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# **The New Economy of Vision**

## **New Urban Spaces in post-1992 Shanghai**

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# Abstract

This masters' thesis, 'The New Economy of Vision – New Urban Spaces in post-1992 Shanghai', authored by Johan Vaide, draws on the economic reforms initiated in the late 1970s to show how Shanghai has experienced a rapid and well-calculated change of its cultural landscape. Due to the launch of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' in 1978 and the construction of an entirely new district (Pudong Xingqu, i.e. Pudong New Area) in 1992, Shanghai has experienced an arising new economy of vision. In particular, the thesis focuses on the construction of new urban spaces and new subject positions. Drawing on dialogues with Shanghainese youth, sociologists Manuel Castells' and Saskia Sassen's theories on globalisation, the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's concepts of 'ideology', 'state apparatus' and 'ideological state apparatuses', Erving Goffman's theory on 'space', Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann's theory on 'institution', state-led urban re/construction, the new economy of vision is best portrayed by giving examples of the new physical reality that has emerged in Shanghai. The novel physical reality consists of shopping arcades, advertisements along certain streets, global artefacts, entertainment venues and individuals that are acting in these new spaces. The thesis also deals with 'the negative' aspects of the new economy of vision: the new layers of inequality (the including and excluding of social groups) that have emerged and due to the urban renewal, individuals have been relocated to other parts of the city.

Keywords: new urban spaces, economic reforms, Shanghai, shopping malls, advertisement, new role models, cultural globalisation, entertainment venues, preservation, relocation.

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# 1 Exploring East Asian cultures, background, purpose and methods

## 1.1 Visiting a metropolitan city with ‘Chinese characteristics’, exploring Shanghainese culture

On February 11<sup>th</sup> 2003, the *Lufthansa*-aircraft carries me to the newly built *Pudong International Airport* in Shanghai. Drowsy and jet-lagged as I am at this time, I enter the arrival hall. At least two hundred people are standing there, almost shouting to get in contact with the ones they are waiting for. People are holding name shields in their hands and one of them says ‘Johan Vaide’. The persons waiting for me are one female student and her boyfriend. These two escorted me to a guesthouse close to Fudan Daxue (Fudan University). Approximately two days passed by and I was, finally, ready for going downtown.

Taking the overcrowded ‘up to date’ bus, number 934, from my apartment (I was relocated to an apartment a week after the arrival) in northeast Shanghai to Renmin Guangchang (People’s Square), the passengers including myself have the possibility to watch Chinese television. In a colourful and rapid concoction with commercials for new *LG*-mobiles, *Knorr*-soy sauces and *L’Oreal*-shampoos (one advertisement presented by the world famous Mainland Chinese actress *Gong Li*<sup>1</sup>), the channel provides daily domestic and international news, entertainment (i.e. music videos with predominately Hong Kong and Taiwanese artists) and cuisine programmes in Chinese. Looking out of the well-polished window, I can see new buildings – built in the 1990s – penetrating the sky, *long tang* housings<sup>2</sup> and taxi cars in different colours passing by. The traffic jam is substantial. On the left hand, Pudong Xingqu (The Pudong New Area) shows itself without any shyness. Pudong Xingqu, which has approximately twenty skyscrapers in different styles, is described as China’s economic powerhouse. It is an incredible, futuristic and fascinating view. For example, the 420-meter tall *Jin Mao*, which was built after inspiration from the traditional Chinese pagoda<sup>3</sup>, disappears dramatically into the grey fog.



Figure 1: Pudong Xingqu (The Pudong New Area)

The urban landscape of Shanghai is rapidly changing, old *long tang* houses are demolished and shopping malls, apartment blocks and offices are being constructed. Sitting down in the bus, after a forty-minute ride, the loudspeaker declares, not in the Shanghainese dialect but in Standard Chinese, ‘Renmin Guangchang dao le’ (We have arrived at People’s Square). The bus arrives gently to its destination.

As I leave the bus, Shanghai Bowuguan (Shanghai Museum) and hundreds of different-styled individuals at once face me. The camel-coloured and enormous building evokes the ancient Chinese history. The museum is a reproduction of an ancient three-legged food vessel. In its nearest environment, I can lay my eyes on sky-high modern buildings and large commercial billboards primarily in Chinese. Surprising, as it may seem, the sense of tranquillity emerges in me.

Departing from one of the larger roads, such as Yanan Dong Lu, Shanghai is a quite different city. Just some minutes stroll from Renmin Guangchang, a variety of people are offering me food for 5 Jiao<sup>4</sup> and illegal CDs and VCDs for 10 Yuan each. I am in a neighbourhood where the housings are low, the streets are more narrow and the

scrubbed laundry is hung out through the windows and balconies – a Shanghai that is untouched by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 2: Shanghai Bowuguan (Shanghai Museum)

Having arrived to Shanghai, I am directly facing ‘things’ that I am not used to seeing and experiencing ‘at home’. In other words, cultural acts and symbols are not the same as in Sweden. The Chinese language is one example. Theoretically, social constructionists Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967:53-54) give an explanation. The taken-for-grantedness, which is comparable with their description of habitualised (routinely done) acts, makes cultural acts and symbols well known to each individual in a society. In Shanghai, my taken-for-grantedness as ‘Swedish’ is, therefore, questioned. Several symbols and acts in Shanghai are similar to the ones back home, but plenty of cultural codes and symbols, such as the language and social norms, like the ‘private space’ (as the following story with my Chinese language partner will show) and so forth deviate from my ‘taken-for-grantedness’.

I remember an almost one hour conversation with Thomas, my Chinese language partner, at the French-styled café *Xiaduo*. He asks rhetorically: ‘What is Western behaviour?’ Drinking on my lemon ice tea, I was a little bit stunned by the question. He continues: ‘In what way should I behave if I meet a Western guy?’ Apparently in his view, there are cultural differences and I agree. Initially, I did not have anything to say though. Putting the glass of ice tea aside, I recalled a situation in my apartment some weeks before. The house owner and his friends came to the apartment. Earlier the same day, I had given him a call. The electricity was going out of order. An electric device was broken. After the problem was solved, they continued to talk and laugh in our apartment. They stayed there for at least twenty minutes or so. ‘We wouldn’t have done the same thing in Sweden’, I said to Thomas.

I have given a short introduction to my own first experience with the fast growing city, Shanghai. I have tried to illustrate the sites that I am seeing while looking out of the window on the local bus, 934. I came to the conclusion that as I am visiting Shanghai I am encountering several things that are not common in Sweden. In the next section, I will describe my previous interest in the East Asian region.

## 1.2 My previous interest in East Asia

Entering the flashing scene of Miss Hong Kong 1994 Pageant and forming the hands similar to the moves of a snake, the Beijing pop artist and actress Faye Wong dramatically dances and sings on a Canto-pop<sup>5</sup> version of a French Eurovision-song from the 1990s.

Watching the TV with its fascinating images, as above, in the small village Slättåkra<sup>6</sup> in my teens, has allowed me to create a fuzzy image of how everyday life is constructed in urban China, post-colonial Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region of China) and Japan. Mostly by watching three channels – *CNE*, *Chinese Channel* and *JSTV* – I have constructed my pre-understanding of China, Hong Kong SAR and Japan. These channels broadcast domestic news, documentaries, dramas (predominantly Hong Kong Kung fu films), children’s TV and music shows, particularly for Overseas Chinese and Japanese living in Europe. Watching Japanese and Canto-pop artists performing on the TV, having pen-pals in the East Asian region (including China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan and South Korea) and sporadically studying Chinese and

Japanese, I could not at all imagine that ten years later I was going to conduct my field work in Shanghai. It was like a dream coming true.

Then one might ask, why I am fascinated by the cultures in East Asia? Actually, I do not have a clear picture of why. There might be, however, two possible reasons. Firstly, the way that one composes Chinese and Japanese words. Employing Chinese characters (in Chinese and Japanese) and two tonal systems (in Japanese), Chinese and Japanese deviate fundamentally from the way one writes and speaks in Swedish and English. The complexity and the structure of the Chinese and Japanese characters are, from my point of view, interesting. Secondly, the grand and explosive Chinese, Hong Kongese and Japanese urban cultures and their experiences of rapid cultural and economic change are intriguing and fascinating. From my point of view, the large cities in East Asia are by the very fact of their existence interesting. Descriptively, the cities blend 'the old' with 'the new': thousands of glimmering skyscrapers, old narrow lanes, hypermodern subways with signs in Chinese or Japanese, impressive crowding, temples, wet and clean clothes hanging out of the windows, small noodle eateries and the fact that the citizens are speaking in Standard Chinese, Cantonese, Japanese or Shanghainese. In other words, what fascinates me most, therefore, is the blending of the cultural heritage (the Confucianist and Buddhist heritages et cetera) with the new 'modern' East Asia. That is to say, it is 'different' but not too 'different'.

Having my first experience with Shanghai and my previous interest in East Asia in mind, the next section will deal with the purpose of this thesis.

### **1.3 The purpose of the thesis**

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Department of Sociology, Lund University, and *Linnéus Palme (SIDA)* for providing me with financial support, which enabled me to conduct my fieldwork in Shanghai during the spring semester of 2003. Having this in mind, the purpose of the thesis is principally a consequence of the decision to give me this funding.

Since the previous leader of the People's Republic of China, Deng Xiaoping, initiated the market-oriented reforms in 1978 and 1992 particularly, the urban areas have experienced an explosive renewal. Principally, drawing on my dialogues with Shanghainese youth, my understanding of globalisation (as found in the works of

sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) and sociologist Saskia Sassen (2000) particularly), the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's concept of ideology (2001,1971) and the sociologist Erving Goffman's theory on space (1990,1959), the purpose of this thesis is to describe the construction of the arising new urban spaces and subject positions in Shanghai. In other words, since the economic reforms were launched, Shanghai and its citizens have experienced an influx of a vast array of new ideologies. Broadly speaking, shopping malls are constructed, novel entertainment venues designate the 'night out' and predominately Hong Kong and Taiwanese artists are displayed on enormous billboards.

Given that the purpose of the thesis is to examine 'the new urban spaces and subject positions in Shanghai', the main objective, from my point of view, is to become acquainted with Shanghainese (youth) themselves. This leads me on to the methodological issues that I had to deal with.

## 1.4 Methods, knowing Shanghainese youth

Having in mind that writing is 'a representational practice' (Hall:2001:1-30) and knowledge is 'situated' (Haraway:1988) in certain contexts, my narrative – my 'representation' of Shanghai – is indeed 'subjective'. Subjective not in a personal sense, but, on the contrary, in the sense of my own relationship with 'the East Asian region' (as described in section 1.2) and the very fact that I have a certain background, which I consider to be a white, middle class, gay male position. Moreover, representation is merely about telling one story out of many other possible (truths). In other words, somebody else would write a similar thesis quite differently. The thesis would, probably, be different if I was a person interested in other phenomena, such as sports (*The Shanghai Stadium*, as another example of the new urban spaces) or technological issues. What I am saying is that I am interested in Shanghainese fashion, culture, Chinese pop music and entertainment venues. Following this line of thought, next section will introduce my Shanghainese informants.

Before my arrival to Shanghai in February 2003, the Internet was an useful and good resource for understanding and becoming acquainted with the Shanghainese culture. One of my better findings was the web version (one also has a paper version) of the lifestyle magazine *That's Shanghai*. Published by *China Intercontinental Press*, *That's Shanghai* is a magazine for English speaking Shanghainese and visiting foreigners.

According to one of my Nordic friends in Shanghai, Shanghainese tend to read *That's Shanghai* more than foreigners. A part from tips on inexpensive and luxurious restaurants, different-styled cafés, cinemas, concerts, arts, shopping and a variety of bars, the magazine has a classified section. In the subsection for 'Personals', I published an advertisement with the subject 'Swedish student in Shanghai' on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2003. In the ad, I wrote that I was due to live in Shanghai during the spring semester of 2003 and that I was looking for Shanghainese friends.

Receiving approximately twenty different replies, I started to get in contact with Shanghainese youth in the age between twenty and twenty-five. With this advertisement, I became acquainted with the Art Director and the fashion addict Belle, the Natural Sciences student and the American English language devotee Matt, the International Relations student Sarah, the Marketing assistant and the piano playing Rosa, the Computer Sciences student and the jazz music fan Audrey, the Humanities student Ke, the Marketing assistant Anna and the International Tourism student and the English language devotee Lee. While my dialogues with Sarah and Ke stifled soon after one coffee at *Starbucks* and an one-day-visit at *Shanghai University* in Baoshan District with Matt, my relationship with Belle and Audrey became more profound. Due to the SARS virus, which was a serious threat to China during my stay in Shanghai (not primarily Shanghai though), I got together with Lee only once. Through Audrey I got in contact with IT-dedicated Peter, and as a result of my meeting with Belle I became acquainted with Art Director and Cantopop addict Apple. Furthermore, sociology student and 'communist youth league of China candidate' Maggie was one of the two persons that met me at the airport. My Chinese supervisor helped me to get in contact with feminist and radio presenter Fei. Since Brigitte is a fashion editor of a Shanghainese fashion magazine, I contacted her by the use of e-mail.

