



Civil Affairs;

An architectural research and design project within the urban context of Chongqing

May 2025

Merijn Vonk | 4645618

AR3B0100

Borders & Territories

Mentors; Stefano Milani, Mauro Parravicini & Oscar Rommens

Delegate; Thomas Verbeek

Research;

Assignment

Patchwork urbanism

Scope

Design;

Bridge

Building

Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road IV

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Experimental Architecture in Socio-Political Contexts

The ‘Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road IV’ graduation studio, organized by the BORDERS & TERRITORIES (B&T) group, will offer an architectural research and design course that investigates contemporary border conditions within the larger territorial scale(s). The studio focusses on urban and territorial sites where ‘other’ spatial conditions have emerged, ones that are ‘teeming with suggestive meanings and unexpected potential’ but which have hardly been analyzed and discussed within the contemporary architectural discourse. In our day and age, it seems no longer possible to investigate space without taking global political developments into consideration, nor to ignore ecological anxieties, pressured coexistences or even economically driven migratory movements. Therefore, special attention should be given to the critical relationship between architecture and its environmental context, as well as its more general socio-political contexts.

The course centers on the investigation into the specific characteristics of contemporary border conditions and the larger urban and territorial scale, with a special emphasis on the socio-political context(s) of architecture. The spatial analyses initiated by the studio are intended to give an insight into how contemporary spatial practices are inscribing themselves into the urban and territorial fabrics while simultaneously providing tools to question the position of the discipline. In our view, architecture is not only dealing with social and technological issues (which anyway should not be presented as merely functional problems, thus framing the subsequent solutions), but also and especially with its intrinsic capability of creating a place that does justice to the depth and richness of human culture.

B&T considers contemporary cities and territories a testing ground for speculative approaches. To this end, the current developments in the border-territories along the ‘New Silk Road’ are particularly intriguing, as the spatial transformations in these areas between the ‘far East’ and other parts of the globe are resulting in a fascinating array of spatial transformations, where different regimes of spatial planning, border tensions, (inter-)continental infrastructural projects, political (dis-)agreements, global capitalism, extra-state utopias and the like, are re-formatting the contemporary territorial and urban landscapes.

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Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road IV

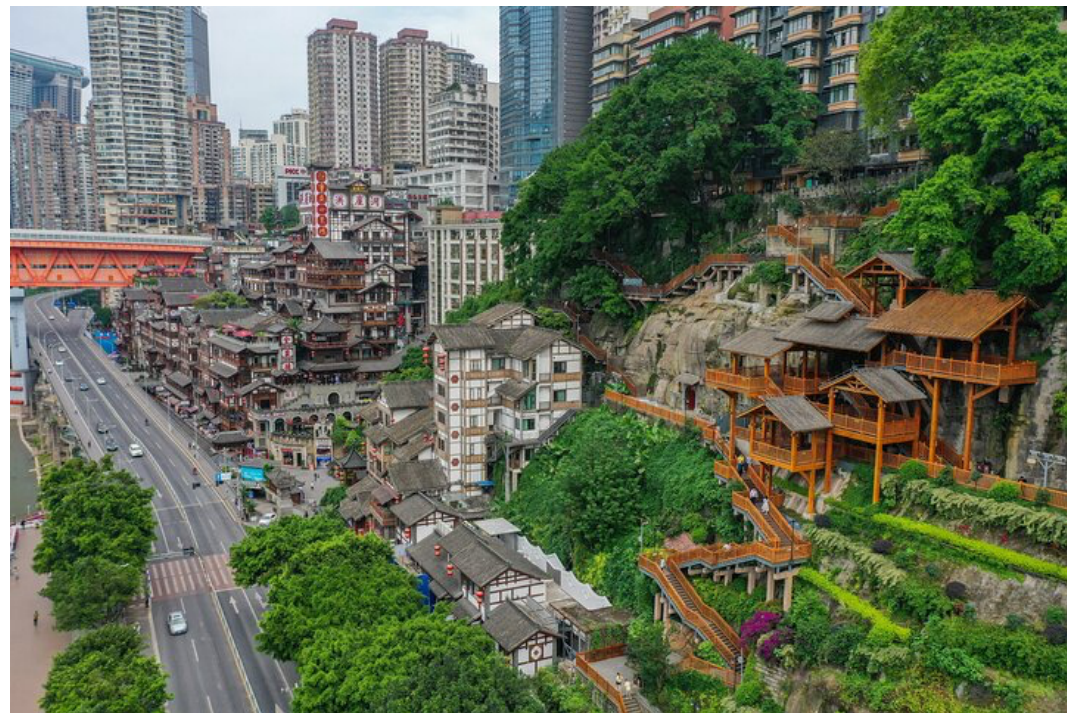
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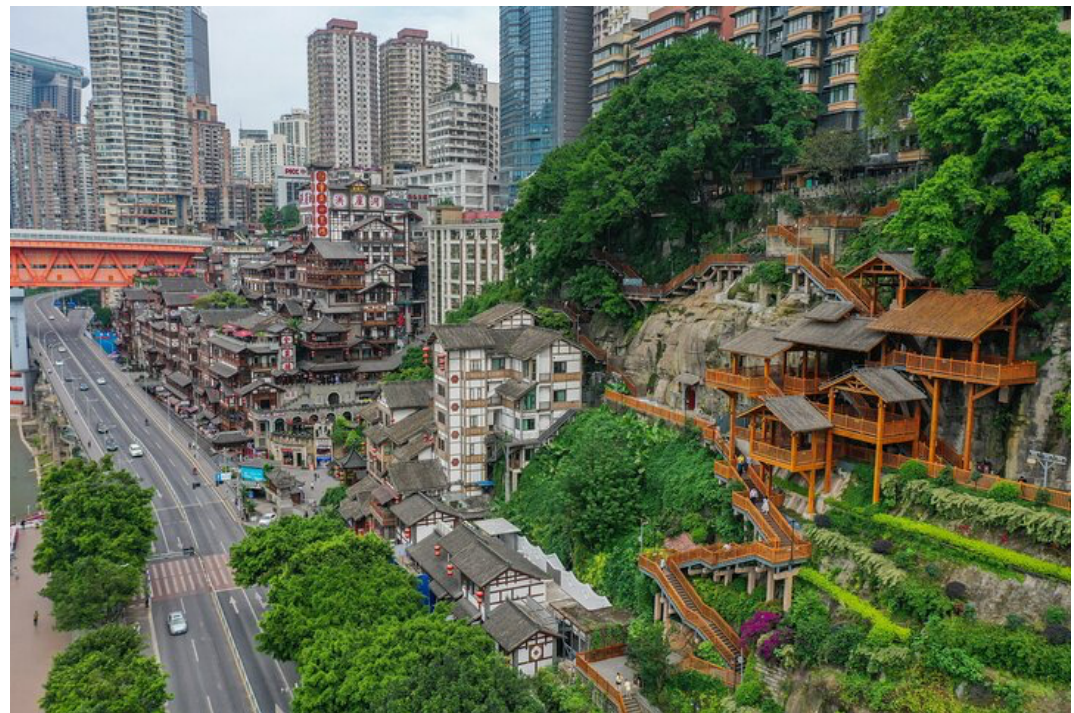
Experimental Architecture in Socio-Political Contexts

