider informality as a practice (McFarlane, 2012). I use the notion that informality exists in hybrid interfaces with formality (AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005, 2009b, 2011b) to think about how the tactics used to access housing move between formality and informality, and what insights this offers into the agency of the state and its equitable housing programmes (Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019). I use the notion of 'peripheral urbanisation' proposed by Caldeira (2017) to consider how the tactics employed around housing provoke a re-negotation of the values of state-built housing, and the implications of this for the politics and inequalities of the periphery

By describing these practices as 'tactics', I mean to evoke de Certeau's ([1983] 2002) concept of tactics as an 'art of the weak' (p. 38) responding to the environments created by the strategies of the powerful. Tactics 'remain dependant on the possibilities offered by circumstances' but 'do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or

identified by it' and so seek to 'use, manipulate, and divert [the spaces produced by strategies]' (pp. 30-31).

I first examine how the resettlement housing provided to displaced farmers was exploited through informal tactics to create spaces which could be rented to migrant workers. I move on to look at the public housing built as social equity for migrant workers and displaced urban poor, and argue that it failed to provide spatial justice due to three slippages in use: a growing number of wealthy tenants, the leveraging of public housing towards a strategy of property accumulation, and its use as a workers dormitory by adjacent factories. Finally I look at how remaining dilapidated housing in Dazhulin was still rented informally to migrant workers, demonstrating the failure of public housing to redistribute urban modernity.

6.4.2 Resettlement housing

The majority of residents in the resettlement housing were the villagers and township-dwellers who had originally lived in Dazhulin. Prior to urbanisation they had been housed in rural homesteads made of brick or mud, or the communal *danwei* of the town. By 2003 most agricultural land had been expropriated and added to the state-owned land reserve. Resettlement housing was constructed on this land by the state and sold to them at a discounted price in compensation for their displacement. In interviews residents described the expropriation as happening very rapidly, encouraged by special policies promoted by the local party which promised bonus payments or preferential treatment to those who signed rapidly:

> It happened very quickly. One day they'd hold a meeting, the next day they'd sign the contract and take a photograph. (B09)
>
> Of course you don't have to sign if you're unwilling, you can always choose not to.[59] (A16)
>
> Really there's no alternative. When this is state policy, there's just no alternative. If they tell you to move, you have to move. (B12)
>
> (Multiple interviews with resettlement housing residents)

This was bolstered by a propaganda campaign which presented becoming urban as an inescapable trajectory of rural life and expropriation as an opportunity to grow rich. Local officials encouraged villagers to arrange fake divorces prior to the allocation of housing, so that ex-husband and ex-wife would count as two households, and receive

[59] This sentence was spoken in the context of discussing bonus payments offered to early signatories. You could chose not to sign *but* you risked losing out on compensation money.

double the allocation of compensatory property (as seen earlier in Chen Yi's story, 6.3.3). According to one official, over 90% of displaced villagers divorced as a result (community official, B14). Officials used informal advice which exploited loopholes in the state's policies to win the trust and induce consent amongst villagers, while still enforcing the policy of expropriation (community official, A18).

The use of rumours, special offers and propaganda mirrors Chuang's (2014) findings on the 'muting' of potential resistance to land expropriation through the work of local party cadres. These local cadres enforced the formal violence of displacement while encouraging displacees to engage in informal practices which would game the system of compensation to their advantage (see Ong, L.H., 2018).

Displaced households were awarded cash compensation for their houses, determined by the quality of the materials and area of their property. This compensation went towards the cost of purchasing urban property in the resettlement housing and transferring *hukou* status from rural to urban and buying into the urban social welfare system. The resettlement housing apartments were typically 60m^2 in area. 20m^2 was provided 'free' by the state as a form of compensation, effectively reducing the price by a third. In practice, the cost of purchasing an apartment and urban *hukou* exhausted the majority of the compensation money awarded. This was especially the case for poorer villagers, who received less compensation money of the low quality of materials their rural homestead was constructed from.

The resettlement housing was laid out in square estates without walls or external barriers, with terracotta-orange brick buildings of six storeys with no lifts. The square estates were (according to local officials) modelled after the character 田 (*tian*) meaning 'field', in reference to the rural origins of the freshly urbanised residents. Apartments were either one or two bedrooms, and generally judged to be of good quality by the residents, although too small and narrow, resulting in cramped conditions. A recurrent complaint was that the dense construction allowed the smell of their neighbours' cooking and the sound of people playing mahjong in the street to intrude into their living space (multiple resettlement housing residents, B09, B12).

Figure 34: Cornershop converted into improvised mahjong parlour. Source: author.

The former villagers became urban property owners with full rights to buy and sell property within the city. The majority remained in the resettlement housing ten years after expropriation took place (community official, A18). The local government rented shop space to them at preferential rates in order to encourage them to open businesses and adapt to urban living (multiple community officials, A21, B14). These businesses included convenience stores, massage parlours, tea houses and restaurants. Gambling amongst the former villagers was so popular that many of these spaces were informally taken over by mahjong players (see Figure 34).

Many of the resettlement housing units had been illegally adapted or augmented by residents. One community official led me to a ground-floor apartment which had been converted into a convenience store by knocking down one of the walls. The building work looked extremely professional, so I asked my guide why this single apartment had been replaced with a commercial unit. She waved a greeting at the shop-owners and asked

them how business was, but once we had walked a short distance she explained that the change in the property had been carried out illegally. She explained that there had been a longstanding problem of property owners in the resettlement housing illegally adapting their property (B23). Several ground floor residential apartments had been converted into small shops, while others had been converted into guesthouses—all uses which lay outside of the formal regulated use of the resettlement housing.

Figure 35a & 35b: Two perspectives on illegal constructions on top storeys of resettlement housing. Source: author.

The roofs and attics of almost all resettlement housing units had been converted into extra storeys (Figure 35). These informal constructions built on existing attic spaces, adding brick walls, doors and windows to create extra rooms, creating an extra storey. Some of these extra rooms were little more than sheds built from discarded shop signs

and corrugated metal, others were much more sophisticated constructions of brick, with windows, gardens, lockable doors and balconies. For this reason, being allocated an apartment on the top floor of a block of resettlement housing was considered extremely fortunate, as it granted you the possibility to expand upwards. The majority were used as extended living space or rented out, but some were apparently used to keep chickens, another practice officially prohibited within the resettlement housing.[60] This mirrored practices of housing expansion in rural China documented by Sargeson (2002), and the informal construction and adaptation of urban villages which commonly takes the form of additional storeys built on rooftops (Tang and Chung, 2002).

The community officials tasked with preventing such illegal adaptations found that they had to personally stand outside certain properties to physically block the builders employed by the residents from beginning work. Even then, when they had successfully fended off the attempted adaptations during the day, the residents would hire builders to return at night and work through until dawn. In the morning officials would discover that an apartment had been converted into a shop, or an illegal extension had been added. After several years the community officials issued a moratorium stating that after a certain date not future illegal construction would be tolerated, prompting a final flurry of construction (fieldnotes, B23).

Many former villagers were reliant on state welfare payments for daily living expenses. Others took on seasonal work for the local government as street-sweepers or security guards. Several interviewees lived of the income from renting out rooms in their property. These included the informal extra stories added to roofs which were rented chiefly to migrant workers. Where households had gained spare apartments through fake divorces, these could also be rented out. This rentier economy had improved with Dazhulin's growing integration into the city, which had led to many more workers seeking a bed for cheap rent in Dazhulin (A38). A good quality apartment would be rented for 1,500 yuan per month, well above the supposed market rate by which the public housing rent was calculated (B45). Despite this growing integration, the urbanised villagers living in the resettlement housing rarely travelled outside of Dazhulin, although the business parks and malls elsewhere in the LJNA were only five minutes away on the light rail line (B09, B10, B22).

The changes that Dazhulin had undergone since 2006 were a source of frustration for some of the former villagers. Although most interviewees acknowledged that the

[60] Throughout my fieldwork I was never able to gain access to any of these extra storeys.

community had been receptive to their needs in keeping the green areas of the housing estates clean and well maintained, others complained that the local state had ceased to care about them. A particular target for complaint was the construction of public housing in 2010, and changing use of space that this had caused. As Chen Yi's story illustrates, many of the businesses owned by former peasants had suffered as a result of the influx of new residents who preferred to spend money at the chain stores of the commercial plaza, or travel elsewhere on the subway to shop. Empty areas surrounding the resettlement housing which the residents had used to grow vegetables and do other informal activities had been filled in with commercial developments. Several interviewees described a sense of anger that the public housing had superior facilities, while the public spaces of the resettlement housing continued to decline:

> They have basketball courts, the commercial plaza, new toilets, new schools. The local government forgot all about us. (Resettlement housing resident, male, 50s, B13)

Interviews conducted on the street in the resettlement housing would often evolve into informal focus groups as neighbours joined in the discussion, sharing their complaints about the affectations of the public housing residents. A repeated point of tension was the urban habits of many residents of the public housing, such as the keeping of pets:

> 'They are all obsessed with dogs. They give their dogs children's names, like "cutie" (*yaoer*). When we kept animals they were just to work or to eat, we don't give them these kinds of names.' (Resettlement housing resident, female, B12)

The local government officials who I spoke with acknowledged that the transition from the countryside to the city had not been straightforward. They referred to this as the issue of 'citizenisation' (*shiminhua*) (see Wang, G. et al., 2008; Chen, Y., 2003). Zhang, M. et al. (2017a) understand this as a struggle by urbanised rural residents to maintain rural habitus in an urban setting. While higher echelons of state had urbanised the environment of Dazhulin and given its residents urban *hukou* status, the task of educating the former villagers in how to behave as urban citizens had fallen to the local community and subdistrict level cadres who I spoke to.

> We had many problems with rural habits immediately after they moved in [to the resettlement housing]. For example, they would let the streets get dirty, leave vegetable peel in the public squares, or leave farming tools outside their front doors, because this is what they're used to in the villages. We had to go around and explain to them that this isn't appropriate.' (Community official, female, 50s, A18)

> 'It's not a problem about their *hukou* status, it's a problem about their way of thinking.' Every society has this kind of problem, he said again. It's partly to do with the speed it happened here. And, yes, the fact that they were *urbanised* without any choice, rather than choosing urbanisation for themselves. 'There are simply too many of them' he said, laughing and gesturing in the direction of the resettlement housing units. (Fieldnotes from meeting with official, B26)

The use of the passive form of the verb urbanise (*bei chengshihua*) here describes urbanisation as an experience which was imposed upon the villagers of Dazhulin, rather than a voluntary engagement or expression of agency in response to urban restructuring. The problem the officials faced was that nominally urban subjects were failing to behave as such: despite their *hukou* status and urban property rights, the former villagers' utilisation and alteration of the space represented a way of engaging with and knowing the urban environment which was viewed as incorrect, rural and informal.

This relates to the discourse of *suzhi* or 'moral fibre' which was used by officials who described these urbanised peasants as having 'low *suzhi*' (B14, B26). The discourse of *suzhi* has been characterised as a trope of neoliberal social discourse in China, whereby discussions social and economic differentiation grounded in class are replaced with an individualised quality of personality reflecting self-discipline and willingness to optimise oneself in the market economy (Anagnost, 2004; Jacka, 2009). While urban restructuring had imbricated the villagers of Dazhulin in the built environment and legal framework of the city, it had failed to transform them into the self-optimising citizen of normative urban modernity. Their economic and social peripherality within the city, reliant on rentier economies and state welfare, reflected this failed transition.

The urbanised villagers of Dazhulin negotiated housing in the city through a variety of techniques that moved between formality and informality. They had engaged with the formal policies of the state where it was beneficial to them, taking advantage of the subsidies offered by the state in acquiring housing, buying into urban hukou and renting commercial space. They had also pursued informal tactics to leverage these formal benefits to maximum advantage. This was demonstrated by the widespread practice of fake divorces to acquire extra property subsidies, the illegal adaptation of urban property and construction of extra storeys. This was also apparent in the rentier economy which emerged from these spaces, as adapted apartments were used for commercial spaces and the extra storeys rented to migrant workers. In this respect, the resettlement housing bore some resemblance to the 'urban village' (see 2.5.2), in that it represented an informal leveraging of property for maximum benefit. It differed however, in that the property being leveraged was urban property, under the control of urban planning ordnances. As a

result the extent of the rentier economy that emerged was much more minimal than in an urban village.

It is important to emphasise that none of these phenomena were particularly unique to Dazhulin, and likely resembled patterns of urbanisation-through-resettlement throughout China (see Jiang, Y. et al., 2018). Li, J. et al. (2016) document similar practices of adapting space amongst urbanised farmers in Beijing. Indeed, the officials interviewed were keen to stress that while there had been problems with informal tactics in Dazhulin, they were relatively minor compared to elsewhere in Chongqing. They also stressed that the villagers of Dazhulin had enjoyed a comparatively positive experience of urbanisation compared to other places in Chongqing, because the municipal state had provided additional funding to smooth the process (B26, B30). The formal benefits that the residents of resettlement housing received from the state constituted equity distributed to the villagers by the municipal government. However this must be placed in the context of the state's expropriation of communal land which was subsequently leased to property developers at considerable profit.

6.4.3 Public housing

In chapters 4 and 5 I demonstrated that the construction of public housing had been of central importance to the so-called Chongqing Model. In the municipality's urban restructuring, public housing was one of the key equitable policies highlighted by the Chongqing Model's leftist proponents. In the urban imaginary of recent development, public housing represented the physical instantiation of the party's commitment to spatial justice, providing housing to migrant workers and other marginalised groups.

As described previously, Dazhulin contains one of the public housing estates constructed at the height of the Chongqing Model in March 2010. Kangzhuang Meidi ('healthy village, beautiful land') provided 1.2 million square metres of liveable housing out of the 40 million promised by Bo Xilai in 2010 (Chongqing Public Housing Information, 2012). It was one of only two public housing estates constructed near the urban core, with others located in remote satellite towns (see 4.3.5). Shortly after it was opened in July 2011, Kangzhuang Meidi was visited by Bo Xilai. The Chongqing Daily reported that residents extolled the virtues of the public housing, describing it as providing a secure home for young migrants and the elderly alike (see 5.4.4).

My first visit to the public housing presented a different impression. The high-tech security gates had been disabled, and the guards never checked identification. The paths around the public housing were lined with people selling vegetables which they had

farmed informally in the adjacent vacant land. Despite the initial announcement that strict income limits would be imposed on applicants, Kangzhuang Meidi's carpark was overflowing, and the neighbouring streets lined with expensive foreign cars. Every morning the adjacent light rail stop was full of white-collar workers preparing for their commute into the business and commercial districts of the city (fieldnotes, August 2016).

Regulations and use of public housing	*2010*	*2016*
Income restrictions on applicants	<1,500-2,000 yuan per person per month[61]	None
Employment restrictions	One year's employment with an urban employer paying social insurance (or six months as a flexible employee).	
Property restrictions on applicants	Households must not own other property within the city.	Restriction still in place but poorly enforced.
Hukou restrictions	None	
Rent	60% of market rates (approx. 400 yuan per month in Dazhulin)	60% of market rates (approx. 600 yuan per month in Dazhulin)
Possibility to purchase	Tenants can purchase property after five years of occupation	Indefinitely postponed

Figure 36: The changing criteria of public housing between announcement in 2010 and 2016. Sources: CQMP 10/03/25; CQMP 10/04/16; CQMP 10/05/25; CQMP 10/12/19; Chongqing Public Housing Management Office, 2011.

Figure 36 lists the public housing application guidelines as announced to the public in 2010, demonstrating the regulations in place to restrict access to the housing to the relatively needy: applicant households must have a monthly income of below 1,500-2,000

[61] 'Single applicants' income must not exceed 2000 yuan per month, two-person households must not have an income exceeding 3000 yuan per month, and for households of three or more the average income per head must not exceed 1500 yuan per month.' (CQMP 10/05/25, p.3)

yuan per person (depending on size of household), not own other property within the city or a car (CQMP 10/03/25, Chongqing Public Housing Management Office, 2011). Successful applicants would be permitted to rent a newly built apartment in the public housing unit of their choice at 60% of market rate. They would have the ability to purchase their property from the state after five years of living there (though this could not be sold on the market, only sold back to the state). Unlike other forms of state-subsidised housing for the urban poor, public housing would not be tied to *hukou* status, but would house rural and urban citizens alike.

A severe limitation of this policy was the requirement for applicants to submit evidence that they had been formally employed by the same employer in the city for a year, or been enrolled into a flexible workers insurance scheme for six months. This excluded a large proportion of the poorest migrant workers who never engaged in formal employment in cities and never participated in social security schemes.[62] Indeed, it revealed the diversity of the term 'migrant worker', which could be applied to a wide group encompassing highly educated inter-city migrants as well as low-skilled rural-urban migrants.

These regulations reveal the shortcomings of the public housing as a provision of spatial justice to migrant workers by requiring a degree of stable urban employment and engagement with urban welfare schemes. However, by the time my fieldwork took place, there had been further changes in the regulations of access to public housing, and these were reflected in a changing use of space in Dazhulin. The income restrictions on applicants were removed in May 2011, thereafter allowing applications by anyone who did not own property within the city regardless of income (Xinhua, 2011). In contrast to initial announcements, residents were not able to purchase their public housing apartment from the state after five years of continuous renting (Bendibao, 2014; Chongqing Public Information Platform, 2015).

> At the time we moved in here they said the apartments would be purchasable. After five years we could buy it. But now there's nothing. Bo Xilai is gone, the government don't care about ordinary people. (Public housing tenant, female, 60s, B34)

Apartments were assigned by a lottery amongst applicants held at regular intervals. However other routes to occupying an apartment existed: some were assigned to those

[62] Wang Z. (2011) records that unstable employment patterns and a preference for increasing take-home pay rather than engaging with formal welfare systems makes the social security engagements rates for migrant workers very low. Liu and Wang (2014) found in a national study that only 26% of migrant workers participated in urban insurance schemes.

displaced by redevelopment in the urban core, others were leased to enterprises which used them to house workers. In some instances public housing was assigned to highly educated individuals with technical skills that the municipality wished to attract (see Liu, Z., 2016 for the latter).

Due to the sensitive nature of the public housing and its association with Bo Xilai, I was unable to secure interviews with any officials working in the public housing. As such, rather than analyse the institutional logics and mechanisms behind these changes in regulation, I instead look at the changing use of the public housing through three 'slippages' in use: (1) a greater number of middle-class residents arrived (2) public housing was utilised to acquire private property (in violation of regulations), and (3) housing units were leased to neighbouring private companies.

I choose to use the word slippages to describe these changes because it hints at the ambiguous nature and politics of these gradual shifts in use. The changes were subtle, and seemed unremarkable to many of those present. It would be wrong to present these slippages as evident of imminent antagonisms emerging between residents. Most interviewees expressed little animosity over these changes, which were sometimes regarded as positive demonstrations of the public housing's inclusivity (B20, B29, A40).

Slippage one: the social composition of tenants

The first slippage I identify is the changing social composition of tenants in Dazhulin's public housing. Due to the relaxed regulations the public housing at Dazhulin was increasingly utilised by young and relatively highly educated tenants. This differed from its portrayal as being primarily for the benefit of poor migrant workers. Although many of these wealthier tenants were technically migrants, they were typically inter-urban migrants from the smaller cities of Chongqing or Sichuan.

One such tenant in her mid-twenties, Miss He, was technically a migrant in the sense that she retained a rural *hukou* registration, but had travelled to the city to attend university, completed specialist postgraduate education, and now worked in a school in the middle-class Jiangbei district. While she was not wealthy enough to live in Jiangbei, she had previously rented an apartment in the resettlement housing and viewed the public housing as a good way to save money towards purchasing a house in the near future (A38).

Other residents were evidently members of an emergent young urban middle-class, analogous to those documented by Zhang (2010) and Fleischer (2010). They had applied for public housing after graduating from university, and worked in white-collar jobs in nearby commercial and business centres. Mr Zhu was an executive manager of an online business in downtown Chongqing, and invited me to conduct an interview in his private

office on the 30th floor of a skyscraper. Mr Zhu's story was typical: he and his wife had applied for public housing shortly after getting married and having their first child; they planned to use the public housing as a 'bridge'—cheap state-subsidised accommodation that would allow them to save up money in order to buy an expensive new apartment in a few years' time (A42). This approach was shared by other university-educated tenants:

> Yes, we plan to stay here for now. Because of the baby, and there are so many other parents around, it's very convenient. Then the plan is to buy a house, then we'll still have to wait a few more years to save up some more money, and also pay for it to be decorated, and buy furniture before we can move in and live there. Anyway, for most people they just live here for a short period of time, perhaps the average person rents here for just a few years. (Public housing resident, female, 20s, A43)

The public housing was thus increasingly utilised as a cheap temporary living arrangement for young middle-class families while they saved up money to buy a house, often in Dazhulin's new luxury developments close by. Poorer tenants had noted that many of their neighbours were much wealthier than would be expected of public housing. One online commentator joked that the residents of Kangzhuang Meidi were not the 'housing difficulty households' (*zhufang kunnan hu*) who were the intended beneficiaries of public housing but were instead 'parking difficulty households' (*tingche kunnan hu*) whose greatest hardship was that they lacked sufficient space to park their cars (Tianya comment, January 2018). Interviewees had similar observations:

> Every type of person lives here. Some poor people, but also some big bosses. Even the rich like it because it's cheap and convenient. (Public housing tenant, male, 30s, B38)

> If you walked through here and just looked at the cars, you'd never guess it was public housing. It's all just BMWs and Audis, foreign cars that belong to the bosses. (Public housing tenant, male, 50s, B37)

> Public housing is just like *jianghu* food. You take every type, from every location, rich and poor, Northerners and Southerners, and put them together. The result is *jianghu*.[63] (Public housing tenant, male, 20s, A42)

In face-to-face interviews people were rarely willing to explicitly criticise the changing tenancy composition, but there was a growing online discourse which criticised the failure of the public housing to live up to the promises of spatial justice. Discussion on the Chongqing Tianya messageboard revealed a public perception that the allocation and utilisation of public housing was increasingly *maoni* ('underhanded'):

[63] *Jianghu* is a term for wilderness that refers to a degree of lawlessness and camaraderie often invoked in relation to the culture of Chongqing, as discussed in 5.3.2.

> The public housing at Mu'er [in the north of Liangjiang New Area] is all just sublet for a high price; the people who have genuine needs are nowhere to be found. If you meet the requirements on the application then you should be given housing, relying on luck just isn't scientific. (Tianya comment, September 2018).[64]
>
> Sometimes when I go back to Kangzhuang Meidi in the evening there's nowhere to park by the side of the road, it's just full of ABB,[65] Land Rovers, these kinds of cars. So I said to my friend 'People who drive these kinds of cars, but live in public housing—what's going on there??' (Tianya comment, August 2017).

Rather than an instantiation of spatial justice, the divide between wealthy and poorer tenants illustrated an inequality emergent from urban restructuring. Interviews with wealthier tenants revealed a different perspective. There was a perception that the poorer inhabitants of the public housing made the area unsafe and unclean. A typical example of this discourse was revealed in the recording of a group interview conducted with wealthy young tenants (Figure 37)

Speaker 1: There are so many husks of sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds littering the floor.

Speaker 2: If you're living on the ground floor don't open the window. Because when they throw out the waste from the noodle shops – oh my god!

Speaker 3: Yeah, rubbish everywhere, disgusting!

Speaker 1: Yes, if we leave the bathroom window open it gets covered with grease from noodles [from the apartments above throwing out noodles].

Speaker 3: So annoying.

Speaker 2: First of all, the problem is that the people who live in public rented housing are *hunza*. Even freshly refurbished houses quickly get dirty, and it's so noisy. But also the transport is very convenient; there is the light rail and buses. […] But, then recently we had a burglary in estate B, they climbed down from the roof.

Speaker 4: What did they steal?

Speaker 2: Luckily they didn't take my father's expensive alcohol—that would've been too much! Just a few hundred yuan. They have climbed over into our apartment from the roof before.

Speaker 1: We also had thieves on the 19th floor; they climbed in through our kitchen window, just as many thieves do. They stole over a thousand yuan.

Speaker 4: 20,000 yuan was stolen from our neighbours.

Figure 37: Extract from interview with public housing tenants, female, 20s, A43.

[64] Tianya is a popular web forum in China, often used for geographically messageboards to discuss local issues.

[65] ABB is a Swiss-Swedish electric car manufacturer.

The term *hunza* was often used by wealthier residents to describe their poorer neighbours. *Hunza* literally means 'mixed' but carries negative implications of disorder and chaos, particularly when applied to social groupings. Public housing tenants displaced by urban development or migration were viewed as dirty, potentially dangerous, and lacking urban habits.

This attitude was mirrored by officials of the subdistrict, who described how they viewed their task as being to raise the level of culture and *suzhi* amongst the poorer tenants, to allow them to become properly urban citizens. They commented approvingly on how Minxin Jiayuan (the flagship public housing estate, built in an already-urbanised area) had succeeded in raising the quality of tenants. By living around urban people with a good level of culture, they had (according to the officials) become urban and modern themselves (B26).

Slippage two: tactics to property accumulation

The changing social composition of public housing tenants did not contravene regulations, and fitted the original notion of public housing as a solution to the housing difficulties of the 'sandwich class' of middle-to-low income earners rather than migrant workers. However, wealthier residents also found tactics which allowed them to actively contravene the formal regulations of the public housing in Dazhulin.