Then one might pose the question, why am I using English names? Since almost all of my informants are proud of having an English name, the thesis will use their English name. The names are, however, figurative.

Whether we were dining out, strolling around the city, shopping or sipping on an iced caramel macchiato at *Starbucks*, we were discussing Chinese popular culture (including Cantopop and Taiwanese pop music), Shanghai's rapid changes and the city's ever-changing appearance. Due to my own personal interest in Chinese pop music, the focus was at the beginning on this topic. Later on, however, the concentration changed



more to the fastly shifting city of Shanghai and my informants' opinions regarding the changes. The shift in focus was a result based on my own dialogues with the individuals I became acquainted with.

Trying always to bring my notebook with me, I wrote down everything that I found interesting during my conversations with my new friends. Rather than having a structured interview in its literal sense, the situations were more similar to dialogues. However, I used a 'thematic encounter' as a framework for the dialogues. In other words, it was 'an informal talk' at various cafés, restaurants, bars et cetera. One discussion generated other questions for another conversation and vice versa. By stating that the interviews were more like dialogues, I am saying that the centre of the conversation was on my informants' and my own experiences of Shanghai.

Due to the fact that neither my informants nor myself could communicate in our native language, the interviews were conducted solely in English. Being Swedish and relatively skilled in the English language, it became obvious that they used my knowledge of English to practice their oral English. Therefore, it is possible to say that I found myself in a position between English teacher and interested sociologist. Perhaps this gave me access to their private lives in a different manner than would have been the case if I presented myself as a sociologist alone. Sometimes we experienced difficulties communicating, but, nevertheless, we managed to understand each other. Occasionally my informants used an electronic translator. In trying to grasp the spirit of this qualitative material, my informants' English has not been corrected whatsoever. In the quotes throughout the following text, my informants' voices are present as they are without any grammatical modification. One obstacle, though, might be in the way that I listened to my informants. In other words, how did I recognize their 'voices' and how did I write them down? How is it possible for me as a listener to present their 'exact' use of a word or sentence? Whatever the case, my intention is to bring their voices alive as I understood them back then.

Having in mind that the people I met through the *That's Shanghai* website speak English, I can ask myself one considerable question; who is (and who is not) reading the magazine? None of them are 'low-skilled' workers in a factory or unemployed. They are university students or they have a 'high-skilled' job at a regional or foreign company. This masters' thesis is a story stemmed from a specific segment of Shanghai's population and my own position in this reality. Following this line of thought, the purpose and the

outline of the thesis is to a large extent a result of my dialogues with the above-mentioned individuals.

## 1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into five distinct, but for each other highly relevant, chapters. Chapter 1, 'Exploring East Asian cultures', gives a descriptive insight into my own experience of Shanghai and 'the East Asian region'. Furthermore, the chapter contains the purpose of the thesis and a methodological section. Taking into account previous 'milestones' of the city's past, chapter 2, 'The Shanghai history', gives a historical sketch of the city. Meanwhile, chapter 3, 'Urban changes, enjoying oneself through the consumer revolution', which is one of the two main chapters in my thesis, analyses the arising new urban landscape. The chapter focuses on the construction of new spatial ideologies, new subject positions and new role models. Moreover, chapter 4, 'Back in the apartment on Shagang Lu', which is the second main chapter, tries to integrate the analysis in chapter 3 with the issue of state-led urban re/construction. Finally, chapter 5, 'Slättåkra, further studies', gives a proposal of further studies.

## 2 The Shanghai history

In this chapter, I will explain Shanghai's diverse past. Beginning in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century with the aftermath of the Opium War (2.1), continuing to the foreign settlements' effects on the city's growth and architecture (2.2). The constitution of the Chinese communist party in Shanghai in 1921 and the Cultural Revolution follows (2.3), allowing the chapter to finish in the present (2.4). Since this is a masters' thesis in Cultural Studies, the emphasis will not be on this chapter.

### 2.1 Buying Chinese silk, drinking tea and fighting for the opium

For a long time, Shanghai (which literally means 'on the sea') has been a unique, vibrant and often disputable meeting point for different cultures from the 'East' and the 'West'. Beginning with the Opium War (1839-42) between China and the United Kingdom, the semi-colonialised town of Shanghai has been under several different influences and authorities.

The clash between Western and Chinese civilisation in Shanghai is the most prominent one in China, except Hong Kong SAR in the south. In contrast to the former British colony Hong Kong SAR, Shanghai has never been a colony in the literal meaning of the word. Due to the 'Treaty of Nanjing' on August 29<sup>th</sup> 1842 (which was the finale of the Opium War), Shanghai and the defenceless *Qing Dynasty* were forced to open the city and its harbour for foreign investments and settlements. Following the British colonisers, the Americans and the French took advantage of the good opportunity of making easy money. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the foreigners were divided into two concessions, the International Settlement (British and Americans citizens) and the French Concession. The Shanghainese themselves were living in the southwest part of Shanghai, in the 'Old City' (see map in appendix A for further clarification).

## 2.2 Shanghai in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

With the progressive combination of the Shanghainese entrepreneurial spiritual legacy, Western capitalism and the strategic and effective geographical location, Shanghai emerged as a metropolitan city less than a century later. According to architect and theorist Zheng Shiling (1999:14-15), Chinese and foreign architects imported European building styles and ideas to Shanghai and revised them. With the concoction of neo-classicism, modernism, Chinese neo-classicism and neo-Gothic style, the city emerged as a pioneering and fascinating site for ‘world architecture’. The most common though was the housing type *long tang*<sup>7</sup>, which is, nonetheless, a combination of Chinese and Western architecture. Building an innovative ‘architectural bazaar’, Shanghai became the one and only centre for finance, commerce and culture in China (1999:13-17). The American academic and correspondent Pamela Yatsko (2001:13) writes:

Local residents worked well with foreigners and adopted their ways, sometimes amassing huge fortunes for themselves in the process... To traditional Chinese in the interior, it was a den of iniquity bereft of Chinese virtues. To the Shanghainese and their more open-minded compatriots, it was the definition of Chinese modernity.

As Yatsko shows above, Shanghai became a melting pot of ideas, styles, philosophies and cultures. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city turned to become ‘the Paris of the East’.

According to geographer Y M Yeung and economist Sung Yun-wing (1996:2), Shanghai was the seventh most prevalent city in the world in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. With a population of nearly four million in 1936, Shanghai knocked out its Asian counterparts – Hong Kong and Tokyo – as the largest city at that time. During this period, the prosperous foreigners built and developed schools, grand villas, clubs, theatres, cabarets, racetracks, factories, banks and roads similar to the ones in Europe and North America. The Italian architect Luigi Novelli (1999:49) states: ‘The urban structure, architectural languages, and above all the city culture are directly influenced by the city’s historical development, causing Shanghai to be viewed as “China’s most westernized” city’. The city of Shanghai became the cosmopolitan city where Shanghainese, Europeans and other individuals from various cultures gathered. Fagou Zujie (The French Concession), in particular, was famous and renowned for its vigorous

clubs, subtle cafés and French housing style. Literary critic Xudong Zhang (2000:351) writes:

By 1942, Shanghai after the previous decades of explosive demographic and economic expansion, had already risen to the status of undisputed center of trade, finance, production, consumption, and entertainment in China and the leading metropolis in the Far East. Its fashion and tempo of life closely followed that of London, Paris, and New York; its daily life was linked more closely to the West than to the rest of the country to which it geographically, that is to say, accidentally, belonged. Compared with Shanghai's cosmopolitan glamour and decadent excess, Tokyo was provincial, and Hong Kong was still a sleepy fishermen's village.

While the city was the leading metropolis in the 'Far East' during the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, as stated in the quote by Xudong, the years from 1949 were radically different.

## 2.3 The Chinese communist party, the Cultural Revolution and pre-1978

Together with the city's population of artists, prostitutes, workers, moneymakers, unemployees, writers and intellectuals and its flamboyant bourgeois entertainment, Shanghai's divide between 'the rich' and 'the poor' became wider and more obvious. A Chinese-translated copy of *The Communist Manifesto* circulated among the young and the radicals. Gathered in a locale close to Huai Hai Lu in Faguo Zujie in Shanghai 1921, the Chinese communist party (CCP) had its first meeting.

The period between 1921 and 1949 were years of growing 'nationalism' (the city had a Nationalist government with the *Kuomintang* group and Sun Yatsen particularly in the lead), urban reconstruction (the construction of 'Greater Shanghai' and herein 170 miles of roads and highways were built) and the occupation by the Japanese between 1937 and 1945. The Japanese occupation was a time of abduction and assassinations. The period was a desire to have a city of its own (MacPherson: 1996:502-515). It is best described by using Sun Yatsen's words. MacPherson (1996:502) quotes Sun: "Whenever I come to a treaty port," he declared, "I feel thoroughly humiliated... because the treaty port is a long standing reminder of our loss of sovereignty". In 1945, when the Japanese lost the Second World War, Kuomintang took back the city. In 1949, Kuomintang

retreated to Taiwan, because of antagonisms between Koumingtang members and the communists (during the time of Japanese occupation these two groups were united), and started to built up another type of Chinese community. The communists won the struggle of Shanghai and China in 1949.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 by Mao Zedong, the city's growth and flourishing culture suddenly declined. The city was to be transformed from a 'parasitic consumer society' to a 'socialist producer city' (1996:515). Shanghai had a population of five million at that time (Mackerras: 2002:193). Economically speaking, the new leaders of Shanghai closed private corporations and markets. The foreign settlers left the city (MacPherson: 1996:515). Culturally speaking, the new leaders took immediate control over the arts, which was considered to be an unhealthy influence and tempt the minds of the people and prohibited cabarets, which was one noticeable symbol of the decadence and the self-indulgence of Shanghai's history. Considered as polluting people's mind, the art and the cultural scene became strictly controlled. Historian and art theorist, Colin Mackerras (2002:75) recapitulates Mao Zedong: 'all culture represents the interests of a class or classes, Chinese revolutionary culture those of the workers, peasants and soldiers; and... traditional Chinese and foreign cultures should be "critically assimilated", their "democratic essence" retained but their "feudal dross" rejected'. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the glorious and famous past of Shanghai was, in this line, discredited and abolished.

Due to the vulgar and pulsating history of Shanghai, the city was considered to be the 'sink of iniquity' by the CCP (Mackerras: 2002:192). During the years between 1966 and 1976 however, trained workers, skillful technicians, machine goods, and several tools were relocated and sent to the rural areas. According to Pamela Yatsko (2001:14): 'The competence, adaptability, and obedience that the Shanghainese had nurtured under foreign occupation served them well under their new Communist masters, helping to turn capitalist Shanghai into a model of state planning'. Since the Shanghainese managed to work with both the foreigners and then the communists, the upcoming years were another test of the Shanghainese courage and strength.

## 2.4 The post-1978 era and the 1990s

While cultural restrictions, economic regulations and public sanctions<sup>8</sup> were frequent during the 1960s and 1970s, the importance of economic growth and economic liberalisation was propagated by CCP leader Deng Xiaoping in the end of 1970s and onwards. With the launching of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' in 1978, China and Shanghai entered a new but uncertain episode of its history. A new ideological character was introduced: 'the market socialist state'<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, the new economic reforms did not have an effect on Shanghai until 1992. The reason behind the delay of rebuilding Shanghai as China's centre for commerce was that the political leaders in the capital, Beijing, did not want to take the risk of dropping important revenues. Rather than reconstructing and giving financial support to Shanghai, the leaders in Beijing were looking to the south. In 1980, Deng Xiaoping decided to set up four 'special economic zones' on the southeastern coast of China (Mackerras: 2002:203). Strategically situated nearby Hong Kong SAR, the sizeable Guangdong Province (with the cities of Shenzhen and Guangzhou in the lead) turned out to be China's centre for economic and financial growth and prosperity. Due to internal political disputes within the CCP, between Gang of Four-supporters and the more market-oriented Party members and the focus on South China, Shanghai stood still.

During the beginning of 1990 opposite to Waitan (The Bund), Pudong Qu (The Pudong Area) was promoted as a geographically functional setting for establishing a special new economic and financial zone (Mackerras: 2002:193-194). Launching the construction of Pudong Xingqu in 1992, Shanghai became a construction site where block after block was demolished to make space for a new and prolific era of 'market socialism'. Towards the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Shanghai emerged as China's prominent economic and financial trade centre. In Shanghai communism was shaking its hands with capitalism as had happened in South China twenty years ago.

Using the historical contextualisation as a base, the thesis will move further on to the new spaces and subject positions that have emerged since the economic reforms were initiated in 1978 and the construction of Pudong Xingqu in 1992.

## 3 Urban changes, enjoying oneself through the consumer revolution

### 3.1 The new economy of vision

Development of the Pudong District will have a great impact not just on the district itself but on all of Shanghai, which in turn will serve as a base for the development of the Yangtze delta and the whole Yangtze basin. So we should lose no time in developing the Pudong District and persevere until construction is completed. So long as we keep our word and act in accordance with international practice, foreign entrepreneurs will choose to invest in Shanghai. That is the right way to compete.