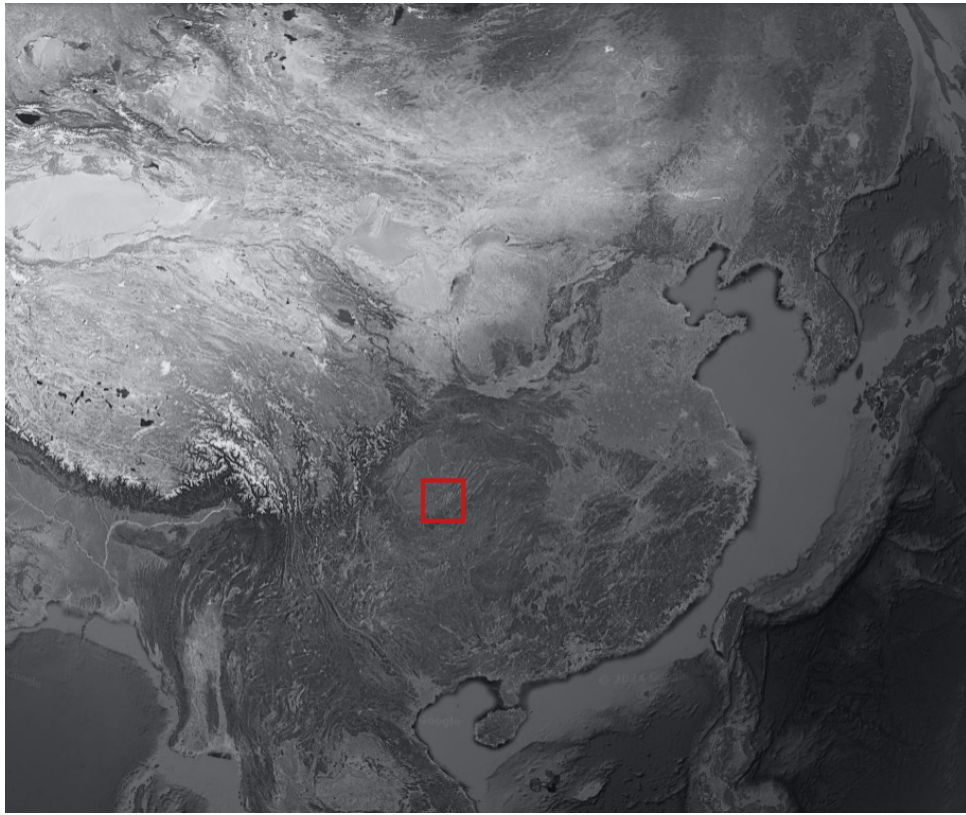
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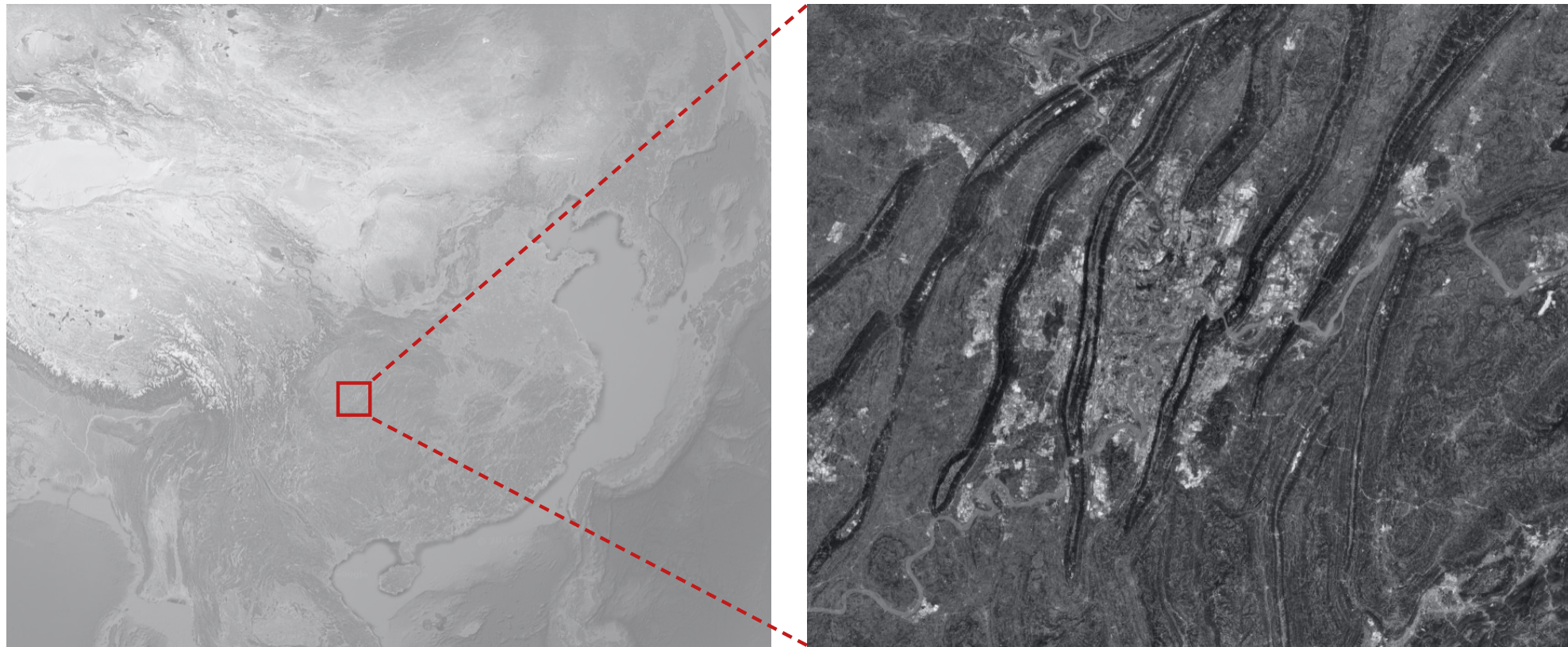
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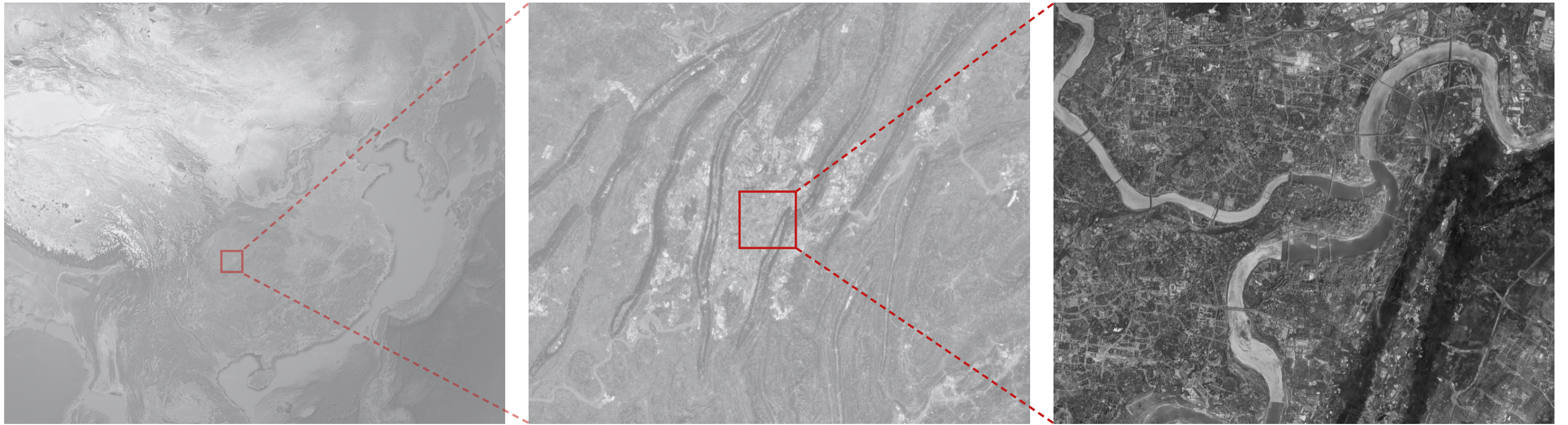
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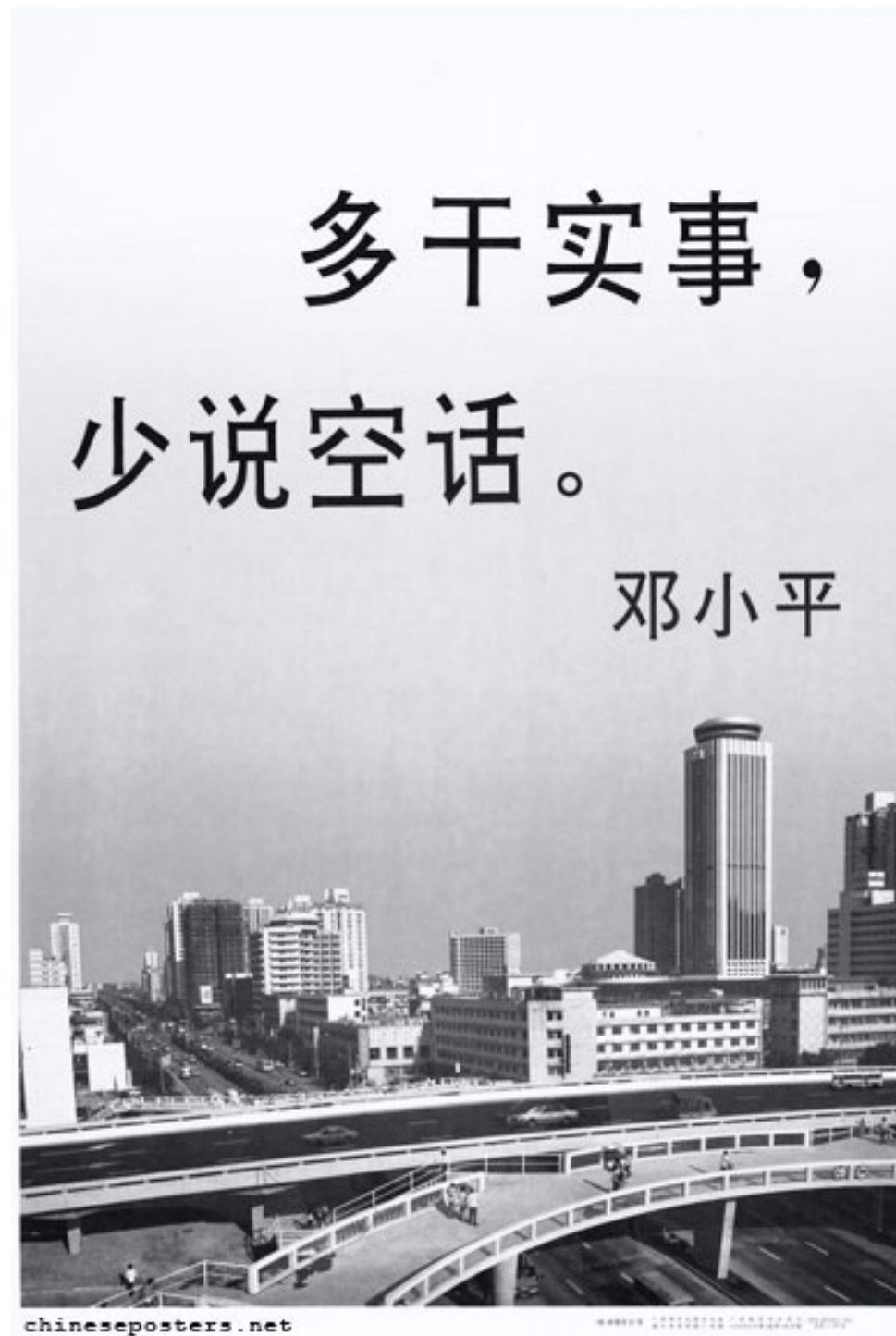