Several wealthier tenants confirmed in the course of interviews that they were in fact living in violation the regulations of the public housing: they owned properties elsewhere in the city, a situation which technically ought to have led to their eviction. In the context of the city's expanding rising house prices and growing real estate speculation, this was regarded by those who admitted to it as legitimate tactic to secure investment in the city's future:

> To be honest, we already bought several houses. But we plan to buy more before we move out of here. House prices at the moment are rising quickly, so it's a good investment. You should think about buying one too. (Public housing tenant, female, 20s, B42)

> The conversation turned to tactics for accumulating properties. People around the table discussed how those wishing to live in public housing might falsify their application with the help of friends who owned businesses which could temporarily take possession of their properties elsewhere in the city, or provide them with a false record of employment. They discussed how couples might orchestrate a false divorce so that the wife could continue buying properties while the husband retained the right to live in public housing, or how houses could be bought in the name of their children to circumvent restrictions. 'There

> are many babies who are already property tycoons!' one person joked. (Fieldnotes, meal with public housing tenants, B44).

The practice of fake divorces was also mentioned as a tactic of housing speculation, allowing one partner to accrue multiple properties while the other remained formally property-less (B46). Online searches also provided ample evidence of public housing being illegally sub-let by tenants, typically to young white collar workers seeking temporary accommodation while working in the nearby business and commerce district of LJNA. There was awareness that many of the tactics used to access public housing were *maoni*:

> So, why do some estates have a 100% success rate for applications? And some estates have thousands of people who don't get a room? Why was I told there were no other estates where I could apply for a two-bedroom apartment? If I apply to an estate which claims to allocate 100% of applications, why don't I get one (am I that 0.001%)? Is it that those estates with 100% allocation success are in fact 100% *maoni*? I want to say that public housing which claims 100% success rate is 100% *maoni*! (Tianya comment, August 2018).

> It's weird, I have a colleague who owns several apartments under his relatives' names. So how does he manage to get a public housing apartment? I know another person whose mother-in-law got an apartment in compensation after demolition, so how did she get public housing too? They just faked the application? Maybe nobody even checked it? Recently another friend surprised me when she told me she has several apartments in her name and she rents them out for over ten-thousand a month each (yes, you read that right!). Plus she owns a car! But she lives in the public housing—do you believe me? (Tianya comment, September 2017).

The acquisition of multiple properties, and the tactics employed to evade detection and eviction, reveal an extension of the use of public housing into an informal means of facilitating property speculation. This entailed further informal practices of property registration, circumvention of regulation and mobilisation of networks of family and privileged relationships with authorities. Spare properties could then be rented for profit, most likely to migrant workers.

Slippage three: state-subsidised workers dormitories

As discussed in chapter 4, some public housing units were built in cooperation with manufacturing enterprises looking to take advantage of the cheap land and subsidises offered by the creation of Liangjiang New Area. Factories came to arrangements with the municipal Public Housing Authority whereby entire blocks of housing were leased out to act as dormitories for workers. In Dazhulin I was able to identify at least four blocks of

public housing which were leased out in this way, occupied by workers at a local electronics manufacturing firm.

> These ones are all for workers. They're a bit smaller and newer than the other apartments. People are always moving in and out, they're only here for a few months. (Security guard, male, 50s, B41)

Online discourse also reflected this changing use, as revealed by one post where the writer discussed a friend who owned several houses but still lived in public housing:

> It turns out employers applied for the public housing and just let her live there. It looks like this isn't an individual case. Because so many of the public housing blocks are managed by corporations, they just turn into a form of employee benefit. So I ask you, who is it who really benefits from Chongqing's public housing? (Tianya comment, September 2017)

This correlates with the development of 'company-oriented public housing' described previously (4.3.5). Similarly, several blocks of resettlement housing were leased out to a neighbouring factory. It was unclear whether this arrangement was legitimate or informal—community-level officials confirmed that the housing was used by local businesses but were unwilling to discuss the nature of the relationship (B14). Local residents speculated that the money from leasing such properties went 'higher up' (A36, B35).[66] In these instances public housing effectively functioned as a form of state-subsidised workers dormitory, making explicit the relationship between the demand for cheap labour in LJNA and the role of public housing in meeting that need and facilitating further urban restructuring.

Shifting opportunities and inequalities

The three slippages identified here—the changing social composition of tenants, exploitation of tenancy to enable property speculation, and the utilisation of apartments by private industry—represent informal tactics which sought to renegotiate the value of the public housing created by the state, and so undermined the protocol of spatial justice claimed by the Chongqing Dream.[67] As Roy (2009b, 2011b) argues, informality is

[66] A recent article by Wang J. and Li (2018) provides data from interviews with public housing officials conducted in 2013 that public housing was indeed being used for industrial dormitories in the more remote estates, with public housing apartments basically indistinguishable from the private dormitories of other manufacturing enterprises.

[67] An interesting development while writing this thesis is that the website of Chongqing Public Housing began to publish details of attempts to address some of these problems, or at least the perception of these problems. It published the details of several people who were evicted from public housing for sub-letting their apartments, and began to publish the details of all public housing applicants online. This effort at transparency provides the names, stated income levels and employers of new applicants. It seems that this does not include resettled urban displacees or those making use of employer-rented public housing, and

manifested not only in the settlements and daily life of the urban poor, but also in the practices of middle class urbanites which circumvent regulations for their own benefit. In Dazhulin's public housing, informality emerged not in the absence of the state, but in active *response to* state intervention, diversifying the use of property away from providing equity for migrant workers, and towards private benefit. These informal practices provoked a re-negotiation of the public value of state-built housing.

Although the majority of interviewees were magnanimous about these changes, a portion of poorer and migrant worker interviewees expressed resentment at the proportion of wealthier tenants, discrimination against poorer residents, and the failure of the city to provide a steady supply of decent jobs in the area (A22, A45, B29, B39, C26). These tenants complained that they were no longer able to purchase their apartments from the state, as had initially been promised, and some attributed this betrayal to the absence of Bo Xilai (B27, B39).

The cases of Old Zhao and Old Jin were exemplary of this class of migrant living within the public housing. They had moved into the public housing with their grown-up children and infant grandchildren around 2012. While their children worked in nearby factories or travelled into the city to work as delivery drivers, Old Zhao and Old Jin had expected to buy their apartments and be able to retire. Instead, they found that to afford the rent on the public housing they had to find work. They admitted they were better off in the public housing, but still found themselves looking for work in their sixties to pay for a cramped apartment that three generations of people lived in.

> The problem is this house isn't your own. You still have to pay money. Still, it's alright… [Income and living standards] have definitely improved though. It's just that nobody wants us when we're at this age. I can't find a job. Most *danwei* don't want you. Maybe some private companies will want us. If there was work, our life would be much better. With no means of subsistence it's worse. (Old Jin, A22)

The only work available for unskilled migrants such as themselves was in the gangs laboring on the construction of the adjacent luxury housing, or (for older workers such as themselves) in landscaping the rural terrain of the undeveloped land into a neater suburban image. In the cold winter fog Old Jin and Old Zhao planted trees along the newly constructed road running through the *kongdi* ('wasteland') that would soon be the main thoroughfare to new luxury housing units (see Figure 38). They deeply resented that the public housing policy had made promises of employment and purchasable homes

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does not address the issue of people misrepresenting income levels, employment status, or properties owned, but nonetheless provides an interesting dataset for future analysis.

which had not been kept, and that they were not able to adapt or modify the apartments themselves (Figure 39).

Figure 38: Planting trees along the new road through the *kongdi*. Source: author.

> Old Zhao: At the time [we moved in] I was able to buy the house in stages—just buy a few square metres at a time. So for example say this year you bought ten square metres, you will pay ten square metres less rent next year. Now you're not allowed to buy it *at all*. It's not good to still need to work when you're sixty or seventy!'
>
> Old Jin: If you don't pay the rent you can just leave, if you've not got the money you have to leave. For example, if you made any modifications to the apartment, decorated it or anything, you have to change it back to how it was originally when you leave. All the scratches on this wall, we'll have to pay for them. Wherever they find a problem in this house they'll deduct some money from the deposit we originally paid. Everyone is just out there looking for work, it's very hard.
>
> Interviewer: So there's no positive side to the public housing at all?
>
> Old Jin, Old Zhao and Old Jin's family (in unison): No!

Figure 39: Extract from transcript of interview with Old Jin and Old Zhao, A22.

For other residents, the picture was more complex. The public housing in Dazhulin was often described as one of the best in the city because of its location close to the edge of the city and connection to the light rail line, compared to other estates which were much more remote and the remote. As a result the competition for places was fierce. Journalists and urban planners who were familiar with the public housing issue in Chongqing explained that wealthier citizens were able to apply repeatedly for apartments because they did not face imminent housing security. Because applicants were assigned apartments at random, those with greater stability of employment and housing could afford to wait for a place in one of the well-connected locations (such as Dazhulin) to become available. Poorer residents who were faced with precarious housing and employment would struggle to meet the formal employment criteria required, and were less likely to be willing or able to wait for an apartment in one of the more desirable locations to become available (B03, B34).

As mentioned previously, the younger migrants who did gain an apartment within Kangzhuang Meidi were grateful for the opportunities they had accessed as a result (A40). The slippages in use of public housing should not obscure the real benefit that it provided for many poorer residents, as illustrated by the life of Zhang Zhigang (see section 6.3.4). Zhou (2018) suggests that in some cases Chongqing's public housing *did* enable intra-provincial rural-urban migrants to 'bridge' from renting to owning property within the city, but also notes poor uptake. Some poorer interviewees expressed pride in the public housing, arguing that it demonstrated that Chongqing was determined to provide a basic quality of life to ordinary people which (they believed) would not be the case in other cities (A29, B20). Nonetheless, it is evidently the case that the reality of public housing did not match the image of spatial justice and egalitarian redistribution of urban modernity described in chapter 5.

6.4.4 Migrant spaces

This failure was illustrated by the fact that most of the migrant workers in Dazhulin did not live in public housing, but rented poor quality accommodation. The migrant housing spaces of Dazhulin were the informal storeys constructed in the resettlement housing, the construction worker dormitories which ringed luxury housing developments and other informal, dilapidated spaces.

Figure 40: Old housing rented out in Dazhulin Old Town. Source: author.

This was demonstrated by an event late in my fieldwork which revealed the reality of housing conditions for many migrant workers in Dazhulin. I had the opportunity to conduct a walking interview with Mr Shen, an original resident of Dazhulin township who had undergone urbanisation but since moved out into commodity housing (assisted by family members who had high-ranking jobs in the party). He took me to see the remains of the old centre of Dazhulin township, which were awaiting demolition and redevelopment as luxury commodity housing. He led me through abandoned factory yards and streets of dilapidated single-storey brick buildings constructed in the 1980s or earlier (Figure 40). Most of them were single-room dwellings, often in a poor state of repair, with no plumbing, heating or air conditioning. As we walked the streets in the late afternoon, a van full of migrant workers who had come from a construction site elsewhere in Dazhulin arrived. They climbed out and made their way inside the houses. It turned out that Mr Shen had acquired a number of these dilapidated old buildings through his family connections, and was renting them out to a construction contractor, who in turn used them to accommodate migrant workers. Another former resident named Mrs Yuan joined us, and the two of them discussed the rentier economy of this dilapidated housing.

Yuan: We have the property rights for these ones. But it's not clear who owns the property rights for the old factory now. […]

Shen: [*Pointing*] I used to live in that house, my mother lived in that house. After my wife and I divorced we got another house. It was a fake divorce. Then, after my mother-in-law died, we had her house as well. In total four properties we're renting. And that property I shared with my neighbour, so two half-rooms and another room on that side we're renting out now. […]

Yuan: Now all of the people renting here are people from outside who came here to work. It's a little boss, a contractor, who I have an arrangement with. I rent them very cheaply, less than 200 yuan [per month].

Shen: Two hundred yuan, eh? Our relatives all came back here wanting to make some money, so I helped them out. I rented the rooms to the little boss, that same guy you mentioned—the original house I grew up in, and also my brother's house. [unintelligible] house as well. I've seen them in my mother's old house cooking rice.

Figure 41: Transcript extract from go-along interview at Dazhulin old town, A44.

When I asked why these migrant workers didn't apply to live in the public housing which was visible in the distance, they said that they'd been told it was full. They were worried that their employment status would exclude them, and they stated that they didn't trust the applications process as fair. Mr Shen laughed and agreed with them. This attitude was mirrored by other poor workers in Chongqing, who doubted they would ever be able to access public housing without the right connections (A32).

Shen and Yuan's dialogue gives an insight into the tactics and networks mobilised by urbanised villagers in seeking rent from migrant workers. Family alliances were used in concert with the persistence of property rights in the old town to acquire properties which are then rented to contractors seeking to house groups of migrant workers.

As with the illegal construction of extra storeys on the roofs of resettlement housing, those migrant workers who could not access public housing were still forced into the liminal and informal spaces of Dazhulin. The spaces occupied by migrant workers—created out of family networks, permissive local officials, modifications of the built environment and the persistence of property rights—were formed at the interface of formal and informal housing practices. The shortcomings of the public housing as an instrument of spatial justice were starkly illustrated by the persistence of a rentier economy predicated on the exploitation of migrant labour which continued around Dazhulin, while the streets of Kangzhuang Meidi were lined with luxury cars.

6.4.5 Between formal and informal

The tactics used to access housing on the periphery present a range of practices which incorporate formal and informal elements. The residents of Dazhulin moved between informal and formal tactics in response to the changing conditions brought about by state-led urbanisation, forming hybrid arrangements with state policy. Both the public housing and resettlement housing was provided formally by the state, but informal tactics sought to find loopholes in regulations that would allow the residents to take advantage of this provision, either for rentier capitalism in the case of resettlement housing, or property speculation on the part of the public housing. In the process the value of public housing was informally diversified away from migrant workers, towards private profit. The role of the public housing is particularly important because it relates the informal use of housing to the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream described in chapter 5. Rather than instantiating spatial justice for migrant workers, many migrants were unable to benefit from this state project and forced to seek accommodation in the informal rentier economy which public housing had been intended to replace. Informality emerged side-by-side with state intervention, and reproduced existing inequalities.

There are several points to highlight here. The formal and informal tactics which were used to access housing emerged directly out of the conditions of post-displacement described in the first half of the chapter. Those who were being displaced to the periphery found themselves in contact with formal mechanisms of the state which sought to guarantee some degree of housing security following displacement, but they also encountered informal practices which could be used to extend this opportunity into an advantage. Urbanised farmers found themselves eligible to receive resettlement housing in compensation, but they could extend this opportunity by divorcing so as to gain extra properties, or bought up leftover properties in the old township which they could then rent out. Wealthier urban residents in Chongqing found that they too would be eligible for public housing, and found themselves able to extend that opportunity by illegally subletting their apartment or speculating on the property market while living there. Such practices continued after displacement, with the subsequent informal adaptation of resettlement housing by the residents.

Informal tactics did not emerge in the absence of the state or state-provided-infrastructure, but rather proceeded in response to the formal actions of the state. The result was a hybrid arrangement between informal and formal tactics (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). However, this interpretation should not suggest that the formal policies of the state

form a single coherent agency (Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019). Rather, the shifting continuum between formality and informality reveals the multiple agencies of the state. The community officials in the resettlement housing assisted urbanised villagers in exploiting municipal-level policy for personal gain, negotiated the gradual disciplinary 'citizenisation' of villagers to the norms of urban modernity required by the subdistrict, and were themselves involved in rent-seeking activities in state-built housing. Similarly, the ambiguous nature of public housing regulations and the failure to enforce them at a local level allowed housing created by the municipal state as a form of equity to be used for private purposes: public housing was occupied by wealthy middle-class households, used to acquire property, and rented to private enterprises as workers dormitories. This is not to suggest that this was a case of local corruption subverting equitable state policy, but rather to illustrate the agency of the local state to determine how formal policy is applied, and its tendency to re-inforce existing inequalities (Roy, 2009b; 2011b). This supports Tomba's (2014) argument that the CPC selectively enforces regulations in such a way that they benefit the middle-classes and facilitate the exploitation of the poor.[68]

These cases also illustrate a renegotiation of the value that housing carries. Using Caldeira's (2017) framework of peripheral urbanisation, it is apparent that urbanised villagers who were able to engage in informal practices of *autoconstruction* and adaptation of their property were able to take advantage of an emerging rentier economy, whereas public housing residents were not allowed to even decorate their apartments, as Old Jin complained. The wealthier tenants of public housing were able to renegotiate public equity into private gain through rent-seeking and property speculation, in contravention of the public housing regulations.

Through the informal tactics employed to access housing and renegotiate its value, we can see a deepening of the highly differentiated experience of urbanisation described in the first half of the chapter. Those who were able to circumvent regulations and use their housing in informal ways made private gain, those migrants who never had the chance to access public housing continued to occupy inadequate conditions. The emergent frictions between these groups seeking to occupy space and utilise housing in Dazhulin reveal the underlying contours of inequality and marginalisation which continue to structure the periphery. The prospect of the subsequent transformation of Dazhulin into a luxury residential suburb seems only likely to deepen such divisions. I carry these

[68] Literature on housing inequalities in bureaucratic socialist systems would be relevant to explore this point in more detail beyond the scope of this thesis: Szelenyi (1978; 1983), Logan et al. (1999).

observations forward into the conclusion of this chapter where I consider them in light of the broader structure of this thesis and relevant literature.

6.5 Conclusions

The subdistrict of Dazhulin emerges from this picture as a highly differentiated and heterogeneous space, reflecting a variety of experiences of displacement and variety of tactics for accessing housing. Fleischer's (2010) account of suburban Beijing sees a space of consumption increasingly dominated by young, affluent home-owners. In Dazhulin, we can see the social heterogeneity and differential engagements with space which precede the creation of a middle-class residential suburb: urbanised farmers, displaced urbanites, rural migrants, *and* a growing number of middle-class aspirant homeowners—all of whom engaged in some degree of informal practice. Following McFarlane's (2012) understanding of informality as a practice that produces space, we should read Dazhulin as a space *produced* by all of these groups, in conjunction with the state policies and discourses described in chapters 4 and 5.

The central argument of this chapter has proceeded in two parts. In the first half of the chapter I argued that the periphery of Chongqing was a space of post-displacement, while in the second half of the chapter I argued that the practices used to access housing blended formal and informal tactics. By 'post-displacement' I mean to capture the heterogeneity of experiences of urbanisation brought together on the periphery of the city, and how the experience of displacement to the periphery creates shifting opportunities but also new inequalities. These findings contribute to the literature on displacement in the Chinese city, illustrating how displacements by downtown redevelopment (Shin, 2016; Song, W. et al., 2010; Wu, F., 2016c), rural expropriation (Jiang, Y. et al., 2018; Chuang, 2014) and migration (Liu, Y. et al., 2018) are gathered in the same space, and concurring with Cowan's (2018) observations in India that urbanisation is a highly differentiated process.

Extending my scope to look at how housing is utilised demonstrates these points in more concrete terms. A wide variety of relationships to housing came out of different experiences of displacement. The changing presence of the state in the process of urban restructuring provoked shifting opportunities for residents to extend their access to housing: divorcing to receive extra resettlement housing, adapting properties to create extra floor space, applying to live in public housing despite being relatively wealthy, utilising public housing to assist speculation on the housing market. This simultaneously provoked new inequalities emerging on the periphery: the emerging social divide between

the wealthy and poor residents of public housing, the rentier economy of urbanised peasants which exploited migrant workers, and the occupation of public housing by tenants who already owned homes elsewhere. Instead of dichotomising the periphery as either formal or informal, Dazhulin emerges from this account as a zone in which state intervention and state-driven displacement exists side-by-side with spaces of improvisation and informality.

These findings contribute a new perspective to the urban periphery in China, and to informality literature generally. They illustrate how informality emerges in response to largescale state-led urbanisation, and how informal tactics can subvert the supposedly equitable values of public housing into private profit. In doing so they extend the arguments of Roy (2009b; 2011b) and Yiftachel (2009) into the context of Chinese state-led urbanisation. These findings also allow an insight into the multiple agencies of the Chinese state and its selective enforcement of regulations to maintain inequalities, building on the recent work of Haid and Hilbrandt (2019). They moreover contribute to an emerging body of work which seeks to illustrate different relationships between formality and informality on the edge of the Chinese city (Sun and Ho, 2015; Liu, R. et al., 2012; Liu, H. et al., 2018).

This chapter relates to the overarching theme of urban modernity in that it demonstrates the diverse tactics undertaken to make life in the city. Housing in the post-reform Chinese city takes on value as a symbol of wellbeing and urban modernity (Zhang, L., 2010; Huang, Y., 2005). As AlSayyad (2004) observes, 'informality operates through the constant negotiability of value' (p. 5) and so informal practices seek to re-negotiate access to urban modernity. Following the suggestion of Abramson (2016) that the Chinese periphery is best understood as a process of becoming urban, the informal and formal practices which navigate shifting inequalities and opportunities to access housing can be read as claims on urban modernity. Similarly, the shortcomings of public housing described in this chapter add to the limitations of the Chongqing Model's claim to spatial justice highlighted in chapters 4 and 5. The urban modernity promised by the Chongqing Model remained subject to negotiation through informal practices which favoured the urban property-owner and marginalised migrant workers.

On a more global scale, there are interesting resonances between the heterogeneous experiences of housing in Dazhulin and Caldeira's (2017) theory of peripheral urbanisation. The residents of Dazhulin were divided by their ability to engage in alteration and adaptation of their own housing, reflecting the different transversal engagements with official logics (p. 4) prompted by informal and formal practices. The

situation differs from the Latin American context in which Caldeira's work is grounded however, in that there is little indication of an active political subjectivity in Dazhulin. For the time being there is no evidence of the insurgent citizenship of the periphery described by Holston (2009), although this might well change in the future if Dazhulin becomes a luxury suburb. Latent antagonisms between migrant workers and landlords, or between poor and wealthy public housing tenants, hint at the contours of a peripheral politics which the arrival of middle-class consumers of luxury housing could further catalyse.

7. Kongdi: informality and temporalities of the periphery

The land was expropriated. After expropriation it wasn't being used, it was abandoned. So just let us plant things here. Land shouldn't be abandoned. That isn't right. [69]

Resettlement housing resident (male, 50s, C28).

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine the space produced by informal practices in the undeveloped land in Dazhulin. I argue that the informal practices taking place on this land produce an ambiguous space which lies between the logics of urban and rural. I analyse how the land is used and by whom, and how the material and socio-economic aspects of its use a space that illustrates the ambiguities of the rural-urban divide. I use Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery to think about this in more depth. I argue that the ambiguous nature of this informal space reflects the distinct temporalities of urban restructuring in China.

This chapter narrows down the perspective of previous chapters, coming to focus on a single space in Dazhulin. It looks in detail at the informal use of a piece of undeveloped land which lay adjacent to the public housing and resettlement housing. In chapter 6 I demonstrated the informal practices at work in spaces of housing in Dazhulin, and in this chapter I extend my examination of the informal practices of Dazhulin into the undeveloped land. To refer to this undeveloped land I use the term *kongdi* (wasteland), which was used by those who carried out informal practices there.

In this chapter I examine how informal practices produce the *kongdi* a space is perceived to lie outside the logics of urban order, but is also increasingly entangled with the city. In particular, I highlight the temporality of the *kongdi*. The processes through which the *kongdi* is gradually incorporated into urban logics and perceived to be an urban space reflect the political economy of urbanisation described in chapter 4, and the piecemeal urbanisation of the periphery. My findings speak to two scholarly literatures. I contribute an original study of informal farming practices which have been only intermittently documented in the study of urban China. I also suggest that the distinct

[69] Chinese: 这个是征用了的，征用之后没有用就荒废了，就让给我们种。土地不能荒废，这是不对的。

temporality of Chinese urbanisation is useful for informing theorisations of informality and the periphery in urban studies more broadly.

This chapter begins by recapping the theoretical approach to informality from chapter 6, and extends it through a discussion of Simone's (2010) theory of the periphery. It contextualises informal farming within the relevant literature of practices of commoning and urban political ecology, highlighting how urban agriculture is seen to mark a rupture from the economic and ecological relationships of the city. The chapter then moves on to discuss what kind of space the *kongdi* is, looking at which spaces in Dazhulin are considered *kongdi* and how they are used in daily life. From there I provide greater detail on the material and social dynamics of informal practices. I analyse how the material dimensions of informality produce a space which draws upon the rural past and urban future of Dazhulin, and is entangled with the ecological flows of the city. I examine how informal practices produce a social and economic space which is apparently separate from the urban logic of the commodity value, but also faced by the imminent enclosure of that space. Finally I return to the question of how far the space produced by the informal practices lies beyond the logic of the city, and summarise my findings.