These are the words by former CCP leader Deng Xiaoping in 1991. Not long after Deng Xiaoping's speech, Shanghai was radically transformed. Reminiscing the imperialistic cosmopolitanism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Deng Xiaoping proclaims in 1991: 'Shanghai used to be a financial centre where different currencies were freely exchanged, and it should become so again'. Demolishing the old *long tang* housings and narrow lanes and building the new and stylish Shanghai, the city emerges once again as an international city.<sup>10</sup>

Anna, one of my informants, fancies the visual changes in two different respects: 'I think it's ok to destroy the old buildings. The new ones give a good image of our city. But I also like them cause I'm applying for jobs in the similar ones'. Supposedly, since the launching of the economic reforms in 1978 and Pudong Xingqu in 1992 (Pudong Qu was nothing but a farmers' and fishers' community before the 1992-reforms), Shanghai has witnessed a sudden but indeed well organised emergence of a 'new economy of vision'. Peter says: 'I watch this everyday, if you are Shanghai's people, you will be honor you are a Shanghainese'. Cultural theorist Ackbar Abbas (2000:779) compares the visual changes with a 'speeded-up image of time-lapse film.' Following Abbas' thought, it is fair to say that Shanghai is growing so fast that it is difficult to obtain a map of it. Having this in mind, it is crucial to ask what 'the new economy of vision' is? Theoretically, the expression 'new economy of vision' is used by political scientist Michael Dutton (2000:222), to illustrate the visual changes that are occurring in



urban China. Due to the fact that Dutton's explanation of these changes lacks a theoretical depth, I intend to present an alternative interpretation of this issue. Descriptively speaking, the new economy of vision is the new monumentally designed shopping malls, the modern two-lined subway<sup>11</sup>, flashy apartment blocks downtown and in the suburbs, decorated buses with outsized advertisements (*Nestlé*, *LG* and *Pepsi*), chic entertainment venues (once again primarily in Faguo Zujie), commercial billboards, miles of elevated highways and the novel international airport in Pudong Xingqu. Arguably, the new economy of vision is the 'materialised' outcome of the economic reforms in 1978 in general and in post-1992 Shanghai in specific.

Having the new economy of vision in mind, the next section will describe the shopping mall as an example of this new phenomenon.

### 3.2 'Do you know Super Brand Mall has its own timely buses for citizens?' - Audrey



Figure 3: Super Brand Mall

Taking the number two subway from Renmin Guangchang (People's Square) to Lujiazui Station<sup>12</sup>, one is directly facing a newly constructed area. It is the 'Lujiazui Finance and Trade Zone'. I am seeing broad boulevards crowded with taxis; newly white painted lines on the avenues and white-collar workers dressed in black and white. With the incredible, astonishing view of the unbearably tall skyscrapers *Jin Mao*, *The Stock Exchange Building*, *The Bank of China Tower*, *Bocom Financial Tower I and II*, I get a little bit shaky of the superb heights.

Turning my curious green-blue eyes away from the sky-high modern buildings, I can look at another new but atypical construction of the post-1992 reforms. It is the shopping arcade *Super Brand Mall* in luminous camel with its ornamental logotype. Entering the enormous and monumentally designed shopping mall, one encounters predominantly chic city-dwellers. Some of them are dressed in the latest gown from a European designer. Another is a retired elderly, watching the new generation of Chinese performing, what could well be named, acts of (symbolic) consumption. Writing about the shopping malls in Paris in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century, philosopher Walter Benjamin (1999:31) states:

These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-paneled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of these corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the arcade is a city, a world in miniature..., in which customers will find everything they need.

Having Benjamin's words in mind, Super Brand Mall is comparable with the shopping arcades of 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris. The 'world in miniature', applying Benjamin's vocabulary, that one enters is overwhelming. Wiped floors, remarkably high ceilings and grotesque large commercials on luxurious clothes. Everyone is eating, shopping and showing oneself.<sup>13</sup> As one example, I remember one Shanghainese heterosexual couple in their 20s, eating Thai food in a minimalistically planned fast-food restaurant, simply dropping a word now and then to each other. The 'Hong Kong-styled guy'<sup>14</sup> is dressed in a white tank-top (i.e. a T-shirt without arms) singing to an upbeat 'Canto-pop' song aired in the restaurant and his white-dressed girlfriend is playing on her trendy and beautified<sup>15</sup> *Samsung*-mobile.

According to Audrey, Rosa and Anna, similar situations, such as the Shanghainese couple above, are very common in Shanghai. Young female friends and/or heterosexual

couples are strolling around in the shopping malls, such as the Super Brand Mall and other shopping arcades primarily along Huai Hai Zhong Lu in Faguo Zujie. They are not buying clothes or other merchandise but *simply* walking and talking to each other. Communication theorist John Fiske (1989:34) highlights this issue when stating: ‘One of the commonest practices of the consumer is window shopping, a consumption of images, an imaginative if imaginary use of the language of commodities that may or may not turn into the purchase of actual commodities’. In a spirit similar to Benjamin, Dutton (2000:230) writes on the new shopping malls in urban China:

In the new shopping arcades of China, it is the gaze that is central. These brightly adorned glass, mirror and chrome monuments to the capitalism of the gaze are also designed to enchant and enhance. One enters the shopping centre as though entering a dream. Everything is made desirable and everything is for sale. This is a far cry from the factory-style shopping arcades of the Maoist era.

According to the quote above, there is no doubt that the shopping malls of the Maoist era are all gone. According to the 22-year-old fashion editor Brigitte at the Shanghai-based fashion magazine *Chic*, ‘the most well-dressed streets’ in Shanghai are Huai Hai Lu and Nanjing Lu. Well-dressed in Brigitte’s definition means following the fashion (predominantly European fashion designer) and using some specific brand names (*Chanel*, *Fendi* and *Moschino* et cetera). While Rosa is not interested in keeping up with the latest trends (she thinks that she does not fit them), she says however: ‘I love to go around with my girlfriends in department stores. Just looking. Everything has high price though.’ Keeping in mind that Audrey is also a former student, she prefers *Pacific*, because it has more ‘reasonable’ prices. Though Anna reveals: ‘Preferably I’m in fond of shopping in Hong Kong. My colleagues at work often go there. Shanghai shopping is ok’. Considering the shopping malls in Shanghai to be occasionally ‘out of date’, Belle agrees with Anna: ‘Hong Kong is a nice place to shop. Much better than here, I think. There are many choices’.

Actually, all of my informants, enjoy strolling around the city and paying a visit to the numerous shopping arcades, if one has a little bit of free time from studies or work. Although, Audrey notices a difference between the two genders: ‘I’ve heard boys seldom go to shopping malls, if they go there, they have definite something to buy and purchase quickly’. Theoretically, this indicates that the (symbolic) consumer, whether there are differences in gender<sup>16</sup>, has arrived to urban China. The issue of constructing new subject positions will be discussed in section 3.3 and explicitly in 3.4.

Portrayed as a 'mega-mall with shopping, dining, entertainment and leisure facilities including a *Lotus Supercenter*, Multi-screen movie theatre, speciality retail shops, food court, world class international and Chinese restaurants, Internet cafe, and parking facilities' (Super Brand Mall webpage), Super Brand Mall is located in the rapid developing Lujiazui Finance and Trade Zone (in Pudong Xingqu) within walking distance to the *Oriental Pearl TV Tower*. The belief of having built 'the dream' (SBM webpage), the Super Brand Mall asserts that it 'has something for everyone' (SBM webpage). Audrey has the same opinion: 'it's an all-around shopping mall'. Peter agrees with Audrey and concludes: 'You can shop, have wonderful food, watch a movie, even you can buy car if you want in there'.

Drawing on the above quotes from Anna, Audrey, Belle and Rosa, Fiske's (1989) examination of window-shopping is fruitful. Fiske (1989:38) writes: 'Window shopping involves a seemingly casual, but actually purposeful, wandering from shop to shop, which means wandering from potential identity to potential identity until a shop identity is found that matches the individual identity, or, rather, that offers the means to construct that identity'. Reflecting on the past, and bringing the quote above into context, Peter says: 'When I was a child, Shanghai had nothing, no good shops, no towers, and every one had the same dress'. Not as fascinated by shopping malls, due to their high prices, but indeed in fond of window shopping, Belle says: 'the clothes in a shopping mall is too popular. The clothes aren't enough special. I want to wear special clothes, which are different from other people. That is why I'm buying fabrics at markets'.<sup>17</sup>

Super Brand Mall is a fashionable 'mecca', an incredible 'utopia' for shoppers. The mall is an 'one-stop shopping and entertainment center for both discerning and value-conscious shoppers' (SBM webpage). That is to say 'the one-day-adventurers' and 'the new rich'. Nowadays, restrained by having an adequate amount of money or not, not everyone can attend the more often than not expensive shopping malls. 'The new rich' is an expression that has emerged since 1978 that explains the arising new middle class in urban China. I will come back to the issue of 'including' and 'excluding' social groups and subject positions in section 3:7.

Without any sign of being reserved, the web site informs: '[l]ocal consumers as well as International visitors... [are] able to experience the best of China and the world under one roof in Shanghai's boom Lujiazui district'. As indicated by Audrey though,

there are few international visitors. She says: 'Instead, I think, many Shanghainese, whether old or young, male or female, go there to purchase'.



Figure 4: Louis Vuitton

Large advertisements are promoting international and domestic (counting Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan) fashion in the Super Brand Mall. The similar site is repeated in every department store throughout Shanghai. The 'act of yearning' for more material goods becomes most evident when one watches the huge *Louis Vuitton* advertisement displayed on *Plaza 66*, which is another new but expensive shopping mall on Nanjing Xi Lu. The European female model *Eva Herzigova* is, from my point of view, protecting her *LV*-bags. The sharing of objects is nowadays an individual business, not a collective one. Whether one is searching for the international brand names (predominantly European) or young Chinese brands, one can buy them in the Super Brand Mall. Furthermore, concerning the wide choices of cooking styles, one can for instance grab a *McDonald's* hamburger, eat a *Pizza Hut*-pizza, have Japanese sushi, a whole bowl of *Ajimasen*-noodles or a plate of *THAI THAI*-curry chicken. Alternatively, one can calm down and watch an international or Hong Kong-produced film, or sip on a *caffè latte* or tea while reading the day's newspaper at the American café *Starbucks*. The web site describes this in detail.

One has '[a]n entire floor of Super Brand Mall dedicated to the pleasures of the palette... [which] include[s] everything from fast food and coffee shops, to 5-star Chinese and International restaurants'. The similar smorgasbord of local characteristics and global cultural artefacts and cuisines can be found within the entertainment complex *Xintiandi* in Faguo Zujie. From another perspective, Xintiandi will be under scrutiny later in section 3.6 and 3.7.

In order to establish an understanding of the mechanisms constructing the contemporary Chinese consumers, it is crucial to keep in mind what has been said above. In the following section, the argumentation will be further theorised and developed.

### 3.3 Urban control, new subject position and consumer culture

Rather than putting an emphasis on the revolutionary past and today's socialist practise, the Chinese State apparatuses, which are constituted by the Shanghai municipal government and extensively the state council equivalent to the central people's government in Beijing, construct the materialist consumer of merchandise and fashion. I will discuss the roles of the Shanghai municipal government and the central people's government in chapter 4. What one is experiencing in Shanghai is a shift in predefined patterns of actions and subjects. Social constructionists Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967:55) write:

Institutions..., by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, *which channel it one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible.*

While not considering the shift as an institution literally, one can, by use of Berger and Luckmann, understand what is happening. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967:54), an institution 'occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors'. That is to say, actions are cast into a systematic pattern. Moreover, institutions always have a history. What one has experienced in Shanghai and extensively in China, is a shift of predefined patterns of conduct over time. Significantly, the predefined patterns of conduct, as stated in the above quote, are channelled from the cultural workers of the socialist-planned economy to the consumer

of the market socialist economy. The cultural worker of the past is the fashion and leisure consumer of today. Whether the construction of the consumer is a tool for leading people off or not from State politics is not my case here. This is a topic for lengthy treatment elsewhere. Rather I am seeking to show, as the purpose of the thesis indicates, the appearance of a new subject position in market socialist China. However, chapter 4 will give a perspective on the issue of 'state-led urban re/construction'. Included here is the construction of several shopping malls.