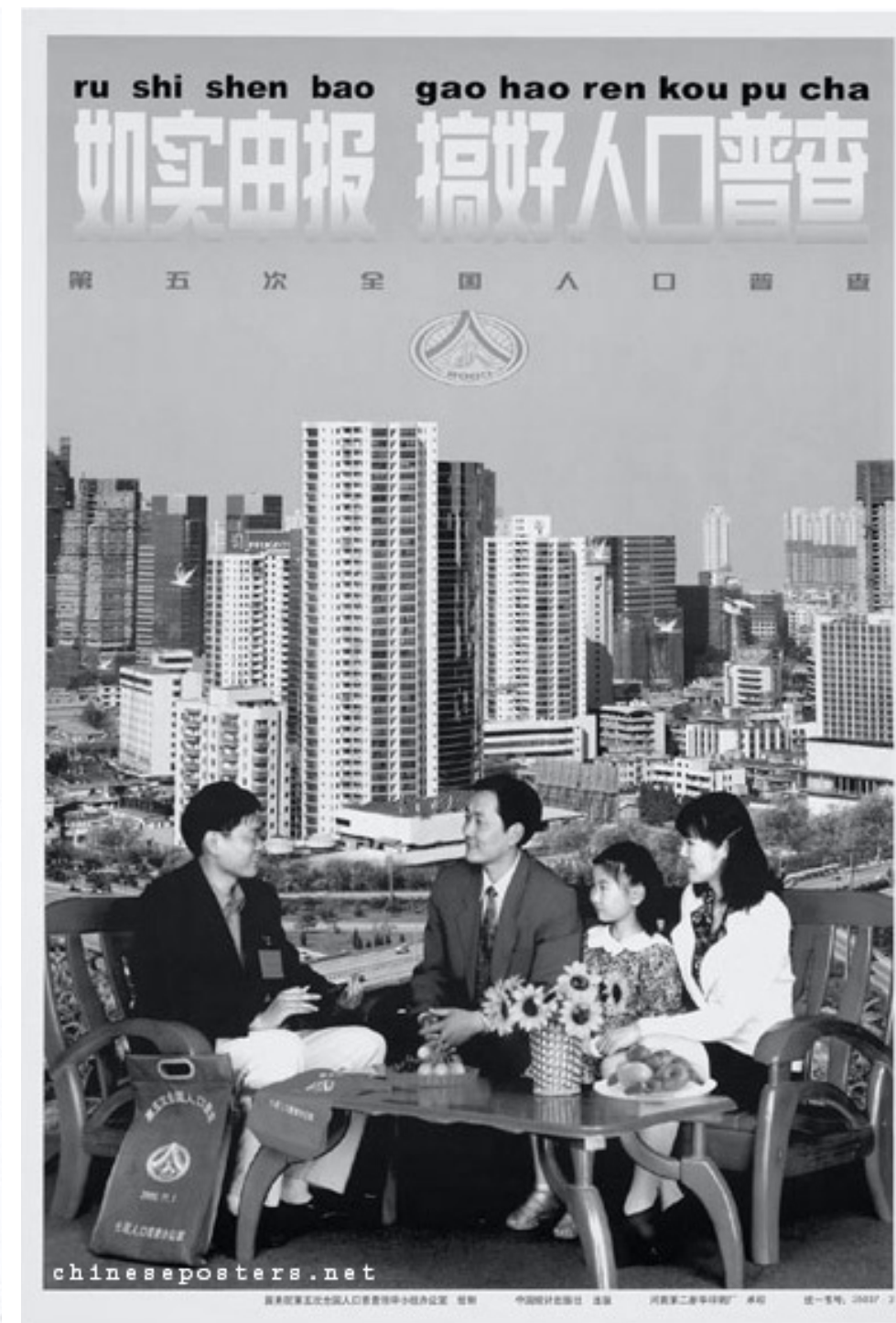




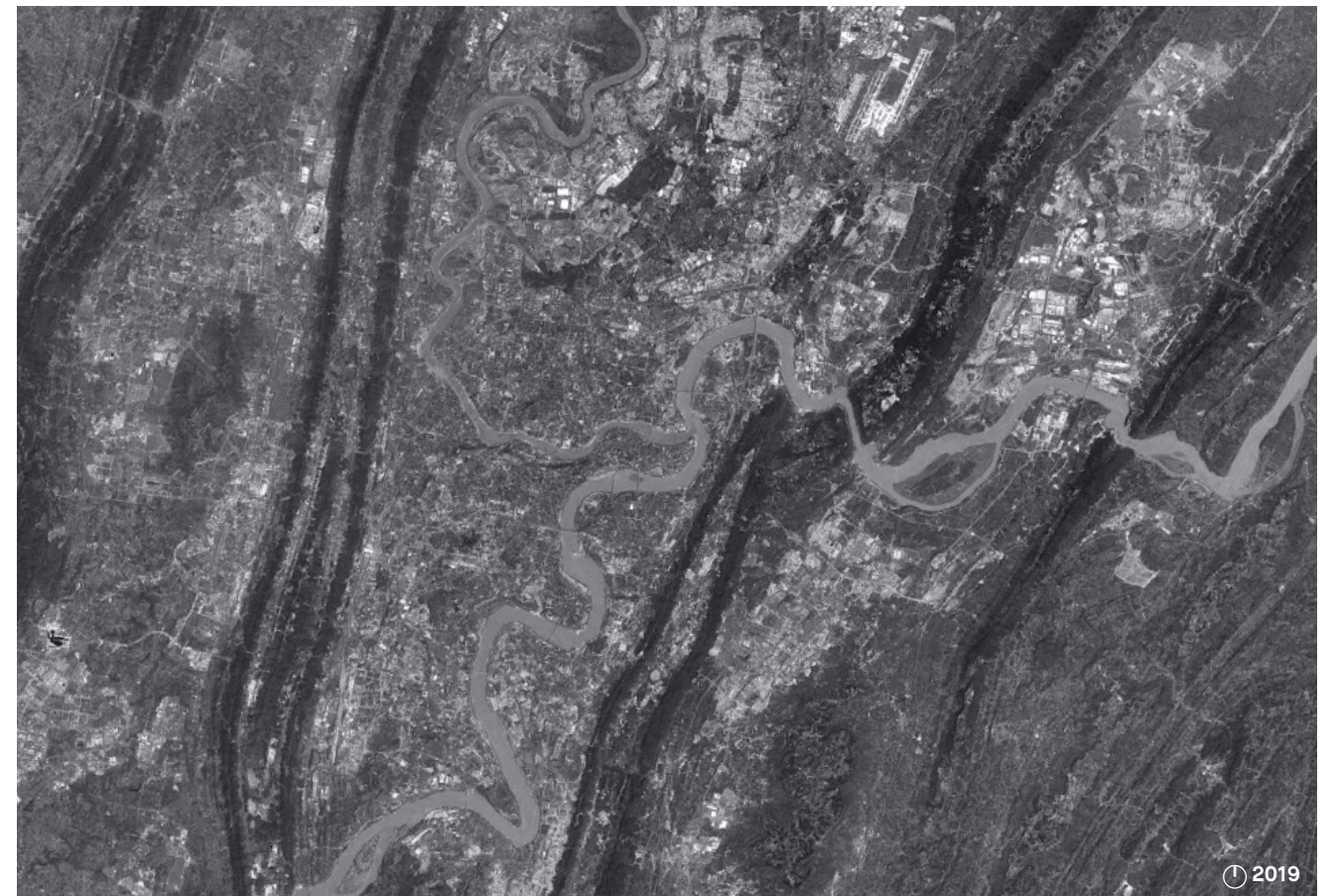
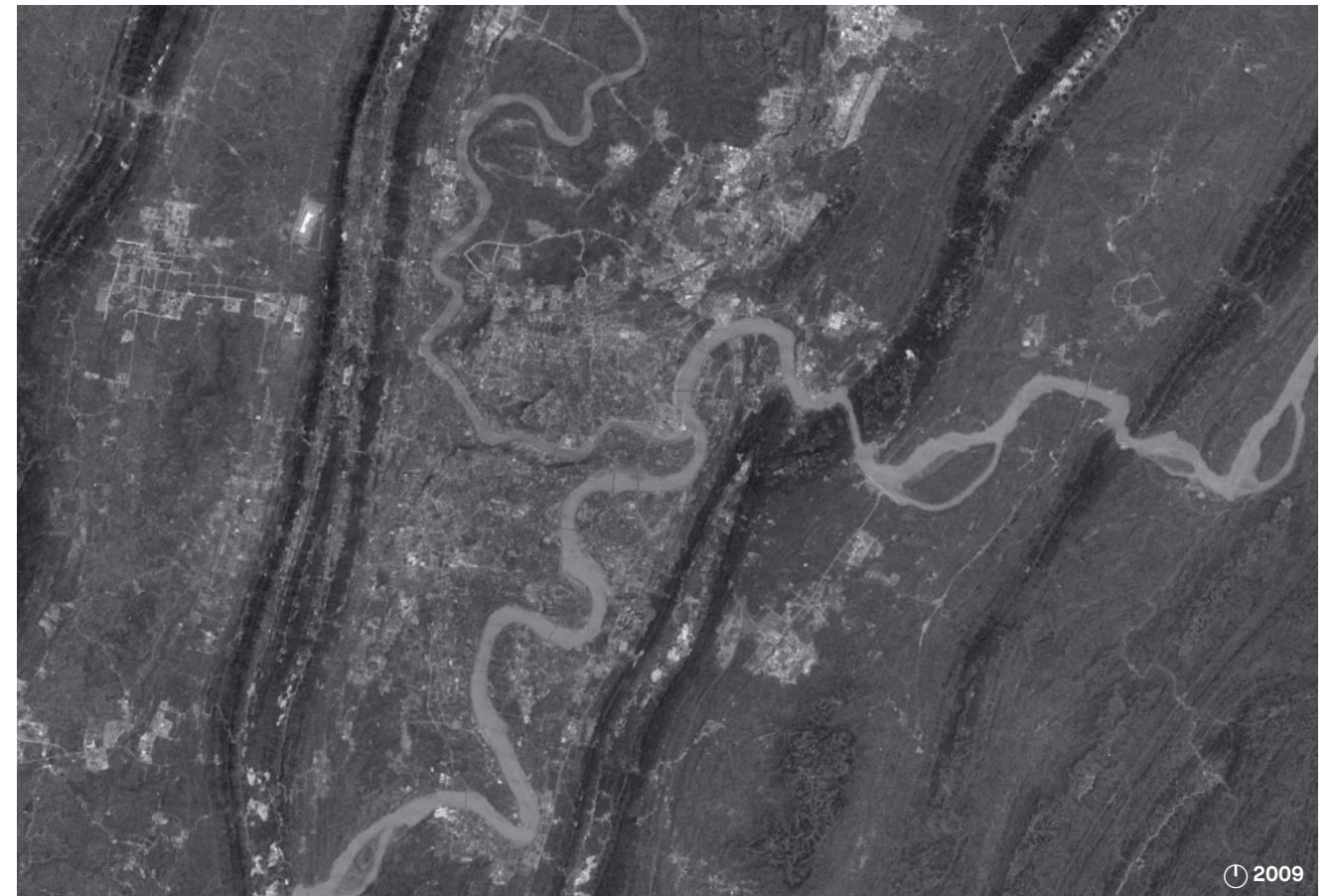
1959
The vegetables are green, the cucumbers plump, the yield is abundant