7.2. Informal ways of making space

7.2.1 Informality and urban logics

In this chapter I utilise the theorisations of informality laid out in chapter 2 and 6, and extend them to consider how space is made by informality on the edge of the city. McFarlane (2012) proposes informality as a practice which produces space. Thus we should understand it not as a category tied to a particular space or organisational form, but rather as an endogenous way of producing space. I situate this approach within a broader theorisation of informality by Roy and AlSayyad (2004) which stresses that the informality does not constitute the failure of planning, but rather is produced *by* planning, and which is deeply enmeshed with the economics and infrastructure of the formal urban city (Roy, 2005; 2009b; 2011b). Caldeira's (2017) theorisation of 'peripheral urbanisation' underlines that practices of *autoconstruction* (that is, self-construction of settlements and buildings) provoke distinct political relations between residents, the state and the city (see also Holston, 2009). Taken together these theories provide a framework for thinking through how practices of informality relate to the local state's attempts to make Dazhulin urban and modern. In Chapter 6 I discussed these theorisations in relation to housing in Dazhulin, and in this chapter I bring the same theoretical approach to a different space.

Rather than looking at how housing practices moved between formality and informality, I turn my attention here to a space which ostensibly lay *outside*—outside the formal logic of the city and outside the commodity value system associated with planetary urbanization. I look at how the practices which took place on the *kongdi* created a space with an ambiguous relationship to the city, seen as lying outside of but also increasingly enmeshed with the logics of urban order. In contrast to typical discussions of informal spaces within the city, the *kongdi* was not a space of housing (although there were constructions in which people slept occasionally). Its primary use was as a space of agriculture and food production, as will be discussed in due course.

In this chapter I consider how the use of the *kongdi* relates to Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery. Like McFarlane (2012), Simone's work inverts space and practice: informality is not a behaviour which emerges out of the periphery, but is rather a practice which produces the periphery. I take the Simonian periphery to mean a space characterised by its ambiguous relationship to a nominal centre. Simone understands the periphery as a space which is characterised by ambiguous positioning and politics, resulting in hybridity. It is understood through the metaphor of the frontier, as a space beyond the boundaries of a hegemonic urban centre, which invites special treatment by the state (whether that is intervention or neglect), and so exists at the intersection of urban and non-urban logics. The periphery thus provokes creative and disruptive responses to the shortcomings of urban formality. The experience of life in the periphery 'is one of being neither rural nor urban' (p. 130). In the context of this chapter, I bring this understanding of the periphery to bear on the rigid dichotomy between rural and urban which is one of the formative contradictions of China's post-reform state entrepreneurialism. The farming of the *kongdi* demonstrates an interplay of the logics of rural and urban: urban land used by urban people for apparently rural practices which were prohibited within the city. By applying Simon's reading of the periphery to Dazhulin, I consider to what extent the space produced by informal practices acts as frontier and hybrid interface between the logics, cultures and legal statuses of rural and urban.

7.2.2 Urban agriculture

Informality has been used to theorise agricultural food production (Van Averbeke, 2007; Neef, 2002), but in recent years a focus of critical geography has been urban agriculture. Particularly significant are understandings of urban agriculture as a practice of creating commons (Tornaghi, 2014) and through the lens of urban political ecology (McClintock, 2010; Classens, 2015). In this section I briefly review these literatures in

order to situate the *kongdi* in relation to them. I use the literature on commons and political ecology to understand how urban agriculture is seen to delineate itself from the urban more broadly, highlighting how urban agriculture practices have been seen to mark an *economic* and *metabolic* break from urban values. My intention is not to offer a thorough survey of these extensive fields (although certainly aspects of my findings speak to them) but rather to understand how their insights might be re-applied from the perspective of informality.

In the context of Europe and North America, formal urban allotments have been studied as gendered spaces (Hovorka, 2006; Buckingham, 2005) and as spaces generative of cultural and political identities (Zavisca, 2003). More explicit political activism is apparent in practices such as 'guerrilla gardening' (Adams and Hardman, 2014; McKay, 2011) and the informal takeover of vacant city plots for agricultural spaces as an act of 'commoning' (Corcoran et al., 2017; Huron, 2015). Tornaghi (2014) critiques the tendency for urban agriculture perspectives to dichotomise the practice as either a lifestyle (i.e. relating to leisure, cultural production, and health) or alternatively as a radical political activity (i.e. relating to food sovereignty, land appropriation and autonomy). Instead she suggests approaching urban agriculture as a space which has the potential to blur the lines between these two categories. This understanding of urban agriculture as a practice which can cross the boundaries between a habitus of lifestyle and a mode of politics has close resonances with informality literature. In the Indian context Gidwani and Baviskar (2011) describe the emergence of ecological and civic commons within the city which intersect with practices of food production, which they interpret as standing in opposition to the commodity form. In these approaches, urban agriculture appears as a practice of 'commoning' that seeks to create spaces which disentangle materials and practices from capitalist dynamics and the commodity form (see Bresnihan and Byrne, 2015, p. 38).

The use of urban wasteland for farming also invokes the literature of urban political ecology. Geographies of the city-as-ecology elaborate on Marx's ([1894] 1992) supposition of the 'metabolic rift': that capitalist urbanization disrupted the agrarian social metabolism, alienating human labour from the biophysical environment by transforming both into instruments of capital (Heynen et al., 2006; Moore, 2000; Bookchin, [1982] 1991). Nature is thus understood as something 'other' than the city, which must be tamed (Kaika, 2005; Smith, N., [1984] 2008). McClintock (2010) extends the theory of metabolic rift to the social and individual level, and suggests that urban agriculture practices constitute a personal escape from the metabolic rift between urban

capital and nature. As a result McClintock concludes that 'the practices associated with [urban agriculture …] are a force of *de* alienation' (p. 12) which allows people to escape the commodification of their relationship with the biophysical world. Classens (2015) similarly suggests that urban gardening offers an escape from neoliberal capitalist logics.

Common to both of these perspectives is the notion of urban agriculture as an escape from a certain logic of the commodity, and a connection (perhaps *re*connection) with a set of values that lie outside. In this sense urban agriculture is viewed as an alternative to the typical logics of capitalism, undoing the alienation from nature and coproduction which the commodity form necessitates. In the context of China, where post-reform urbanisation has directly meant assigning commodity form and exchange value to previously communal rural spaces, I suggest it is reasonable to see these approaches as interpreting urban agriculture as an escape from *urban* logics. Contra the claims of planetary urbanisation (Brenner, 2013; Brenner and Schmid, 2012; 2014) urban agriculture (and other projects of urban greening) continue to be *seen* as offering a space outside the logic of the urban (Angelo, 2017).

In briefly surveying the relevant theorisations of urban agriculture from the perspective of the urban commons and urban political ecology I have clarified the ways in which urban agriculture is perceived to mark a rupture from the logic of the city: as a practice which is economically and ecologically separate from the city. Practices associated with urban agriculture are seen to mark an alternative to the logic of the urban, by producing spaces which are economically and ecologically autonomous from it. These two lines of enquiry will be carried forwards to examine the extent to which informal practices in the *kongdi* mark it as a zone outside of urban order—potentially a zone beyond the normative urban modernity of the city.

7.2.3 The Chinese context

Urban agriculture is an emerging field within Chinese urban geography. Commercial urban farming projects have been studied as processes of diversifying land use (Peng et al., 2015) and an emergent practice of a health-conscious urban middle class (Shi et al., 2011). Particularly significant are the development of agro-tourism areas on the peripheries of major cities described by Yang, Z. et al. (2010). Rock et al. (2016) provide the only existing study of informal urban agriculture practice. This study conducted semi-structured interviews and soil analysis with 30 informal urban farmers in Chongqing, focussing on the urban core of Yuzhong and Jiangbei. They found that the majority of practitioners of urban farming were rural migrants over the age of fifty. The land that they

farmed was largely vacant plots or marginal land beneath transport infrastructure owned by the state or private enterprises who tolerated their use of the land which had on average been used for less than two years. These findings can be interpreted as highlighting the way in which migrant workers seek to maintain cultural and bodily autonomy from the commodified foodways of the city, in line with the economic and ecological approaches mentioned previously (Engel-di Mauro, 2016).

My findings on the *kongdi* form differ with those of Rock et al. (2016) in that informal agricultural practices in Dazhulin took place on the urban periphery, on land which had been rural only a decade prior, never been built upon, and retained a continuity of use in some instances. As I discuss, the practice of informal farming on undeveloped urban land appeared to be common across the peripheries of Chongqing. Interviewees were keen to emphasise there was nothing unique about the informal farming of the *kongdi*. Personal observation while travelling in China would suggest this practice is widespread in the state-owned land reserves of other cities, and would take a broadly similar form.[70]

7.3 *Kongdi* as peripheral space

7.3.1 Delineating *kongdi*

This section introduces the term *kongdi*, and examines what kind of spaces were designated *kongdi* on the periphery of Chongqing. It provides necessary context for my use of the term and establishes the significance of the *kongdi* as a broader category in peripheral urban development beyond the particular space this chapter focuses on. I use the term *kongdi* to refer to land which had not yet been built on and which was still used for informal farming in Dazhulin. *Kongdi* is an emic category, in the sense that it was the word most often used by those who worked and lived on and adjacent to the undeveloped land. *Kongdi* is commonly translated as 'vacant land' or 'open space'.[71] The character *kong* refers to empty, hollow, bare or unoccupied space, while the character *di* refers earth, land or soil.[72] In everyday use, *kongdi* is utilised in a manner similar to the English

[70] Similar practices of land financing in other cities in China necessitate state-owned land reserves (Huang, D. and Chan, 2018) similar to those often used for farming in Chongqing.

[71] With a different pronunciation, the same two characters refer to air-to-surface missiles. When searching for Chinese literature on the term I was only able to find writing which referred to this usage of the characters.

[72] *Kong* is commonly applied to mundane physical objects (e.g. *kongping* 'empty bottle'), any figuratively free or un-utilised states of existence (e.g. *kongshijian* 'free time'), and used to denote the hopelessness or vacuity of plans, actions and discourse (e.g. *konghua* 'hollow words', *kongpao* 'to hurry in vain'). I find these alternative meanings productive when thinking about the nature of the undeveloped space in Dazhulin.

'wasteland', to describe specific spaces or a type of space in general. This is illustrated by the images found by searching for *kongdi* on baidu.com,[73] revealing flat and bare space, parcelled up for leasing or strewn with detritus.

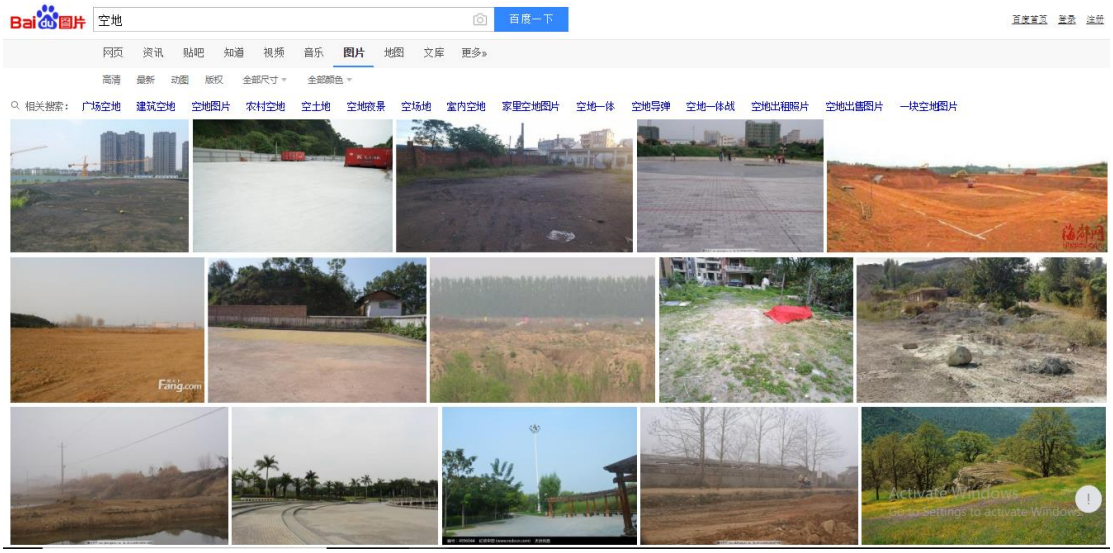

Figure 42: The images brought up by a search for *kongdi* on baidu. Source: baidu.com.

In the course of my fieldwork, I also encountered other kinds of spaces described as *kongdi*: abandoned construction sites, narrow stretches of empty land between adjacent developments, and districts of still-inhabited housing scheduled for demolition. *Kongdi* is evidently not a neutral category, but expresses a judgement about a specific space which encompasses its present status and its imagined potential. It refers to a space that is caught between an under-utilised past and a future which will realise some latent potential.[74]

Spaces designated as *kongdi* are also the spaces in which practices and materials which do not fit into the order of normal space in a Chinese city overflow: spaces in which waste is thrown, but also spaces in which offerings to ancestors are burned.[75] *Kongdi* in this sense coincides with the Li's (2014, pp. 100-101) claim that public land in the Chinese city lies 'outside' the practices of caring for space which make urban order, and so permits subversive and polluting activities to take place.

[73] Baidu is a widely used Chinese search engine analogous to Google.

[74] My utilisation of these terms frequently intersects with understandings from Anglophone geography. Although the concept of 'edgelands' (Shoard, 2002; Farley and Roberts, 2012) is typically deployed in the context of peri-urban England specifically, it captures the image of an overlooked space allowed to grow unruly and chaotic; full of 'unkempt and overlooked textures' (Farley and Roberts, 2012, p.8) which problematise a neat divide between notionally pristine countryside and notionally modern city. See also Mabey (1973).

[75] Scott (2007, p. 37) provides an account of the prohibition of burning offerings in urban space in China.

Figure 43: View from Caijia public housing showing surrounding *kongdi*. Source: author.

7.3.2 Situating *kongdi* in Dazhulin

In this chapter I focus on one particular space of *kongdi* in Dazhulin, close to the public housing and resettlement housing described in chapter 6. This is just one example of a form of space that was common across the periphery of Chongqing. My estimate from satellite photography was that in 2016 roughly 2.84 km^2 of land in Dazhulin was undeveloped *kongdi*, even though all land in the area had been formally 'urban' for over a decade. This amounted to around a third of the land in the subdistrict. In more distant peripheral areas—where expropriation took place more recently—this figure would undoubtedly be higher.

The profusion of *kongdi* space in Dazhulin was a result of the uneven pace of urbanisation and the fragmented landscape this created. As mentioned in chapter 4, the territory of Dazhulin had been largely farmland interspersed with steep hills and river gorges until 2003 when it was expropriated by the state and added to the state-owned land reserve. Under the land financing system, this land would then be used as collateral

Figure 44: Comparison satellite photography of an area in north Dazhulin. Top: September 2007, shortly after expropriation. Bottom: August 2017. Souce: GoogleEarth.

to borrow money for infrastructure investment which would in turn raise the value of the land until it was 'cooked' (*shudi*) and ready for lease to developers. Much of the *kongdi* in the area surrounding Dazhulin had already been sold to developers who had postponed construction until the housing market improved (see section 4.4.2; fieldnotes, March 2017; Fangtianxia, 2017). Over the course of my fieldwork the horizon of Dazhulin transformed, as swathes of undeveloped *kongdi* were transformed into construction sites from which high-rise towers rose.

Most of the *kongdi* in Chongqing's periphery retained an obviously agrarian character of patchy green fields and bamboo thickets, despite the new roads and construction sites which had carved it up (see Figure 43). In some cases it was partially cordoned off with temporary brick walls or fencing, but these were easily circumvented. In most cases there were no barriers at all to prevent people coming and going, and there was apparently no policing of the space. As a result, the peripheral *kongdi* reserve became a site in which nearby residents engaged in a variety of informal practices. This primarily consisted of small-scale farming, but also included small constructions and other intervention. Although much of the undeveloped land in the northern periphery of Chongqing had already been sold to developers, it was still often referred to as 'state-owned land' (*guoyou tudi*), reflecting an ambiguous understanding of ownership which I discuss in section 7.6.

Comparing satellite photography from shortly after Dazhulin was formally urbanised (2007) and ten years later (Figure 44) reveals the continuities of the landscape. Agricultural plot sizes and shapes in the state-owned land often followed those of its pre-urban use, even after they had been cut up by new roads and developments. Other areas of undeveloped state-owned land had been completely altered into flattened and empty plots which bore no obvious traces of their agrarian past. In such plots informal farming was less common, although they were still used for other informal activities by nearby residents such as food production, religious uses and dumping of waste.

On some occasions, informal use of space extended beyond the undeveloped land surrounding the built-up areas of Dazhulin. Roadside verges and parkland were occupied and planted with vegetables and maize. Any green space which was not actively cultivated by the local state or obviously leased for another use was quickly returned to agrarian use by nearby residents. Particularly notable was the small space beneath electric pylons, which in many cases was farmed by local residents despite the relatively small ground area they offered and the signs warning of the danger of electrocution (Figure 45). These spaces were again referred to as *kongdi*, and represented a local iteration of a

broader pattern across the city.[76] Spaces of *kongdi* emerged at the margins of existing urban forms.

This section has established the meaning of *kongdi* and provided context for how this distinct form of space manifested in Dazhulin. In the following section I move on to consider the uses and attitudes towards the *kongdi*, both amongst those who made use of it and those who did not.

Figure 45: Informal farming beneath electricity pylons in parkland adjacent to public housing. Source: author.

7.4 Daily life of the *kongdi*

7.4.1 The *kongdi* from the outside

In this section I examine the *kongdi* in Dazhulin more closely, exploring first how the *kongdi* was regarded by the local state as representing a backwards rural past, and by property developers as representing opportunities for marketing and development. I then move on to introduce in detail a specific area of the *kongdi* which lay on the edge of the public and resettlement housing estates in Dazhulin, which is the focus of the remainder

[76] One such example occurred in the nearby Zhaomushan Park during my fieldwork, where a Chongqing Morning Post reporter described the 'terrible stink' of these sites in an area intended to be a city park, and quoted local officials who explained that 'it is not permitted to grow vegetables in public green spaces, regardless of whether or not the land is abandoned' (Jing, 2016).

of this chapter. I consider briefly the meanings assigned to the *kongdi* by those who occupied the land within it, and how they reflect the absent pasts and futures of development. I emphasise that through these perspectives and practices the *kongdi* was seen to be a space outside of urban order, lying beyond the formal boundaries of the city.

The informal uses of land were tolerated by officials in the local government but not endorsed. Those I spoke to stressed that there was nothing remarkable about the informal use of the land—it was normal for land to be used in this way while it was sitting idle prior to development. However they also acknowledged that it was not good for the image of the area. Higher level officials in the subdistrict government (*jiedao*) said such activities should be discouraged where possible, because they disrupted the image of an orderly urban environment which the local state sought to construct:

> [The informal farming] isn't an appropriate topic for you to investigate, it's too sensitive. Because really these aren't farmers, they're city people now. There's nothing we can do about it, they'll just do it anyway, but it's too sensitive [for you to research]. […] When the rest of the land is developed we can expect that their culture level will be raised.[77] (B26)

This repeated the attitude described in chapter 6 (6.4.2) towards the poorer residents of Dazhulin with a rural background, who were regarded as questionably urban and in need of state intervention to assist them in becoming modern and urban. Informal use of the *kongdi* was regarded as indicative of non-urban status, and would be solved by the continued urbanisation of the area. The urbanisation of the land was expected to complete the 'citizenisation' of the people living around it, perhaps because they would no longer have access to space in which to practice informality.

The presence of the informal farmers was a representation of the gulf between the image of an orderly urban modernity which the officials sought to construct, and the reality of an unfinished peripheral district in which much land retained a rural character. The continued practice of non-urban activities by urbanised villagers troubled Dazhulin's urban modernity, but could be tolerated as a temporary stage in development which would soon be superseded by a properly urban, properly modern way of life. Their anxiety seemed to be that the continued use of the *kongdi* was evidence that Dazhulin was 'lagging behind' in the process of becoming modern and urban.

[77] Undoubtedly the concern to avoid focussing attention on the informal use of *kongdi* was heightened by my status as a foreign researcher from a nominally 'advanced' Western country, and intersected with a justifiable anxiety around the portrayal of China as 'backwards' or rural in Western representations (as conveyed by some instances of the ethnographic imaginary described in chapter 3).

The drive to become modern and urban was apparent elsewhere in Dazhulin. During my fieldwork many of the spaces of *kongdi* were transformed from green fields into construction sites. Developers' showrooms appeared around the periphery of the built-up area, advertising an elegant suburban lifestyle to middle-class urban families. One developer explained the appeal of Dazhulin:

> There has been rapid development of non-agricultural industries, electronics and auto industries in Yubei district, so now the real estate market is developing here too. Now it's developing faster than anywhere else in Chongqing, and the area has become the preferred choice of the middle and upper classes of Chongqing. […] If you come from [the central districts of] Yuzhong or Jiangbei you're used to the feeling of the bustling metropolis with many big buildings, lots of people, but… speaking for myself I prefer a place where there are slightly fewer people so the environment is a little better. A place with a better sense of space. Then, my first choice would be Dazhulin. […] This district is a 'half-city'. (Property developer, male, 30s, A34)

This predicted transformation of Dazhulin into a luxury residential suburb sought to take advantage of the unfinished and peripheral nature of the district. This depended on the acquisition of land well-serviced by urban infrastructure built in the past decade, but also the instrumentalisation of the sense of nature and contrast with the grey inner city which Dazhulin evoked. The advertising material produced by housing developers in Dazhulin and nearby utilised imagery of nature and greenery, with maps implying proximity to adjacent verdant countryside (Figure 46). These place making tactics evoked the imagery of farming, nature and greenery, but would lead to the destruction of the *kongdi* and its rural character. In the showrooms of developers, scale models of the area represented the *kongdi* as a vibrant green patch of flat land dotted with flowering bushes and bisected by a bright blue stream, mirroring European pastoral imagery (Figure 47).

Such advertising can be read as an urban production of nature through an alienation from the realities of the rural and natural in favour of their reproduction as an aesthetic spectacle (Swyngedouw, 2009). This corresponds with a growing literature on aestheticisation of the notion of a rural and natural past in middle-class housing and place making in China (Oakes, 2006; Wu, F., 2010a; Sturzaker and Law, 2016; Zhang, L., 2010).

The aesthetics of Dazhulin between-rural-and-suburban resembled the hybridity of the periphery as 'frontier' theorised by Simone (2010). Amidst the fragmentary landscape, spectacular representations of quiet rural idyll were undercut by the intrusion of the real and still present rural people and practices which had not yet vanished from the area. Luxury housing showrooms were surrounded by construction hoarding showing rolling

green fields or rich deciduous woodland, which stopped abruptly to reveal undeveloped wasteland or informally farmed *kongdi*.

Figure 46: Advertising materials from commodity housing developments in Dazhulin. Source: G.com.cn.

Figure 47: The *kongdi* as represented in a housing development showroom, labelled as state-owned land. Source: author.

Figure 48: 'The results of construction' on the wall around the *kongdi*. Source: author.

7.4.2 The *kongdi* between public housing and resettlement housing

Over the course of fieldwork my research on the kongdi came to focus on one specific space. This was a rectangular plot of roughly 75,000 square metres which lay directly between the public housing, resettlement housing and the commodity housing construction site (Figure 49 & Figure 51).[78] The plot was delineated on two sides by concrete walls which faced onto active roads; on the other two sides by a newly-built road which was closed to traffic and lined with freshly-planted trees. It was abutted by a blue-roofed unit of housing for workers on the commodity housing construction site, and a petrol station facing the highway. When approaching this space on foot from the direction of the city one was given the impression of a building site, as the walls outlining the site were covered in municipal propaganda envisioning a prosperous urban future, although occasional gaps in the wall allowed glimpses of the vivid green landscape beyond (see Figure 48).

In planning documents this area was marked out as land for commercial construction with additional cultural amenities. The development rights had been auctioned in 2012, bundled with those of nearby plots, and leased to a consortium of three corporations, who paid 2,003 yuan per square metre (1.476 billion yuan in total).[79] The contract stipulated that construction on the site should commence before the end of 2012, five years later work had still not begun. Contacts in the offices of developers working elsewhere in Dazhulin revealed that the delay in construction had been due to the lease-holders' attempts to negotiate a change in land use to allow them to build further luxury housing on the site. An article shared on Weibo described the area as 'golden land' and quoted an anonymous source in the real estate industry who related the reasons for the delay to the growing speculation on housing prices in the area:

> The market competition is so intense at the moment nobody will want to take on a purely commercial plot. […] Half of the top ten housing developers in Chongqing are watching this plot intently (quoted in Zeng, 2017).

The sale of the land-use rights to a different developer finally allowed residential construction to go ahead in early 2018, after my fieldwork had ended (see Figure 50).

[78] This land originally belonged to Shiliangqiao Village, in Dazhulin Township and was expropriated by the state in 2004.

[79] Contract reference: Yubei District, New North Zone, 2012, no.239 (渝地[2012]合字（北新）第 239 号).

Figure 49: One half of the *kongdi* photographed from adjacent public housing (resettlement housing and commodity housing construction sites visible beyond). Source: author.

Figure 50: The *kongdi* being prepared for construction in February 2018. Source: WeChat.