By building shopping malls such as the Super Brand Mall, the market socialist country has, using the French Marxist Louis Althusser's term (2001:115), 'interpellated' new subject positions. By addressing, i.e. interpellating, as in my case building shopping malls, one creates, in line with Althusser, 'the Chinese consumer'. Simultaneously, absurd as it may seem, there are norms regulating the actions of the consumer. Althusser (2001:112) asserts that 'ideology always exist in an apparatus [i.e. the shopping mall], and its practice [through consuming merchandise], or practices [such as symbolic consumption]'. The consequence of ideology is material. In other words, the ideology of consumption results in concrete subjects. Whether shopping is passive, active, or something in between is not my concern here.<sup>18</sup> What is more important, paraphrasing Althusser, is that the consumer in question behaves in a particular way (walks around, looks at various merchandise and tries a pair of *Fendi*-trousers on), adopts a practical attitude, and, what is more, participates in certain regular practices (stands before the mirror and sees how the clothes looks and stands on the right side while taking the escalator up or down to a different level). These are the ideological apparatus which 'depend' on the ideas that he and she have, in all consciousness, freely chosen as a subject. Usually, one will have some help from the instrumentally acting sales-assistants. The notion of Althusser's ideology is, however, too fixed, in that it can be undermined, negotiated and contested. The ideology of the consumer is weakened, for instance, when Belle only 'touches' the fabrics. Whether it is 'good' or not in the expensive shopping mall *Plaza 66*, she continues to the fabric market where the items have a lower price. Still she is symbolically shopping. What is more, in an European and North American context Fiske (1989:40 my italics) writes:

But, of course, ideologies do not suit all groups in a society equally well; indeed, it is their function not to do so. The sense of pleasure or satisfaction occasioned by progress achieved is not equally available to all; rather it is most "naturally" accessible to *the mature, white,*

*middle-class male*, and becomes progressively less available as social groups are distanced from the ideological norm.

The issue of including and excluding social groups as in the above quote will be discussed in detail in section 3.7.

In the case of shopping malls, ideology is determined by and restricted to a specific geographic locality<sup>19</sup>. To put it differently, ideology parts with space. When one exits the shopping mall, one enters other ideologies; the well-decorated subway with several advertisements by, for instance, *Nestlé's Nescafé* and *Motorola's* newest mobile; the streets with *Pepsi Cola* signs and so forth. *The Pepsi Cola* advertisement will be examined later in section 3.4. Furthermore, Erving Goffman (1990) gives a hint of what is happening. Goffman (1990:109) asserts that 'localities' are to a certain extent confined by boundary markers to perception. The boundary markers in a shopping mall are firstly, the space – the walls and the interior design which restricts ones actions – in itself. Secondly, the objective, the reason (in this case to propagate and stimulate consumption) why one produces such a space. Maintaining and embodying certain standards, applying Goffman's terminology (1990:110), the consumer moves across the shopping mall, watching out for the shirt that one finds beautiful and at the same time suitable. Goffman (1990:109-140) divides the performance of an individual into two regions, the front region (the street, the shopping mall, the bar, the public et cetera) and the back region (the home, the toilet in a shopping mall, the private et cetera). Goffman (1990:114) shows: 'some aspects of... activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed'. Illustratively, one cannot walk around and shout to people in the shopping mall.

Marxist sociologist Fredric Jameson (2003:71) writes: 'There is a psychology of space in the mall – the patch, the corridor, the matrix – just as there is an ecology of the thing'. According to Audrey, the environmental space in a shopping mall is important. She states: 'Sometimes girls go to shopping mall not to buy something, just to spend time together, so the environment is very important'. The spatial locality has to have cool air, polished floors and a soft atmosphere. Any litter is swept away immediately. On the same issue, Fiske (1989:39) writes: 'A key feature of the styles on offer is newness, and shopping malls emphasize newness over almost any other characteristic. The plethora of shiny surfaces, the bright lights, the pervasive use of glass and mirrors all serve to make both the commodities and the center itself to appear brand new, as though minted



yesterday'. Moreover, Fiske (1989:39-40) writes: 'It all adds up to an overwhelming image of newness, a space with no place for the old, the shabby, the worn – no place for the past, only an invitation to the future'. In addition, juxtaposing Super Brand Mall and Wujiaochang (literally means a 'five-corner square'), which is a shopping area in the northern part ('low corner') of Shanghai, Audrey would stay longer in a nicely designed shopping area. Compared to the shopping streets Huai Hai Lu ('high corner') and Nanjing Lu ('high corner'), Wujiaochang is an 'unclean' and 'unpleasant' area. Some of my informants were literally laughing at me when I went shopping at Wujiaochang. Belle says: 'Wujiaochang has no clothes, no nice pub, no handsome guys. There are many Chinese boys from the countryside. They are rude, silly, out of date, they've no education'. Descriptively, the expressions 'low corner' and 'high corner' describe a substantial divide within the city. While the 'high corner' denotes the prosperous former foreign concessions, the 'low corner' denotes the areas on the eastern and northern ends of the concessions.<sup>20</sup>

Similar findings about the ideology of consumerism are identifiable in an article by literature critic and cultural historian Jing Wang (2001). Jing gives a more macro perspective to my account and her analysis frames my discussion applying the theories of Althusser and Berger and Luckmann. While using a language that can be described as 'populist'<sup>21</sup>, Jing shows how the state collaborated with the print media to produce a novel and innovative discourse of leisure culture in the middle of 1990s. What one is experiencing is a radical change of the market from an 'organic' economy, which pleased physical needs, to a 'social' and a leisure-driven cultural economy. Publishing shopping guides (style and lifestyle magazines) and making ad campaigns to propagate the consumer of leisure-narrative in the urban areas, the leadership in Beijing literally created 'the consumer with Chinese characteristics'. Jing (2001:84) writes: 'The centrality of culture and the prominence of symbolic consumption emerge undeniably as the most eye-catching features that define urban life in China today'. She understands the leisure culture as 'an official discourse born from a well-calculated state policy'. Furthermore, Jing (2001:75) writes:

The consumerist modernity of work-and-spend-culture is more than the sum of blitzes of TV commercials - a vision - or of governmental propaganda materials - an ideology. Spending boils down to the size of wallets and pocketbooks. Rising to the occasion, the state has undertaken the building of

the material base of a consumer society as steadily as it inculcates the ideology of mass consumption.

What I have done in this section is provide an analysis on the construction of the Chinese consumer. The discussion by Jing above on consumption as ideology moves me on to the billboards located along certain streets in downtown Shanghai. While considering the shopping arcade as one part of the new economy of vision, the next section will analyse another part of this.

### 3.4 New faces, 'hunks', regionalism and socialist thought

With the launch of 'the market socialist state' and 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' in 1978, new faces have entered the Chinese urban landscape. In my account, the new faces - *Kelly Chen, Sammi Cheng, Jay Chou, Gong Li, Faye Wong, Aaron Kwok, F4, Maggie Cheung and Coco Lee* – are another part of the new economy of vision. The mentioned names are Chinese pop- and film stars deriving from Mainland China, Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan. One can see them on large billboards and ice tea bottles, promoting various youth clothing brands and decorating the often-crowded buses.

One out of many dominant symbols of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Shanghai are the advertisements promoting national and multinational products. Multinational and regional brands have literally transformed the face of urban China since the country initiated its economic reforms in 1978. I can see large advertisements promoting products by multinationals; *Nestlé, L'Oreal, KFC, Pepsi Cola, McDonald's* and *Coca Cola*, and several East Asian clothes, mobile phone and beverage companies; *A&K, LG, Giordano, Kirin, Samsung, Metersbonwe, Jeans West* and *Samuel and Kevin*.

Focusing on one specific campaign, the *Pepsi Cola*-campaign, one may get a picture of the billboards in Shanghai. While not attempting to give a representative picture of the displayed advertisements, the *Pepsi*-campaign and similar ones are, indeed, very common. Styled from the bottom to the top in white, well powdered and asymmetrically painted in blue on different parts of the body, the Hong Kong and the Taiwanese pop artists promotes *Pepsi Cola* soft drinks. According to my observations of various advertisements, most models displayed on the billboards are pop artists originating from Hong Kong SAR or Taiwan. While the *Pepsi Cola Company* is a multinational company, the faces are a part of the escalating and intensive 'regionalism'.

As I will show in section, 3:5, ‘Global Spectacle with Chinese characteristics’, Shanghai and Hong Kong SAR have a certain economic (but also cultural) connection. Moreover, previously considered to be pollution of ones mind, one reason being that one does not speak or write standard Chinese in Hong Kong SAR, Cantonese pop artists such as *Sammi Chen* and *Aaron Kwok* have entered the mainland Chinese market and in my account, the urban Chinese landscape.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 5: Jay Chou

The advertisements promoting various products in the urban areas have become a trend that is, from my point of view, reconstructing the Chinese culture. In a similar vein sociologist Saskia Sassen (2000:143) writes: ‘the city [in general, not specifically Shanghai or other major urban centres in China] is... emerging as a strategic site for understanding major new trends that are reconfiguring the social order’. In the Shanghai context and extensively in the major cities in China, reconfiguring the social order, using Sassen’s vocabulary, is about displaying other types of personalities than one did before the economic reforms and particularly under the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, what

the billboards are propagating is a visual public space that includes and excludes specific personality types.

What one is experiencing in Shanghai is a rigorous shift in projected personality types. In other words, the advertisements are displaying different personality types in different political and historical contexts: from farmers and cultural workers during the Cultural Revolution to the muscular Taiwan or Hong Kong SAR ‘hunks’ in the market socialist era. *Sarcastically, Mao Zedong is not ‘the idol’, Taiwanese pop artist Jay Chou is (or is supposed to be!).*<sup>23</sup> Giving some attention to the complex situation between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, one might ask why the Chinese mainland promotes such a pop artist as *Jay Chou*. Is it political or is it merely about making money?<sup>24</sup> While not depicting ‘the man’ in the blue Mao suit, one depicts ‘the man’ as a ‘sexy’, muscular, well-dressed star. Following this line of thought, the concept of projecting refers to two different types of personalities. On the one hand, it refers to personality types that are ‘present’ in the advertisement and on the other hand, it refers to personality types that are ‘absent’ in the advertisement. Therefore, I am dealing with a shift in projected subject positions. Moreover, however, the billboards are not homogenous.

What one is experiencing in Shanghai, nonetheless, is an intense and often contradictory mix of visual messages. The mix of ‘capitalist’ and ‘socialist’ messages might be contradictory for a ‘Westerner’<sup>25</sup> but for Shanghainese citizens, as Lee puts it, ‘that’s how it opens’. Reflecting on another kind of advertisement, Lee says:

I do like that kind of thing. Yesterday, I just saw one, which is very interesting on it. It says, ‘support the national army, love the people, work hard together, to build our nation’. You see, sometimes we are encouraged by that stuff and it’s in an advert form, which is very easy to remember, and I’m a little nostalgic. It reminds me about what happened in the past.

According to Lee, a second advertisement declares:

Support the Army, treat the relatives of the Army well, and support the policy of the government, and love the people.



Figure 6: Example of governmental advertisement

Trying to say ‘yes’ and ‘no’ at the same time to market-oriented habits, role models and symbols deriving from outside China, the Shanghainese urban landscape is a diverse and fascinating fusion of capitalist, postcolonial<sup>26</sup> and socialist messages. The next section will put my above analysis on shopping arcades, consumerism and advertisements in a wider context.

### 3.5 Global Spectacle with Chinese characteristics

The skyline has changed a lot since only five years ago. Shanghai is changing the fastest. My parents live close to Huai Hai Lu. New stores are opened

frequently. It is a big difference since I was a little girl. Nowadays it is a fashionable area. Before we had only simple stores.

These are the words by Maggie. Having Maggie's words in mind, the coming section will deal with the topic of 'a global spectacle'.

Immediately after Beijing initiated the economic reforms and the construction of Pudong Xinqiu, Shanghai has been under an instant and spectacular influx of global artefacts, diverse symbols and various habits. Looking momentarily at the urban landscape, I realise immediately the great and tremendous impact of globalisation on the city. Spending a large amount of my time in shopping malls (section 3.2) and strolling around in the streets by myself or with my Shanghainese informants and friends, the global impact is noticeable to a great extent. Not talking about Shanghai in particular, Sassen (2000:146) writes: 'Major cities can be thought of as nodes where a variety of processes intersect in a particularly pronounced concentrations'. Symbolically unfiltered by the government, the urban space of Shanghai is at the present time, not exclusively though, a multi-coloured parade of multinational and local advertisements, sky-high modern buildings, trendy and wealthy Chinese youth, petite eatery hangouts where one can buy dumplings and other snacks, cool but not seldom expensive bars, fast-food restaurants in different shapes (*McDonald's*, *Pizza Hut* and *Ajimasen Noodles* et cetera) and large shopping malls. Having this in mind, Sassen (2000:144) regards the city and the metropolitan region 'as strategic sites where these macrosocial trends [globalisation flows] materialize...'. What is more, Sassen (2000:147) states: 'Large cities around the world are the terrain where a multiplicity of globalization processes assume concrete, localized forms'. A typical localized form, applying Sassen's words, is the entertainment complex Xintiandi in section 3.6 and 3.7, where one is using a Shanghainese 'case' with Western 'contents'.