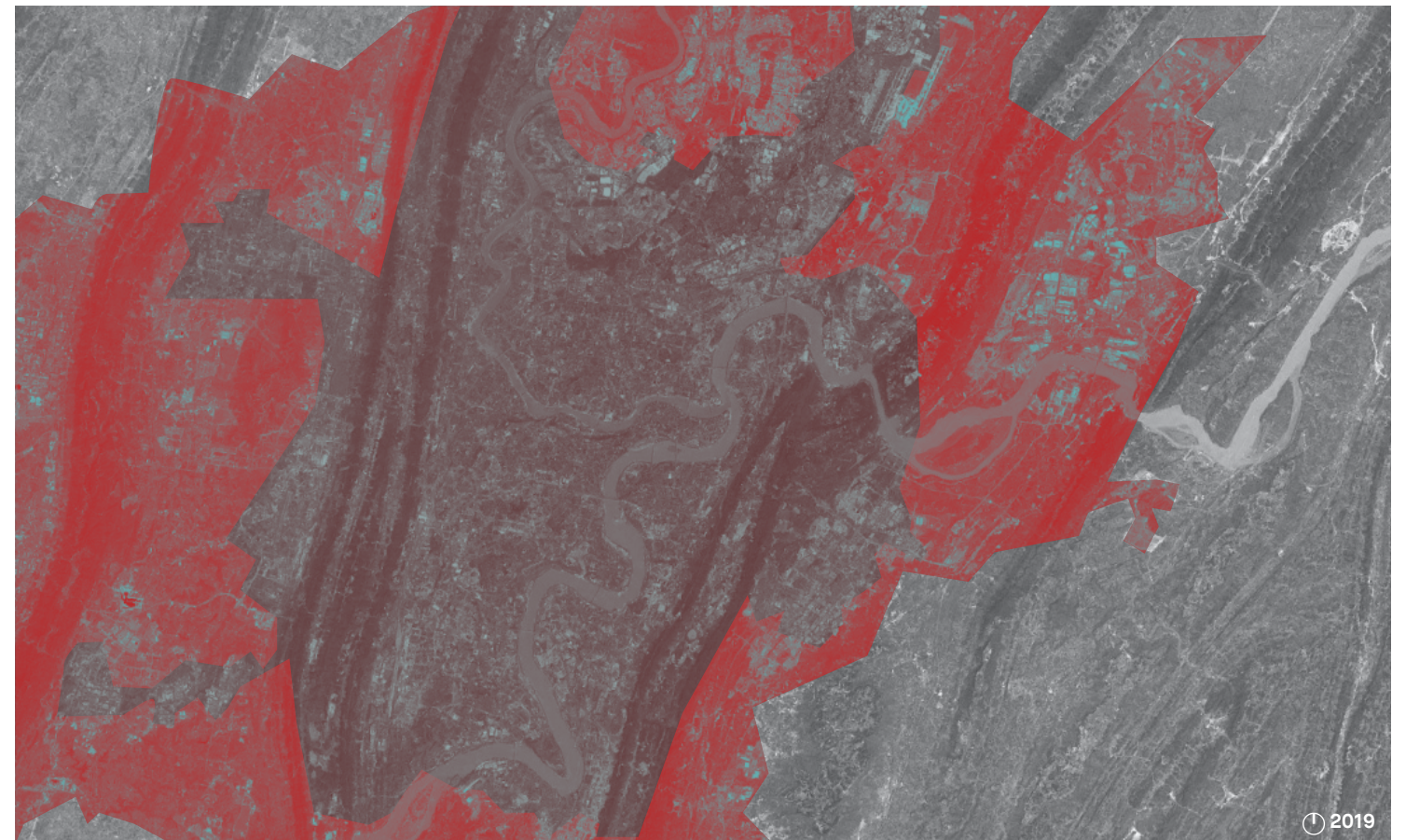
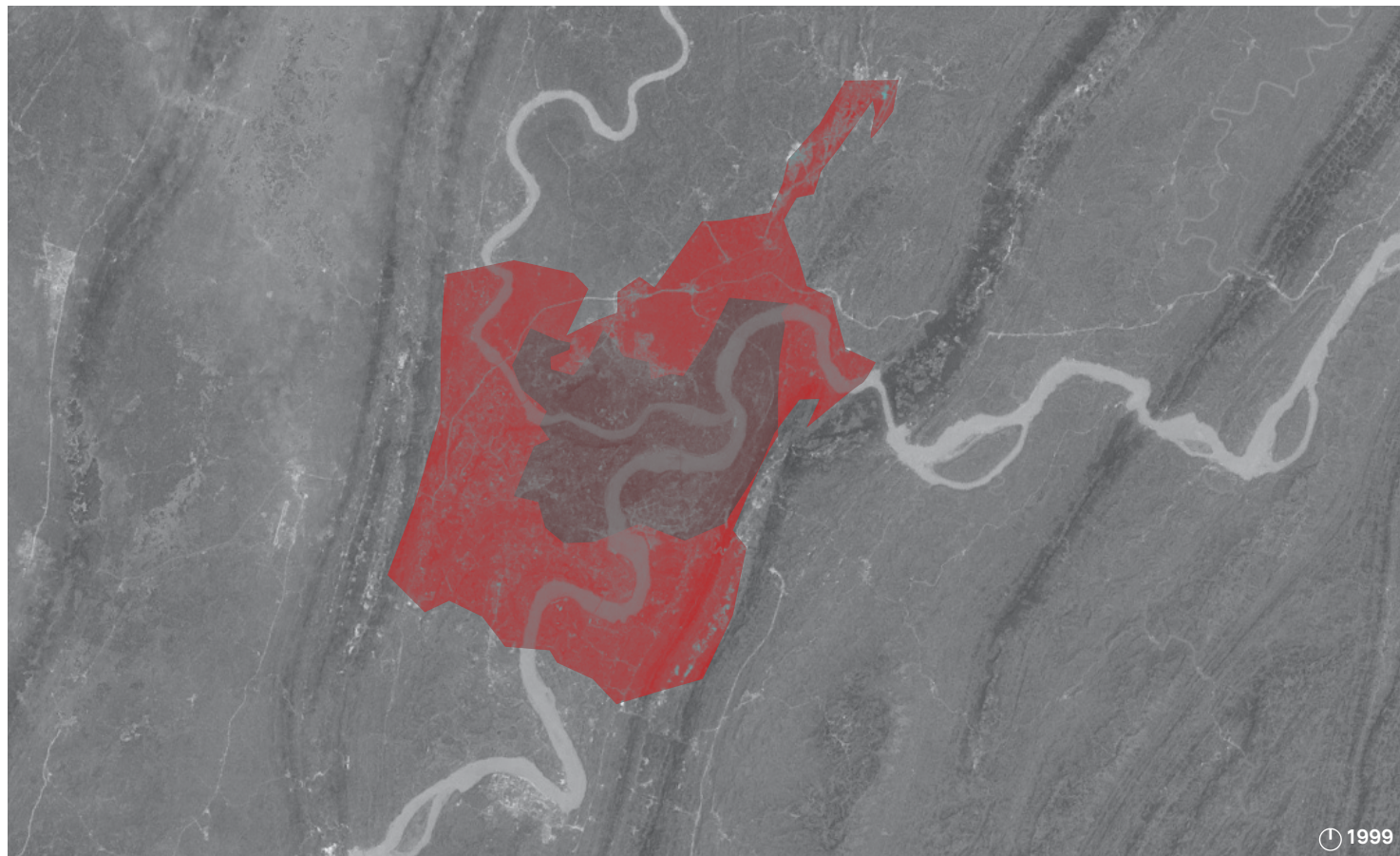
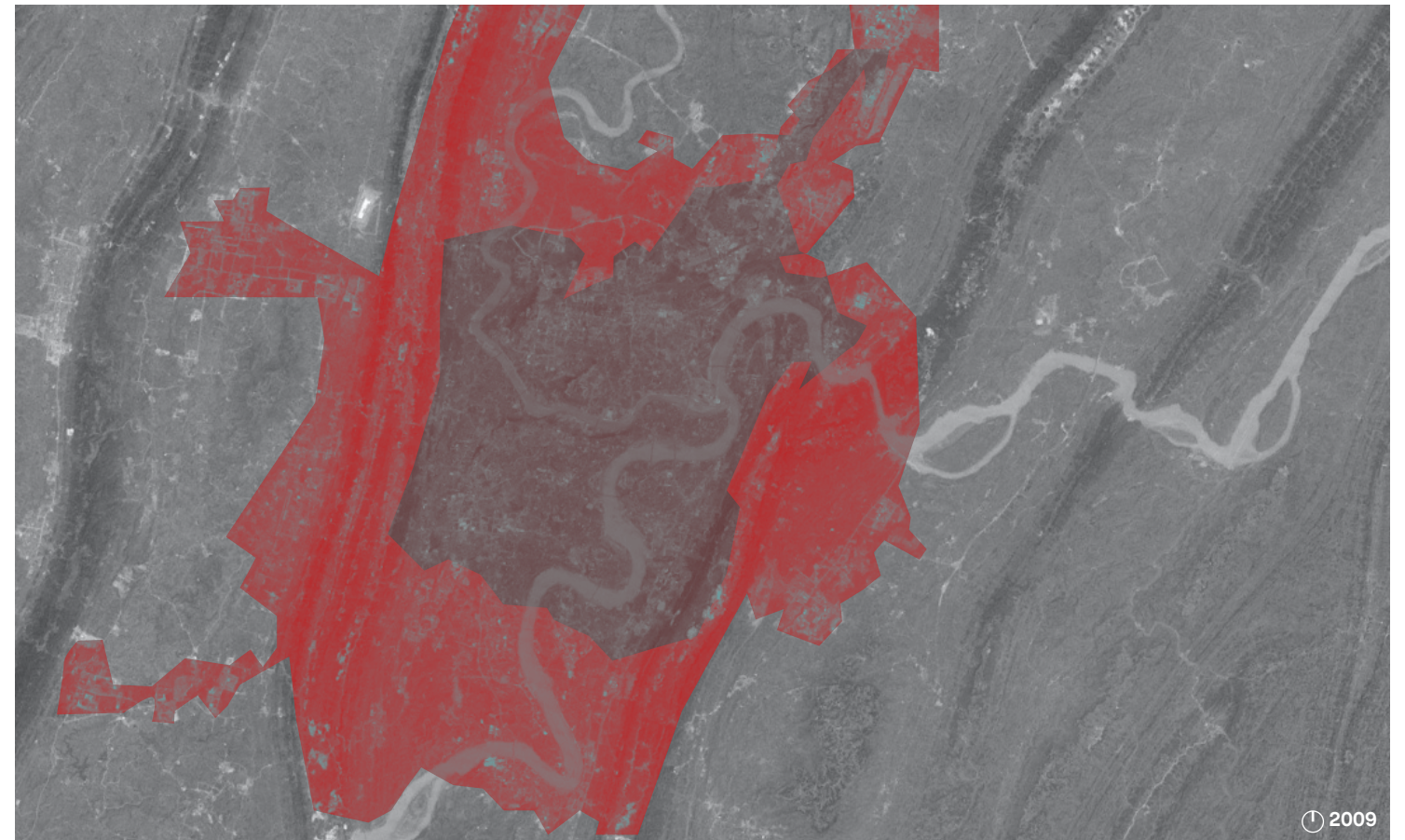