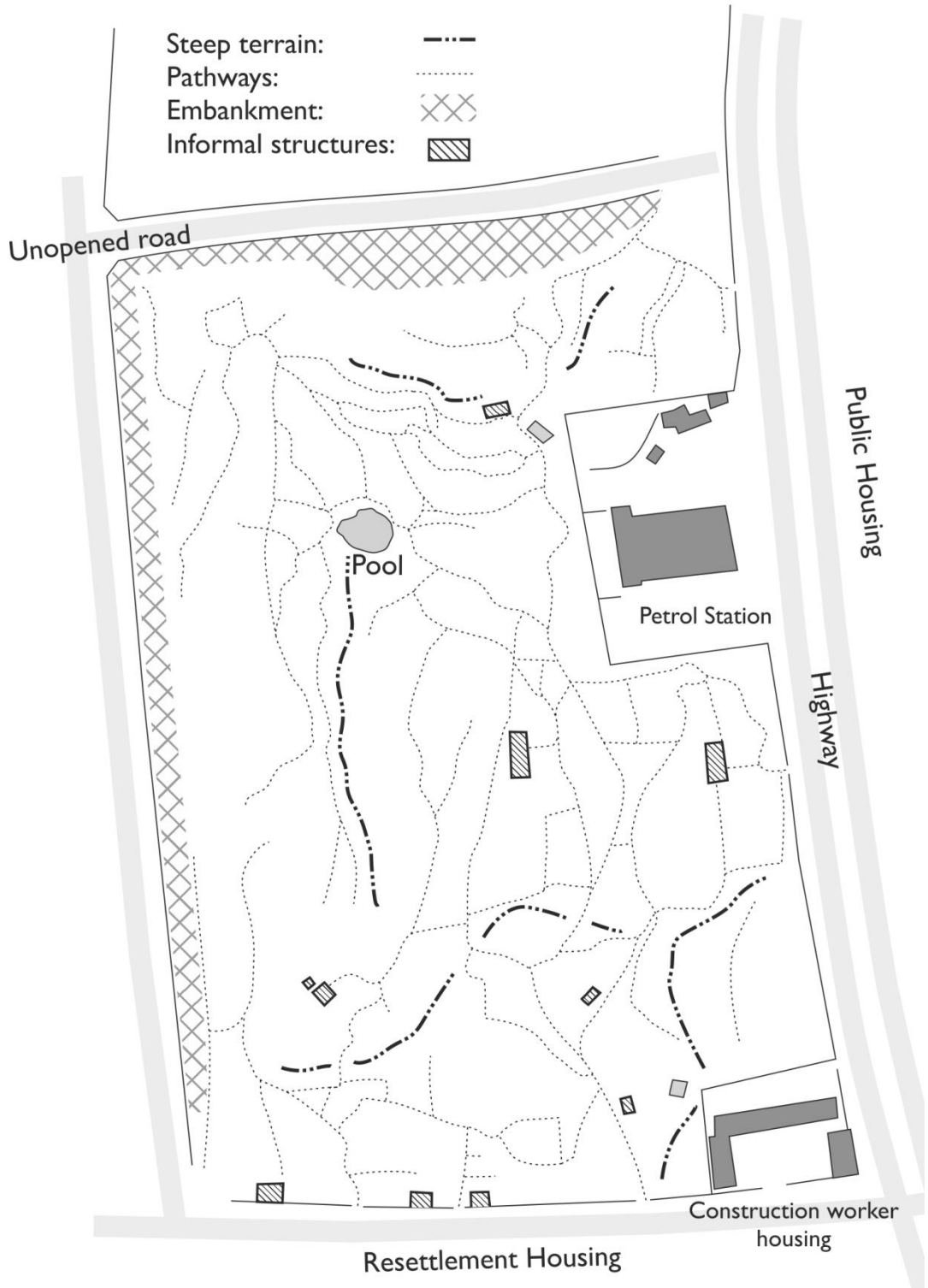

Figure 51: The *kongdi* in early 2017. Source: author (methodology for producing map described in 3.2.3).

For the duration of my fieldwork the landscape of the *kongdi* retained an agrarian character. Areas of the terrain were steep, rising into ridges and troughs where the plots stretched into thin terraces. There were areas of marshy pools and bamboo thickets. Small informal constructions had been adapted from the ruins of stone-built rural homesteads, or constructed from scratch with corrugated metal, bamboo poles and tarpaulins. A network of paths delineated the boundaries between plots. Throughout daylight hours there were people present farming plots, although it was busiest in evenings and weekends. The food produced in the *kongdi* was consumed by those who had grown it, but was also sold in the surrounding area both in designated marketplaces and at the side of the street.

I conducted interviews with the farmers of 36 different plots on the *kongdi* (Figure 52 and Appendix C). Some of these were relatively brief semi-structured encounters based around a survey; others were persistent relationships that evolved into friendships. These interviews only covered a small proportion of the total number of people making use of the *kongdi*. Nonetheless these interviews and relationships—combined with extended observation and occasional participation in farming and other informal activities—provided a rich picture of the daily life of the *kongdi*.

When interviewees talked about the *kongdi* they divided those who made use of it into two groups. Those who had grown up in Dazhulin and farmed the land prior to urbanisation were considered 'locals' (*dangdiren*), while those who had moved to the area following urbanisation were considered 'outsiders' (*waidiren*). This reflected differential experiences of displacement (as described in chapter 6) distinguishing between the migrant workers and urban poor who had been displaced to public housing by migration or redevelopment, and the 'native' farmers who had been urbanised and displaced into resettlement housing.[80] A large proportion of those making informal use of the *kongdi* were retired. Local users of the *kongdi* tended to be older (mean age of 62) and split evenly along gender lines. Outsiders were younger (mean age of 50) and were predominately women (67%, n =19), with far more in paid employment.

[80] All locals interviewed in the *kongdi* lived in resettlement housing, the vast majority of outsiders lived in public housing. Those outsiders who did not live in public housing mostly lived in resettlement housing units or informal constructions within the resettlement housing rented out by local landlords. As discussed in chapter 6, many locals had acquired multiple resettlement housing units during expropriation and subsequently expanded them through informal construction of additional floors. Only one interviewed outsider in the *kongdi* reported that they owned their own property, a unit of nearby commodity housing which their family had bought (C11).

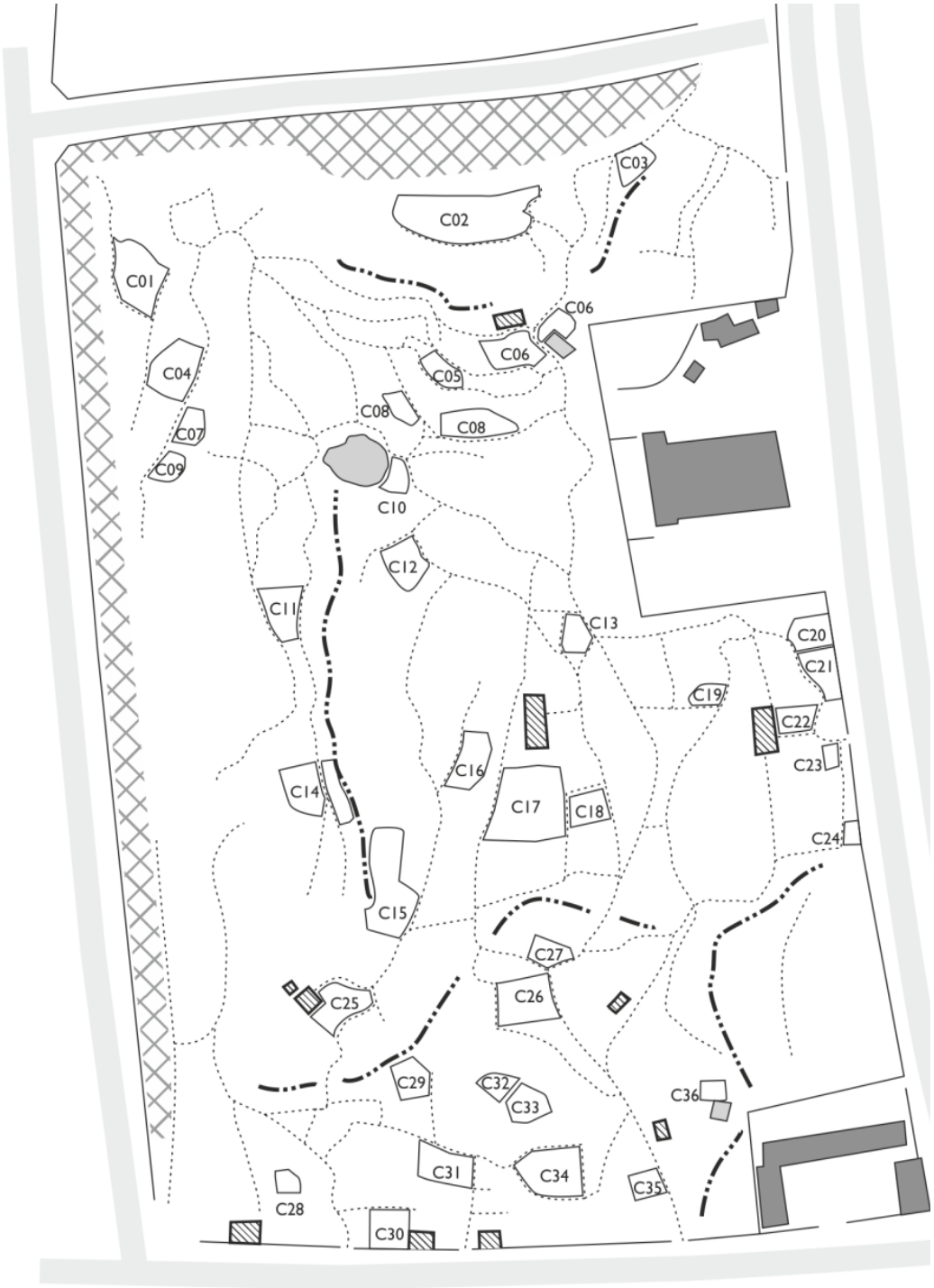

Figure 52: *Kongdi* mapped with numbered informal plots where interviews took place (see appendix C).

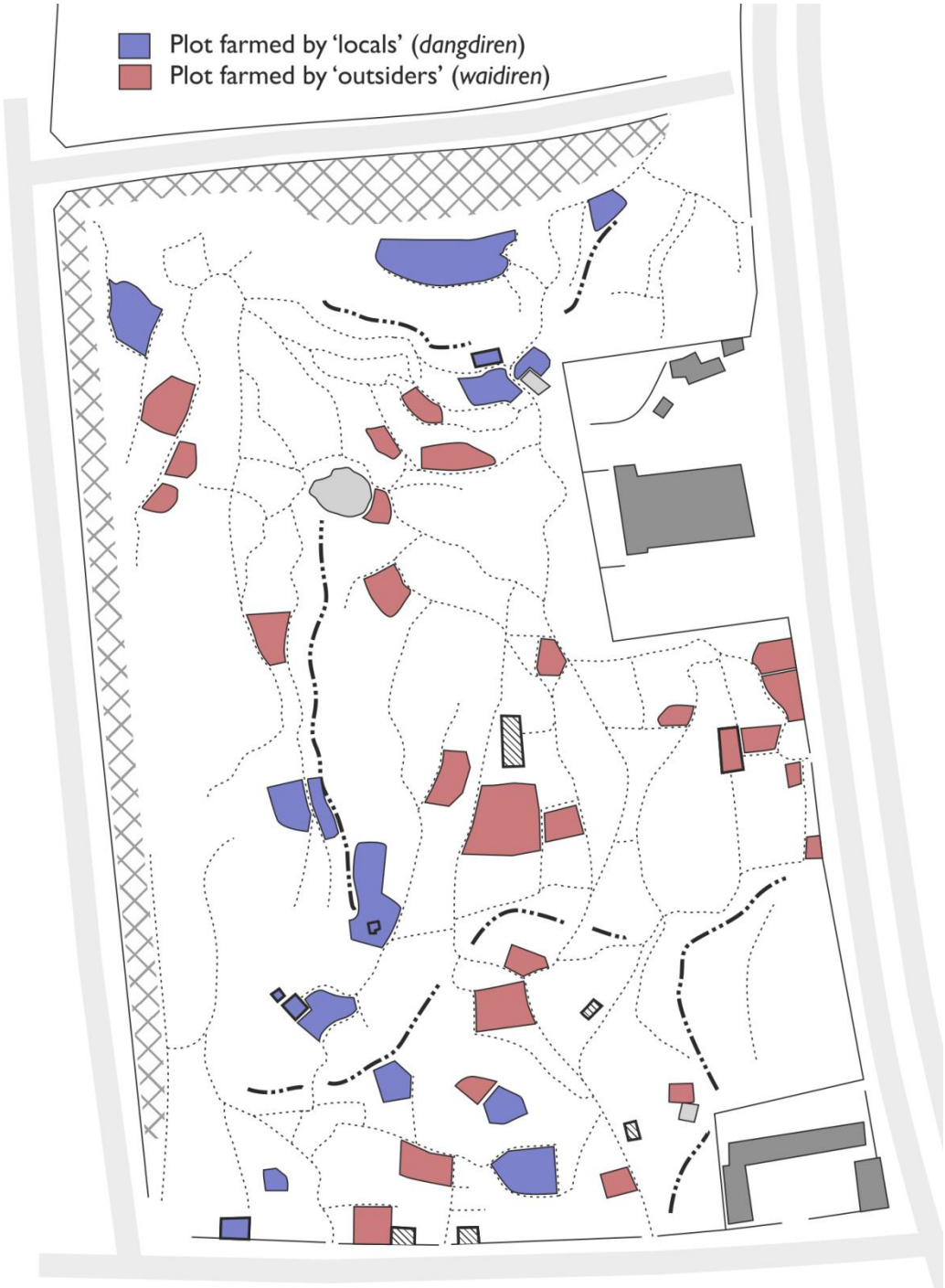

Figure 53: *Kongdi* plots mapped by division between 'local' and 'outsider' farmers.

Plots of land farmed by locals tended to be smaller, and marginal within the *kongdi*, while plots tended by outsiders tended to be larger and clustered around the centre and eastern edge of the *kongdi* facing onto the public housing (Figure 53).[81] Locals had farmed the *kongdi* for an average of four years, compared to an average of two to three years amongst outsiders. Several of the outsiders had been engaged in informal farming

[81] An exception to this was the presence of two larger-scale farms tended by locals which grew exclusively maize (C02 & C34), managed by multiple family members

since they arrived in the public housing in 2011, while many others had only started using the land the previous year, having observed others doing so. Of those interviewed, 43% (n = 16) farmed only for personal consumption, with the majority of others saying that they ate some of their crop and sold the rest. Vegetable markets had been established when Dazhulin urbanised, and they contained benches where informal farmers could sell their crops. Most, however, preferred to sell their crops on the street and in the public spaces of the public housing and resettlement housing, where there was more passing traffic.

The mean plot size (based on self-reported plot boundaries and estimates from satellite photography) was 160 m^2, although several plots were over double this size. Moreover, it became apparent that many plots were disparate and some farmers tended multiple plots in the *kongdi* which were not always reported, so this estimate is probably well below the real figure. These plots were typically divided into beds of multiple vegetables: potato, lettuce, sweet potato, white radishes, pea shoots, aubergines, and local varieties of brassica such as *ercai*. The only cereal grown was maize which had been the principal crop prior to urbanisation. [83] The edges of plots and pathways in between them were marked by stones placed along the perimeter. In the warm and wet climate vegetables were quickly harvested and re-planted, so differing varieties of vegetable were grown over the course of the year. In the winter potatoes and white radishes seemed most successful, in the summer a great many vegetable plots were replaced with shoulder-high stalks of maize, which was still treated as the signature crop of the area. At the end of my fieldwork I received a farewell gift from one participant in the form of two plastic sacks of freshly harvested pale yellow Dazhulin corncobs.

7.4.3 The *kongdi* from the inside

For those who made use of the *kongdi*, it served as a space for practices which were not permitted within the ordered space of the city. This was most apparent in its use for informal farming, but there were a variety of other practices which were seen to violate the urban modernity of the city that continued to be carried out in the *kongdi*. As with informal farming, typically these were associated with a rural past, and so perceived to represent dirty, dangerous or backwards behaviours that disrupted the process of becoming urban and becoming modern.

[83] Referred to as '*baogu*'. Dazhulin's variety of *baogu* was said to be famously sweet and tender.

Figure 54: A typical *kongdi* plot in winter (public housing in the background). Source: author.

In traditional Chinese religious practice incense and paper offerings are burned in public spaces to honour ancestors and feed hungry ghosts (Heng, 2014; Scott, 2007). These practices were banned within the public spaces of the public housing and resettlement housing, but continued in the *kongdi*. This was particularly notable during Ghost Festival (*zhongyuan jie*). Similarly the *kongdi* was a favourite site for the residents of Dazhulin to light fireworks during Spring Festival. In these practices the *kongdi* served as a space outside of the state's normative vision of urban modernity which allowed the persistence of activities prohibited as insufficiently urban. For the many residents of Dazhulin who had been displaced from the countryside to the urban periphery, this provided a degree of cultural continuity with pre-urban rural life.

A different kind of absent past was often evoked by interviewees in the *kongdi*. The older generation of informal farmers had been young during the years of the Cultural Revolution, and often made reference to China's revolutionary history in relation to their farming activity. Several of them mentioned that they had been 'sent down youth'—urban teenagers sent to the countryside to learn revolutionary subjectivity from the peasantry. Without my prompting, conversation amongst this generation frequently turned to the Cultural Revolution, recalling the ideological valorisation of farm labour during the Cultural Revolution to explain why they continued to farm the *kongdi*.

> This is the land the CPC conquered with blade and gun, with sweat and blood. It's not right for it to stand empty. (Resettlement housing resident, male, 50s, C28)

> When we were young, before development, this is all we studied in school! All we did was 'learn to work, learn to farm, and learn to fight'![84] (Public housing resident, male, 60s, C10)

On other occasions conversation turned to Chongqing's more recent evocation of revolutionary egalitarian discourse, and the spectre of Bo Xilai and the Chongqing Dream described in chapter 5. Interviewees praised Bo and explained proudly that they lived in 'the public housing that Bo Xilai built' (C26). One of the users of the *kongdi* who became a friend was Zhang Zhigang (see 6.3.4), the public housing tenant who had been displaced from the central city by redevelopment. Sitting out with his friends in the *kongdi* drinking alcohol, the conversation often turned to the legacy of Bo Xilai, with all of those present praising him and complaining about how inefficient and corrupt the management of the city had been since he had been removed. The spot where Zhang and his friends sat in the *kongdi* was only about a hundred metres from the entrance to the public housing where Bo had been photographed surrounded by smiling crowds in 2011 (see 5.4.4, Figure 27) and it felt like his absence still haunted the landscape. One of Zhang's friends turned bitterly to look over the *kongdi* and explained to me: 'I tell you one thing, if Bo Xilai was still here, this place would already be developed!' (B27). This observation hinted at the ironic position of Bo Xilai in the popular mythology of Chongqing—he was viewed as a friend of the people and agent of spatial justice, but his success was measured by his expansion of a mode of urbanisation which had displaced these people to periphery, and would displace them from the *kongdi* within a year's time. The vision of urban modernity which he inspired, even amongst those who used the *kongdi*, was one in which such peripheral spaces were erased.

For those making use of it, the *kongdi* formed a space outside of the temporality and logics of urbanisation. It was a space in which the dominance of urban modernity was temporarily suspended, allowing the persistence of practices prohibited within the expanding zone of urban order. It similarly allowed the persistence of memories of a revolutionary past which no longer carried meaning within the logics of the city. At the same time, it highlighted the irony of the vision of urban modernity which the users of the *kongdi* associated with its future—they anticipated their own imminent displacement

[84] This quote is derived from Mao's May 7th Directive in 1968, which led directly to the establishment of the system of urban teenagers being resettled in the countryside. In Chinese: 学工学农学军.

from the *kongdi* as precisely a demonstration of urban modernity, a necessary step which should have in fact already happened, were Bo Xilai still in charge. In this sense, the *kongdi* was a space outside the temporal advance of urbanisation, where absent pasts and futures could be practiced.

In this section I have discussed how the *kongdi* was viewed by the local state as representing a backwards rural past, and by property developers as representing opportunities for marketing and development. I have introduced the *kongdi* between the public and resettlement housing in detail, and finally considered how the *kongdi* reflects the absent pasts and futures of development. Through this analysis I have demonstrated that the *kongdi* was perceived as a space that lay outside of the formal urban order of the nearby built-up areas. For the local state this represented an embarrassing disruption of the urban modernity they were in the process of building; for the real estate developers of the area it represented a marketing opportunity; for those residents who made use of the *kongdi* it represented a chance to enact informal practices to produce space. In the following section I will consider the material dimensions of these practices.

7.5 Material dimensions of the *kongdi*

7.5.1 Material aspects

This section considers the *kongdi* in material terms. It examines how informal practices shape the space and draw upon the urban and rural dimensions of the space. In this way it examines how informal practices produce a space which is perceived to be materially separate from the city, but is in other ways still within the logic of the urban. The first half of this section considers how informal constructions on the *kongdi* made use of materials which were post-rural (i.e. left behind by the rural past) and pre-urban (i.e. pre-figuring the urban future). The second half of this section considers the extent to which the people making use of the *kongdi* perceived it to be ecologically and metabolically separate from the city (as urban agriculture is often understood to be in urban political ecology scholarship).

7.5.2 Construction

Figure 55: Paddy in the *kongdi* (C12). Source author.

The farming techniques employed on the *kongdi* were sophisticated, and demonstrated consistent practice and investment in a plot over an extended period of time: trellises were constructed from bamboo, plastic sheeting was used as mulch to encourage the growth of young plants during the cold and wet winter, marshy turf was dug from the marshy land and used to enrich the soil elsewhere. Small paddies of standing water were constructed where water spinach could be grown (Figure 55). Pools of stagnant water were used to mix chemical fertiliser applied to the soil. Several interviewees had constructed composting bins out of old polystyrene bins and wooden boards and deliberately cultivated organic crops. Over the course of fieldwork I observed these techniques shifting with the seasons, but retaining a continuity of application and 'ownership'. Most of those interviewed had used the space for several years. Rather than being a zone of neglect or lack of care which was used in a casual or temporary manner, observation revealed that human intervention into the *kongdi* was careful and continuous, demonstrating considerable investment of time, effort and resources.

Figure 56: Small construction in the *kongdi*. Source: author.

There were several semi-permanent informal constructions on the *kongdi* that had been built and maintained over several years. The simplest of these were small sheds built out of rubble, wood, plastic and whatever other materials could be acquired freely, which held farming tools, fertiliser and seeds (Figure 56). More significant constructions were small multi-room buildings. The shelter built by Zhang Zhigang (see 6.3.4) was constructed out of a bamboo and wood frame, featuring a pitched roof, two rooms and a porch. The outer room held converted oil drums used for smoking meat and a sofa where Zhang could sit and monitor the fires. The inner room contained a bed where he could sleep and a generator which provided electricity to light the building. Zhang needed these facilities while smoking meat through the night at the busiest times, when he would stay awake until daybreak and then fall asleep in the inner room. The building's doors were secured with padlocks, and Zhang kept a dog which guarded the hut when he was absent. More advanced settlements in the *kongdi* resembled small compounds: multiple free-standing huts and a chicken run encircled by a fence, guarded by dogs and locked doors.

A particularly notable construction was the creation of a public toilet. Two men from the neighbouring resettlement housing had taken over an old brick building which stood on the edge of the *kongdi* facing the road, having previously been part of the temporary architecture of a construction site. They fitted a new door and hung a sign reading 'public

toilet' upon it. Inside was an improvised latrine which allowed human waste to drop down the steep slope at the edge of the *kongdi*, leading to a compost pit which they had excavated. It was then collected and used to fertilise crops.

Water pipes running to buildings near the road were tapped with hoses which ran into the *kongdi*, to feed small pools where farmers could fill buckets to water their crops during the hot summer. With the construction of the new road the local government planted trees and greenery along the adjoining embankments and installed a system of pipes to irrigate them—these were similarly patched to provide water for the other half of the *kongdi*. When interviewed, the farmers using these hosepipes which appeared out of the undergrowth in the middle of the *kongdi* denied any knowledge of how the water supply had become tapped: 'I don't know where it comes from. Somebody else just gave it to me.' (C01).

In other cases adaptations made use of the traces of the agrarian past which remained on the landscape. Half-standing walls of brick and stone formed the basis for sheds to store equipment, the surface of the winding country road which passed through the area broken up and used to demarcate the boundaries of plots, and the remains of old outhouses were adapted into pools for gathering fertiliser and compost (Figure 57).

Figure 57: The ruins of an old homestead form the basis for a composting pool. Source: author.

7.5.3 Ecology

The material dimensions of the *kongdi* were also reflected in the perception that it was a space that was ecologically distinct from the city, offering a chance to escape the notionally unhealthy metabolism of the urban. From some angles the *kongdi* was understood to offer an alternative ecology to that of the city, while from other angles it was a space that was still enmeshed with urban flows of waste and pollution.

Interviewees contrasted the healthiness of farming on the *kongdi* to the unhealthy practices that they associated with the city. Several emphasised the physical labour of farm work as an important element of their motivation to engage in informal farming. This was particularly apparent among the older farmers of the *kongdi* who often related a perceived decline in health with the decrease in physical labour brought about by urbanisation (e.g. C33). Such practices envisioned the *kongdi* as a space of metabolic separation from the city, which allowed them to maintain some degree of autonomy of health and bodily reproduction. This is also apparent in the fact that the many of farmers interviewed consumed the crops they grew rather than taking them to market (discussed in full in section 7.6).

