

Chinese Landscapes and Cultural Heritage for Co-designing a New Inhabiting: Preliminary reflections on Chongming Eco-Island

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RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The research reflects on new solutions to the **contemporary crisis of the inhabiting** through **Chinese landscapes and cultural heritage**. **Chongming Eco-Island** is presented as a preliminary case study for its historical representation of the **human-nature relationship** and its role as a contemporary **sustainability project**, observed during a recent research mission in China.

CHONGMING AS A SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE STUDY CASE

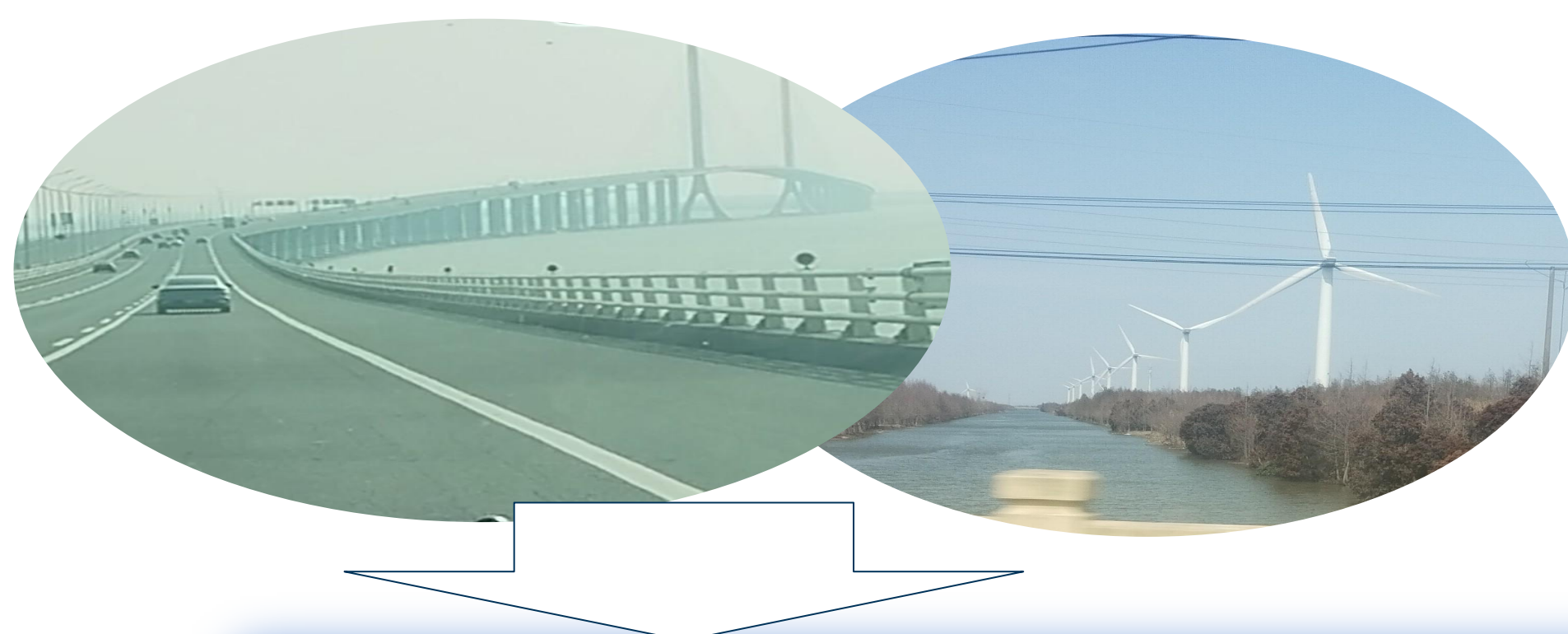


Chongming Island offers a significant example of the intersection between **ecological transformation, heritage, and sustainable territorial planning**. Located at the estuary of the Yangtze River, **Chongming Island** 崇明岛 constitutes the core of Chongming District, one of Shanghai's 16 administrative divisions. Formed through the progressive alluvial deposition of the Yangtze, it is today one of the world's largest alluvial estuarine islands (Chang, Sheppard, 2013). Since the Maoist period, large-scale **land reclamation** and **wetland embankment** have profoundly transformed its geomorphology and ecological landscape (Yue, 2021). This trajectory gradually shifted toward ecological protection and sustainable planning. The **Dongtan 东滩 wetlands**, located in the eastern part of the island, were inscribed in the **UNESCO World Heritage List in 2024** as part of the *Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China*, confirming their global ecological significance, and within the Chinese planning framework Chongming is promoted as an **Eco-Island 生态岛** and a strategic model of **sustainable territorial development**.

