
Preface

This book focuses on China water policy issues with particular reference to Shanghai in the reform era. Whereas North China has suffered from water scarcity due to its low level of rainfall and high population growth, South China has been relatively water-rich and enjoyed its abundant water resources thanks to sufficient rainfall and surface water resources such as the Yangtze River. However, I realized that many of the mega-cities like Shanghai have faced the challenge of 'pollution-driven' water scarcity. Little research has been done on Shanghai's water policy although numerous research works have dealt with Shanghai's achievement of unprecedented economic growth since 1990. Water has played a pivotal role in Shanghai's development, but has been ignored. These factors motivated me to initiate research on Shanghai water issues in 2000.

The formulation of theoretical framework was an outcome of a number of discussions with Professor Tony Allan and the then School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Water Research Group (now King's College London Water Research Group) members, reflected on various case studies from the countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. My first attempt to apply a set of social theories such as Mary Douglas' Grid/Group Theory and Hajer's discourse analysis

into the Chinese context was encouraged by the water research group. The untested assumption without fieldwork in China did not make me confident. The fieldwork in Shanghai and Beijing in 2002 proved that the theory can work in the Chinese context. The co-evolutionary approach from the complexity theory was also introduced by the water group. This approach made my chapter on private sector participation useful in explaining how numerous social actors have co-evolved to achieve their common goal — Shanghai's water privatization.

There have been various occasions where I received comments and opinions on my Shanghai's water policy research. I was given an opportunity to present my early version of theoretical chapter at the Professional Association for Chinese Environment Conference in Nanjing, China in May 2002. I received invaluable comments and feedback on my early version of the impacts of international development agencies during the conference in Moscow in August 2002, which I attended, organized by the European Association of Chinese Studies (EACS).

Some of the most exciting findings from my fieldwork in China in 2002 were the identification of emergence of non-governmental associations including environmental NGOs in Shanghai and the fast advance of foreign and local companies to the Shanghai water sector. These extraordinary findings have gained wide public interest. More academic attention has been paid to my thorough observation and analysis on the emergence of local environmental NGOs in Shanghai. I was invited to present a paper on Shanghai's environmental NGOs at the NGO conference jointly organized by Wageningen University and Qinghua University in April 2004, which will be published in a special issue of the *China Information* journal soon.

My analysis on water privatization in Shanghai has drawn the attention of UK and French water firms such as Thames Water and Veolia Environment China, which were willing to gain an in-depth evaluation of the business environment in the Chinese water market in 2003. A short but exclusive market information and analysis on water privatization in Shanghai was published in *Global Water Intelligence* in October 2003, titled, 'Shanghai growth overshadows

risks.' The chapter on Shanghai water privatization has also been received well in academia, and the *Water Policy* journal will publish a short and updated version of the chapter soon.

I have been a lecturer at the Institute of Contemporary Chinese Studies, University of Nottingham since November 2004. The colleagues in the institute are primarily focusing on China with various disciplines, which has provided me with a good environment to complete this book. I have begun to teach a new course called 'Environment and Development in China' for undergraduate students since autumn 2005, which includes much about China and Shanghai water policy issues. I feel encouraged by students' active response to water issues in China. In this book, I have primarily focused on water challenges in Shanghai. However, I will launch a new research on water issues in China soon. This will be able to accommodate not only problems in mega-cities like Shanghai, but also the challenges China faces in the water sector and on how to achieve its sustainability together with its rapidly growing economy.