For some interviewees urban life was perceived to be hazardous and linked to dangerous flows of unknown chemicals and pollutants, and that the *kongdi* offered some escape from such flows. As Klein, J.A. (2013) notes, such a discourse of anxiety over the presence of dangerous pollutants in foodstuffs is a characteristically urban concern of contemporary China. In Dazhulin this was illustrated by resettlement housing resident who had grown up farming, who explained to me her concerns about buying live ducks from a farmer on the street corner:

> Of course, we like to imagine these ducks are organic because they're from the countryside, but we know really they feed them chemicals. But now we're urban people we don't have any choice. (Resettlement housing resident, female, 50s, B11)

Consumption of food bought in the city required placing trust in other parties who could not be guaranteed to keep foodstuffs free of chemicals. By contrast, farming the *kongdi* restored a degree of autonomy by providing a guarantee that they weren't consuming dangerous chemicals or pollutants. This was particularly important for farmers who had young children in their households (C17, C30). As a result, many farmers in the *kongdi* chose to avoid the use of pesticides or chemical fertilisers, instead relying on manure and compost which they made themselves. Access to *kongdi* was thus seen to allow a degree of metabolic separation from the city, enabling those who farmed

it to live within the city but maintain separation from its potential contamination of foodstuffs.

For others the idea of the *kongdi* as a healthy space separate from the city seemed laughable. One farmer who had grown up in Dazhulin described how the city had already intruded into the land of the *kongdi*, and the extent to which urban flows of pollution had already compromised its status as a place of bodily health:

> There's no way [to use the land as we used to before]. There's too much pollution, no way. In the original farmland the water was clear. Even if it was muddy you just had to take it home, wait for the impurities to settle before you can use it for cooking. Nowadays there's no way you could do that. […] And this is social progress? This is a rural area. I used to plant crops. Now they're using the land to build houses. More people are living in this area. More people are moving in, that's just how it is. If there's more people there will be more pollution. All kinds of rubbish, what they eat, what they shit, what they use, everywhere. (Resettlement housing resident, male, 60s, C25)

For this local farmer, there was no point in practicing organic farming on the *kongdi*, since its natural resources had already been compromised by the intrusion of urban life. As a result he used chemical fertilisers to wring the best quality crops he could from the soil. Having lived in Dazhulin his whole life and witnessed the urbanisation of the last decade, he saw any idea that the *kongdi* was separate from the city as fanciful: the socio-natural processes of the countryside had already been irrevocably damaged by contact with the urban.

The notion of cross-contamination between rural and urban was also a concern for the authorities of Dazhulin, but in a different respect. The new urban areas of Dazhulin were policed according to principles of maintaining urban order. Explicitly 'rural' activities which would disrupt the image of an ordered urban suburb were prohibited within housing estates, and enforced by community-level officials (see discussion in Chapter 6). This included the prohibition of urbanised peasants storing farming tools in public spaces and the construction of illegal additions to housing, but also aimed to prevent inhabitants of the urban periphery from discarding waste on the street: both vegetable waste and human refuse. As described in chapter 6, local officials had undertaken efforts to reduce this behaviour within the housing estates, but it continued within the *kongdi*.

Figure 58: The partition of waste between *kongdi* and resettlement housing. Rubbish is gathered behind the wall while smoke blows back into the housing. Source: author.

Figure 59: Smoking meat on the edge of the *kongdi*. Source: author.

Supposedly dirty and wasteful activities were displaced to the *kongdi*, a zone beyond the nominal remit of urban order. The very activity of informal farming was an example of this displacement of figuratively dirty and non-urban behaviour. Similarly, the walls and fences delineating the *kongdi* were generally heaped with rubbish on the side facing away from neighbouring housing, circumventing the prohibition on dumping waste within the city by doing so in the *kongdi* (Figure 58).

Conversely, the practices of the *kongdi* were sometimes regarded as dangerous to the cleanliness and order of the adjacent built-up areas. Locals in the resettlement housing described how prior to urbanisation the smoking of meat (*larou*) during winter had been a major social occasion. Extended family groups would assemble and collectively smoke large amounts of pig meat over the course of several days. Such activities were prohibited within the city, on the principle that the smoke would blow into housing units and contribute to the poor quality of air in the city. Despite this prohibition, the smoking of meat continued within the *kongdi*. Many people crossed the narrow fence which separated the housing units from the *kongdi* and constructed meat-smoking ovens there (Figure 59). The smoke from these ovens was often blown back across the fence into the adjacent housing, but apparently none of the urban authorities cared. Evidently, it was the cultural perception of smoking meat as a dirty and rural activity which was prohibited within urban space, rather than the actual pollutants of the smoke. In this sense, the *kongdi* was seen as a space where dirt and rural habits threatened to disrupt the urban modernity of the surrounding areas.

These examples serve to illustrate the partial and contested entanglements between ecological processes of the *kongdi* and the surrounding city. While in some respects the *kongdi* was perceived as representing a separation from the city and a chance to reclaim the health and nutrition associated with rural life, in many other respects the two remained closely entangled, as the pollution of the city affected the ecology of the *kongdi*, and the supposedly ‘dirty’ rural practices of the *kongdi* flowed back into the city. In these respects, the *kongdi* can be understood to be a space produced by informal practices which seek to escape the material and ecological dimensions of urbanisation, but remain entangled with urban processes.

7.6 Social and economic dimensions of the *kongdi*

7.6.1 Social and economic aspects

This section considers the social and economic dimensions of the *kongdi*. It examines how this land's informal use was integrated with the local economy and post-displacement social configurations. It examines the extent to which informal practices created a space of community and collaboration which was separate from the logics of the city.

The social and economic dimensions of the *kongdi* are significant in so far as they are manifested apparently outside of the control or administration of urban authority. As discussed previously, the attitude of local party officials whom I spoke with was that the *kongdi* was a zone beyond the governance of urban order. Officials at the subdistrict level (*jiedao*) showed little interest in governing the *kongdi* and acknowledged that people could use it freely for the time being. Lower level community (*shequ*) officials similarly perceived the *kongdi* to lie beyond the responsibility of formal governance. In fact, several cadres had themselves engaged in small-scale informal farming of the *kongdi*. A go-along interview with two officials from the community revealed their attitude:

> Official 1: That piece of land belongs to the state, but they can grow their own things there.[86] If there comes a time when it's needed, they'll be pushed off.
>
> Official 2: If the state isn't going to occupy the land then they can carry on farming, and anyway there's nobody looking after it.[87]
>
> (Go-along tour of resettlement housing, B23)

Their attitude was that the informal use of the *kongdi* was an expected outcome of the process of urbanisation, but one which did not merit attention: the *kongdi* was a space beyond the remit of urban governance. Because 'there's nobody managing it', it lay beyond the responsibility of the urban apparatus of state, yet was also no longer part of the countryside. The *kongdi* was imagined as a 'blank' space positioned between the rural past and urban future, devoid of meaning and invisible to the authority of the local state.[88]

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[86] While technically true in the sense that all urban land belongs to the state, this piece of land had already been leased to a developer (see 7.4.2).

[87] Chinese: 反正没人管。The verb *guan* (管) used here is typically translated as 'manage' or 'be in charge of' but also has the meaning of 'to have jurisdiction over' or 'to be concerned about'. The sentence captures both the technical administrative 'gap' of the *kongdi* which was not their responsibility, and the attitude that stemmed from this—that it was a space where one could do as one pleased, unmanaged by the state, not concerning the city.

[88] It is worth recalling again Mayor Huang Qifan's description of the Liangjiang New Area as 'a sheet of blank paper, onto which something completely new can be drawn' (quoted in CQMP 2010/06/18 p.6).

7.6.2 Food production

The permissive attitude of the local state was mirrored by those engaged in informal food production on the *kongdi,* who regarded their use of the land as a temporary activity which emerged out of expediency:

> The state already expropriated [this land], but it's only reasonable that we should be able to farm here. Normally it would be illegal, but the government has no rules which state that once the land has been expropriated nobody is allowed to use it. (Public housing resident, female, 30s, C30)

The assertion that the land was state-owned and thus functioned as something akin to a commons which was freely available to anyone who wished to make use of it was mirrored by many farmers. This was despite the fact that the land had in fact already been leased to developers, an event which did not seem to affect the perception that it was state-owned land. Many of those interviewed responded to any questions about the provenance of the land, or how they had gained access to it, with the assertion that 'this is national land, everybody can use it' (C23). Some interviewees suggested that the farming and 'development' of unused land was characteristic of Chinese culture, and *kongdi* spaces necessarily invited cultivation:

> Chinese people love this kind of work—if you're willing to grow your own crops there's no need for quarrelling. (Public housing resident, male, 30s, C21)

> I saw it was *kongdi* so I just started farming, it was being wasted. (Commodity housing resident, male, 60s, C11)

Moreover, such intervention was seen to reflect the determination and hard work of rural people adapting to life within the city:

> I started farming here just this year. I didn't go to the urban core, and since the economy fell again lots of people were leaving. This land belongs to the state, before that it was countryside, but then after reform and opening up the countryside was turned into a city. They took all the farmers of this place and moved them elsewhere, and then all of this land was idle. Then as the country was developing very quickly there was so much space here, just barren hills all covered in weeds. […] This land belongs to the state, people can't simply run off with it, it's just that whoever occupies this space can do what they want with it. (Public housing resident, male, 30s, C21)

This attitude reflected the historical distinction between topsoil (*tianpi*) and subsoil (*tiandi*) in pre-modern Chinese customary law, with the presumption that the right to make temporary use of idle topsoil did not violate the continued possession of subsoil rights by the state (Huang, P.C.C., 2001).

The extent to which users of the *kongdi* were economically reliant upon it as a means of subsistence varied. Only four interviewees (10%) described their primary motive for farming as being to sell the resulting produce, with the majority stating that their household ate some of crops produced and sold the rest.[89] Twenty-six interviewees (70%) stated that they had no paid work, and lived off pension income or the state security paid to urban residents (*dibao*). Older female farmers often described their day as being structured around the unpaid work of childcare, looking after young children or grandchildren while their partners or grown-up children were at work. They saw the farming of the *kongdi* as a hobby which could be easily integrated with this work, and provide healthy fresh food for children.

The younger farmers had paid work in addition to farming the *kongdi*, working in nearby factories or doing menial work for the local government: sweeping streets, planting trees and maintaining the green spaces of the subdistrict. After six o'clock there was a noticeable influx of farmers arriving at the *kongdi* still dressed in the green and orange uniform of state-employed outdoor labourers.

> I'd like to have time to farm every day, but because of working in the factory it's generally just two or three hours a week. (Female public housing resident in his 30s, C12)

Farming took place alongside full-time work, so was clearly not a primarily commercial practice. One official interviewed claimed that many people farming the *kongdi* made tens of thousands of yuan per year from selling their produce, but most farmers contradicted this claim and were dismissive of the economic value of their use of the *kongdi*:

> For example, if you were growing vegetables here and you said that this bit of ground where I'm growing vegetables was yours, the vegetables you would grow here in a single year don't amount to more than a couple of hundred yuan. In China's current economy that's nothing special. So this kind of thing isn't driven by seeking a big profit. (Public housing resident, male, 30s, C 21)

The majority of those interviewed reported a purely recreational motive for engaging in food production, describing it as enjoyable, good exercise, while the money made from selling vegetables was just pocket money.

The informal practice of food production in the *kongdi* emerges as a practice which was largely for purposes of leisure and health, and not a response to economic necessity. As Tornaghi (2014) argues, the 'lifestyle' qualities of urban agriculture do not necessarily

[89] Typically this was expressed as 'whatever we can't eat, we sell to others'. 15 interviewees (40%) stated they only ate their crops and didn't sell any of them.

preclude more overtly political dimensions. In the case of the *kongdi* however there was little indication that informal food production permitted any degree of economic autonomy from the city.

7.6.3 Cooperation

Most of those interviewed described the relations of *kongdi* as being 'harmonious' (*hexie*). Examples of cooperation between those engaged in food production were numerous. Many resources, such as fertiliser pools and tapped water supplies, were shared freely. Others, such as compost heaps, shed space and tools, were often shared between neighbouring plots according to informal agreement.

Several interviewees noted that knowledge of farming techniques and food production was shared within the *kongdi*. One public housing resident who had migrated from Guizhou described how she had sought assistance from local farmers when she began to grow vegetables in the *kongdi*, since the climate and soil quality differed subtly from that of her hometown (C27). In other instances, novice farmers were taught how to grow vegetables by their neighbours:

> Many people don't like farming, and I didn't like it at first either. Nothing would grow and I got so frustrated. I didn't know what I should be growing in which season, or anything like that. For example, I didn't know which was the right season to plant maize, or when I should fertilise the soil, or when I should plant vegetables. I had to ask those next to me about everything. But after a year or two, I became addicted to it! Now I think it's great. (Public housing resident, female, 30s, C30).

The overwhelming picture from interviewees was that there was no conflict between those people making informal use of the *kongdi*, and this was supported by my own observations.

> You can talk about 'irregular' (*weigui*), you can talk about 'illegal' (*fanfa*). The point is that I can do as I like here, as long as it doesn't affect anyone else then where's the conflict? There's no conflict. […] It's always been this way in Chongqing, ordinary people can all get along together fine. The police don't come here, the government don't care. If the police come and tell me to move then I'll move.' (Public housing resident, male, 50s, B27).

A few minor incidents gave me cause to question this picture of a universally harmonious relationship amongst the users of the *kongdi*. Early on in fieldwork I made the mistake of standing on a patch of young chives which had just begun to sprout, not realising that the land was cultivated. When the farmer of this plot arrived he complained

bitterly that people were always walking across his land, while the neighbours I'd been interviewing apologised on my behalf. The tendency for some bits of land near entrances and pathways to be degraded by passing traffic was a subject of several complaints, but did not seem to be a serious issue. A more problematic issue was theft of vegetables during the night, which several farmers close to the public housing complained about (C21, C24). A minority of 'outsiders' complained that the 'locals' looked down on them and tried to bully them:

> The locals' attitude to the outsiders can be bullying. […] Each has their own logic, but I'm not afraid of them. We're not at fault, we've broken no law. If we broke the law, I'd fear the government not them. (Public housing resident, female, 70s, C27)

These incidents, however, seemed to be rare. The question of how access or 'ownership' to particular plots was determined was a more common issue, although interviewees did not describe it as a source of outright conflict. Only one local farmer claimed to have farmed the same plot of land consistently since urbanisation a decade prior (C03). Interviewees described how the formerly agrarian land had been neglected after it was turned into state-owned land. As a result, they had taken it on themselves to clear a plot in the undergrowth, move rubble and stones, and 'open the wasteland' (*kaihuang*) for themselves. Other interviewees had inherited plots that had been abandoned by previous farmers, had been given them by friends, or had been told about unused plots by other farmers:

> It was a friend who gave it to me. They farmed a lot of the land, but then they were busy and couldn't farm all of it, so they let me use some. […] [My friend] gave it to me and said at the time that it was clear. It has nothing to do with who owns the land. I just want to grow vegetables in the little area I have, just to eat myself. […] In Chongqing, if you have land for farming generally other people won't interfere, unless it's obviously a wasteland. It's just like before I started to farm here, there was nobody using the land, so I came and started farming. If the original owner returned and wanted the land back, of course you'd give it back. So where is the problem? There's no need for any dispute. (Public housing resident, female, 30s, C30)

Access to land was largely negotiated through friendships, cooperation, and word of mouth, in the absence of any way of knowing the 'ownership' of individual plots beyond personally talking to those using it.

While undertaking interviews, I was sceptical of this portrayal of the shared use of the *kongdi* as largely 'harmonious'. On one occasion I expressed doubts to two elderly migrants living in the public housing that this disorganised shared use could function as

seamlessly and harmoniously as they claimed. They laughed and asked me what my parents did for a living. I replied that they were both educators. 'Well there you are! You're a city person! This is a countryside matter! Of course you wouldn't understand. But this is just the way things are in the countryside, we don't bother one another' (Public housing resident, male, 60s, C10). The *kongdi* was again invoked as a space beyond the logic of the city, a discrete space where the communal logic of the countryside could prevail amidst the encroachments of the city. By asking about conflict within this space, or the specific technicalities of informal 'ownership', I was introducing a foreign logic to the *kongdi*, and would never understand it.

The *kongdi* emerges from this discussion as a space of cooperation. It can be seen to reflect elements of urban agriculture as commoning, representing a suspension of the urban logic of the commodity and a continuity with the communal practices of the rural past. The communal benefits of the *kongdi* were accessed without any form of regulation, but rather out of an apparently 'harmonious' understanding of what informal practices were acceptable. However, this harmony was brought into question by the question of what would happen when the *kongdi* was destroyed and the commons enclosed.

7.6.4 Dividing the *kongdi*

Over the course of my fieldwork the farmers of the *kongdi* watched the neighbouring construction sites growing taller, and knew that it was only a matter of time until such development would reach them. When farmers of the *kongdi* saw me making my way through the fields they would often assume I was a developer, come to look at the land prior to construction: 'So you're here to build houses then?' It was understood to be inevitable that developers would arrive, but unclear exactly when:

> Everyone was saying that developers bought the land, but I don't know for sure. If someone else is selling it we have no idea. We're old women, we don't understand culture and don't know how to read, we just listen to what other people say. This land will be sold. They're all saying that the bosses will be coming to buy it, but it's not clear what's true and what's false. (Resettlement housing resident, female, 50s, C34)

The threat of impending development raised the issue of whether any of those occupying the land would be eligible for compensation. Formally, the land had already been expropriated over a decade beforehand, and compensation paid to those villagers who had farmed it. Nonetheless, there was widespread expectation that informal farmers would receive some small monetary payoff for the re-expropriation of the land they had

worked. This was referred to as the 'green sprout fee' (*qingmiaofei*), borrowed from the terminology of the Land Administration Law used to determine compensation for land expropriated by the state. Some stated that the prospect of receiving financial compensation was their chief motivation for continuing to farm the land:

> So this kind of [farming] isn't driven by seeking a big profit. When nobody was using this land then you can just come and plant crops here, first come first served. And then when the funds come through and they build houses here, they'll give you a little compensation. (Public housing resident, male, 30s, C21)

It was rumoured that informal farmers in neighbouring areas had been awarded 1,300 yuan each, irrespective of the size of their plot (C15, C29), while others claimed that they would receive a few thousand yuan per plot (C03).[90]

Significantly, this informal compensation was not expected to be awarded equally. The farmers who were expecting to receive compensation were all locals who had grown up in Dazhulin, and linked their right to compensation to their 'native' status as the original farmers of the land. 'Outsiders' who had been displaced from elsewhere to the public housing and started farming the *kongdi* more recently were not expected to be eligible for compensation. One such outsider described the situation:

> I farm this land myself, but other people gave it to me initially. If the developer is giving out money, they'll receive that money. But I'll be able to take any crops I've grown and take the money from selling them. We agreed this all before. If you can't agree these kinds of things then nobody will give you any land. […] There'll be no dispute, because when I started growing [crops] here I didn't know the land belonged to the state. […] But previously the government came and notified us, saying that this land would soon be leased out to developers. I listened to what they had to say but I still was none the wiser. Before anything happens they'll come and put up a sign saying 'at such-and-such-a-date the state will take back this land, those eligible for compensation will receive it, come and get it!' (Public housing resident, female, 30s, C30)

Outsiders who had not grown up in Dazhulin would be unlikely to receive any compensation for the work they put into informal constructions and 'opening up the land'. One of the outsiders who would be affected by this was Li Yangyang, the migrant worker profiled in the previous chapter (6.3.2) who had been displaced to the city by the need to look for work. She had farmed a plot on the *kongdi* for a few years, and was sure that she had no chance of receiving compensation for the work she had put into it:

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[90] The interviewee claimed they would receive several thousand yuan per *mu* of land farmed. A *mu* is a Chinese measurement of area equivalent to 666m^2. Based on the average plot size calculation earlier in this chapter, each farmer's plot amounted to roughly one quarter of a *mu*.

> Those who planted this land, dug out all of these places, pulled out the stones—all of them are outsiders who came here looking for work. In general it's the outsiders who do the most farming around there, the locals don't do so much. The locals basically just work in those places that they farmed before, places they're familiar with. Over here [indicating the portion of the *kongdi* facing the public housing] it's all outsiders. It's not easy for outsiders who come to find work in the city. The state has never given us compensation for urbanisation. Everything we have they have worked for with their own two hands. The young ones can go to work and get a little money; us older ones can grow and sell vegetables to help out. So if there are outsiders who want to compete for compensation, they can do so. But why go to the trouble over a little money? Better to avoid falling out, just grow your crops and enjoy eating them. (C15)

As she talked, Li Yanyang continued to work, carefully planting potatoes in the damp winter air. She stood up and looked over towards the construction site, and the towers of scaffolding-clad residential blocks which grew taller and more numerous every day.

> I've been farming now for year or two. I used to grow crops over there [indicating the construction site] before we were pushed off. There were trees planted there, and I chopped them down and planted in the soil. I had no idea whose the land was originally, but when we were finally pushed off the owner (*zhuren*) came and claimed the green sprout fee. So there you go, we just wanted to grow crops to exercise and stay healthy. If you're not a local then there's nothing you can do. If somebody comes and tells you the land is theirs you have no way of knowing if it's true or not. But we didn't argue about this. It's just money anyway. (C15)

Li Yangyang's experience reveals the superposition of several logics of ownership at work in the *kongdi*. There was a moral code which presumed a 'harmonious' coexistence of farmers working side by side. This was imagined as an explicitly rural practice, in opposition to the commodity values of the city. This was illustrated by the farmer who rebuked me for approaching the land with an 'urban' logic (C10). In contrast to this, the impending development of the urban land raised the prospect of the land taking on the value of a commodity. Those who stood to profit from the 'green sprout fee' from developers engaged in various tactics in order to benefit from the ultimate urbanisation of the land. These claims rested on the original ownership of the land prior to its formal urbanisation. The *kongdi* was produced at the interface of several contradictory logics: perceived to be state-owned land despite already being leased to a developer; understood as a space of harmonious rural relationships, but still enclosed by the anticipation of the *re*-expropriation of common land into urban commodity housing; a fictive asset which worth billions of yuan, while the land itself was still worked by displaced residents.

7.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have undertaken a comprehensive investigation of the informal practices associated with the *kongdi* in Dazhulin. I have considered how the *kongdi* was perceived both by its users and by local officials as a space that was different and somehow separate from the surrounding built-up spaces. Through a detailed examination of the material and socio-economic dimensions of the informal practices which produced this space I have demonstrated that the *kongdi* was positioned ambiguously between functions and categories of rural and urban. In this section I consider this ambiguous positioning through Simone's (2010) theory of the periphery, and the further implications for urban studies.

The informal practices which produced the *kongdi* can be seen as continuation of the plurality of informal and formal tactics described in chapter 6. However they are carried out at a different scale, not manifesting as long-term tactics to secure the right to urban modernity in the city, but reflecting a more quotidian rhythm—the practice of crossing between the formal space of the city and informal space of the *kongdi* was a daily occurrence, and for many of those interviewed informal use of the *kongdi* went hand-in-hand with formal employment and residence in state-owned public housing. This illustrates McFarlane's (2012) point that people 'move between formal and informal activities and arrangements, not just over the course of their lives, but also over a single day' (p. 101). However, the attitudes of the farmers and local officials towards the *kongdi* as space which was 'lagging behind' demonstrated that it nonetheless was a space very distinct from the urban order surrounding it. The barrier between the space of the city and the space of the *kongdi* was permeable, as demonstrated by the flows of people, pollutants and foodstuffs. The edge of the *kongdi* was 'full of potential holes capable of providing, albeit always temporary, shelter and manoeuvrability' (Simone, 2010, p. 98).

Simone's theorisation of the periphery is of a space which occupies a radically ambiguous position whereby it belongs neither to the properly 'urban' order of the centre, nor the rural. It is an area 'whose character does not yet fully reflect the "stamp" of the city' (p. 39), but which might soon be captured or displaced by the normative logic of urban modernity. To live on the periphery is then to live a 'partial life' which is 'neither urban nor rural' (p. 130). Such an existence, however, might also allow creative practices which enable life to continue to be lived through the upheavals of urban restructuring.

The material dimensions of the *kongdi* demonstrated that it was perceived as a space that was in some respects separate from the city, in some respects entangled within it. The informal practices of construction in the *kongdi* produced space which responded to the

rural past and urban future alike, reclaiming the remnants of rural homesteads while making use of urban water supplies. Similarly, the notion of the *kongdi* as offering a degree of autonomy and separation from the metabolic rift of the urban varied: while outsiders perceived the *kongdi* as a space of nostalgia and health, for many of the natives they recognised it as already damaged and spoiled by the presence of the city.

The social and economic dimensions of the periphery likewise reflected an ambiguous position between rural and urban. For many of the users of the *kongdi* it reflected a space of 'harmony', cooperation and collaboration between the heterogeneous groups displaced to the periphery. The point was forcefully made to me that by worrying about the organisation and ownership of the space I was bringing to the *kongdi* a foreign and urban logic of property rights and commodification. However, the imminent enclosure of the *kongdi* revealed just such a countermovement at work. The movements undertaken to seek to profit from the expected demolition of the *kongdi* perform a 'politics of anticipation' (Simone, 2010, pp. 95-101) in that they are an attempt by the marginalised to predict the unilateral actions of the state and market and position themselves to benefit from it. By continuing farming and making arrangements for who would receive the 'green sprout fee', the farmers of the *kongdi* were 'positioning [themselves] in relationship to events and places in preparation to move quickly' (Simone, 2010, p. 96). In this way, the urban logic of commodity and property rights was re-imposed onto the *kongdi* by the prospect of its imminent destruction.