With the economic structural reforms as a reference, the country pompously invited the global economic and cultural flows by itself. Remember the colonisation *by force* – it was not an invitation – by the Americans, the French and the British in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Japanese in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, having the decline of the nation state-narrative<sup>27</sup> in mind, the Chinese state apparatus is not loosened or at all bygone. Importantly, if it would not have been for Deng Xiaoping's reform package – 'the opening up policy' – in the end of 1970s, Shanghai would have seen a fundamentally different reality. Briefly, the expression 'opening up', alternatively 'open

door', was coined by the Americans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to obtain similar rights and access to the Chinese ports as other 'Western powers' operating in China. Paradoxically or not, the expression is nowadays widely used by the central people's government (equivalent to the state council) in Beijing.

Supposing that 'spatial forms and processes are formed by the dynamics of the overall social structure [in my case China]' (Castells: 1996:411), the urban renewal of Shanghai is not a straightforward consequence of imposed economic and cultural globalisation. Following this line of thought however, it gives the fact that the global flows have their own rules. I will come back to this issue shortly in chapter 5. Furthermore, geographer Fulong Wu (2003) has an idea that the global flows do not have the possibility to act by their own rules in the context of China. Fulong (2003:59) writes: 'The change is spatially filtered through and affected by geography, policies of individual states, and shifts in capital'. In the case of urban China in particular, global flows cannot play by their own guiding principals. In other words, they are filtered, as stated by Fulong, through certain mechanisms. The global flows have to accumulate the history of the specific locality, in my case Shanghai (and China), and act in line with the proposed policy and habits. Local states and cultures make their unique impact on the way in which the built space is changed. In a different vein, Castells (1996:411) illustrates this state of affairs: 'space is the material support of time-sharing social practices'. What is more, Castells (1996:411) writes: 'By time-sharing social practices I refer to the fact that space brings together those practices [which are a part of the overall social structure] that are simultaneous in time. It is the material articulation of this simultaneity that gives sense to space *vis-à-vis* society'. Having this in mind, Jing (2001:71) understands the state as an equaliser of the sometimes relentless global flows into the Chinese mainland. She declares: 'The capacity of China that can say yes and no at the same time is what keeps the country going, on to wealth and power and perhaps to the spectacle of a reform that may leave little room for ridicule'.

In their article, the art historians Anthony D King and Abidin Kusno (2000) examine the Chinese state project of modernity in post-1978 urban China. They focus on the Chinese cultural geography and the global flows of capitalism and architecture. Although King and Kusno forget to mention the shopping mall, such as the Super Brand Mall, as an example of (post)modernity, their narrative is abundant. Denying the catch up with the West narrative, the authors suggest that China is constructing its own

version of (post)modernity. Asserting that (post)modernity is a cultural as well as temporal, geographic and historical category, King and Kusno show how the urban space of China is integrated into the realm of global capitalism. Taking the skyscraper, the apartment building and the suburban villa as three examples of (post)modernity, they address the intriguing play between local legacies and global cultural flows. I will not be dealing with whether urban China is 'modern', 'postmodern' or something 'in between'. A further analysis could include that. The space is limited. In my account, the skyscraper – 'the emblem of Shanghai's evolution' stated by my informant Peter – is the most apparent. Recall the 420-meter tall *Jin Mao*, which was mentioned in section 1.1. Abstractly speaking, while utilising the similar glass of the Western skyscraper construction, *Jin Mao's* design derives from the structure of the traditional Chinese pagoda. On the topic, King and Kusno (2000:46) write: 'new forms and shapes emerge in the architectural and building topology of the city in relation to the very specific conditions and influences in which it develops'. The synthesis of local heritage, regional characteristics and global cultural sights and artefacts make the city a hybrid one. My Cantonese informant Apple, on the other hand, is more cynical. At least according to her, the appearance of the city's 'surface' is different from what some individuals believe 'within' (feelings toward newness, innovation and prejudices against non-Chinese). The Shenzhen native Apple stresses:

You don't call a city cosmopolitan just because it has many modern buildings. It depends on how people think and act in this way. We should be more open to the new things and be more understanding of people who are different from what we are used to know.

With a less pessimistic view, she concludes: 'People are getting more confident and they know they could even do better than the foreigners'.

As a result of the introduction of the market oriented reforms in general and the construction of Pudong Xinqiu in particular, Shanghai has turned in to an international 'megacity'. Comparing with another megacity, Deng Xiaoping utters in 1988: 'Now there is only one Hong Kong, but we plan to build several more Hong Kongs in the interior'. With a population reaching almost 20 million in 2003, Shanghai is one of the biggest cities in the East Asian region<sup>28</sup>. This is discussed by sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) in depth. Castells (1996:403) states:



Megacities are the nodes of the global economy, concentrating the directional, productive, and managerial upper functions all over the planet; the control of the media; the real politics of power; and the symbolic capacity to create and diffuse messages.

Juxtaposing Shanghai with Hong Kong and clarifying the nodes Castells is referring to, Rosa states:

*My city is the economic centre of China, Shanghai is no city of culture. Shanghai is the fastest growing city. We see changes everyday. Shanghai will take over Hong Kong's position. We will overpass Hong Kong. It's hard for them to develop more. (My italics)*

Furthermore, Castells (1996:409-410) describes, 'Megacities are the centers of economic, technological, and social dynamism, in their countries and on a global scale... they are centers of cultural and political innovation... [and] they are the connecting points to the global networks of every kind'. Shanghai is one of the significant nodes, i.e. connecting points, among megacities such as Tokyo, Osaka, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Bombay, Sao Paulo, New York and the 'Hong Kong-Shenzhen-Guangzhou-Pearl River Delta-Macau-Zhuhai metropolitan regional system'<sup>29</sup>. Brigitte is, however, slightly anxious about the rapid transformation of Shanghai. She says:

No changes, no energy for the city. I like the changes but I can't stand the high speed of the city beat, I mean the life is like in Hong Kong or Tokyo. You have to come up with the developing speed of the whole city to make yourself modernised.

Discussing in the context of globalisation, Sassen means that many of the global processes are working at a global level. Sassen (2000:146) states: 'Cities emerge as one territorial or scalar moment in a trans-urban dynamic. This is, however, not the city as a bounded unit, but the city as node in a grid of cross-boundary processes'. Since the construction of Pudong Xinqiu, Shanghai's co-operation with Hong Kong SAR has expanded enormously. Shanghai is merely one of the major cities that has emerged as one territorial moment, applying Sassen's vocabulary, in the Chinese trans-urban dynamic: Shanghai and the 'Hong Kong-Shenzhen-Guangzhou-Pearl River Delta-Macau-Zhuhai metropolitan regional system'. However, one should not forget to mention the 'negative' side of the rapid transformation. While connecting Shanghai (Pudong Xinqiu and 'high corner' particularly) with other parts of the globe, many Shanghainese locals are being disconnected. Castells (1996:404) shows: 'what is most significant about megacities is

that they are connected externally to global networks and to segments of their own countries, while internally disconnecting local populations that are either functionally unnecessary or socially disruptive'. Following this line of thought, I would like to pose a question: Are not Pudong Xingqu, in particular, and Shanghai, in general, to a greater extent connected with New York, Hong Kong SAR and Tokyo rather than with the Western provinces in China?

While this section has focused on the issue of globalisation processes and how Shanghai has been integrated into the realm of global capitalism, the next section will bring up its 'opposite', the call for a history.

### 3.6 Call for preservation

Talking about the historical legacies of the city, Maggie gives her thoughts on the new sky-high modern buildings:

It is amazing, but at the same time, some things should be saved. Beautiful old houses should be saved. Some of the new buildings are ugly. We cannot destroy the history of Shanghai. We need to protect our history. Too many tall buildings. Old buildings are historical marks... Less than one hundred old buildings remain, they should be protected. We do not need a city without a history. Memory and history are important.

Above everything 'new' that Maggie criticises above, Shanghai has shown a great concern on architectural preservation. That is to say, to remind the 'Deng- and Post-Deng youth'<sup>30</sup> and the visitors of *World Expo* in 2010 of the city's historical and architectural past. Approximately 250 buildings have been registered as municipal listed buildings (Abbas: 2000:779). As late as in the end of June 2003, Shanghai's famous walking path Waitan – with its 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century European colonial architecture along Zhongshan Dong Yilu – was suggested, by the Shanghai municipal government (The Shanghai cultural relics management commission), to be registered as a world cultural heritage (Shanghai Today *CCTV9* June 20<sup>th</sup> 2003 and Shanghai municipal government webpage (a) on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003). From my point of view, I find the preservation of predominantly colonial buildings slightly paradoxical but certainly interesting. Let me explain. During the Cultural Revolution, the new leaders forced the foreigners out of Shanghai. Nowadays, the present leaders of the city 'want' to be remembered by the colonial past of the city. There is, nevertheless, a substantial difference. At the time when

the Chinese communist party was constituted in Shanghai in 1921, the city was a segregated area with powerful foreign concessions. At this point in time and since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Shanghai belongs to the Chinese 'themselves'.

Keeping Maggie's thought on the new constructed buildings in mind, Lee gives his view on the old buildings in the city:

I have to say that I really like some old houses, especially some [European] old villas on Heng Shan Lu [Faguo Zujie]. The new buildings are ok. You know most of the new buildings are for living. The older ones are exotic and nostalgic. I mean, with foreign land flavour.

As Lee fancies the older colonial buildings in Faguo Zujie, Weihua Chen has experienced indirectly the issue of 'relocation'. Relocation is a result of the urban renewal of the city. The issue of relocation will be discussed in detail in section 3.7. Weihua Chen wrote a debate article on 'Relocation Lacks Human Touch' in *Shanghai Star* (July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003), an English newspaper published in Shanghai and on the Internet. In an e-mail correspondence, Chen<sup>31</sup> writes:

Preserving old housings is preserving history. Everybody know they want to keep their history, just like you keep your childhood photos and we want to keep the Ming Dynasty Forbidden City in Beijing. I saw Europe briefly and I must say that many Italian cities don't have as many modern buildings as Shanghai and some other Chinese cities. It's not because they cannot afford to financially. It is people feel better to have a sense of history... Why should we wipe it out as much as we can? We should keep them and show to our children and visitors. So if you go to Xi'an city, you can tell it's a city that reflects China's history of 2,000 years, you go to Beijing, it's the history of 1,000 years and you come to Shanghai, you see China of the last century.

Having the above quotes in mind, the entertainment complex Xintiandi is an interesting case study. Linking the past with the future, Xintiandi is a new landmark of Shanghai's processes of innovation. As a restoration born out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century *Shikumen housings*, which is an architectural symbol of Shanghai's past, Xintiandi is an urban tourist attraction. Strategically located in the same neighbourhood as the place for the founding of the CCP in 1921, Xintiandi is an attractive 1,5-billion Yuan commercial 'reuse' of historical buildings.



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Figure 7: Starbucks in Xintiandi

Behind the renovation of the Shikumen housings is the Hong Kong-based company, *The Shui On Group*. As early as 1997, *The Shui On Group* prompted to renovate the area to an entertainment complex encompassing the historical and cultural legacies of the city. Breaking ground started in 1999. The first stage was finished in 2001. Bringing the issue of preservation to life, Sociologist Sharon Zukin (2000:81) describes: ‘Historic preservation connects an ecology of urban buildings and streets with an ecology of images of the city’s past’. Following this line of thought, with the fusion of 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial design, socialist legacies, new values and habits, Xintiandi is an impressive and pioneering bazaar of multiplicity. In a similar vein, Castells (1996:411 *my italics*) writes: ‘*social processes* [the urban renewal of Shanghai] influence space by acting on the built environment inherited from previous socio-spatial structures’. What one is witnessing in Xintiandi is a reuse of previous socio-spatial structures; the narrow lanes, the feeling of walking in an old Shanghainese neighbourhood et cetera. One tries to incorporate Shanghai’s past, whether one manages to do so is not my case here. Xintiandi is, now, an international dining, fashion, entertainment and tourist community. Lee gives his view, ‘I think it is wise to combine typical Shanghai stuff with Western culture. It is just some Western stuff inside a Shanghai shell’.



Figure 8: The restored Shikumen housing in Xintiandi

Enclosing approximately 30 000 square metres and with a ground area of 60 000 square metres, the group of Shikumen buildings provides locals and international tourists with a petite feeling of walking in the energetic Shanghai streets of 1920s and 1930s. Reflecting on the old Shikumen housings, Anna declares: 'I used to live in a similar neighbourhood. It reminds me about my childhood. It is like going home'. Lee also used to live in Shikumen housing. He gives a different and critical perspective. He says: 'When we live in a Shikumen, it seems that we are living with people. If you live in a new and big building, people won't get to know each other. Now I live in such a big building, I seldom see my neighbours'.

According to Maggie, Xintiandi is a new way of (re)making Shanghainese urban history. She sees it as a novel technique of producing Shanghai history. While my other informants regard the place more as a tourist attraction, Maggie considers Xintiandi to be a good reminder of the city's history. Brigitte declares critically: 'The place is getting more and more of a tourist scenery'. Anna says: 'It is getting more and more commercialised. It is like a tourist attraction. Expensive too'. 'Xintiandi is for travellers',

Belle states. Relying on my dialogues with my informants, friends and my own experiences of Xintiandi, many tourists from Japan, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore and other parts of Asia are visiting the new area.