FIELD OBSERVATION

INFRASTRUCTURE

The 8.9 km-long **bridge** connecting Shanghai to the Island and the **wind turbines** signal infrastructure development



YINGDONG ECO-VILLAGE

Eco-villages provide not only tourist services but also **social spaces** and **community support** for local residents



DONGTAN RESERVE AND WETLANDS

From threatened wetlands to **protected heritage**, Dongtan is now a key stopover for **migratory birds** and a **UNESCO site**



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND BIOSPHERE

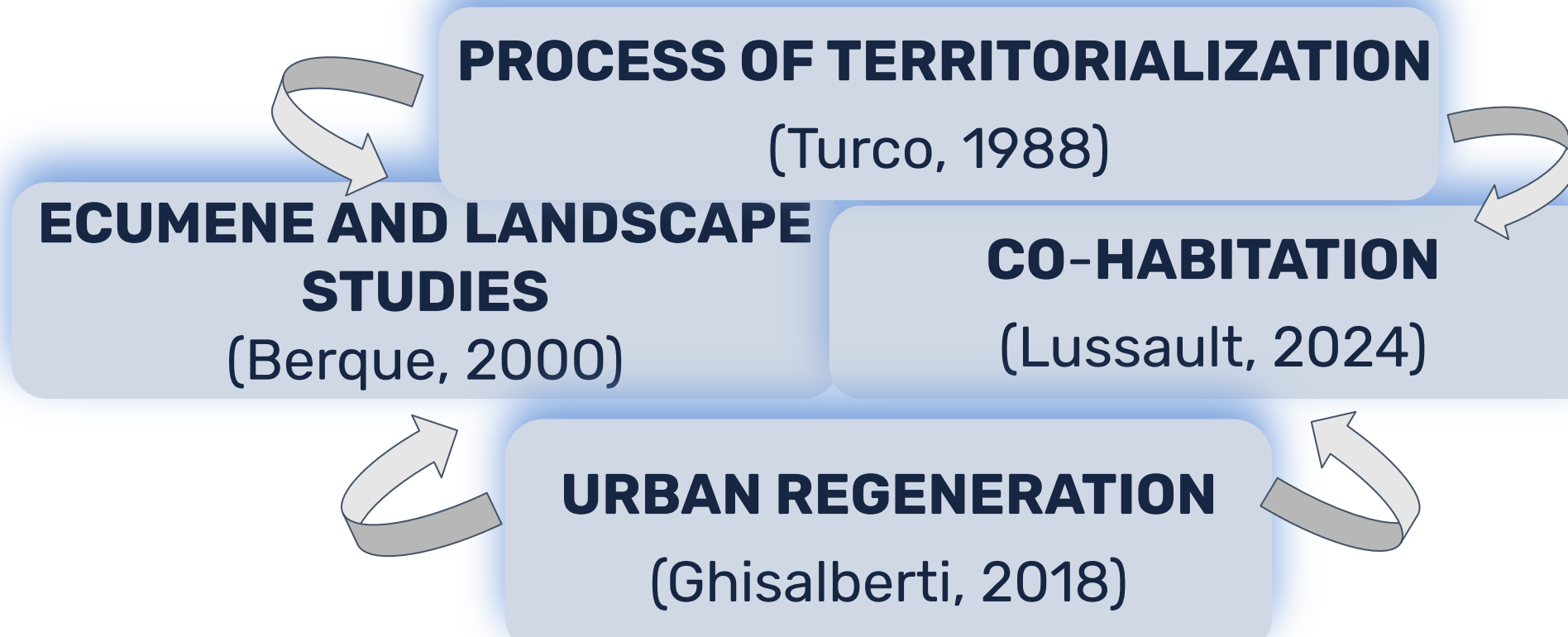
NEXT STEPS

Investigating Chongming Island through **historical, linguistic, and cultural lenses** to rethink **inhabitation imaginaries**.

GOALS

- Imagining new ways to integrate sustainability, memory, and everyday living in Chongming Island
- Exploring new cultural imaginaries of the human-nature relationship
- Rethinking inhabitation processes integrating the knowledge gained through the observation of Chinese landscapes and cultural heritage

THEORIES



METHODS

- Historical, linguistic and discourse analysis
- Field observation and photographic documentation
- Cartographic and landscape analysis

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