It is also important to note the novelty of the way of life that was created in Dazhulin. In the experiences of the urban displaced sleeping in highrise housing, working in nearby factories, and crossing into the *kongdi* to grow their own food or build their own constructions, it is possible to discern a truly different mode of urban life on the periphery. Arguably, this blending of rural and urban logics, practices and patterns of behaviour was far more novel—and far more indicative of urban futures—than the normative vision of the future that the state promoted. While the life of those making use of the *kongdi* might be 'neither urban nor rural' insofar as it is not amenable to formal notions of urban modernity, I would contend that it is most definitely an urban (and modern) existence. In this sense I push back against Simone's (2010) characterisation of the quotidian existence of the periphery as a 'partial life' (p. 130). Rather, the example of the *kongdi* prompts us to expand our understanding of urban life beyond the normative bounds of the state's vision of urban modernity.

By occupying an ambiguous space, the *kongdi* escapes the strict binary of rural and urban which characterises the land, labour and culture of contemporary Chinese urban

modernity. The *kongdi* disrupted the temporality of urbanisation. The formal urbanisation of the land did not bring about urban modernity, but rather provoked informal practices which challenged this vision of modernity. If we understand the urban periphery in China as a zone which is both pre-urban and post-rural (Leaf, 2016), we can see that the *kongdi* was perceived by many as a space that existed outside the temporality of urbanisation, 'lagging behind' the pace of development and 'troubling' Dazhulin's urbanisation. However, it was precisely the distinct temporalities of urbanisation driven by land financing which had allowed the *kongdi* to come about. While the *kongdi* was produced by informal practices, these were only able to emerge due to the fragmented landscape which had been created by a decade of successive waves of piecemeal urbanisation, as described in chapter 4.

This point brings us to one of the most interesting aspects of this space which has remained implicit in much of this discussion. Unlike the 'urban village' or the peri-urban shanty town—which emerge as informal urbanisation of spaces which are not yet formally urban—the informality of the *kongdi* came about *after* formal urbanisation had taken place. It was a formally urban space which manifested through ostensibly non-urban practices. This was possible because of the temporality of land financing which was fundamental to the political economy of Chongqing's urban restructuring. As a financial asset the land of the *kongdi* had been used by the state to leverage infrastructure investment, 'cooked' for the market, and leased to property developers for hundreds of millions of yuan. Yet due to the timeframe of this model, the *actual* land itself continued to produce food and provide space for those displaced. The informal use of the *kongdi* renegotiated its value away from an asset of urban commodification towards communal use. The *kongdi* troubled the logics of the urban in Dazhulin insofar as it gave space to contradictions of these logics, but at the same time offered a view of a different urban future.

The *kongdi* was coproduced by state-led land finance-based urban restructuring, and the informal practices of displaced people responding to this restructuring. The *kongdi* must be understood as space produced by urbanisation, but one which was articulated through rural pasts, the contradictions of state entrepreneurialism, and the contingent responses of the displaced. The expansion of the city does not produce a space homogenised under any singular logic of the urban, but provokes heterogeneous responses which expand our understanding of what being modern and being urban might be. Standing in the *kongdi* we might reconsider the implications of such a space for the current debates around planetary urbanization (Brenner and Schmid, 2012), and consider

how the process of making Dazhulin urban could be seen to expand our understanding of what becoming urban and becoming modern entails.

8. Conclusions

In terms of urban planning, I have to emphasise that the relationship between country and city is absolutely not based on public housing allowing rural people to become urban people. In fact it's about turning the countryside into the city.

WeChat message from public housing resident (male, 20s, June 2017).

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter of the thesis I recap the arguments I have made in the previous chapters, reflect on how the findings of this project respond to the research questions outlined in chapter 1 and provoke some theoretical innovations and questions for further consideration. I begin by restating how I situate my research within existing literature, before moving on to summarise the arguments made in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Following this, I offer four summary conclusions in response to the four research questions posed in chapter 1. Finally, I consider further implications of this project for research and theory more broadly.

The broad ambit of this research reflects the dislocations of my own experience in coming to understand the periphery of Chongqing, and trying to synthesise the contingencies of this periphery into text. My intention in presenting these different treatments of themes of modernity and the urban periphery is to apply the practice of inter-referencing (Chen, 2010) on an urban scale, and to use these dislocations to articulate with some fidelity the complexity of Chongqing as I encountered it.

8.2 Chapter review

8.2.1 The invisible metropolis

In chapter I introduced the central questions and reference points of this study, and gave an overview of the structure of the thesis. I described the topics and themes of the thesis and my findings (1.1). I introduced the city of Chongqing and its recent history (1.2), and described its marginal position within Anglophone urban studies and spectacular representation in the West (1.3). I introduced four research questions which would guide my thesis (1.4) and outlined the structure of the thesis (1.5). I situated my study within the literature of Chinese urban political economy (1.6).

8.2.2 Situating this study

In chapter 2 I introduced the key terms of this project situated and it within existing literature. I described the theoretical coordinates of my research and how its content relates to contemporary scholarship. I began by introducing the notion of urban modernity (2.2). I outlined urban modernity as a heuristic device to explore the relationship between normative images of urban modernity and the everyday creative labour of life in the changing city (2.2.2), and looked at the historical geography of Chinese urbanisation before and after reform (2.2.3 & 2.2.4). I discussed the postcolonial critique of urban studies (2.3) and how an understanding of modernity as 'dislocated' might be applied in China (2.3.4).

The second half of this chapter discussed tactics for approaching the periphery (2.4). I outlined a genealogy of the periphery as analytical category (2.4.2) and as an approach to studying the fringes of cities (2.4.3). I extended this discussion through common typologies of periphery, and introduced Dazhulin (2.4.4). I reviewed the extensive literature on informality and its changing relationship to the urban periphery, highlighting in particular the work of Roy (2005, 2009b, 2011b), McFarlane (2012) and Simone (2010) (2.4.5). I moved this discussion to the context of China (2.5) where I surveyed the issues in defining the Chinese urban periphery (2.5.1), the tendency to dichotomise between formal suburbs and informal urban villages, and the emerging literatures studying forms of periphery which trouble this dualism (2.5.2).

8.2.3 Dislocation as methods

Chapter 3 recounted the methodology used to gather the data presented in this thesis and explained the decisions I took around positionality, representation and the politics of knowledge production. I began by detailing the methodology through which the data presented in this thesis was gathered (3.2). I summarised my experience of ethnography, interviews, observation, and gathering of photos and video (3.2.2), and the gathering of documentary data (3.2.3). I recounted the temporal structure of my fieldwork, analysis and writing (3.2.4).

I considered the politics of knowledge production by narrating my frustration with the limitations of the Orientalist 'ethnographic imaginary' of knowledge production (3.3.1). I reflected on the metaphor of dislocation as a tactic to disturb the ethnographic imaginary, and I related this to the work Chen Kuan-Hsing (3.3.2). I used dislocation as a framing to think about the difficulties, decisions and compromises encountered during

fieldwork (3.4.1), focussing on issues of ethics and consent (3.4.2), language (3.4.3), working with research assistants (3.4.4), and collaborative video production (3.4.5). I summarised more personal difficulties and how they determined my positionality in the field (3.5) and considered what lessons other doctoral students might draw from my experience (3.6).

8.2.4 Fragmented urban restructuring

In chapter 4 I analysed the policies and processes of Chongqing's urban restructuring at the scale of the city. I argued firstly that viewing Chongqing's urbanisation from a longitudinal perspective highlighted the extent to which the municipality pursued a typical model of state entrepreneurial urbanism, troubling the image of a distinct and radically egalitarian 'Chongqing Model'; secondly I argued that successive waves of intervention created a fragmented peripheral landscape, exemplified by the subdistrict of Dazhulin.

I examined the policies, political economy and changing spaces of Chongqing's urban restructuring since 2000, focussing on the northern periphery of the city and the subdistrict of Dazhulin. I argued to distinguish between the egalitarian discourse of the *Chongqing Dream* and the long-term urban restructuring of the *Chongqing Project*—rather than collapsing both into the 'Chongqing Model' (4.2).

I discussed the key policies of the Chongqing Project: State-owned Urban Investment and Development Companies (UIDCs) facilitated the expansion of urban infrastructure (4.3.2). A system of land financing expropriated land from peripheral townships, created a state-owned land reserve which was leveraged to finance infrastructure investment and then leased to developers (4.3.3). The Liangjiang New Area (LJNA) attracted foreign and domestic industrial capital through subsidised land prices and tax cuts (4.3.4). I described and critiqued the equitable policies which were implemented (reform of the *hukou* system and construction of public housing), suggesting that these policies were a way of supplying cheap labour to industrial capital (4.3.5). I argued that when viewed from the longitudinal standpoint of urban restructuring we must question the extent to which the Chongqing Model offered a meaningful break from the political economy of state entrepreneurialism (4.3.6).

The latter half of chapter 4 looked at how these policies transformed the northern edge of Chongqing. I traced three waves of intervention by which the space was turned from 'raw' agrarian land into 'cooked' land that could be leased to developers (4.4.1). I briefly sketched how this rhythm of rapid successive interventions manifested in the space

of Dazhulin (4.4.2), describing the collocation of resettlement housing for urbanised villagers, public housing for migrant workers, construction sites for luxury commodity housing, and extensive areas of as-yet-undeveloped land used for informal agriculture. The result of this decade of upheaval was a fragmented landscape marked by the co-presence of urban and rural forms.

8.2.5 Red hyperbuilding

Chapter 5 analysed the municipality's discursive and aesthetic efforts to restructure the urban imaginary of Chongqing. Firstly, I argued that the Chongqing Dream's vision of urban modernity was a dissonant and often contradictory combination of capitalist, socialist and Maoist imaginaries which served to justify urban restructuring. Secondly, I argued that this vision of urban modernity was nonetheless successful because it responded to the inequalities of uneven development by articulating an alternative vision of urban modernity characterised by spatial justice.

I examined how media and academic texts portrayed the urban restructuring described in chapter 4, and related this to Ong's concept of hyperbuilding (5.2). The findings of this chapter contribute a new perspective to scholarship on the Chongqing Model, stressing its popular urban imaginary. They also contribute to the urban studies literature on 'urban futures' in Asian cities, examining an image of urban modernity that was portrayed as an alternative to neoliberal narratives.

To illustrate this, I first argued that Chongqing's vision of urban modernity was a dissonant and often contradictory mixture of protocols which served to justify urban restructuring. For context I examined the portrayal of Chongqing as 'lagging behind' the modernity of China's coastal cities (5.3). I traced how three protocols of the Chongqing Dream responded to this peripheralisation by re-imagining the city as becoming urban and becoming modern (5.4.1): acceleration (5.4.2), Red Culture (5.4.3), and spatial justice (5.4.4) which would be achieved through the construction of public housing for migrant workers. In performing this reimagining of Chongqing, these protocols justified the upheaval and displacement of urban restructuring.

Secondly, I argued that despite the dissonance of this vision, it was nonetheless successful because it responded to the inequalities of uneven development by articulating an alternative vision of urban modernity characterised by spatial justice. Although chapter 4 highlighted that the political economy of Chongqing did not represent a meaningful break from state entrepreneurial urbanism, I demonstrate that the discourse and aesthetics of the period nonetheless presented Chongqing as offering a radical *alternative to* the

urban modernity of Shenzhen and Shanghai (5.5) Irrespective of the shortcomings of the Chongqing Model as urban policy, the myth of the Chongqing Model responded to a popular critique of the inequalities of post-socialist development.

Through making these two arguments I sought to foreground the problem space of urban modernity, and characterised the reorientation of Chongqing's urban imaginary towards egalitarian values as a project of 'red hyperbuilding'. Carrying this forward into chapters 6 and 7, I used the findings of this chapter to explore the gap between the promises of red hyperbuilding, and the realities of life on the periphery.

8.2.5 Housing and post-displacement

Chapter 6 narrowed the focus to a neighbourhood scale, looking at daily life in Dazhulin. Firstly I argued that the urban periphery is a space formed by heterogeneous experiences of displacements which produce new opportunities and inequalities. Secondly I argued that tactics used to access housing reveal practices which move between formality and informality, demonstrating to inequalities which further illustrate the shortcomings of the spatial justice of the Chongqing Dream. In making these arguments, I suggested that Dazhulin was a space of post-displacement. I proposed this term to capture the heterogeneity of displacements brought together on the urban periphery, and the shifting opportunities and new inequalities of living through urban restructuring after displacement.

This chapter used an ethnography of displacement and housing to examine how everyday life is lived in the shadow of rapid urbanisation and the urban imaginaries used to justify it, as described in chapters 4 and 5. The findings of this chapter contribute ethnographic detail to a growing scholarly interest in the interface between formality and informality (both in China and globally), highlighting in particular the multiple agencies of the state and the renegotiation of the value of state-built housing. The concept of 'post-displacement' was proposed to link such spaces and practices to the displacements engendered by urban restructuring (6.2).

The first argument made in this chapter was that the urban periphery is a space composed by heterogeneous experiences of displacement. I traced three life histories to exemplify the displacements brought together in Dazhulin (6.3): displacements through migration, through urbanisation and through redevelopment (6.3.2-6.3.4). These life histories demonstrated that displacements are integral to the restructuring of the city, and that the experience of urbanisation is highly differentiated: it reflects the different

contours of legal status, communal ties, and relationships with the city. It generates shifting opportunities but also new inequalities (6.3.5).

The second argument in this chapter extended this investigation to examine tactics used to access and utilise housing on the urban periphery, comparing resettlement housing, public housing, and other migrant housing (6.4.1). Urbanised villagers leveraged resettlement housing to their advantage using informal and formal tactics, such as faking divorces and illegally altering their properties in order to rent them out. The residents of the resettlement housing thus occupied an ambiguous relationship with the city: they stood to benefit as urbanised rentier capitalists, yet remained socially and economically unintegrated into the city (6.4.2). Public housing tenants comprised young university graduates, migrant workers and the displaced urban poor (6.4.3). Identifying three slippages in the use of public housing revealed its shortcomings as an instantiation of spatial justice: apartments were occupied by wealthy residents due to lax regulations, some of them leveraged rent-seeking or property speculation. In other cases apartments were used as dormitories for industrial enterprises. As a result many migrant workers in Dazhulin still lived in poor quality informal rented accommodation (6.4.4). Contrasting these experiences demonstrates the differentiated strategies used to leverage housing—blending formal and informal approaches, renegotiating the value of housing, highlighting the shortcomings the state's singular narrative of spatial justice (6.5.4).

These two arguments explored how ordinary people sought to access urban modernity after displacement, revealing heterogeneous ways of becoming urban. This provided an alternative perspective to Fleischer's (2010) ethnography of suburban consumption of space, and contribute to literatures of formal and informal peripheries.

8.2.6 The temporalities of informality in the *kongdi*

Chapter 7 further narrowed the scope of study to an ethnography of a particular space in Dazhulin. I argued that the informal practices associated with the *kongdi* (wasteland) produced an ambiguous space on the periphery of the urban. I used Simone's theorisation of the periphery to think through the ambiguous positioning of the *kongdi* and draw out the particular temporalities of the Chinese periphery.

This chapter analysed data from long-term participant observation, mapping and interviews with informal farmers. It extended the perspective of informality as a practice established in chapter 6 into the use of as-yet-undeveloped land. It contextualised this space with reference to Simone's theories and existing work on urban agriculture (7.2), noting that urban agriculture has been interpreted to constitute economic and ecological

autonomy from urban value forms. The findings of this chapter contribute to the growing literature on informality on the urban periphery in China and more globally, noting that the *kongdi* is a space that is *already formally urban* but manifests non-urban uses, rather than rural space pre-figuring urban uses.

The main argument of this chapter was that the informal practices associated with the *kongdi* produced a space that occupied an ambiguous position between rural and urban logics—it was formally commodified urban space but is used for communal rural purposes which disturb urban order. I introduced the emic category *kongdi* to describe the informal use of vacant land (7.3.1) and described how this appears in Dazhulin (7.3.2). I introduced the *kongdi* where I conducted research (7.4.2) and examine how the *kongdi* was seen by officials (7.4.1) and those who used it (7.4.3) as distinct from the city surrounding it.

I analysed the materiality of the *kongdi* in two steps (7.5): firstly examining practices of informal construction (7.5.2), and then investigating how the ecology of the *kongdi* was perceived to be variously separate-from or entangled-with the city. I then analysed social and economic dimensions of the *kongdi* (7.6), considering the economics of informal food production (7.6.2), the status of the *kongdi* as a space of cooperation and commoning which stood outside of urban value forms (7.6.3) and the way in which the immanent enclosure of the space reimposed commodity values (7.5.4).

From these material and social dimensions, I demonstrate that informal practice produces a space which exists ambiguously between urban and rural logics, ecologically and economically distinct from the city but still entangled with and determined by urban processes. I also suggested that the *kongdi* also reveals a temporality of urbanisation which is distinct to the political economy of China, emerging from the strategies of land financing and successive waves of intervention described in chapter 4. I consider how the informal use of the land positions it at the junctures of urbanisation, between a rural past and urban future.

8.3 Peripheral Modernities

8.3.1 Looking back

In summarising the findings of this thesis and considering what general arguments emerge out of the specifics of each chapter, I return to the research questions posed in chapter 1 and the problem space of urban modernity articulated in chapter 2. By the problem space of urban modernity, I refer to the tension between the normative vision of urban modernity typically presented by the state in China, and the realities of everyday

life in urbanisation and the creative practices it prompts. This tension has been a heuristic device through which to examine Chongqing. Throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis, one of my primary interests has been the question of how these tensions are resolved—or more often, fail to be resolved—on the periphery. My emphasis on the periphery is intended to foreground urban modernity in those mundane spaces of the Chinese city which are often overlooked by Anglophone critical geographers, rather than the spectacular spaces of 'high-end' excess and 'low-end' deprivation, as identified by Perera and Tang (2013, p. 3)

The empirical chapters of this thesis can be seen as a series of nested peripheries. I begin by examining a city on the periphery of urban modernity and its struggles to redefine urban modernity, moving down to a district on the periphery of this city and the diverse tactics employed to survive in the city and secure access to urban modernity, finally zooming in to a peripheral space within this district, where practices of informality point to quite different ways of becoming modern and becoming urban. The text moves from the periphery, to the periphery of the periphery, to the periphery of the periphery of the periphery. With each change in scale we see the question of what becoming urban means articulated differently, and our perspective on the problem space of urban modernity shifts.

Thus, the overarching theme of this thesis has been the interrelation of urban modernity with the periphery—that is, the periphery as a space of *becoming modern* and *becoming urban*. Following Robinson (2006), my intention in adopting this approach is to call into question what we might consider to be modern, and to be urban. Moreover, my intention is to ask whether we might see some new meanings of being urban and being modern arising in the city of Chongqing, a place very much imagined as peripheral to urban modernity in many narratives, and certainly marginal to the literature of Anglophone urban studies. In answering these questions I draw on the insights from the empirical chapters of this thesis (5, 6, & 7), in addition to the arguments made in the overview of the political economy in chapter 4.

8.3.2 The experience of urbanisation

The first research question of this thesis sought to explore how Chongqing's rapid urbanisation was understood by those living through it—both in terms of state-led propaganda and discourse of progress, and the actual experience of urbanisation:

1. *How was Chongqing's rapid urbanisation portrayed by the state and experienced by those living through it?*

In this thesis I have demonstrated that the experience of urbanisation was heavily influenced by the vision of urban modernity articulated by the state, which employed various protocols to set out an ambitious vision of Chongqing's urban future as characterised by spatial justice, and as an alternative to the post-socialist urban modernity of other Chinese cities. I have also demonstrated that despite this, the experience of urbanisation was for many one of displacement and enduring inequalities often intersecting with those spaces which the state had portrayed as sites of spatial justice, i.e. the public housing of the urban periphery. I have suggested that Chongqing did not mark a decisive egalitarian break with the typical Chinese model of state entrepreneurial urbanism, but a more progressive iteration. This can be broken down into three points, drawing on the findings of chapters 4, 5 and 6.

a) **Official portrayals of urbanisation constructed an imaginary of urban modernity through diverse protocols**. The imaginary of urban modernity that the local state adopted employed various dissonant protocols (drawing on contemporary capitalist imaginaries of modernity, but also historical Maoist discourses of spatial justice), in order to justify urban restructuring. This was demonstrated in chapter 5, where I presented evidence drawn from official discourse that the Chongqing Dream sought to reimagine the city through protocols of speed, spatial justice and the inversion between core and periphery, and thus justify urban restructuring (5.4).
b) **Official discourse portrayed Chongqing's urbanisation as offering an alternative urban modernity**. The discourse of spatial justice employed by the state sought to present Chongqing's urbanisation as an alternative to the increasingly capitalist urban modernity of China's coastal cities. In chapter 5 I demonstrated that the Chongqing Dream presented urban restructuring as instantiating an alternative form of urban modernity based around spatial justice, represented by the figure of the migrant worker and the construction of public housing (5.5).
c) **The experience of urbanisation for many residents of Chongqing was one of displacement and enduring inequalities.** Revealing the shortcomings of this official portrayal, the reality of urban restructuring for many was one of displacement and the persistence of inequalities. This was particularly notable in the case of the urban poor and rural migrants who were portrayed as chief beneficiaries of Chongqing's emphasis on spatial justice, and in the use of the public housing that was imagined as the concrete instantiation of this principle. This was demonstrated in chapter 6, where I presented evidence drawn from interviews and ethnography that the urban poor had experienced restructuring as displacement, and encountered new legal, economic and social inequalities in the post-displacement space of the periphery (6.3). Evidence in chapter 6 also revealed that the use of public housing had diversified away from housing the poorest, and many poor and migrant residents were still disadvantaged in their access to housing (6.4). This claim is supported in chapter 4, where I

suggested that when viewed longitudinally, the egalitarian elements of Chongqing's urban policy were limited in the context of the deepening marketisation of land and labour (4.3).

In answering this research question, I have shown that in contrast to the official portrayal of Chongqing's urban restructuring as the forging of a new urban modernity based spatial justice, the experience of urbanisation for many was one of persistent inequalities—often precisely the inequalities which characterised the neoliberalising models of urban development that Chongqing portrayed itself as offering an alternative to. This is not to suggest that the more equitable dimensions of policy were meaningless, or to question the intentions of those who advocated them, but to emphasise the limitations of such a partial approach to realising spatial justice.

8.3.3 Making life on the periphery

The second research question of this thesis aimed to explore the question of how life was reproduced on the urban periphery—that is to say, it sought to study what kind of life was created on the periphery of a rapidly urbanising city, and how those residents of the periphery accessed the benefits of urban modernity that had been promised to them by the Chongqing Dream, in particular through large-scale state projects intended to create egalitarian dividends:

2. *How is urban life made on the periphery characterized by informality and large-scale state projects?*

In this thesis I have demonstrated that life on the periphery of Chongqing is complex and heterogeneous. In this sense, I seek to qualify the answer provided by the previous research question, by emphasising that there is no 'typical' life on the urban periphery; a diverse array of subject positions, experiences of displacement, and tactics employed to access urban modernity results in a highly differentiated experience of urbanisation (albeit one in which inequalities persist). I have demonstrated the use of varied formal and informal tactics to access the benefits of urban modernity. These tactics contributed to the shortcomings of the spatial justice promised by public housing. This can be broken down into three points, drawing on evidence from chapters 6 and 7.

a) **The periphery is heterogeneous.** While the urban periphery of Dazhulin represents a type of landscape that was commonly overlooked by other residents of Chongqing, and understudied in existing literature, in this thesis I have argued that it is in fact a complex social terrain made up of diverse groups, diverse practices and diverse uses of space. This was illustrated through ethnographic data presented in chapters 6 and 7. I suggested the term 'post-displacement' to capture the diversity of experiences of and responses to the displacements

brought together in the neighbourhood of Dazhulin (6.2). Through three ethnographic life histories I documented how people with different legal status, social and economic relationships to the city, property rights and experiences of displacement had been brought together on the periphery (6.3) I also examined how this heterogeneity produced the space of the *kongdi*, through the diverse social configurations and collaborations which emerged out of the spontaneous use of vacant land for informal food production (7.6).

b) **Life on the urban periphery is made through formal and informal practices.** The evidence assembled in this thesis supports the emerging body of literature which views formality and informality not as dichotomous spheres of urban life, but as practices which are often intertwined and used in parallel by the same actors (Roy, 2009b; McFarlane, 2012; Caldeira, 2017). In the case of Dazhulin, the heterogeneous residents of the periphery utilised both formal and informal tactics to gain access to the benefits of urban modernity and create spaces of their own. In chapters 6 and 7 I presented evidence drawn from my ethnography to support this argument. I examined how housing on the urban periphery is acquired and leveraged through a variety of formal and informal practices, whereby resettlement housing was acquired through loopholes and adapted without permission, while public housing was accessed formally but then put to a variety of informal uses which contradicted its original advertised use (6.4). I extended this analysis in Chapter 7, presenting evidence that the *kongdi* was constructed as an ambiguously urban space—one which was formally urban but produced by a wide variety of informal practices which were prohibited within urban space (7.4, 7.5 & 7.6).

c) **The spatial justice promised by large-scale state projects was flawed in practice.** It is important to bring into focus the extent to which the reality of Dazhulin revealed the shortcomings of the urban imaginary of the Chongqing Dream. This point builds on the first research question, drawing out the limitations of the ability of equitable state policy—specifically public housing—to correct the inequalities of urban restructuring. This was demonstrated by the evidence presented in chapter 6. I showed that the public housing regulations had been amended to remove income restrictions and allow wealthier applicants access (6.4.3). I documented how this had led to three slippages in the use of public housing, resulting in apartments being occupied by middle-class urbanites; often wealthy people who owned property elsewhere in the city and used public housing as cheap accommodation while they speculated on Chongqing's property market. In other instances public housing was leased directly to industrial enterprises to provide housing for workers. While other studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of Chongqing's public housing programme (Zhou, J., 2018; Zhou, J. and Ronald, 2017; Gan et al., 2016b), I argue that this perspective needs to be tempered by a scepticism about the efficacy of the egalitarian distribution and purpose of such a programme, particularly in the context of deepening marketisation of labour.