While strolling around in Xintiandi, one is meeting a diverse range of tastes and cultures. Experiencing the Cantonese crowded karaoke bar *SoHo Pub and Restaurant* – the magazine *That's Shanghai* (September 18<sup>th</sup> 2003) describes *SoHo* as '[p]opular with Honkie, Japanese and Korean tourists' – with its many bottles of famous wines and champagnes and rich clientele<sup>32</sup>, I can only a half minute later have a cup of coffee at *Starbucks* or *McCafé*<sup>33</sup>. One can experience a stylish gallery, the *StarEast Entertainment Complex*, a rocky Beijing rock concert at *Live House The Ark*, trendy haute boutiques, theme restaurants, *La Maison Club*<sup>34</sup>, a film at cinema complex *UME*, fashionable cafes (*Simply Café* with its delicious tea sorts) and several differently designed bars. At the same time as the Hong Kong lifestyle shop *A02 Fashion/Café* focuses much on colourful retro-design and fashion clothes for men and women, *Simply Life* focuses on modernised Chinese-styled furniture and luxurious souvenirs. While the *East West* serves a fusion of Indian, Chinese and Japanese food, *KABB* relies much on the American-styled cuisine. Sitting in the Tang-dynasty-styled *TMSK*, one can a little bit later drink a beer or a cocktail at *Luna* listening to a band from The Philippines. What one is witnessing is a globalised neighbourhood with Chinese characteristics.

### 3.7 Excluding subject positions

Construction workers are hammering day and night to build a modern city, zebra-crossing guards shout to people to go or stay back, local students, working and visiting foreigners, beggars asking for money, taxi drivers, wealthy white collar workers wearing famous European (*Fendi*, *Gucci* and so forth) brands in Xintiandi and on Huai Hai Lu, immigrants carrying bulky bags (Zhang: 2001), elderly in Maoist styled shirts, the new economic elite (Pearson: 2000) and sanitation crews with their yellow gloves in the shopping malls. Are all Shanghai citizens equal in 'the new economy of vision'? While the city (the Shanghai municipal government) is showing a great interest in urban renewal and making new subject positions, one might pose the question: Who has the

possibility to get satisfaction from the arising new economy of vision and to partake at all?

Shanghai is becoming a socially diversified space; some individuals are exceedingly 'rich' and a large number are exceptionally 'poor'. Ludicrously, Deng Xiaoping's word from 1978 is outstandingly noticeable. He states: 'we should allow some regions and enterprises and some workers and peasants to earn more and enjoy more benefits sooner than others, in accordance with their hard work and greater contributions to society'. Concerning areas such as Xintiandi, with its high and occasionally average prices on entertainment (i.e. dancing, karaoke, and concerts) and Chinese and international food, many subject positions are excluded (and therefore included). Fei gives her critical view: 'For me, it looks too new. Xintiandi is not that common for Chinese people. I think it's a part of the white-collar workers. The appearance of people is as if they are white-collars'.

Similar to shopping malls such as the Super Brand Mall, the diverse contents of the places in Xintiandi propagates an array of certain ideologies: the ideologies of consumerism and leisuring. The entertainment complex prompts, or at least tries to tempt, one to focus on having a nice and pleasant time with friends, relatives and colleagues. Having an iced caramel macchiato (similar to an iced caramel caffè latte) for 33 Yuan at *Starbucks* and seeing clothes with prices as high as 1200 Yuan for trousers at the Hong Kong-owned lifestyle boutique *A02 Fashion/Café*, I realise that one has to have an adequate amount of money in Xintiandi. Interestingly, the average annual income in Shanghai was 12 883 Yuan in 2001 (People's Daily February 13<sup>th</sup> 2002). Audrey highlights this issue when stating: 'Few people can afford going to Xintiandi. It is too expensive for me'. Peter prefers to go to Xintiandi with his girlfriend. He says:

Sometimes I will have a cup of coffee in Starbucks with my girlfriend. It is simple and fast, of course I like the environment, the experience is good for me, but in fact, the coffee is not very good. Youth people, they don't care about the coffee, they just want to have one place to have a rest and talk to each other. Starbucks is one place to relax.

The most prominent visitors to Xintiandi are roughly, according to my dialogues with my informants and friends, the 'one-day-adventures', occasionally students as above, white-collar workers and international tourists, not forgetting the security guards, the cleaners and the staff. However, the latter three are not participating directly.



Confined by boundary markers to perception, once more applying theories by Goffman (1990) and Althusser (2001), Xintiandi is determined by ideology and restricted to a certain geographic locality. What one is experiencing in Xintiandi is a socially diversified place, where specific subject positions are 'welcome' and 'others' are not. Following this line of thought, Zukin (2000:81) explains: 'Occupation, segregation and exclusion on every level are conceptualized in streets and neighborhoods, types of buildings, individual buildings and even parts of buildings. They are institutionalized in zoning laws, architecture and conventions of use'. Furthermore, Zukin (2000:89) writes: 'Ethnicity is both promoted and reviled in neighborhood shopping streets...'. Not noticing anyone from the western provinces in China, there is no doubt that the most prominent domestic visitors are the country's labelled majority, the Han Chinese. Furthermore, what one is doing by building areas such as Xintiandi is disconnecting a part of the local population from the city. Following Zukin's argument, almost all cities, including Shanghai, apply spatial strategies to separate, set aside and detach 'the not welcomed'. The area has safety guards. However, one has to keep in mind that the view of 'including' and 'excluding' is a highly European construction. The Shanghainese that I talked to say that they are indeed proud of 'the new' Shanghai that has emerged, though, they cannot afford to take part in it (everyday).

Since Xintiandi is constructed by renovated Shikumen housings, the area has, undoubtedly, a history. In other words, it was not a green land or a blank space. Renovating to construct a new area, the people living in the Shikumen housings at that time had to relocate to different parts of the city. Construction, in this sense, equals destruction. The daily lives of the inhabitants were shattered. According to Weihua Chen, approximately one to two million individuals have been relocated. Chen writes about one of her cousins wanting to visit her old neighbourhood, which is today Xintiandi. Striving to have a look at her old house, she was driven out by the current owner. Chen describes:

She is now over 50 years old and lived in that place since her childhood. I used to go there a lot because it's close the People's Square, where the annual firework show took place. We were very excited in the old days, sitting on the roof garden and watch the show. The emotional attachment could not be expressed by words or measured by money. She told me that she and her big family of about 10 people once lived, the people who rent the place refused her request. You know these people make sacrifice for the area which is now Xintiandi, the posh bar area in Shanghai. My cousin was very angry and she was still angry while talking to me a week after that.



According to Lee, however not specifically referring to Xintiandi, many families have to relocate in the remote suburbs. There are three alternatives; firstly, one will be relocated into a new apartment in the suburbs, secondly, one will get a certain amount of money to move, and finally, thirdly, one has the opportunity to move back to the newly reconstructed area where one was used to live in. Lee explains: 'If the government ask you to move they will also offer you some houses in remote area', or 'The money is given by counting how many people are there in the family and then find the house yourself. Maybe you'll get 50.000 Yuan for one person in a family. So it's very little money'. Most importantly, however, Lee says: 'But we are lucky we could move back there, for a new modern neighbourhood will be built there'. Moreover, talking about the newly built neighbourhoods, Lee concludes: 'Some are nice, I have to say. So that's why most of the people choose to live in those houses, instead of getting that little money. But they are too far away from downtown'.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter aimed to examine the new urban spaces and subject positions in Shanghai. What I did in section 3.1 was to give a short introduction to the concept of 'the new economy of vision' and my definition of it. In section 3.2, I gave an illustration of this state of affair. While section 3.2 intended to describe the Super Brand Mall as one of the many elements of the new economy of vision, section 3.3 gave an analysis of the Chinese consumer in relation to Berger and Luckmann's treatise on 'predefined acts' and the construction of 'institutions' over time. Louis Althusser's concept of 'ideology' and Erving Goffman's concepts of 'front region' and 'back region' were also incorporated. Moving further on to section 3.4, this part of the thesis attempted to show another part of the new economy of vision, the billboards displayed along certain streets in Shanghai. In section 3.5, I drew on globalisation theories and stated that Shanghai has become integrated into the realm of global capitalism. In section 3.6 and 3.7, I aimed to discuss the desire to construct the history at site and the negative aspects (the excluding of certain subject positions and the issue of relocation) with the new economy of vision. Following this line of thought, the new economy of vision is constituted by the shopping arcades, the advertisements, the global artefacts, the entertainment venues and, last but

not the least, the individuals (my informants as mentioned above) that are acting in these new spaces. Having the above summary in mind, chapter 4 will develop the analysis of the new economy of vision, but from a rather different perspective. In order to establish a more accurate understanding of the new economy of vision, I will examine the Shanghai municipal government's and foreign investors' role in the construction of the new economy of vision and subject positions.

## 4 Back in the apartment on Shagang Lu

After a chaotic day downtown filled with brutal crowding, a horrible run after a subway train to Shimen Yilu and having spicy fried noodles at the Cantonese restaurant *Bi Feng Tang*<sup>35</sup>, it is quite pleasing to come back to my street. The name of the street is Shagang Lu. With lot of greenery, the middle-sized supermarket *Lianhua*, ten minutes by bus to Fudan Daxue, petite eatery hangouts with rice and noodles in soy sauce and small twenty-four-hours shops, my street is a pleasant and peaceful neighbourhood to calm down and relax in. In other words, the new economy of vision – the new urban spaces – is literally ‘out of sight’. Architect Le Corbusier’s (1995) words on New York’s development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century correspond with what is currently happening in Shanghai. Le Corbusier (1995:107) writes:

The skyscrapers then disappear in an area of several miles, an urban no man’s land made up of miserable low buildings – poor streets of dirty red brick. They spring up again suddenly in mid-town (the center of the city) much higher, fitted out with “architecture” and charged with a mission, the proclamation of a proper name, that of a financial success, a fortune, a monetary power.

Having Le Corbusier’s words in mind, the similar is a reality in Shanghai. On my way back to the apartment on Shagang Lu, watching out of the no 934 bus’ window, I realise the great diversity, or should I say ‘segregation’, of the city. In the case of Shanghai’s cultural landscape, the new spaces of consumption and leisure are concentrated mostly to Nanjing Lu, Faguo Zujie, Xujiahui (which is an area in the southern parts of the city) and Pudong Xingqu. Specifically, the Shanghai municipal government has focused the urban renewal to the downtown area, which is, yet again, constituted by the former concession areas and Pudong Xingqu.

While using foreign, Taiwan and Hong Kong SAR investments as strategic tools for the construction of new urban spaces and ‘money making’, the Shanghai municipal government (and extensively the state council equivalent to the central people’s government in Beijing) is the main actor of initiating the construction of the new urban spaces. Land economist Felicity Rose Gu and architect Zilai Tang (2002) have the similar idea. Focusing on how Shanghai has been integrated into the global and, specifically, the regional urban-economic systems, Rose Gu and Tang (2002:285

authors' italics) write: 'However, development in Shanghai is not *controlled* solely, or even largely, by the global system; there has been only very limited reduction in the control of the state over urban and economic development processes and patterns'. Explaining the above quote, Rose Gu and Zilai (2002:385) write: 'Following gradual political and administrative decentralization that began in the early 1980s, governments at the city, district, and county levels have seen their powers in urban and economic decision-making increase within legal and policy frameworks set nationally and provincially'. Following this line of thought, the Shanghai municipal government gives a crucial insight to what is happening. The website (b) shows that '[t]he HK SAR plays a very important role in Shanghai's development for the investment from HK in Shanghai amounting 30% of her total foreign capital by now as well as may offer more experience on technology, administration, and talents import to Shanghai'. Not exclusively Hong Kong SAR plays a significant role in the urban renewal, the website (c) informs: 'Accordingly, Shanghai shall make full use of her comprehensive advantages and further improve the investment environment and attract more Taiwanese investors into Shanghai to establish businesses under the guidance of the national industrial policy'. As an example of 'the regional investment use' as a way to re/construct urban space, I have presented the Hong Kong SAR initiative Xintiandi in the previous sections 3.6 and 3.7. Together with Xintiandi, the majority of entertainment venues (clubs and bars in Faguo Zujie) are owned and run by Hong Kongese.

The Shanghai municipal government website (d) shows that the city accepted 1,930 foreign-funded enterprises in the first half of this year, with the combined investment of US\$3.9 billion. Keeping this in mind, Rose Gu and Zilai (2002:285) write:

Development outcomes are therefore the result of the *interaction* of state behaviour with external economic forces for development and change, forces controlled not at the national level, but internationally, through, *inter alia*, the activities of TNCs [transnational companies].

According to the city's industrial and commercial bureau, the registered average capital for each of these foreign-financed ventures reached US\$2 million (d), which is an increase of 44 percent from the same period the previous year. On a meeting in the end of august 2003, while launching new policies for foreign investment, Shanghai Party

Secretary Chen Lianyu (e) states: 'It is necessary for Shanghai to resort to foreign capital to sustain rapid economic growth and upgrade the city's level of internationalization'.

