

Internship report:

9 weeks with 24 million Chinese in Shanghai

Between October and December 2014 I had the chance to experience the exciting and multifaceted Chinese metropolis Shanghai and to learn more about Urban Ecosystem Services. This stay was possible thanks to Prof. Breuste who arranged an internship at the Department of Environmental Sciences of the East China Normal University.

During the nine weeks, it was my task to investigate the recreational functions of parks. In order to gain a thorough understanding, I applied different methods including observation, mapping, qualitative interviews, and a survey. By observation and mapping, I collected data about park structures and facilities. Furthermore, I identified different user groups, common recreational activities, and changes during the day. The survey and qualitative interviews were especially useful to get insights into the thinking and perception of Chinese people concerning green spaces. How important are park visits for their daily life? How satisfied are they with certain features of the study areas? Are there differences in the use of the individual parks? What are important attributes of a good park? And how should the greenery look like? These questions were raised to find out more about the relation between Shanghai's residents and parks.

Since I do not speak Chinese, I was very glad about the valuable support of Liang Zhao (PhD student) and Prof. Li (Associate Professor of the Department of Environmental sciences) with his team of students who offered help in each and every aspect. I am especially grateful to Prof. Breuste for making this adventure possible and for all his quick and useful advices.

Altogether, it was a very rewarding experience in Shanghai. I had not only the possibility to apply theoretical knowledge acquired during my master studies in "Spatial Development and Natural Resource Management M.Sc.", but also to gain additional qualifications (especially concerning methodology). Although it was sometimes challenging, I deeply enjoyed working independently in such a huge city surrounded by people of a different cultural background.

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