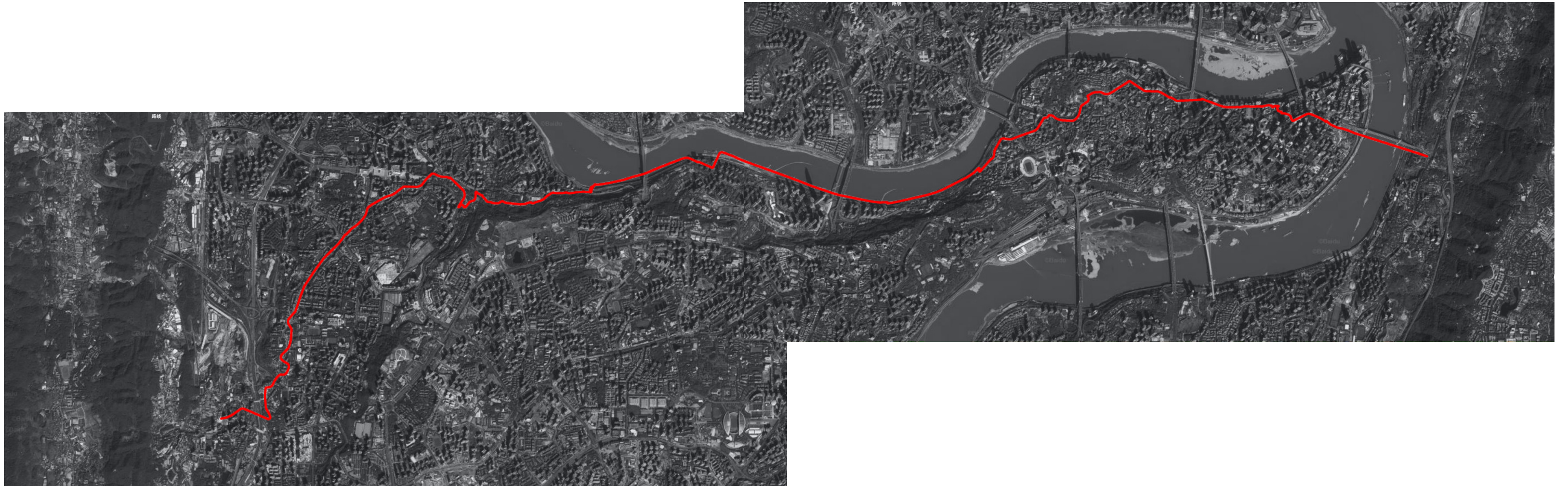
1992
We should do more and engage less in empty talk

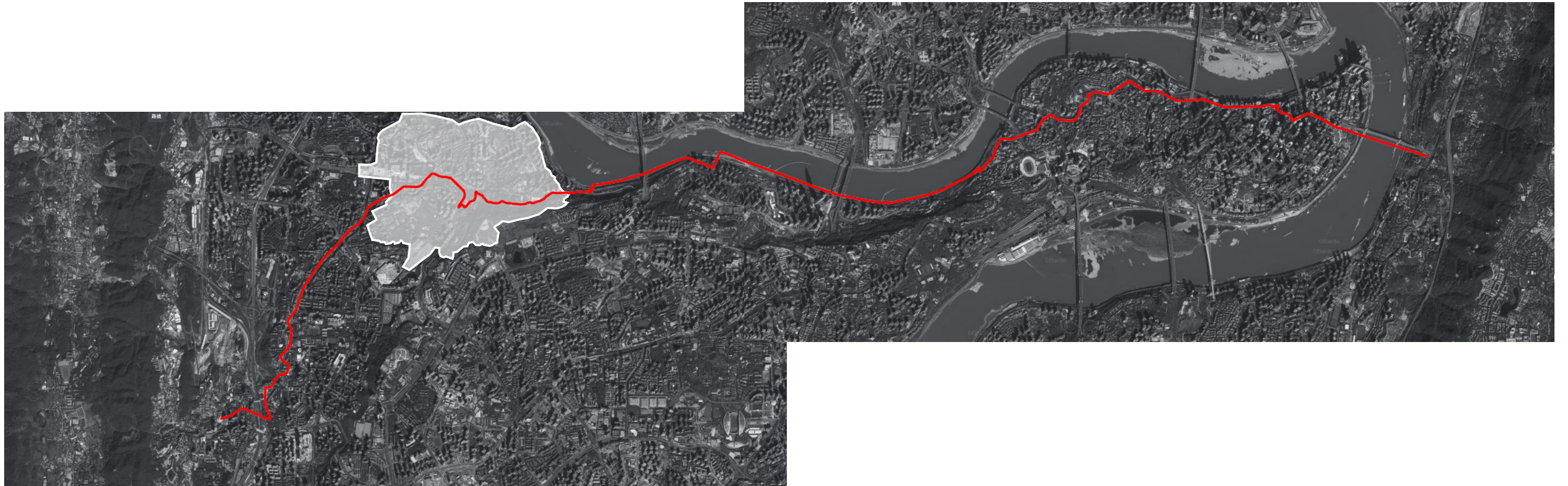


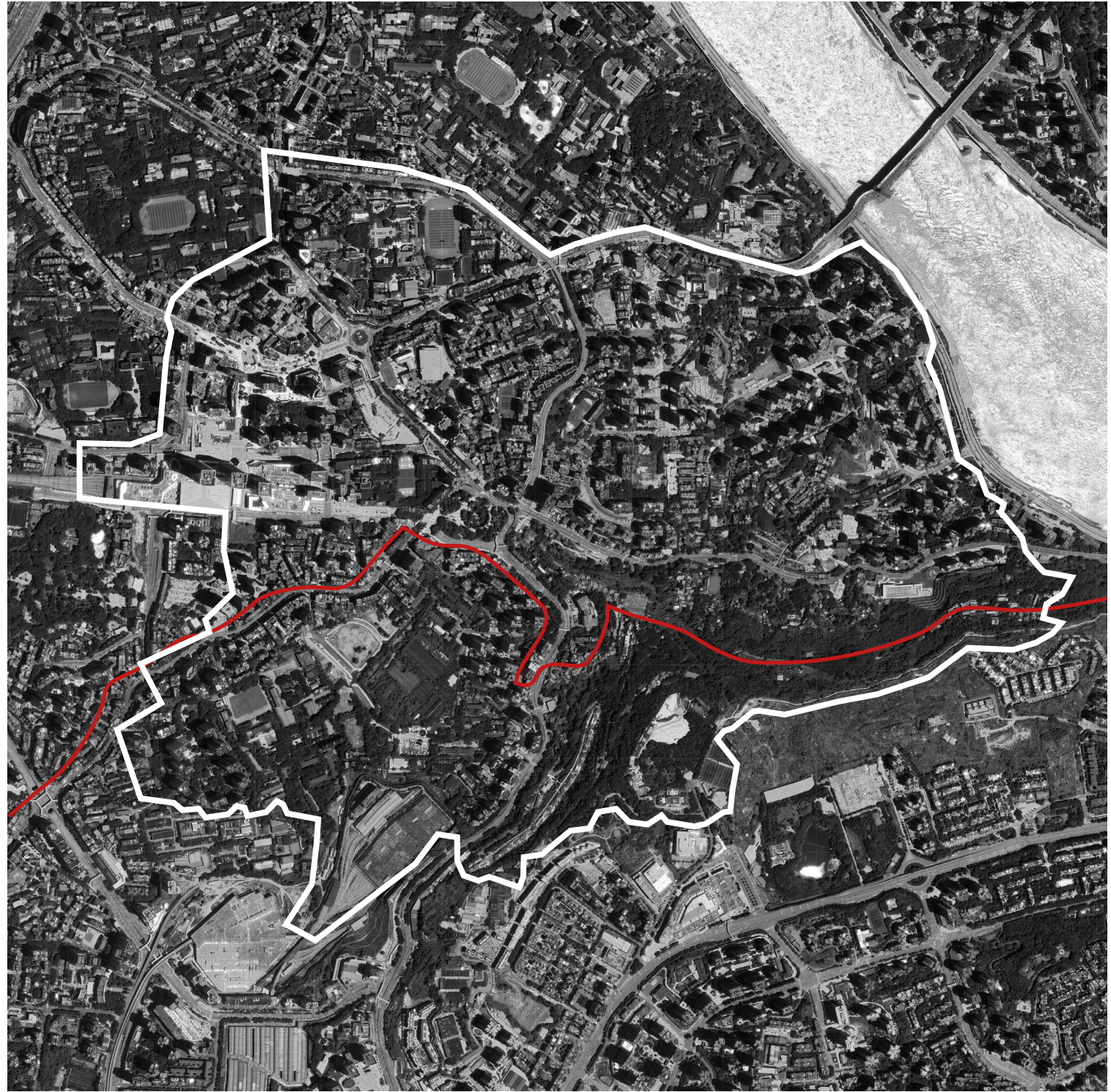
2000
Report truthfully, do a good job in the national census











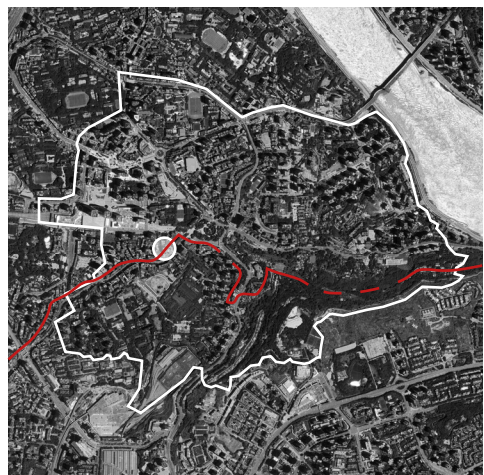


Image from own collection
Satellite images retrieved from Google Earth, accessed in March 2025



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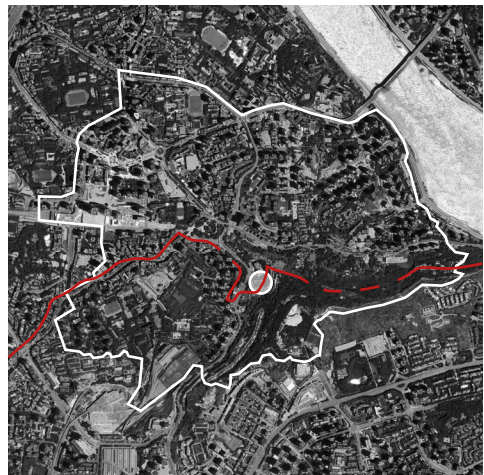
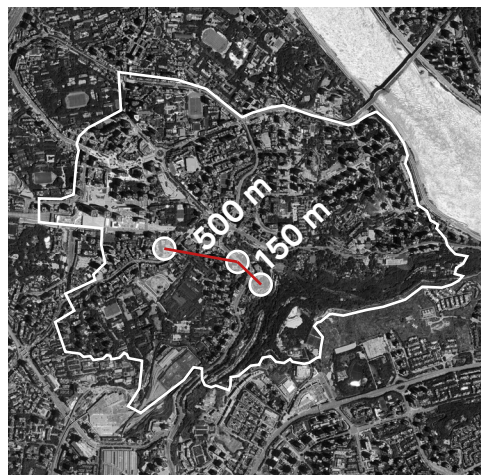