In answering this research question, I aim to qualify the inequalities identified in research question one by capturing the complexity and heterogeneity of urban life on the periphery. I have demonstrated that the residents of Dazhulin provide a more complicated

picture of urban peripheries than the typical dichotomy of informal and deprived peri-urban areas and formal and wealthy urban areas, and is so doing contribute to an emerging body of literature which explores the interface of these categories (2.4) and the highly differentiated experience of urbanisation emerging from them. Practices of informality emerged in response to the advance of the state and the provision of state-subsidised housing. We might suggest that it was precisely the failure of the state to account for informality that led to the limited success of the state-led equitable policies. This speaks to an emerging literature of informality and its entanglement with the multiple agencies of the state (2.4.5). This is particularly significant in articulating how urbanisation outside of the Global North differs from models based upon the study of North American and European cities. The residents of the periphery represent a heterogeneous range of economic, social and legal statuses which prompt a wide range of formal and informal tactics to remake life and access the benefits of urban modernity—benefits which public housing was not able to provide for many.

8.3.4 The periphery and the temporality of urban restructuring

The third research question of this thesis sought to explore how the space of the urban periphery reflects the tensions and dislocations arising from the contradictions in the political economy of Chongqing's rapid urbanisation, with a particular emphasis on temporality. It was intended to examine how the broader structural issues of the recent urban expansion of inland Chinese cities are reflected in the spaces of everyday life:

3. *What contradictions arise from Chongqing's rapid urban restructuring, and how are they manifested in the space of the periphery?*

In this thesis I have demonstrated that the periphery is space in which many of the contradictions of Chongqing's urban restructuring manifested, reflecting the displacement to the periphery of people and practices which were seen to be incompatible with urban modernity. In this sense, the periphery can be treated as a spatialisation of the tensions arising from the contradictions of urban modernity. The spaces of the periphery reflect the distinct temporality of urbanisation in China. This finding extends the analysis of informality in making life on the periphery in the second research question, which it relates to the speed of urban development in Chongqing: it demonstrates that informality does not just precede formal urbanisation, but emerges alongside and after formal urbanisation has taken place. This conclusion can be broken down into three points, drawing on evidence from chapters 6 and 7, supported by chapter 4.

a) **The periphery is a space of displacement.** The urban periphery is a space to which people and practices were displaced. The people and practices displaced to the periphery can be seen as the externalities of urban restructuring. By 'externalities' I mean the consequences of urban restructuring which are incompatible with the particular imaginary of urban modernity which restructuring sought to realise. This displacement reflected the broader contours of urbanisation in the Chongqing region: the removal of those residents of the rural periphery and the urban core who occupied space which was needed for development. Those people and practices whose presence stood in the way of the realisation of the local state's vision of urban modernity were pushed out to increasingly peripheral spaces. In chapters 6 and 7 I presented evidence which illustrated this, supported by the analysis in chapter 4. Urban policy since 2000 in Chongqing sought to expand the state-owned land reserve and provide cheap labour for industrial capital, so displacing people from the valuable space they occupied and moved them to the urban periphery (4.3 & 4.4). In Dazhulin this resulted in a space where all residents had undergone recent displacement due to urbanisation, although their experiences diverged strongly (6.3 & 6.4). This was also evident in the use of the *kongdi*, an informal space to which practices which were no longer permitted within the city were displaced—practices considered dirty and disruptive of the modernity of the city—were shifted to the periphery (7.4 & 7.5).

b) **The periphery is a space which is ambiguously urban.** The urban periphery in Chongqing is a space which is formally urban but retains characteristics of space not fully incorporated within the city. This means that the periphery is a space in which 'non-urban' functions and practices persist informally, where economic and social integration with the city is limited for many people, and where the construction of urban modernity remains an unfinished project. This reflects Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery as a space neither entirely urban nor entirely beyond the urban. In the specific case of China, this reflects the contradictions of state institutions which maintain an absolute formal dichotomy between rural and urban (2.2 & 2.6). This argument is chiefly demonstrated in chapter 7, and supported by evidence drawn from other chapters. The *kongdi* is a space that is understood as ambiguously urban: in material terms, it is perceived as ecologically distinct from the city in some respects but still entangled with urban flows of pollution and waste in others, and the boundary between the *kongdi* and the surrounding city is permeable (7.5). Similarly in social and economic terms the *kongdi* is imagined as a space of autonomous food production with a rural and non-urban character, but is still implicated in an urban politics of anticipation (Simone, 2010, p. 98) which preceded the imminent destruction and development of the space (7.6). This ambiguity of peripheral space is supported by considering the political economy of land financing and for-profit development which encouraged state and private developers to delay development while waiting for prices to rise, creating spaces which functioned as *kongdi* (4.3 & 4.4).

c) **The periphery is temporary, mobile, and dynamic, reflecting the temporality of urban development.** Against understanding the urban periphery as a static category, the experience

> of Dazhulin supports the suggestion of Abramson (2016) that we should treat the periphery as a process. The periphery does not stand still. The example of Dazhulin also reveals that the periphery manifests the distinct temporalities of urban development in Chinese cities. This is apparent in terms of the stop-start rhythm of development which creates a fragmented peripheral landscape, in terms of policies which leverage the imagined future of the periphery to fund development in the present, and in the cultural politics of everyday life on the periphery which anticipates the imminent realisation of urban modernity. This is evidenced in chapters 6 and 7, and supported by the survey of political economy in chapter 4. The periphery was constructed through a series of waves of displacement (6.3), which accompanied the waves of successive intervention that partially urbanised the northern edge of the city (4.4). The rhythm of urbanisation proceeded in fits and starts, with quick periods of construction interspersed with long delays—while some areas of Dazhulin changed very rapidly, others retained their agrarian character after more than a decade of urbanisation (4.5). Even while these areas lay 'idle', they continued to accrue value for the state and developers as land and house prices rose (4.3). In the case of the *kongdi*, the informal use of this peripheral space drew upon the material of Dazhulin's rural past and the infrastructure which prefigured its urban future (7.4). Unlike other examples of peripheral urbanisation in China, informality emerged alongside formal urbanisation, rather than preceding it (2.4.5). The informal peripheral urbanism of the *kongdi* emerged from the distinct temporality of land financing.

In answering this research question, I have suggested that the use of space on the periphery reflects the distinct temporalities of rapid urbanisation in China, and the contradictions emerging from Chinese urban political economy, in particular the dichotomising divide between rural and urban. In this way, this research question seeks to advocate the utility of elements of Simone's theorisation of the periphery in the case of China, but also extend this theory to consider how the periphery reflects the distinct temporality of urban development in inland Chinese cities, illustrating that informality emerges in response to state intervention, not in its absence.

8.3.5 Other urban modernities

The fourth research question in this thesis sought to explore what possibilities for novel or different forms of urban modernity emerged from the experience of Chongqing's rapid urbanisation. In posing this question I sought to respond to the specific representation of Chongqing in Western sources which treated it as an unprecedented new form of urbanism prefiguring urban futures of the twenty-first century (1.2 & 1.3), and approach this impression through the problem space of urban modernity (2.2). In posing

this question I wish to consider whether Chongqing's experience constitutes the possibility of a new understanding of contemporary urban life:

4. *What possibilities of different urban modernities emerge from the experience of Chongqing*?

I demonstrated that many of the claims made by the local state to represent an alternative form of urban modernity to that of other post-socialist Chinese cities were not borne out in the reality of daily life on the urban periphery. However, I have also tried to outline the distinctly heterogeneous life of the urban periphery, and give attention to the novel social configurations, tactics, and uses of space which rapid urbanisation has provoked. In this sense, I want to suggest that we should look to the periphery, and particularly the *kongdi*, as a space which offers insights into new ways of becoming modern and becoming urban. This conclusion is essentially a synthesis of the answers given to previous research questions, and can be broken down into two points, drawing on evidence from chapters five, six and seven, supported by chapter four.

a) **Chongqing's urbanisation does not present an alternative form of urban modernity.** The imaginary of the local state portrayed urban restructuring as a necessary step towards achieving a novel form of urban modernity which would present an alternative to the neoliberal development of coastal cities, and imagine Chongqing as lying at the core rather than the periphery of urban modernity in China, based upon the principle of spatial justice (5.4). However, the reality of life on the urban periphery revealed the limits of this claim. A longer-term view of the political economy of urbanisation reveals that Chongqing pursued a development model based on deepening marketisation of labour and land (4.3). An investigation of public housing revealed the limited extent to which it had achieved spatial justice for migrant workers (6.4.3).

b) **It is in the practices of daily life on the periphery where we can discern the possibility of difference.** If there is a site which represented an alternative mode of becoming modern and becoming urban in Chongqing, it lay on the periphery and in the production of the *kongdi*. By describing Dazhulin as a space of post-displacement (6.3) I mean to draw attention to the diverse subjects and informal tactics brought together on the periphery in the task of making urban modernity for themselves amongst the unfinished projects of state-led urbanisation. This should not distract from the profound inequalities which persisted on the periphery, but rather demonstrate that from a highly differentiated experience of urbanisation we might discern differentiated ways of becoming modern. This is particularly notable in the case of the *kongdi*, where an informal economy of food production had emerged spontaneously in the fragmented space left behind by rapid urbanisation (7.6). In the novel use of material infrastructure (7.5), economies of informal production (7.6) and practice of activities no longer permitted within the city (7.4.2), there is evidence of an alternative mode of urban life

which escapes the normative demands of the state's vision of urban modernity, albeit one faced with rapid enclosure.

By attempting to draw together these conclusions which posit the periphery as a space of urban modernity, I do not intend to overstate the failure of the Chongqing Model, or the radical character of the *kongdi*. Certainly, for many of the people interviewed in this thesis, the urbanisation of Chongqing was viewed in explicitly positive terms, albeit a project whose radical promises had been betrayed by the deposal of Bo Xilai from power. Equally, I do not want to suggest that the *kongdi* was envisioned as an explicitly political space, or as offering a form of contestation or counter-power to the local state or global capitalism. Rather, the point here is to suggest that we might look upon the practices of the periphery—the tactics and social configurations which coalesce in the aftermath of displacement and produce the space of the *kongdi*—as revealing a different mode of becoming urban and becoming modern. This implies, of course, a considerable disruption of understandings of urban as a dichotomic category composed in opposition to the rural, which is an essential distinction whose contradictions lie at the core of China's post-socialist development. It is precisely because the Chongqing Model failed to incorporate the informal practices of the periphery within its normative and disciplinary vision of urban modernity that it *failed to produce a meaningfully different vision of what the city could be*. This leads us to consider how the porous nature of the Chinese state and its multiple agencies can frustrate state-led attempts to create spatial justice. It also invites a consideration of how the category of modernity is constructed through reference to global imaginaries of the urban, and how this informs the study of the urban. The task, to paraphrase Robinson (2006), is to undertake research which might recognise peripheral spaces such as the *kongdi* as sites generative of urban modernity.

8.4 Looking forwards

8.4.1 Modernity and the city

Several themes emerge from this research which I have not had full space to draw out within this thesis, or which point towards future research directions for the scholarship of Chinese urbanisation and urban studies more generally.

A key theme of this thesis has been the usefulness of urban modernity as a heuristic device for investigating the junctures of contemporary urbanism, particularly in China. The utility of this problem space is that it acknowledges the new social and material forms created in the city, and recognises the enduring popularity and explanatory power of the

notion of progress and transformation of everyday life through the built environment. This 'myth' of the city is a constitutive element of the experience of the urban for a great many people, particularly in the rapidly growing cities of Asia. Many other terminologies and research streams in recent years have similarly tried to address how practices of 'becoming urban' are anticipated and represented, and the politics arising from such a representation.

This is apparent in recent discussions of 'worlding cities' (Roy and Ong, 2011) as well as investigations that study the politics of utopian urban futures (Harrison, 2006; Datta, 2018; Urry, 2016; Bhan, 2014; Watson, 2014). Within these contexts, the importance of a persistent popular belief in progress as achievable through urban form and innovation has not been a central angle of investigation, although it evidently remains a fact for a great proportion of urban populations around the world. Greater attention could be paid to concurrent work in anthropology (Bach, 2011; Jasanoff and Kim, 2015) which takes modernity as an open problem space through which to interrogate how the city is understood and experienced. Such a perspective could a valuable ethnographic understanding of the entanglement between the urban and the modern to current debates around the ontology of the urban and its boundaries (Brenner, 2013; Derickson, 2015; Roy, 2016b; Jazeel, 2018).

If we take seriously the suggestion by Haid and Hilbrandt (2019) of informality as a heuristic device from which to pose 'uncomfortable questions about the state' (p. 9), we can open up a more varied and nuanced understanding of the Chinese state, and its vision of modernity. Current events would suggest that the Chinese state's imaginary of modernity will have ever greater influence on cities and development around the world—coming to terms with the rise of a state-backed vision of modernity, and what it means for cities, requires an understanding of how these manifest and relate to everyday life beyond the formal bounds of the plan. In linking modernity, the periphery and informality in this thesis I have tried to work towards this goal. I would suggest that serious consideration of how modernity is articulated and negotiated through daily life would be a valuable addition to this literature in bridging the gap between the visions of states and planners and the everyday life or urban residents.

8.4.3 Urban China as methods

The question of the Chongqing Model intersects with a number of current debates in Chinese urban political economy, and about the nature of Chinese politics more broadly. The experience of Chongqing speaks to the boundaries between state and market, the

viability of 'neoliberalism' as a descriptor, the relationship between central and local government, the possibility of a 'China Model', and the possibilities of a leftist politics arising from these junctures. I believe that the arguments presented in this thesis contribute to several critiques of the Chongqing Model from the left (Mulvad, 2015; Lim, 2014) and add important qualifications to more positive assessments (Harvey, 2012; Vukovich, 2018). More specifically, the findings of this thesis add a valuable urban and ethnographic perspective to a topic typically dominated by perspectives drawn from policy analysis, macroeconomic data and commentary on the internal debates of the CPC.

I believe moreover that such a perspective is extremely necessary in the current era of this debate, when there have been a profusion of theories trying to describe the overall political approach of the 'China Model', but relatively few attempts to differentiate this model regionally (Zhang, J. and Peck, 2016). As I mentioned in chapter 1 (1.3) the Anglophone study of Chinese urbanism has systematically focussed on the cities of Beishangguang (*Bei*-jing, *Shang*-hai and *Guang*-zhou) and shown little interest in the regional variations in urban political economy or experience within the rapidly urbanising rest of the country. As Kanai et al. (2018) identify, there are likely to be over a hundred significantly sized cities within the Chinese interior about which there have been zero 'urban' publications in English, let alone attempts to make such cities sites generative of urban theory. Rectifying this oversight is all the more pressing given the increasing global economic importance of many of these inland cities, as global supply chains shift away from the coast.

Sustained ethnographic research in such locations can draw out the dynamics of informality and the reality of interactions between people, state and markets which are so often excluded from accounts which rely purely on the perspective of planners or officials. There is a growing body of literature examining informality in urban China (Zhao, P. and Zhang, 2018; Sun and Ho, 2015; Wu, F. et al., 2013) and its interactions with formality (Wu, F. and Li, 2018), but much work to be done to fully understand how urban life is produced at the margins of plans and state initiatives.

The findings of my thesis also demonstrate the valuable insights to be gained from bringing understudied Chinese cities into conversation with other currents in urban studies. Chapter 7 suggests an important addition to Simone's (2010) theorisation of the periphery is attention to the particular regional temporalities of urbanisation, which were so clearly evidenced in the *kongdi* in Dazhulin. The successive waves of urbanisation in Chongqing and the rural-urban hybridities they created suggest fascinating material for a comparative study with the archetypal sites of desakota research in Indonesia and the

Philippines (Ortega, 2016). The differentiation of the informal production of space in the Indian case studies utilised by McFarlane (2012) and Roy (2009b) and Chinese iterations would provide ample material for comparison, as would the 'highly differentiated experience of urbanisation' amidst the rentier capitalism of urbanising farmers observed by Cowan (2018) in the suburbs of New Delhi. In analysing my data I found Caldeira's (2017) theorisation of 'peripheral urbanisation' to be extremely useful in thinking through the relationships provoked by adaptation of the built environment. Consideration of how the experience of Chongqing and other under-studied cities of China modifies such theories would be valuable, not least given the totally different political culture of China—the brutal political contours of urbanisation in Dazhulin were apparent, but nowhere in my fieldsite did I find evidence of the creation of a new insurgent citizenship in the mould described by Holston and Caldeira (2008). This is not to say that such a subjectivity was absent, but that expanded understandings of the political are needed to allow it to speak.

Such insights are moreover necessary for a meaningful left politics or critical research agenda in contemporary China. Rather than relying on commentary from non-China-specialists with little insight into the actual dynamics of daily life in urban China and its particular cultural and historical specificities, sensitive ethnographic research is necessary to understand the political junctures and radical potentials emerging from the current movement. In this sense, I advocate extending the decolonial perspective of Chen Kuan-Hsing's 'Asia as methods' (2010) to engagements with China more broadly, utilising the extent to which the broader East Asian experience unsettles Western presumptions to generate new insights. Above all, it is important to resist perspectives which presume convergence between China and the West, or the ultimate triumph of liberal politics and Western political categories, is inevitable. Attention to leftist Chinese perspectives which work with more nuanced positions to the functions of the state in general (Dirlik, 1991; Connery, 2015; Wang, H., 2009; Vukovich, 2018) can assist in picking apart the subtle textures of interaction between state and informality (Roy, 2009b; 2011b; Yiftachel, 2009; Haid and Hilbrandt, 2019) which make up contemporary Chinese life, and the political possibilities emerging from it.

8.4.6 On the periphery of urban knowledge

The final suggestion for a research trajectory emerging from this thesis is the restatement of an epistemological argument which has gained much attention in urban studies over the past fifteen years, but still bears repeating. Urban studies as a theoretical

discipline remains largely grounded in the empirical experience of Western European and North American cities. The critiques made by Robinson (2006), Roy (2009a), Jazeel and McFarlane (2010) and others have built a strong body of literature examining the problem of urban theory's parochial attachment to the North Atlantic, but the empirical work of putting such principles into action through extensive research in cities 'off the map' has proceeded more unevenly. This is particularly the case in China. At present, China has more cities with populations of over 1 million (and more urban residents in absolute terms) than Europe and North America combined. We might well ask how any claim to speak for 'planetary urbanization' can proceed without a detailed empirical analysis of Chinese cities, and particularly those cities outside of the imagined capital of Beishangguang. It is impossible for urban studies to claim to speak for the urban from a non-Eurocentric position without a more serious engagement with Chinese urbanism.

Attention is needed to cities at the periphery, and the peripheries of cities. This is not true just for China, but the example of China provides a particularly telling perspective on the oversights of urban knowledge production. The boundaries which prevent cities on the periphery from becoming sites of theory production are not just epistemological, but also practical—research in such places must be necessarily exploratory, uncertain of its findings beforehand, and requires extensive time spent on the ground. All of these are principles which are incompatible with many of the conditions of urban knowledge production in an increasingly neoliberal university, as advocates of 'slow scholarship' have identified (Mountz et al., 2015)

The principles outlined in Tariq Jazeel's (2019) recent call for attention to 'singularity' in urban studies are worth echoing as indicating one potential path out of this impasse. By proposing urban singularity as an approach to doing research, Jazeel emphasises the importance of sustained research attention to under-studied sites. This is characterised by wide-ranging theoretical engagements, attention to the frictions which disrupt the presumed categories of the urban, a decolonial attention to the politics of translation and untranslatability, sustained attention to single fields and sites, and attention to the poetics of urban life. Sustained attention to the poetics and singularity of urban modernity is particularly necessary in those peripheries generally excluded from such narratives.

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Appendix A: Formal recorded interviews

PH = public housing; RH = resettlement housing; CH = commodity housing.

NB: Interviews A01-A15 were conducted in Yuzhong at a fieldsite that does not appear in this thesis, but are included as important experiments in conducting interviews and sources of background information which appears in this thesis. Two of these interviewees were also surveyed in appendix C: A24 = C15; A25 = C25.

Code	*Date*	*Role*	*Gender*	*Age group*	*Location*
A01	28/05/2016	Security guard	Male	50s	Yuzhong
A02	04/06/2016	Hawker	Female	40s	Yuzhong
A03	07/06/2016	Urban Planner	Female	20s	Yuzhong
A04	07/06/2016	Police officer	Male	30s	Yuzhong
A05	20/06/2016	Journalist	Female	30s	Yuzhong
A06	09/07/2016	Hakwer	Male	70s	Yuzhong
A07	09/07/2016	Retiree	Male	60s	Yuzhong
A08	09/07/2016	Hawker	Male	30s	Yuzhong
A09	15/07/2016	Migrant worker	Male	40s	Yuzhong
A10	15/07/2016	Migrant workers	Multiple	Multiple	Yuzhong
A11	15/07/2016	Hawker	Male	50s	Yuzhong
A12	29/07/2016	Demolition worker	Male	40s	Yuzhong
A13	03/08/2016	Shopkeeper	Male	50s	Yuzhong
A14	10/08/2016	Migrant worker	Female	60s	Yuzhong
A15	17/08/2016	Artist	Female	20s	Yuzhong
A16	05/11/2016	RH Residents	Female	50s	Dazhulin
A17	05/11/2016	RH Resident	Female	50s	Dazhulin
A18	08/11/2016	Official (*shequ* level)	Female	50s	Dazhulin
A19	09/11/2016	RH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
A20	09/11/2016	RH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A21	23/11/2016	Official (*shequ* level)	Female	50s	Dazhulin
A22	25/12/2016	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A23	06/01/2017	RH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
A24	16/01/2017	PH Resident	Female	40s	Dazhulin
A25	17/01/2017	RH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
A26	17/01/2017	RH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A27	17/01/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
A28	21/01/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
A29	22/01/2017	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A30	23/01/2017	CH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
A31	15/02/2017	CH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
A32	05/03/2017	Cleaner	Female	40s	Yuzhong
A33	02/04/2017	Developer	Male	30s	Dazhulin
A34	02/04/2017	Developer	Male	30s	Dazhulin
A35	17/04/2017	PH Resident	Male	30s	Dazhulin
A36	04/05/2017	PH Resident	Female	30s	Dazhulin
A37	04/05/2017	PH Resident	Female	60s	Dazhulin
A38	12/05/2017	PH Resident	Female	20s	Dazhulin
A39	16/05/2017	PH Resident	Male	20s	Dazhulin
A40	16/05/2017	PH Resident	Female	20s	Dazhulin
A41	23/05/2017	PH Residents	Female	20s	Dazhulin
A42	23/05/2017	PH Resident	Male	20s	Dazhulin
A43	30/05/2017	PH Residents	Female	20s	Dazhulin
A44	03/06/2017	Go-along interview at Dazhulin Old Town	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A45	03/06/2017	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
A46	06/06/2017	PH Resident	Male	20s	Jiangbei
A47	15/06/2017	Teacher	Male	40s	Dazhulin
A48	15/06/2017	Cadre (*danwei* level)	Male	30s	Dazhulin