Economically speaking, only foreign banks that are situated in the 'Lujiazui Finance and Trade Zone' (the same district as the location of the Super Brand Mall, section 3.2) are allowed to engage in the Chinese national currency, *Renminbi*, transactions (Rose Gu and Zilai: 2002:286-287). However, 'special development zones' have been established around the city (Hongqiao Economic and Technological Development Zone, Caohejing High Technology Development Zone, Waigaoqiao Free Port, Jinqiao Export-Processing Zone and Zhangjiang Science Park). On the issue, Rose Gu and Zilai (2002:286-287) states that '[e]ach zone carries various incentives for inward investors, including tax breaks; essential infrastructure is also already provided on-site...'. Following this line of thought, Rose Gu and Zilai (2002:287-288) assert:

The municipal government and district authorities have attempted to direct the location of foreign investment through not only regulatory and financial measures but also physical measures in terms of the concentration of infrastructure provision in certain areas, most likely those development zones or prominent locations such as Lujiazui, Hongqiao and Huai Hai Road central business centers.

The fact that the Shanghai municipal government is deliberately making the new urban spaces can be understood in line with the theoretical framework of Althusser (2001). Thinking of it this way, it would be the only apparatus that decides what is and what is not going to happen with(in) the city. In trying to understand the Shanghai municipal government as the representation of the central people's government in Beijing, Louis Althusser's term 'the State apparatus' is applicable. In a West European context Althusser (2001:92) states: 'the State is a 'machine' of repression which enables the ruling classes (in the nineteenth century the bourgeois class and the 'class' of big landowners) to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation)'. Similarly, today's leadership in Beijing can be understood as a 'machine of repression' (i.e. other governments in other countries alike). Perceiving the Shanghai municipal government as a representation of the Chinese State apparatus in Beijing, one is not exclusively speaking of a 'repressive' apparatus. Having the urban renewal in mind, the Shanghai municipal government can, conversely, be regarded as a 'production' apparatus. While the Shanghai municipal government puts aside the 'older' version of the city, a new economy of vision

emerges. On the issue, deputy secretary of the CPC Shanghai committee and mayor of Shanghai Hang Zheng (f) writes:

With a history of more than 700 years, Shanghai was once the financial center of the Far East regions. Since the reforms that began in 1990s, great changes have taken place in the city. The municipal government is working towards building Shanghai into a modern metropolis and a world economic, and into a financial, trading and shipping center by 2020.

Strategically, the Shanghai municipal government (the ‘repressive’/‘production’ state apparatus) is the designer of the new economy of vision (the ideological state apparatus). While the repressive state apparatus functions, above all, by ‘repression’/‘production’, the ideological state apparatuses function by ‘ideology’. Following this line of thought, Althusser (2001:96) writes: ‘I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities, which presents themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions’. Having the analysis in chapter 3 in mind, the ideological state apparatuses are the new shopping malls, the metro system, flashy apartment blocks in the suburbs, decorated buses with outsized advertisements, chic entertainment venues, advertisements displayed along certain streets, miles of elevated highways and the new international airport in Pudong Xingqu. Moreover, Althusser (2001:98 *my italics*) shows:

Given the fact that the ‘ruling class’ in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class fractions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses insofar as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses, precisely in its contradictions... To my knowledge, *no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses.*

What one is experiencing in Shanghai is a deliberate involvement by the Shanghai municipal government in the booming construction of the new urban spaces. As in the quote above, the Shanghai municipal government is exercising its hegemony over the new economy of vision.

Accordingly Althusser (2001:101) writes: ‘Not only does the State apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction..., but also and above all, the State apparatus secures by repression [and by ‘production’] (from the most brutal physical force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship)

the political conditions for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses'. In other words, initiating and intervening in the construction of the new urban spaces and subject positions, the Shanghai municipal government has 'the final word' in every decision making process. Furthermore, collaborating with the economic executives, the leaders of the Shanghai municipal government and extensively the state council in Beijing are undeniably creating 'the Chinese consumer' of commodities and leisure (section 3.2 and 3.3). On the issue, Rose Gu and Zilai (2002:289) write:

TNCs [transnational companies] and other foreign economic agents are encouraged to provide capital, technical expertise, and so forth for Shanghai's development, but there has been no transfer of decision-making power in terms of the *pattern* of urban development from the state to the global economy.

Whether a shift of decision-making power is required, as stressed by Rose Gu and Zilai above, is not my issue to discuss. What is more significant, however, is that one is witnessing a new urban form that the world has never seen before. In other words, this is a market socialist country using symbols (section 3.4) and habits (section 3.2 and 3.3) that characterise capitalist countries in Europe, North America, South Korea, Singapore, Japan and so forth. In 1991, Deng Xiaoping states: 'Don't think that any planned economy is socialist and any market economy is capitalist. That's not the way things are. In fact, planning and regulation by the market are both means of controlling economic activity, and the market can also serve socialism'. Following this line of thought, I am dealing with a socialist city re/construction by the capital generating utilisation (as showed in this section) of multinationals and regional companies. Having the socialist city re/construction in mind, Deng Xiaoping (1979) states:

It is wrong to maintain that a market economy exists only in capitalist society and that there is only "capitalist" market economy... Developing a market economy does not mean practising capitalism. While maintaining a planned economy as the mainstay of our economic system, we are also introducing a market economy. But it is a socialist market economy... The socialist market economy mainly regulates interrelations between state-owned enterprises, between collectively owned enterprises and even between foreign capitalist enterprises. But in the final analysis, this is all done under socialism in a socialist society... As long as learning from capitalism is regarded as no more than a means to an end, it will not change the structure of socialism or bring China back to capitalism.

Moreover, Deng Xiaoping (1979) says: 'Of course, we do not want capitalism, but neither do we want to be poor under socialism. What we want is socialism in which the productive forces are developed and the country is prosperous and powerful'. Following

this line of thought, Jameson (2003:66) asserts that 'we [are] witness[ing] thousands upon thousands of buildings constructed or under construction which have no tenants, which could never be paid for under capitalist conditions, whose very existence cannot be justified by any market standards'. Having these construction projects in mind, Jameson (2003:66) writes: 'We here follow the outlines of housing communities in the Pearl River Delta area [South China] which are being projected for a future quite unlike those researched by Western speculators or banks and funding institutions in the capitalist world'. According to Jameson's argumentation above, one is experiencing a reality that the world never has thought of or expected to see before. Blending and negotiating 'Chinese socialism' with 'European and American capitalism' and its paradigms, the urban centres in China are undoubtedly a new urban form. Making use of Castells' terminology, it is possible to state that what one is seeing (and desiring) is a socialist megacity in the making. One does not want a Chinese 'New York', 'London' or 'Tokyo' – one desires to be like the tiny, 'authoritative' and capitalist citystate, Singapore, in South East Asia (King and Kusno: 2000:62). Specifically, Singapore has succeeded in maintaining 'the social order'. Deng Xiaoping (1992) concludes: 'Thanks to a strict administration, Singapore has good public order. We should learn from its experience and surpass it in this respect'.

Saying 'good-bye' to my Shanghainese informants and friends over a Cantonese dinner in Faguo Zujie, my life in a metropolitan city with 'Chinese characteristics' – which is by no exception a new urban form – is coming to an end. The bus to the high tech Pudong International Airport departs every half an hour from Wujiaochang. Arriving to the airport, I am confronted by individuals wearing a mask in fear of getting the SARS virus. Everyone seems to be frightened. After the temperature check – asserting that one has not been coughing the recent days and does not have a temperature over 38 degrees on a form – the only thing that is left is to board the aircraft.



## 5 Slättåkra, further studies

I am back in Sweden. The crowding in the streets is non-existing, the unforgettable spicy fried noodles at the Cantonese restaurant *Bi Feng Tang* are sadly absent and it is, surprisingly, strange to listen to Swedish people in the local bus. Sitting again in front of the TV in Slättåkra, watching the 'Shanghai Today' news programme on *CCTV9* (the international channel on *CCTV, China Central Television*) received via a satellite dish, I am back where I started when I was thirteen years old. As told in the programme, the city is still affected by the SARS virus with enormous loss of important economic revenues due to the disease. In spite of everything surrounding the SARS virus, Shanghai is changing in a rapid and undeniably well-calculated pace (chapter 4). Having this in mind, Le Corbusier's (1995:99) words resonates in my head. He states: 'New York is not a finished or completed city. It gushes up. On my next trip it will be different. Those of us who have visited it are asked this question: "When you were there in 1939, or in 1928, or in 1926, or in 1920, was such and such already there? Oh, really, you don't know then what an effect that makes!" Such is the rhythm of the city'. I can ask the same questions to inhabitants and visitors of Shanghai as Le Corbusier does to those who are visiting New York. Since I departed from Shanghai in the middle of May 2003, a new bridge has been inaugurated over Huangpu River, new apartment blocks constructed and old areas demolished. As a matter of fact, Shanghai is changing in this very moment of writing.

In relation to the analysis in chapter 3 and 4, what will the consequences be regarding the new economy of vision in the years ahead? Since one is witnessing an increase of self-governing at the city level (as stated by Rose Gu and Zilai in chapter 4), what will happen with the leadership in Beijing and extensively the CCP in itself? Even though the Shanghai municipal government is the main actor in the construction of the new urban spaces (chapter 4), I have the belief that the individuals are changing the social order as well. What one should not forget are the responses by the inhabitants, what is happening with their identity and how they perceive themselves and others. What will the consequences be on individuals regarding their use of global artefacts and habits (section 3.2 and 3.3)? As urbanites are becoming richer and richer and extensively more 'individualised', is it actually possible to redistribute the money to the poor rural

areas by the use of taxes? Will the urbanites comply, or will one try to change the redistributive system? In relation to the purpose of the thesis, finally, what will the consequences be with reference to the shopping arcades (section 3.2 and 3.3), the advertisements (section 3.4) and the entertainment venues (section 3.6 and 3.7) and the subject positions that these spaces have created for the upcoming years?

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1 (consulted September 4<sup>th</sup> 2003)

*Shanghai municipal government webpage (e)*

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## Pictures

Figure 1: Pudong Xingqu

<http://www.eastgreetwesttravel.com/images/shanghai/pudong.jpg> (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Figure 2: Shanghai Bowuguan (Shanghai Museum)

[http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/socsfb/shanghai\\_mus.jpg](http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/socsfb/shanghai_mus.jpg) (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Figure 3: Super Brand Mall

<http://www.superbrandmall.com/images/landmark.jpg> (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Figure 4: Louis Vuitton



[http://www.lapanse.com/pages/pubs/vuitton/vuitton\\_piscine\\_07.html](http://www.lapanse.com/pages/pubs/vuitton/vuitton_piscine_07.html) (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Figure 5: Jay Chou

<http://www.pepsi-cola.com.cn> (consulted June 2003)

Figure 6: Example of governmental advertisement

my own

Figure 7: Starbucks in Xintiandi

<http://www.pgallery.net/kingstonchang/image-48426.html> (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Figure 8: The restored Shikumen housing in Xintiandi

<http://www.globaltravelwriters.com/Xintiandi.html> (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

(Appendix A)

Map of present Shanghai

<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/images/map/shanghai/shanghai-map-m.gif> (consulted October 10<sup>th</sup> 2003)

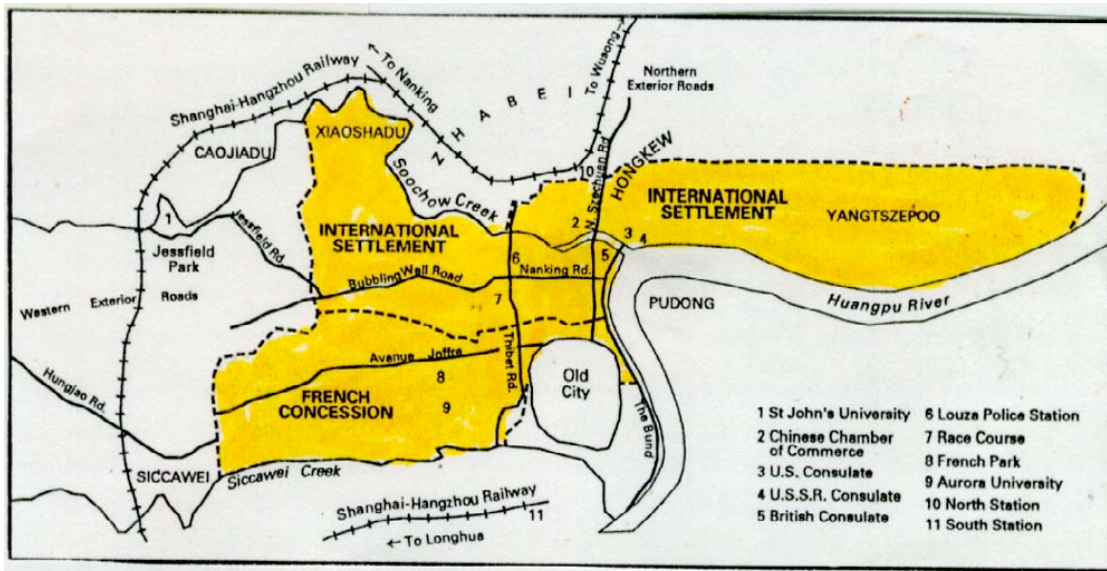
Map of former foreign concessions

<http://www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-images/t-map1.jpg>

# Appendix A



Map of present Shanghai.