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BIRKHÄUSER

Rural Urban Framework

TRANSFORMING
THE CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE

Joshua
Bolchover

John
Lin

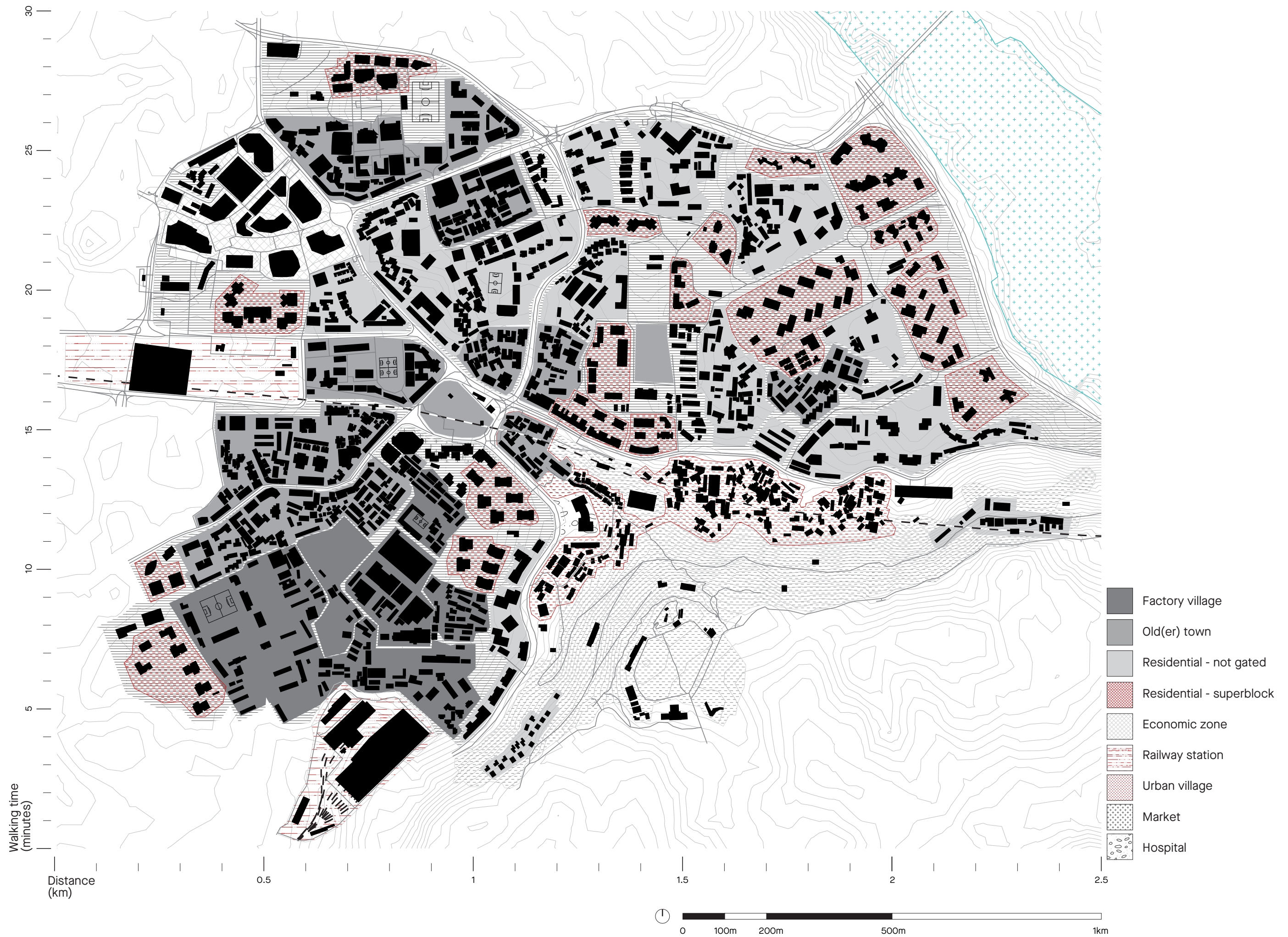


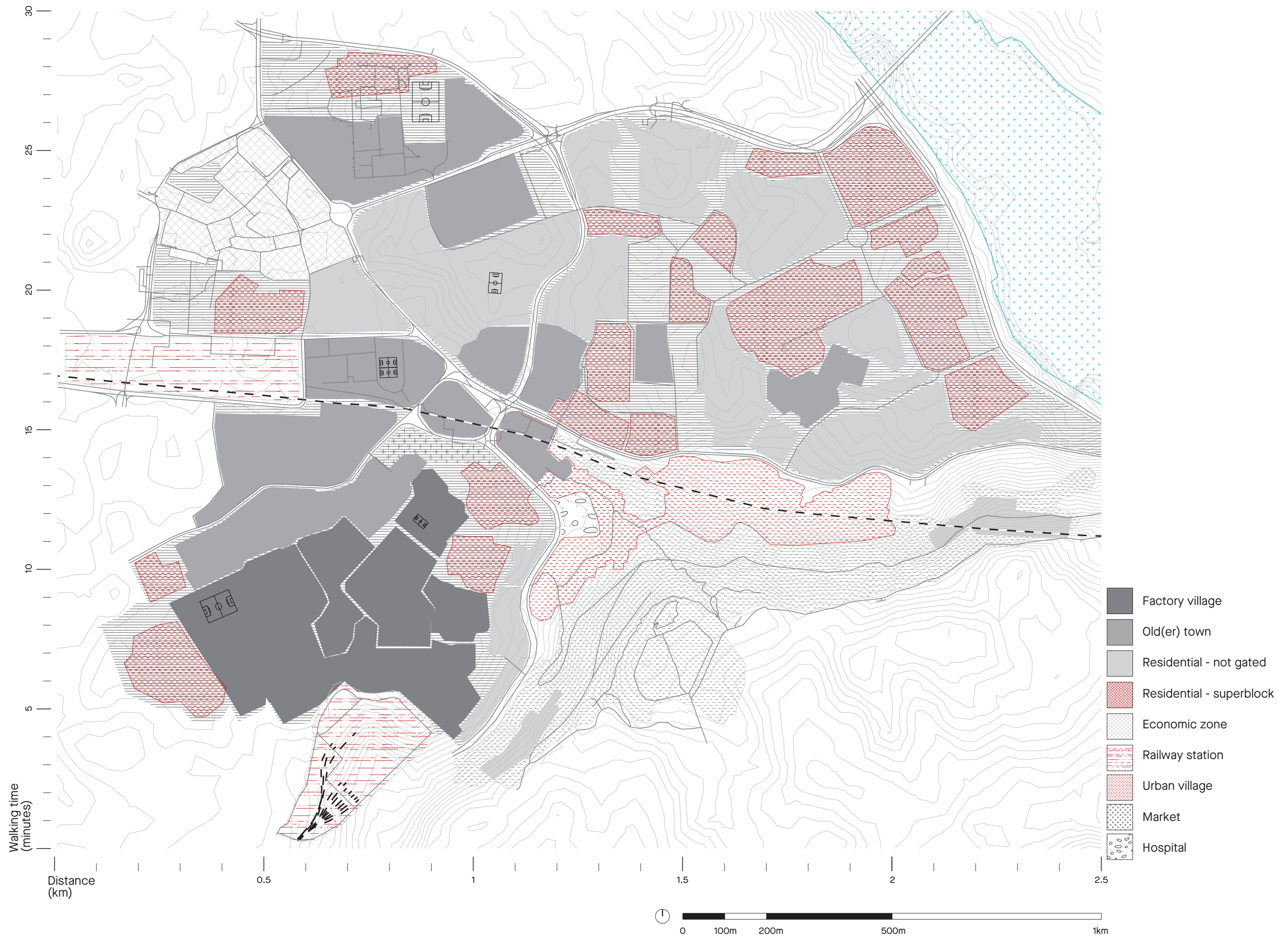


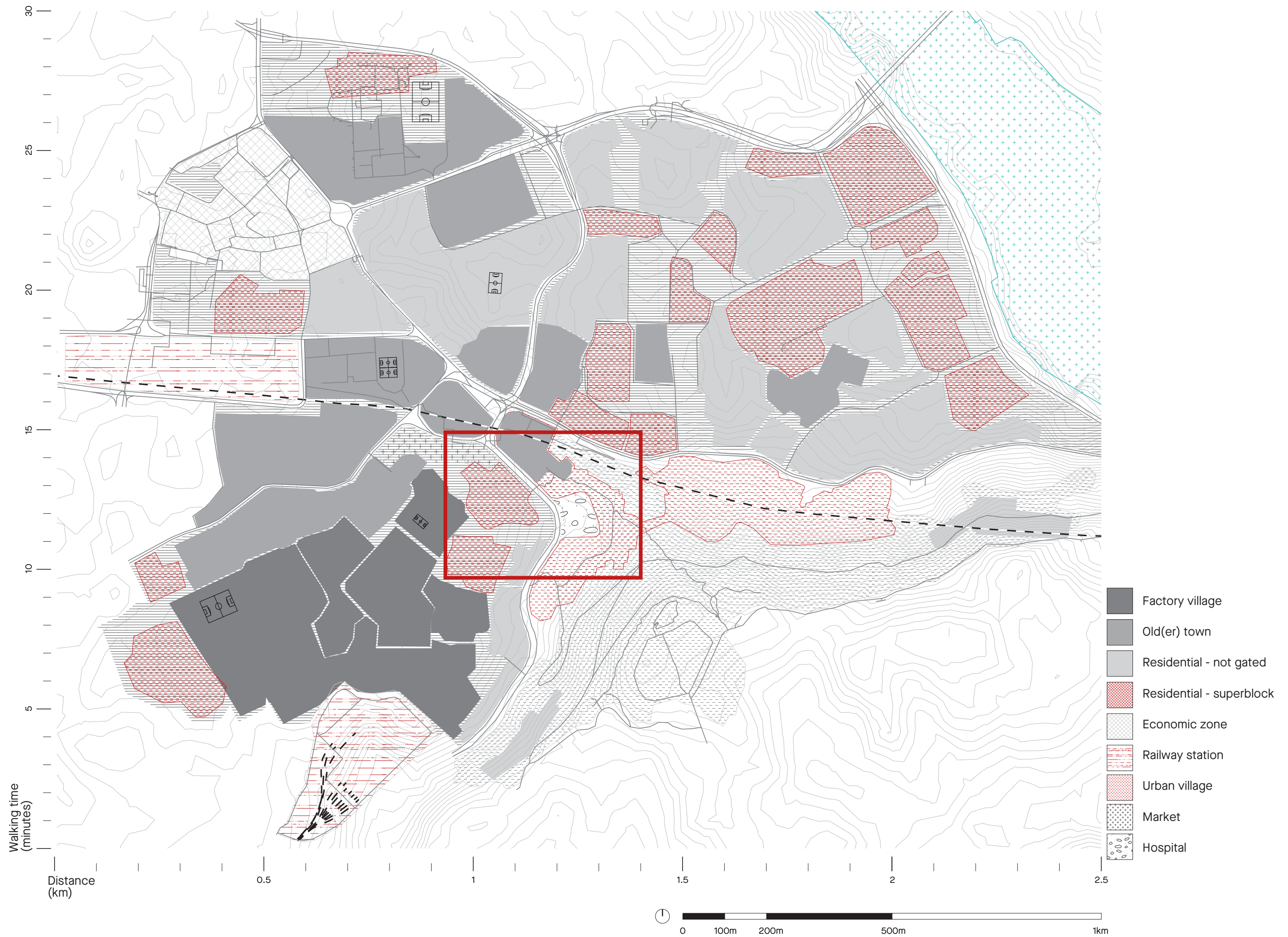


'...irrational and unpredictable adjacencies: fish ponds next to factories, abandoned houses next to new tower blocks, informal settlements next to formally planned commercial blocks, farmland next to golf courses'