Appendix B: Significant non-recorded interviews and meetings

Code	*Date*	*Role*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Location*
B01	11/11/2015	Journalist	Male	30s	Yuzhong
B02	10/07/2016	Literary Salon	-	-	Yuzhong
B03	28/07/2016	Journalist	Female	40s	Yuzhong
B04	11/08/2016	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B05	11/08/2016	PH Resident	Female	20s	Dazhulin
B06	11/08/2016	CH Visit	-	-	Dazhulin
B07	13/10/2016	Urban Culture Festival	Mulitple	Multiple	Yuzhong
B08	19/10/2016	RH Resident	Male	60s	Dazhulin
B09	19/10/2016	RH Residents	Mutliple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B10	20/10/2016	RH Resident	Female	40s	Dazhulin
B11	20/10/2016	RH Resident	Female	50s	Dazhulin
B12	20/10/2016	RH Residents	Multiple	Mutliple	Dazhulin
B13	02/11/2016	RH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B14	03/11/2016	Official (*shequ* level)	Female	50s	Dazhulin
B15	05/11/2016	RH Resident	Male	40s	Dazhulin
B16	08/11/2016	RH Resident	Female	40s	Dazhulin
B17	09/11/2016	RH Resident	Female	50s	Dazhulin
B18	09/11/2016	RH Resident	Male	40s	Dazhulin
B19	16/11/2016	RH Resident	Male	70s	Dazhulin
B20	16/11/2016	PH Resident	Male	30s	Dazhulin
B21	17/11/2016	RH Resident	Female	60s	Dazhulin
B22	17/11/2016	RH Resident	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B23	23/11/2016	Go-along tour of RH	-	-	Dazhulin
B24	24/11/2016	RH community centre visit	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B25	04/12/2016	Architect	Female	50s	Yuzhong
B26	06/01/2017	Official (*jiedao* level)	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B27	15/01/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B28	17/01/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B29	18/01/2017	Spring Festival Celebration	-	-	Dazhulin
B30	22/01/2017	Official (*jiedao* level)	Male	40s	Dazhulin
B31	23/01/2017	Tour of Dazhulin Old Town	-	-	Dazhulin
B32	15/02/2017	CH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B33	03/03/2017	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B34	05/03/2017	Urban Planner	Male	30s	Yuzhong
B35	10/03/2017	PH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B36	11/03/2017	Tour of CH	-	-	Lijia
B37	27/04/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B38	16/05/2017	PH Resident	Male	50s	Dazhulin

B39	18/05/2017	PH Resident	Female	60s	Dazhulin
B40	18/05/2017	PH Resident	Male	30s	Dazhulin
B41	23/05/2017	Security Guard	Male	50s	Dazhulin
B42	01/06/2017	PH Resident	Female	20s	Dazhulin
B43	03/06/2017	Tour of CH	-	-	Dazhulin
B44	04/06/2017	RH Residents	Multiple	Multiple	Dazhulin
B45	07/06/2017	RH Resident	Male	20s	Dazhulin
B46	17/06/2017	Lawyer	Female	30s	Nan’an

Appendix C: *Kongdi* survey

Plot code	Principal crop	N farmers	Gender	Age	Est. plot size (m^2)	Started farming	Started farming this plot
C01	Maize	1	M	70	300	From childhood	5 years ago
C02	Maize and Vegetables	1	M	52	650	From childhood	2 years ago
C03	Vegetables	2	FM	60	110	From childhood	Since 1970s
C04	Vegetables	1	F	51	250	From childhood	Since *qingminjie* of 2016
C05	Vegetables	1	M	39	100	From childhood	2 years ago
C06	Maize and Vegetables	2	FM	50	260	From childhood	8 years or more
C07	Vegetables	1	M	-	90	From childhood	Unclear
C08	Vegetables	1	M	51	270	From childhood	5 years ago
C09	Vegetables	1	F	70	80	From childhood	Since last year
C10	Vegetables	1	F	55	70	From childhood	3 years ago
C11	Vegetables	1	F	61	180	From childhood	A year and a half ago
C12	Maize and Vegetables	1	F	33	170	From childhood	3-4 years ago
C13	Vegetables	1	F	45	100	From childhood	2 and a half years ago
C14	Maize and Vegetables	1	M	75	300	From childhood	2 years ago
C15	Vegetables	1	F	48	420	From childhood	2-3 years ago
C16	Vegetables	2	MF	50	190	From childhood	Since last year
C17	Vegetables	1	F	26	560	From childhood	2 years ago
C18	Vegetables	1	F	61	130	Still learning	2 years ago
C19	Maize	1	F	55	70	From childhood	Unclear

Plot code	Hometown	Housing type	Use of crops	Other work	Hukou status	Use of fertilisers	Expecting compensation
C01	Dazhulin	RH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Yes
C02	Dazhulin	RH	Sell	No paid work	Converted	Manure (purchased)	No
C03	Dazhulin	RH	Eat, sell	No paid work	Converted	Manure	Yes
C04	Changshou, Chongqing	PH	Eat	Childcare, no paid work	Rural	Manure	No
C05	Changshou, Chongqing	PH	Eat and sell	Factory	Rural	Manure	No
C06	Dazhulin	RH	Eat and sell	No paid work	Converted	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Yes
C07	Not in Chongqing	PH	Sell	Unclear	Unwilling to state	Manure	No
C08	Hechuan, Chongqing	PH	Sell	Street Sweeper	Rural	Manure and chemical Fertiliser	No
C09	Dazhulin	RH (renting)	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Manure	Yes
C10	Chongqing ‘but not the city’	PH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Rural	-	Perhaps
C11	Hechuan, Chongqing	CH	Eat	No paid work	Rural	Manure	No
C12	Liangping, Chongqing	PH	Eat	Factory	Rural	Manure	Don’t know
C13	Nanchuan, Chongqing	PH	Eat	Street Sweeper	Rural	Manure	No
C14	Dazhulin	RH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Yes
C15	Kaizhou, Chongqing	RH (bought)	Eat	Childcare, odd jobs	Rural	Chemical fertiliser	No
C16	Liannglu, Chongqing.	PH	Eat	Street Sweeper	Rural	Manure	Unclear
C17	Chongqing, not the city.	PH	Eat and sell	Service job in a shop	Rural	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	No
C18	Chongqing, Guanyinqiao	PH	Eat	Originally worked in steel factory in	Urban	Manure	No
C19	Chengdu, Sichuan.	PH	Mostly to sell, eat a little	Childcare, no paid work	Rural	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Don’t know

Plot code	Principal crop	N farmers	Gender	Age	Est. plot size (m^2)	Started farming	Started farming this plot
C20	Vegetables	1	M	66	140	From childhood	Unclear
C21	Vegetables	1	M	35	160	From childhood	This year
C22	Maize	1	F	73	100	From childhood	4-5 years ago
C23	Vegetables	1	M	35	40	From childhood	Unclear
C24	Vegetables	1	F	42	40	From childhood	4 years ago
C25	Vegetables	1	M	60	190	From childhood	5 years ago
C26	Vegetables	1	F	62	270	From childhood	3 years ago
C27	Vegetables	1	F	73	100	From childhood	5 years or more ago
C28	Vegetables	1	M	58	60	From childhood	4 years ago
C29	Maize and Vegetables	1	M	75	130	From childhood	Since 2015
C30	Vegetables	1	F	35	170	1-2 years ago	1-2 years ago
C31	Maize and Vegetables	1	F	73	200	From childhood	2-3 years ago
C32	Maize	2	FM	74	80	From childhood	Unclear
C33	Vegetables	1	M	73	130	From childhood	3-4 years ago
C34	Maize	3	FFF	Mid-50s	300	From childhood	Since 2009
C35	Vegetables	1	F	53	90	From childhood	3 months ago
C36	Vegetables	1	F	52	60	From childhood	5 years ago

Plot code	Hometown	Housing type	Use of crops	Other work	Hukou status	Use of fertilisers	Expecting compensation
C20	Chongqing	PH	Eat	No paid work	Rural	Manure	No
C21	Guanyinqiao, Chongqing	PH	Eat	Factory	Converted	None	No
C22	Qianjiang, Chongqing	PH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Rural	Chemical fertiliser	No
C23	Tongliang, Chongqing	PH	Unclear	Chemical Factory	Unclear	Unclear	Don’t know
C24	Born in Sichuan, moved to Chongqing at young age (Jiangbei)	PH	Eat, sell	No paid work	Converted	None	No
C25	Dazhulin	RH	Mostly to sell, eat a little	No paid work	Converted	Chemical fertiliser	Perhaps
C26	Laiwan, Guizhou	PH	Eat	No paid work	Urban	Manure	No
C27	Chongqing	PH	Eat	No paid work	Converted	Manure	Yes
C28	Dazhulin	RH	Eat and sell	No paid work	Converted	Manure (organic, made own manure)	Perhaps
C29	Dazhulin	RH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Yes
C30	Chongqing	PH	Eat	Childcare, no paid work	Urban	None	No
C31	Guang'an, Sichuan	RH (renting)	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Rural	Chemical fertiliser	No
C32	Suining, Sichuan	PH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Fertiliser pool	Perhaps
C33	Dazhulin	RH	Eat	No paid work	Converted	Manure and Chemical fertiliser	Don't know
C34	Dazhulin	RH	Eat	Construction Work	Converted	Chemical fertiliser	No
C35	Dianjiang, Chongqing	PH	Eat	Childcare	Rural	Chemical fertiliser	Don’t know
C36	Fuling, Chongqing	PH	Eat some sell the rest	No paid work	Converted	Chemical fertiliser	No

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

调查：城镇化与城郊的日常生活

您正在被邀请参加一项调查，该项调查由英国利兹大学和中国西南大学组织，得到了英国经济社会科学基金项目和英中协会的大力支持。此封信的目的是向您介绍这项调查的主要内容和参与方式。

调查的高级目标

探索下列问题：

1、城镇化之前的日常生活和城镇化之后的有什么不一样？
2、什么是建筑对日常生活的影响？
3、在城镇化的过程中，怎么保持传统的社会关系或建立新的关系？
（比如说：邻里关系、社会整合、公共空间、等。）
4、在城镇化的过程中，人们和自然环境的关系发生什么变化？
（比如说：环保、健康、生态文明、等。）

调查形式

走访当地市民，询问关于当地环境、建筑的相关问题。通过对市民日常生活经历的了解，反映城市化建设给他们的生活带来了怎样的影响。

这项调查是一个子项目,属于一个大研究项目("重庆的空间与现代性")。该调研究项目持续一年（从 2016 年五月到 2017 年五月）。

参与方式

如果您愿意参加这项调查，您将被邀请接受采访。我们可以一起选择合适的采访地点和时间，我们不会对您作任何强制的要求；您也可以随时终止我们之间的谈话。另外，我们对您的采访将会被记录，您提供的材料（照片、录音文本等）也可能会被用于学术论文或相关文章和活动；但是，我们向您郑重保证：
在不经您允许的情况下，您的身份和联系方式我们将为您绝对保密。
您所提供的所有材料绝不会用于商业用途。
如果您想要证实我们对您的采访材料的准确性，我们热忱愿意为您提供。
如果您想要结束同我们的合作与调查，请随时联系我们，我们尊重您的决定。
如果您想要阅读最终完成的学术成果，我们真诚欢迎。

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Translation of participant information sheet

Study: Urbanisation and daily life on the outskirts of a city

You're being invited to participate in a study undertaken by the University of Leeds, UK, and Southwest University, China. It is supported by funding from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council, and the Great Britain China Centre. The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to the main content and participation methodology of this study.

Purpose of study

The high-level goals of this survey are to explore the following questions:

1. How has daily life changed in the course of urbanisation?
2. What is the relationship between the built environment and daily life?
3. How are traditional social relations maintained or new relationships established in the process of urbanisation? (For example: neighbourhood relations, social integration, public space, etc.)

4. How has the relationship between people and the natural environment changed in the process of urbanization? (For example: environmental protection, health, 'ecological civilization', etc.)

Methodology

The methodology of this study is to visit local citizens and ask them questions about the local buildings and environment. The aim is to understand how citizens' experiences of daily life reflect the broader changes that urbanisation has made in their lives.

This study is part of a broader project ("Space and modernity in Chongqing") which lasts for one year, between May 2016 and May 2017.

Participation

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will be invited to take part in an interview. We can together choose an appropriate time and place to conduct this interview, there will be no mandatory requests made of you. You can choose to end the conversation between us at any time. Interviews will be recorded, and any material or data you provide during the interview (photos, audio recordings, etc) may be used in academic papers or related activities. In this process we can promise to you:

1. Your identity and contact information will be kept strictly confidential unless you have other wishes.
2. All material and data provided will not be used for commercial purposes.
3. If you wish to review and confirm the accuracy of the record of interviews, we are happy to provide you with it.
4. If you would like to end your participation in the study, please contact us immediately and your decision will be respected.
5. We are happy to share with you any academic outputs arising from the data gathered.

Appendix E: Conversation guide for public housing interviews

背景
一开始，你可以介绍一下你自己吗？
比如说：你为什么住在康庄美地？
是什么让你决定申请住在公租房？
你喜欢住在这里吗？
有什么好处，什么坏处？

房子
你是什么时候搬到这里的？
老家在哪里？
你一个人住在这里吗？
房子质量怎么样？（
你想要买房子还是继续租房？为什么？
你觉得重庆房价怎么样？

家庭背景
你结婚了没有？
你有没有孩子？
父母住在哪里？

工作
你（或者你爱人）做什么工作？
在哪里工作？
怎么上下班？一般要多长时间？
你觉得重庆就业情况怎么样？

申请过程
你可以讲一下你申请公租房的过程吗？
排了多久的队？
你为什么选择住在这个小区？
你觉得申请过程公平吗？
你第一次来康庄美地你有什么感受？

配套设施
平时在哪里买东西？
你觉得康庄美地位置和交通怎么样？
绿化怎么样？

宠物
你养宠物吗？为什么？
公租房里的人喜欢养什么宠物？
养宠物有什么好处，什么坏处？
有没有人养家禽？（养鸡，养鸭）

噪音问题
广场舞
活动表演
打麻将
附近的店铺
摩托车

城市和农村
你听说过"城乡结合部"吗？怎么定义这个词？
对你来说，公租房的位置是在城市还是农村还是城乡结合部？
你觉得住在这里是城市生活还是农村生活？怎么区别？

休闲爱好
你有什么爱好？
你喜欢什么样的休闲方式？
比如说：打球，跑步，骑自行车，阅读，养动物，种菜，参加社区活动，打麻将，广场舞，钓鱼
在什么地方做这样的活动？

社会环境
你有朋友住在康庄美地吗？多少？
邻里关系怎么样？为什么？
请你比较一下公租房的邻里关系跟以前住的地方有什么不同？
你对住在这里的人有什么了解？
（我的印象中有种居民：刚毕业的年轻人；农民工；被拆迁的）
你觉得像这样的不同社会背景的人混杂地住在一起有什么好处，什么坏处？
你觉得有的人会因为对方的背景、地位低、不愿意跟对方多接触吗？为什么？什么例子？

环境问题
你觉得住在这里安全不安全？有什么安全措施？
你听说过这里的公租房有空的房子吗？
你听说过有公司把这里的房子下来给工人住吗？

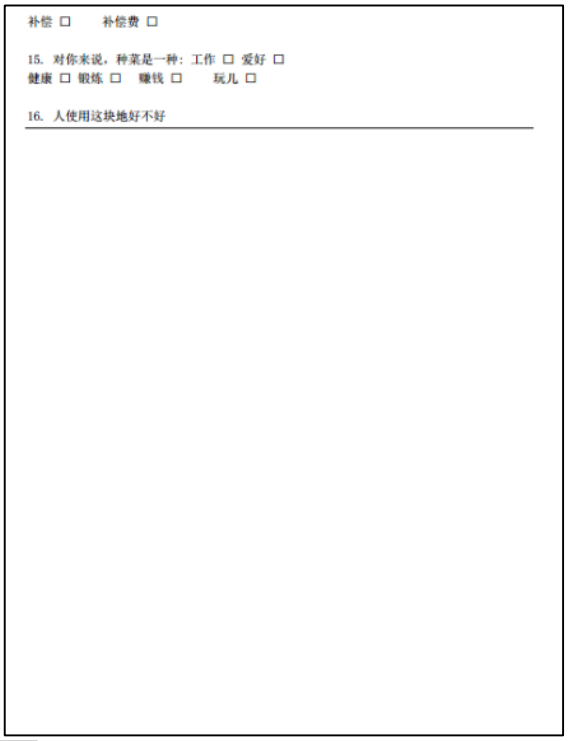
总结
公租房是否给你一种家的感觉？
你觉得住在公租房让你有归属感吗？
在未来你还想住在这里吗？

Translation of conversation guide

Background
Can you introduce yourself?
For example: why do you live in *Kangzhuang Meidi*?
What made you decide to apply for public housing?
Do you like living here?
What are the good points and bad points?
House
When did you move here?
Where is your hometown?
How many people do you live with?
What is the quality of the house?
Do you want to buy a house or continue to rent? Why?
What do you think of house prices in Chongqing?
Family background
Are you married?
Do you have children?
Where do your parents live?
Employment
What do you (or your spouse) do for employment?
Where is your work located?
How do you get to work? How long does it usually take?
What do you think of the job market in Chongqing?
Application process
Can you tell me about the process of applying for public housing?

How long did you have to wait?
Why did you choose to apply to live here?
Do you think the application process is impartial?
How did you feel when you first came to *Kangzhuang Meidi*?
Facilities
Where do you usually go shopping for everyday items?
What do you think of the location and public transport options here?
What do you think about the green and environmental facitilities here?
Pets
Do you keep any pets? Why?
What kind of pets do people keep in the public housing?
What are the good points about keeping pets, and what are the negative points?
Does anyone in the public housing keep poultry birds? (e.g. chickens, ducks)
Noise
Have you been troubled by noise in the public housing from: dancing in the public square; performances or events; playing *majiang*; shops; motorbikes.
City and countryside
Have you heard of 'urban-rural integration'? What do you understand this to mean?
In your view, is the public housing located in an urban area, rural area or peripheral area?
Does life in the public housing resemble an urban lifestyle or rural lifestyle? What's the difference?
Leisure
What hobbies do you have?
What do you do for leisure? For example: playing sports, running, cycling, reading, keeping animals, growing vegetables, participating in community activities, playing *majiang*, dancing in the public square, fishing.
Where do you do these leisure activities?
Social environment
Do you have friends living in *Kangzhuang Meidi*? Roughly how many?
Is there a good relationship amongst neighbours here? Why?
How does the relationship between neighbours in public housing compare to where you lived previously?
What do you know about the kind of people living here? For example, is it the case that most residents are either: young graduates; migrant workers; those displaced by development in the city.
What do you think are the good points and negative points about the range of social backgrounds gathered here?
Is your impression that people here get along well regardless of their background and status? Why? Can you give an example?
Environment
Do you feel safe living here? What security measures are in place?
Are there any unoccupied apartments in the public housing?
Have you heard of any companies renting out public housing to their own workers?
Summary
Do you feel at home in the public housing?
Do you feel a sense of belonging living in the public housing?
Do you still want to live here in the future?

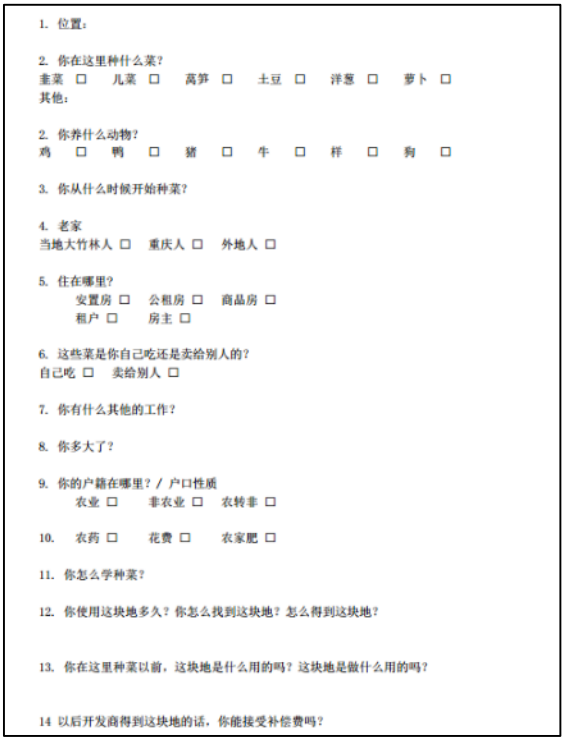
Appendix F: *Kongdi* questionnaire



补偿 ☐　　补偿费 ☐

15. 对你来说，种菜是一种：工作 ☐ 爱好 ☐
健康 ☐ 锻炼 ☐　赚钱 ☐　　玩儿 ☐

16. 人使用这块地好不好



1. 位置：

2. 你在这里种什么菜？
韭菜 ☐　　儿菜 ☐　　莴笋 ☐　　土豆 ☐　　洋葱 ☐　　萝卜 ☐
其他：

2. 你养什么动物？
鸡 ☐　　鸭 ☐　　猪 ☐　　牛 ☐　　样 ☐　　狗 ☐

3. 你从什么时候开始种菜？

4. 老家
当地大竹林人 ☐　重庆人 ☐　外地人 ☐

5. 住在哪里？
安置房 ☐　公租房 ☐　商品房 ☐
租户 ☐　　房主 ☐

6. 这些菜是你自己吃还是卖给别人的？
自己吃 ☐　卖给别人 ☐

7. 你有什么其他的工作？

8. 你多大了？

9. 你的户籍在哪里？/ 户口性质
农业 ☐　　非农业 ☐　农转非 ☐

10. 农药 ☐　　花费 ☐　　农家肥 ☐

11. 你怎么学种菜？

12. 你使用这块地多久？你怎么找到这块地？怎么得到这块地？

13. 你在这里种菜以前，这块地是什么用的吗？这块地是做什么用的吗？

14 以后开发商得到这块地的话，你能接受补偿费吗？

Translation of *kongdi* questionnaire

a) Location:

1. What vegetables are you growing here?

2. What animals do you keep?

3. When did you start growing vegetables?
4. Where is your hometown? [Dazhulin/Chongqing/elsewhere]
5. Where do you live? [resettlement housing/public housing/commodity housing/rent/own]
6. Will you eat these vegetables yourself or sell them to others?
7. Do you have any other work?
8. How old are you?
9. Where is your *hukou* registered? [rural/non-rural/converted rural-to-non-rural]
10. Do you use pesticides/chemical fertiliser/manure?
11. How did you learn how to grow vegetables?
12. How long have you been farming this plot? How did you acquire it?
13. Before you grew vegetables here, what was this land used for?
14. Do you expect to receive compensation if this land is acquired by developers?
15. How do you view growing vegetables? [work/hobby/health/exercise/a way of earning money/fun]
16. What do you think about the way this land is currently used?

Appendix G: Glossary of Chinese terms

anzhifang	安置房	Resettlement housing provided at a discount to urbanised villagers.
beibu xinqu	北部新区	New North Zone (NNZ), a largely residential expansion of the northern edge of Chongqing established in 2001.
baogu	包谷	Sichuan dialect term for corn.
Chongqing chenbao	重庆晨报	Chongqing Morning Post
Chongqing ribao	重庆日报	Chongqing Daily
danwei	单位	Work unit established as the basic unit of administration of state-owned enterprises in the PRC, came to define urban form during Maoist period.
Dazhulin	大竹林	Principal fieldsite, peripheral subdistrict in NW Chongqing.
dibao	低保	Basic social security income paid to low-income citizens.
dipiao	地票	'Land ticket' system. A development rights transfer scheme established in 2008 to allow remote rural residents to marketise development rights.
gaige kaifang	改革开放	'Reform and Opening Up', liberalising policies introduced from 1978.
gongzufang	公租房	Public housing; a mode of state-owned housing provided for
guoyou tudi chubei	国有土地储备	State-owned land reserve.
guoyou zichan jiandu weiyuanhui	国有资产监督委员会	State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC).
hunza	混杂	Mixed.
hukou	户口	Household registration status; determines ability to access social welfare provisions in cities.
jianghu	江湖	Literally 'river and lakes' – poetic term referring to the lawlessness and comradery of life in the wilderness (see chapter 5).
jiaxinceng	夹心层	The 'sandwich class' facing housing difficulties, unable to afford to buy property but ineligible for state aid.
jiedao	街道	Subdistrict (i.e. subdistrict-level government, also known as 'street committee').
kaihuang	开荒	To open up wasteland to cultivation.
Kangzhuang Meidi	康庄美地	Public housing estate located in Dazhulin, opened July 2011.
kongdi	空地	Analogous to 'wasteland', applied to not-yet-developed plots of land throughout the city (see chapter 7).
larou	腊肉	Meat preserved by air-drying or smoking. Traditionally made in the month preceding Spring Festival.
lianzufang	廉租房	Low-rent housing, provided by the state for urban residents below a certain income.

Liangjiang xinqu	两江新区	Liangjiang New Area (LJNA), a special economic zone created in northern Chongqing in 2011.
liulang	流浪	Vagrancy, to drift about.
maoni	猫腻	Underhanded, commonly used to describe suspected corruption in allocation of public housing.
Minxin Jiayuan	民心佳园	Public housing estate located in the south of the New North Zone.
nonmingong	农民工	Migrant worker.
qidao yiping	七通一平	'Seven connections, one flattening' shorthand for the infrastructure investment required to prepare land for lease to private developers.
qingmiaofei	青苗费	'Green sprout fee' paid to farmers whose crops are destroyed when land is acquired for development (see chapter 7).
quji	区级	District-level (i.e. district government).
ren shi yi zhu xing	民食衣住行	'People's clothing, food, shelter, transport' – the 'five characters' which should define the priorities of the CPC according to Mao.
renmin gongshe	人民公社	People's Commune established as the basic unit of rural collectivisation and governance after 1949.
shiji	市级	City-level (i.e. municipal government).
Shiliangqiao Village	石梁桥村	Former village of Dazhulin.
wuge Chongqing	五个重庆	'Five Chongqings' slogan introduced by Bo Xilai.
xigongsi dingxiang peitao gongzufang	系公司定向配套公租房	'Corporation-oriented support public housing'
Yufu	渝富	Urban investment and development corporation formed in Chongqing in 2004.
zhishi qingnian	知识青年	'Educated Youth' sent down to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.
zhixiashi	直辖市	Directly controlled municipality (highest level of urban administration in China).
zhongyuanjie	中元节	Ghost Festival.