Map of former foreign concessions.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Yao a yao yao dao waipo qiao – Shanghai Triad (1995), 'Ba wang bie ji' – 'Farewell My Concubine' (1993) and 'Da hong deng long gao gao gua' – 'Raise the Red Lantern' (1992)

<sup>2</sup> Long tang housings, which is a certain kind of building type, will be described in chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> A Chinese pagoda is a religious temple.

<sup>4</sup> 1 yuan is approximately 1 SEK.

<sup>5</sup> Canto-pop derives predominantly from Hong Kong SAR and is performed in Cantonese dialect (which is radically different from Standard Chinese and Shanghainese in oral form). Cantopop is highly commercial; it can be compared with American pop artist Britney Spears, Swedish A-teens and so forth.

<sup>6</sup> A small village situated 25 kilometres from Halmstad on the Swedish west coast.

<sup>7</sup> Long tang-housings are single units repeated side by side. This type of houses derives from the former foreign concessions in Shanghai. According to Luigi Novelli (1999), the long-tang housings are similar to the English terraced housing. Novelli also stresses that the first types of long-tang housings had to 'meet Chinese residential needs'.

<sup>8</sup> The Gang of Four was considered to do the most harm to people during the Cultural Revolution. Considered to oppose Marxism, disrupting manufacturing and agricultural production, harassing respectable government workers and damaging international trade, they (one of the members were Mao Zedong's wife) were overthrown in October 1976. (Beverly M Kitching in (ed) Colin Mackerras et al 2002 p 96)

<sup>9</sup> A further discussion on the expression of 'the market socialist state' is found in chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> Whether it is positive or not to be an international city is not my issue to discuss.

<sup>11</sup> Shanghai will have a ten-lined subway system by 2010.

<sup>12</sup> The trip costs 3 Yuan.

<sup>13</sup> Watching everything and strolling around in the shopping arcade, one might consider me to be a 'flâneur' in Benjamin's vocabulary. A flâneur is the French word for 'a stroller'. What Benjamin (1999) did in his *The Arcades Project* was to describe the new emerging 'modernity' in 19th century Paris. By strolling around, i.e. flâneuring, in the city of Paris, Benjamin draw on the shopping arcade as an example of 'modernity'.

<sup>14</sup> In detail, the 'Hong Kong-styled guy' is an ideal type, not an actual individual. However, according to my informant and friend Belle, 'the Hong Kong-styled men' have long, sometimes dyed, hair and are dressed in 'hip' and 'trendy' brand clothes. In line with my dialogues with Belle, many Shanghainese men tries to look like 'Hong Kong guys'. The 'Hong Kong-styled men' can be found in glamorous and trendy bars and clubs such as Park 97 (California Club) in Fuxing Gongyuan (Fuxing Park), Faguo Zujie.

<sup>15</sup> According to various dialogues with my friends and observations, many female Shanghainese decorate their mobile phones with different pop artist stickers, cuddly toys and small wires. However, it is not very common among male Shanghainese. Having my dialogues with Shanghainese youth in mind, it is considered a little bit 'girlish'. The fashion of decorating ones mobile phone derives from the youth cultures in urban Japan.

<sup>16</sup> Since my interest in this thesis is to show the urban changes that have occurred in Shanghai since the development of Pudong Qu, the emphasis will be on 'urban changes' and 'new subject positions' in particular. Additionally, it is a fact that 'urban changes' are also a gender issue. While one is constructing new spaces, one is experiencing a change in gender practices and symbols. However, the space is limited to forty pages. Nonetheless, a further study could incorporate the gendered structures of the new urban spaces in Shanghai.

<sup>17</sup> The topic of different 'tastes' and by showing ones own identity and position in the society by the use of clothes, hairstyles and practices are widely discussed in the academia. A further analysis can incorporate Pierre Bourdieu's analysis on 'distinction'. Bourdieu (1984) draws on 'taste' as a tool to define and contrast oneself against 'others'. Struggling to improve ones own position in society, taste is essential to the investment of different capitals (ie. economic, social, symbolic and cultural). Illustratively, shortly, while Belle wants to wear 'special' clothes by searching for and buying fabrics at various markets, other people requests 'fashionable' or 'popular' clothes. Belle differentiates herself from others, because they are being 'popular' or 'fashionable'. Moreover, using the term 'habitus', Bourdieu shows how members of a society

are struggling to be apart of a certain desired collective. Since the space is limited to forty pages and the purpose of the study is primarily to analyse 'the new urban spaces' in Shanghai, the thesis has no possibility to include an analysis of the making of distinctions.

<sup>18</sup> A significant discussion on the topic of consumerism and shopping malls can be found in John Fiske (1989).

<sup>19</sup> Ideology is not always determined by and restricted to a specific geographic locality. Discussing the use of Internet, ideology is not determined by and restricted to a particular locality. While the Chinese state has the opportunity to control the urban space, the influence over people's use of Internet is harder to manage.

<sup>20</sup> A further study could incorporate a study of the divide between the low corner and the high corner. What differentiates them from each other, what do the areas have in common? Following Belle's statement, how are people dressed and so forth? What is 'identity construction' in low corner and high corner?

<sup>21</sup> Jing uses words and expressions such as 'the urban propaganda machine', 'the state machine', 'well-calculated state policy' and so forth.

<sup>22</sup> A noteworthy discussion on the topic of experiencing and 'banning' popular culture in an East Asian context can be found in Yoshiko Nakano (2002). In the article, Nakano shows how the Chinese people have imported Japanese popular cultural goods. With pirated Japanese TV-dramas from Hong Kong, socialist slogans and Hong Kong popular culture as a reference, Nakano shows how the Chinese mainland is gradually becoming a part of the realm of Asian popular culture. In one part of the article, Nakano discusses the Chinese mainland particularly. Before the re-union with Hong Kong, China incorporated the Hong Kong terrestrial channels into the Guangzhou TV-system. What the Chinese government was doing was censoring specific contents believing that they might undercut China's socialist ideals. Slogans such as 'Protect the Environment' or 'Everyone is Responsible' were displayed instead of broadcasting 'the real' news. Moreover, the Japanese dramas deriving from Hong Kong SAR are subtitled in traditional characters, and hence, they are not allowed in China. Since 1955, the Chinese mainland is only using simplified characters due to language reforms to propagate mass literacy. In Taiwan and Hong Kong SAR, the traditional characters are still being used. Now, ironically as it may seem, the traditional characters are now being associated with capitalism (i.e. Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan).

<sup>23</sup> Having the construction of 'masculinity' in mind, one might pose the question, how is 'femininity' constructed in advertisements in China? In his dissertation *Chinese Women and Consumer Culture – Discourses on Beauty and Identity in Advertising and Women's Magazines 1985-1995*, Perry Johansson (1998) addresses the questions of how Chinese femininity, i.e. the constructions of 'beauty' and 'identity', is constructed in advertisement and consumer culture. Drawing on economic changes, role models, the development of consumer culture and a historical perspective, Johansson shows the changes – through the Maoist era and onwards – of femininity constructions. Another noteworthy text is the article by L H M Ling (1999). Similar to the dissertation authored by Johansson above, Ling tries to show the changes of role models and displayed personalities that have occurred in China.

<sup>24</sup> The People's Republic of China's policy towards Taiwan is that the former retains sovereignty over the latter. While Taiwan has its 'own' elected president, China sees the island as a province of China. Rhetorically, what will the Americans, who have a large economic, political and military interest in the region, do if the polity makers in Beijing put economical and politic sanctions against Taiwan? Will one tolerate the intrusion or put economical and political sanctions against the mainland? The issue is widely debated in the academia and the mass media. However, the cultural issues such as above have not been under extensive scrutiny.

<sup>25</sup> The expression 'Westerner' was a common label on me and other individuals originating from Europe and the US staying in Shanghai. For those people that I was talking to and 'having a laugh with', it was an expression that one used a lot. However, it was not considered to be 'negative'. Rather it was an opportunity to practice ones English.

<sup>26</sup> Similar to Hong Kong SAR, Shanghai has been under Western influences, i.e. 'colonialism', for a long time. Postcolonialism refers, broadly speaking, to the countries and 'cultures' that has been under European and American 'colonialisation'. What is, then, postcolonial in the context of Shanghai? Take for instance the buildings that the Europeans and Americans built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the present time, these old buildings are defined as cultural heritage sites and thus, one is creating an innovative vision of the semi-colonial city of Shanghai. In other words, briefly, drawing on 'images' from the past, one creates deliberately the new Shanghai, the postcolonial Shanghai. A noteworthy discussion on the topic can be found in Ackbar Abbas (2000) and Xudong Zhang (2000).

<sup>27</sup> Whether the nation state is experiencing a decrease in power or not is widely discussed in the academia. A noteworthy discussion can, for instance, be found in John Tomlinson (1999) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000).

<sup>28</sup> One might ask, what is 'the East Asian region'? Whether one is drawing an attention to national boundaries, cultures, or economic/political similarities/dissimilarities, one is always excluding 'someone'. A noteworthy discussion of what is the 'East Asian region' can be found in Paul Evans (2000).

<sup>29</sup> Using Castells' definition

<sup>30</sup> The expression 'Deng- and Post-Deng youth' is my own. The expression describes the generation, which has no direct experience of The Cultural Revolution, though; one has an indirect knowledge of it through their parents. The 'Deng – and Post-Deng youth' are the ones that were raised up during the economic reforms and onwards.

<sup>31</sup> The e-mail address to Weihua Chen was published too. I wrote a short notice about what I am doing and then, in the second e-mail, I asked five structured questions. The questions were, 1) You wrote, 'I believe that more old houses should be preserved'. As from your point of view, preservation seems to be an important issue. From my personal view, I do agree with you. At this point in time, however, I'm just being 'critical' to the overall topic of preservation, - what is important with preservation? Why should one preserve buildings and housings? What is it about? 2) Would you, please, in detail describe the situation where your cousin tried to have a look at her old home the other day. Just to give me a better picture of the situation. 3) You are writing about 'old buildings' in your article. What characterises 'the old buildings'? How do they look? What is so special with them? Why are these old buildings important? (Concession-style, Shikumen et cetera...) 4) How many, approximately, are being relocated every year? 5) Does 'the preservation debate' have something with the World Expo 2010 to do?

<sup>32</sup> Drawing on my observation of what the clientele was wearing (i.e. brand names) and drinking (i.e. brand names).

<sup>33</sup> *McCafé* is owned by *McDonald's*.

<sup>34</sup> Another part of 'the new economy of vision' the 'disco culture'. While I am not focusing on the disco culture, James Farrer (1999) does. Not directly focusing on 'disco culture' as, from my point of view, a 'new economy of vision', Farrer describes how urban Chinese youth take part in the cosmopolitan sexual culture of the disco. However, he is, insightfully, showing the social background and development of the Chinese 'disco culture'. While the 'ballroom dance' was banned by the CCP during the Cultural Revolution, the 'disco culture' arrived to China during the economic reforms in the early 1980s. Farrer writes that the youth must, now, learn how to be 'the consumer' and 'a desirable commodity' at the same time in the disco. What one is experiencing is not a localisation in its literal sense, rather one enters 'the transnational modernity of music, dance and sexual excitement'. At least, according to Farrer, and he seems to be fascinated about it, one is becoming a 'cosmopolitan', who may experience 'forms of intimacy and behaviour' which would have been suppressed in another social space. Drawing on my observations at bars and in clubs, I would state that there are several issues that can be scrutinized. Which sexualities are welcomed? What is so extraordinary with the Hong Kong styled guys at *Park 97*, which is a club with a high percent of visitors being trendy Shanghainese, Hong Kongese and foreigners, in Faguo Zujie? What is more, in what ways are the foreigners consuming Shanghainese women? According to Lee, there is a wide prostitution going on in the city's bar and club communities. As stated by Lee, there are a variety of websites made by 'expatriates' discussing Shanghainese women.

<sup>35</sup> Bi Feng Tang is the place for having a breakfast with a bowl of rice and green tea, a short lunch with some foreigners, a delicious dinner with ones friends and after a night out longing for night snacks. One can practically sit there and eat dim sum snacks for an entire day. Bi Feng Tang serves cheap but appetising Cantonese food. Popular among my friends; curry-fried noodles, fried chicken feet, warm beer, rice soup, and steamed dumplings are the most frequent dishes. Relying on my own observation, whatever the time is, the restaurant is always gathered with people.