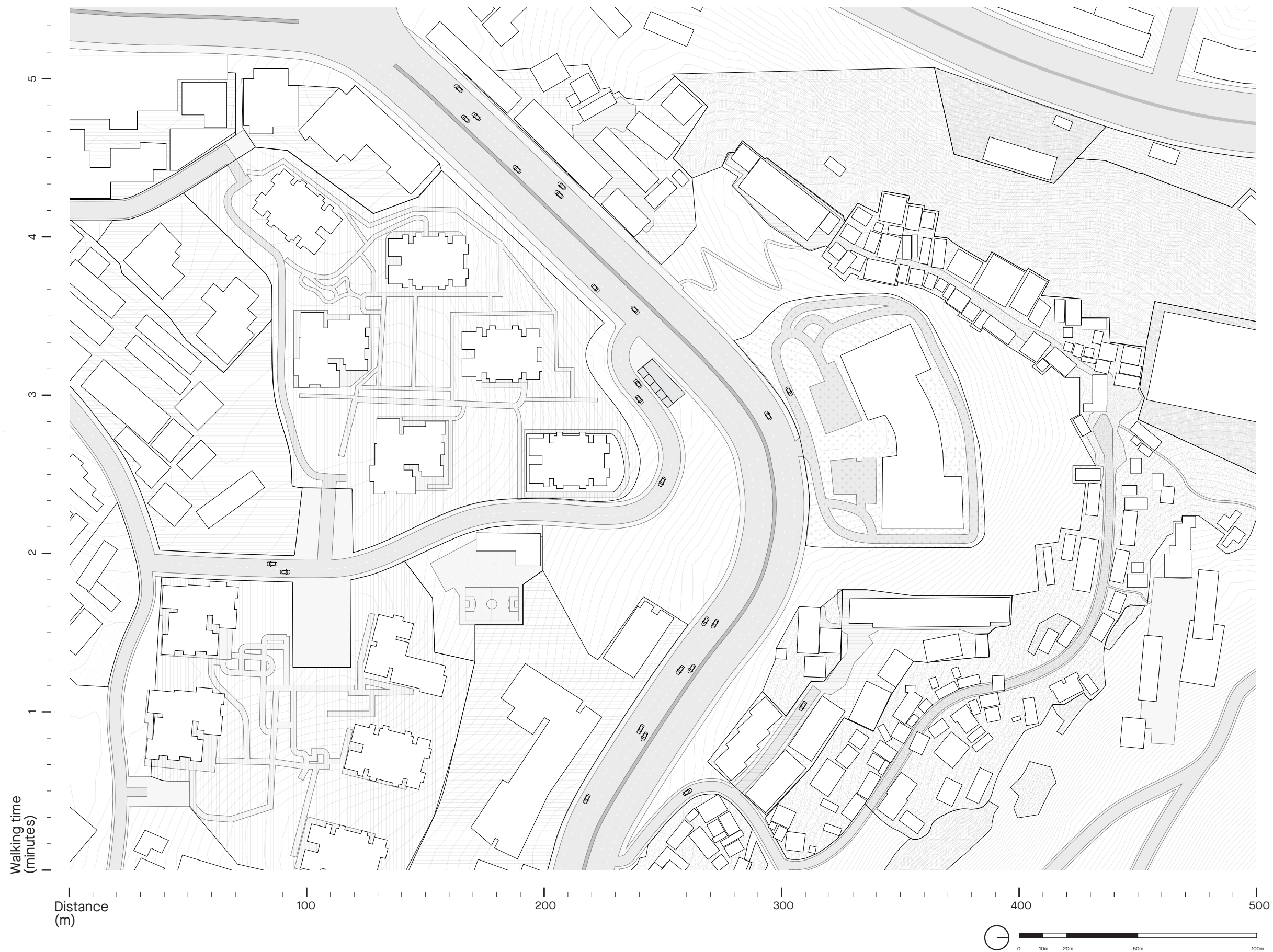


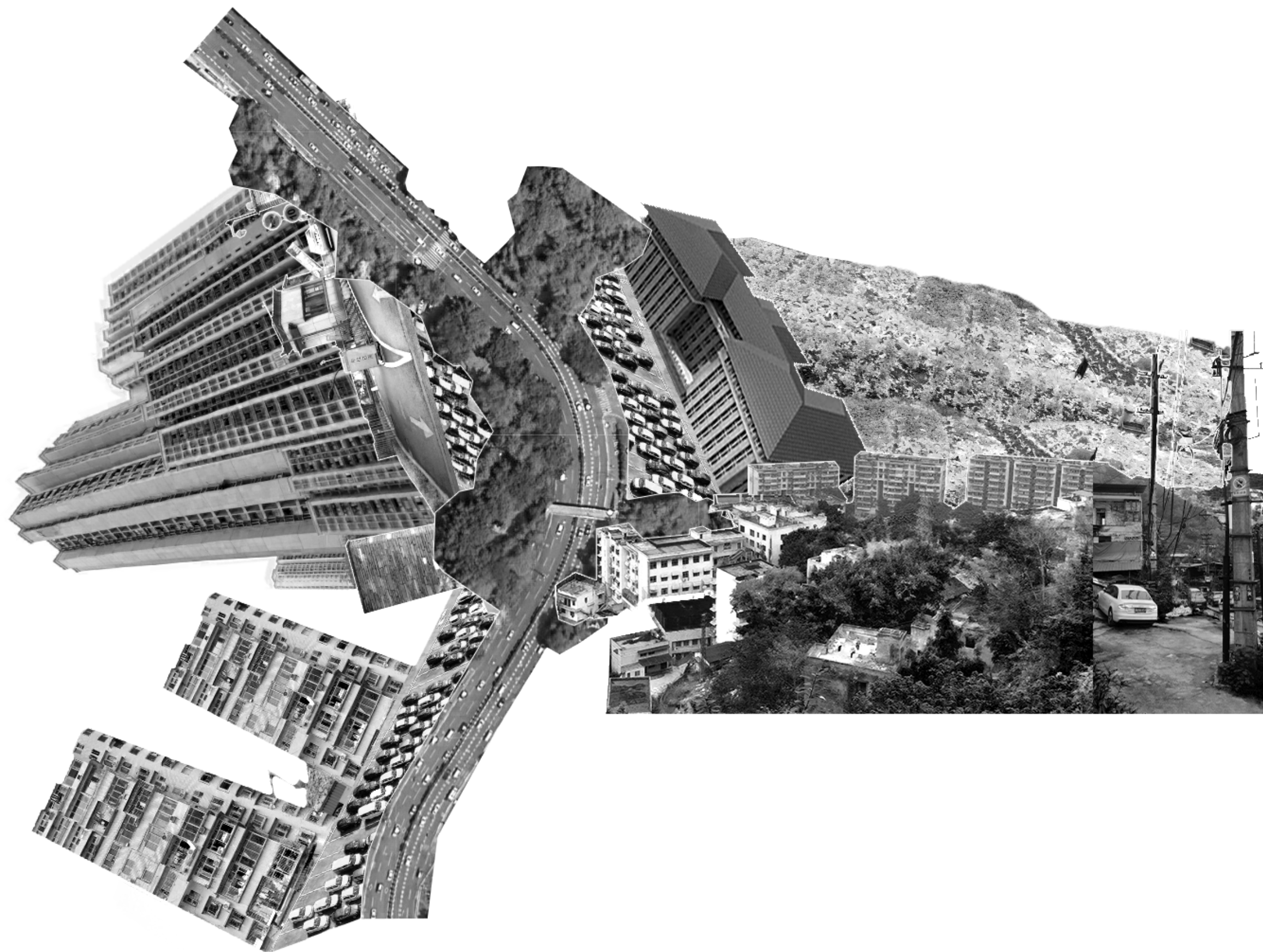


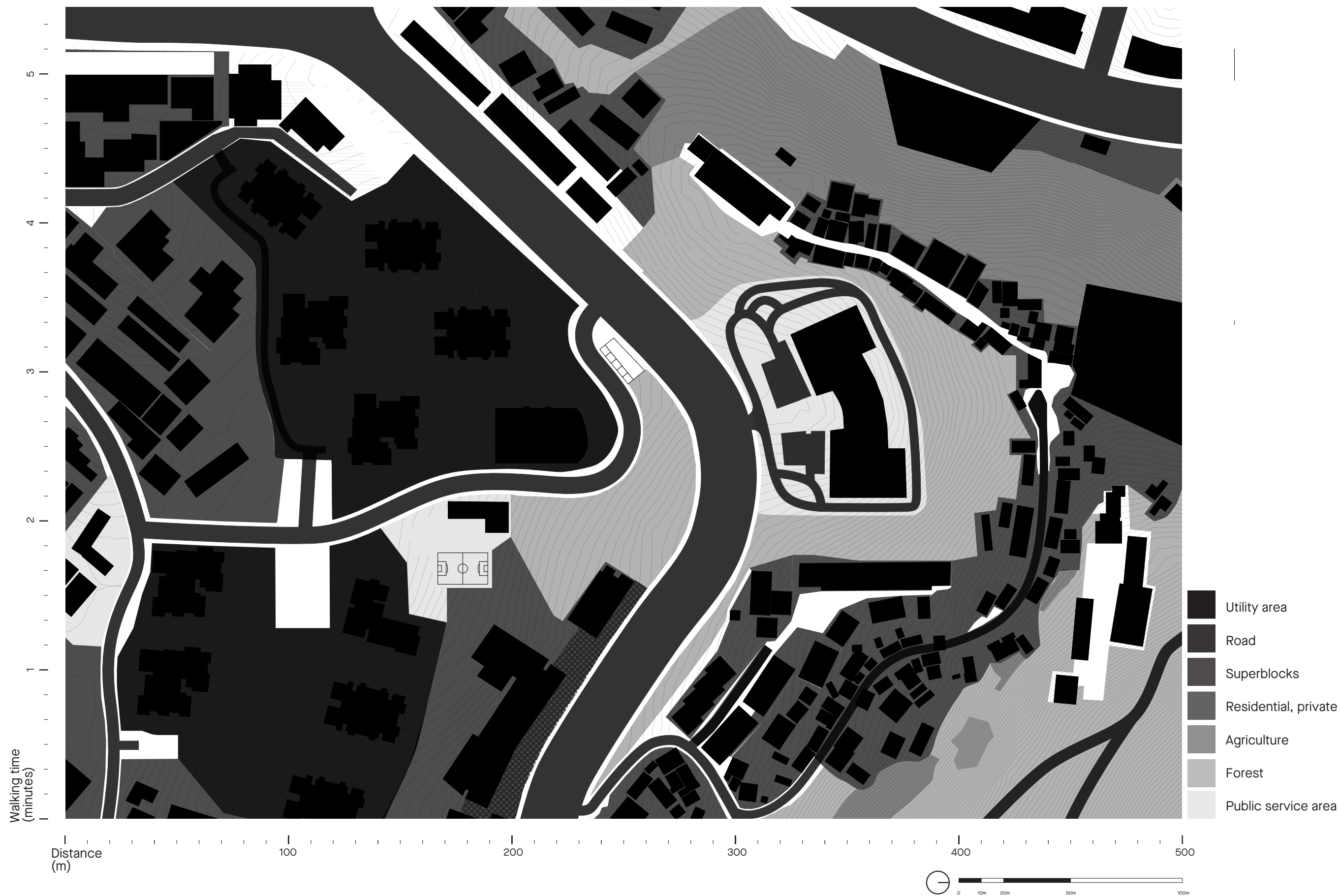


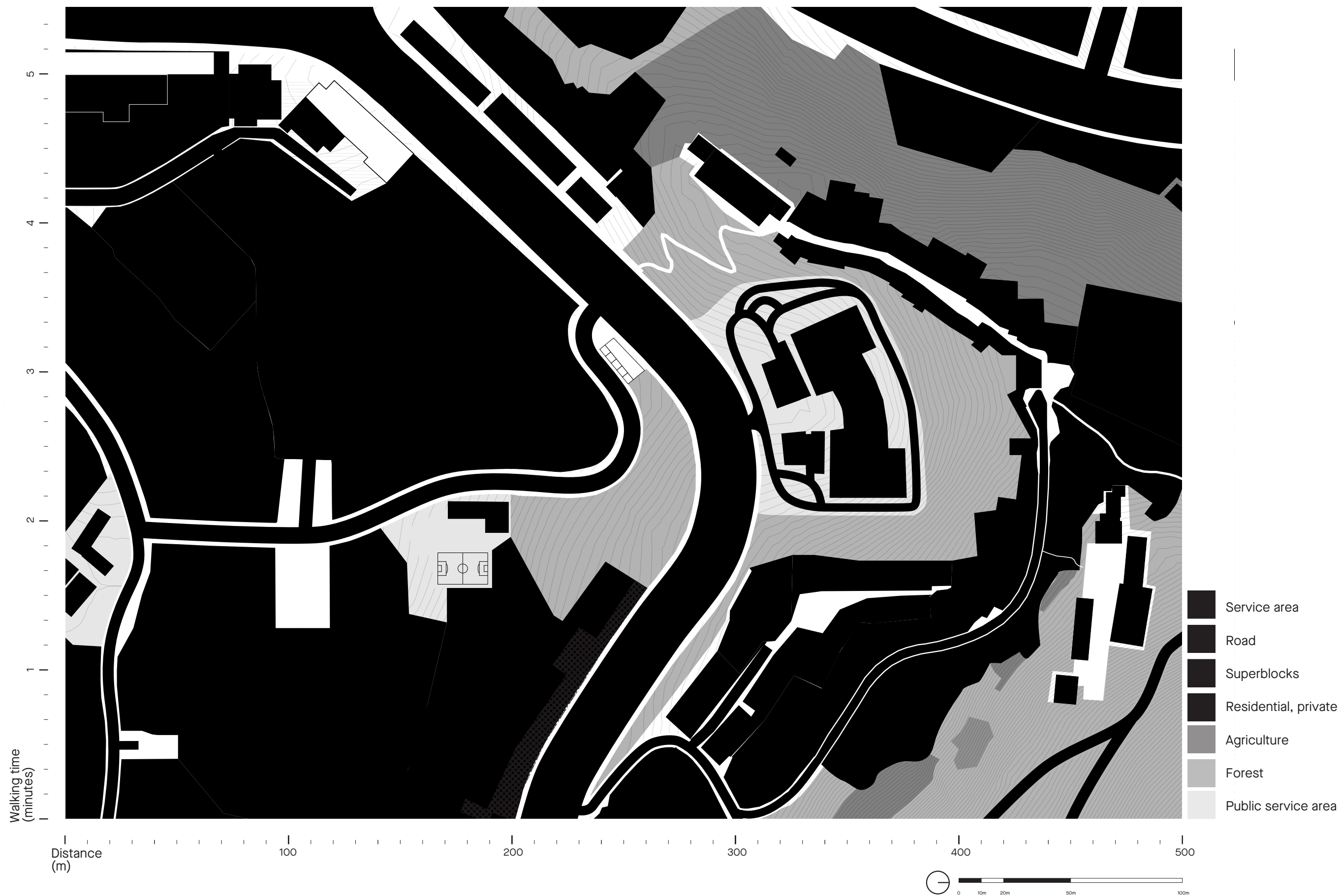


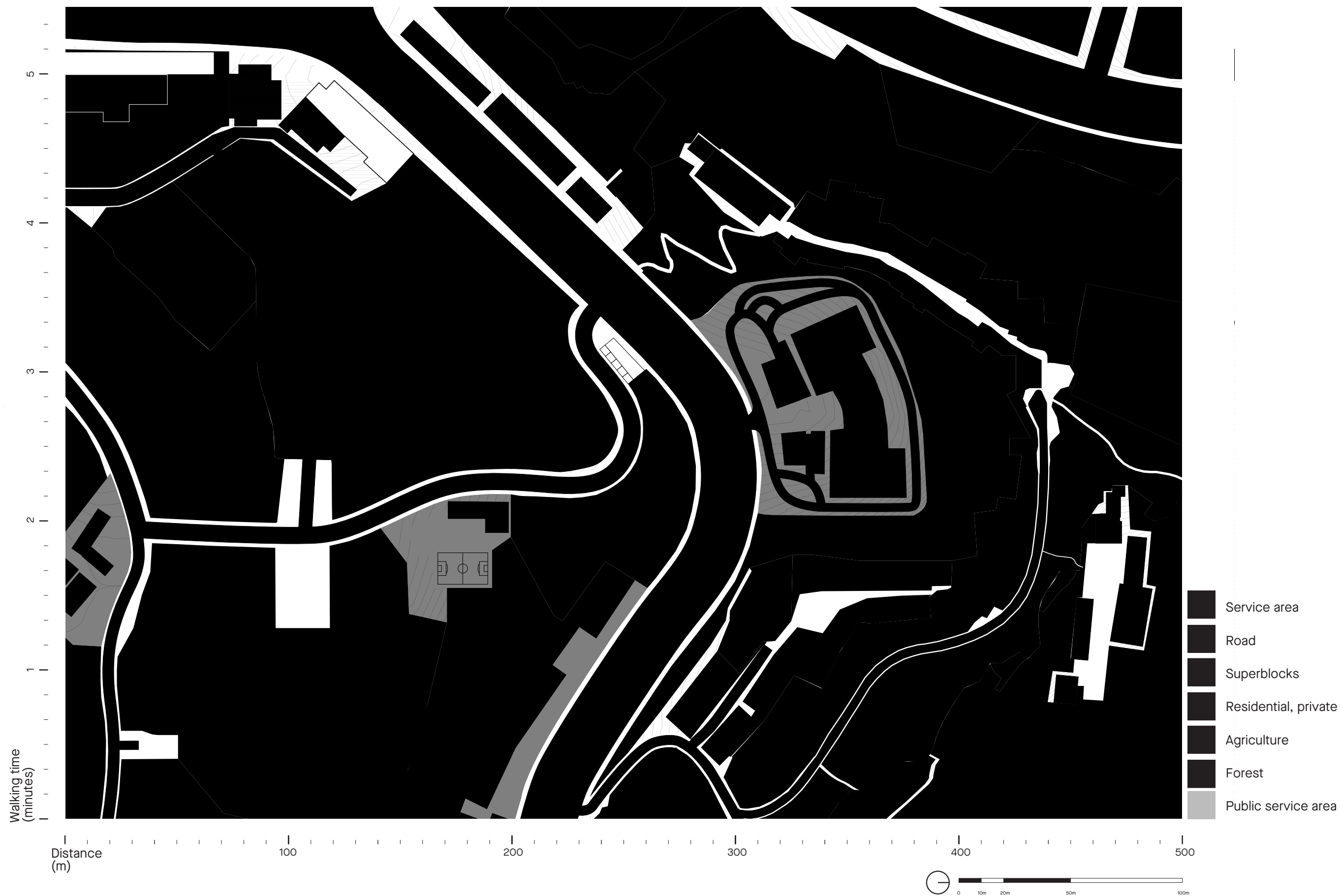




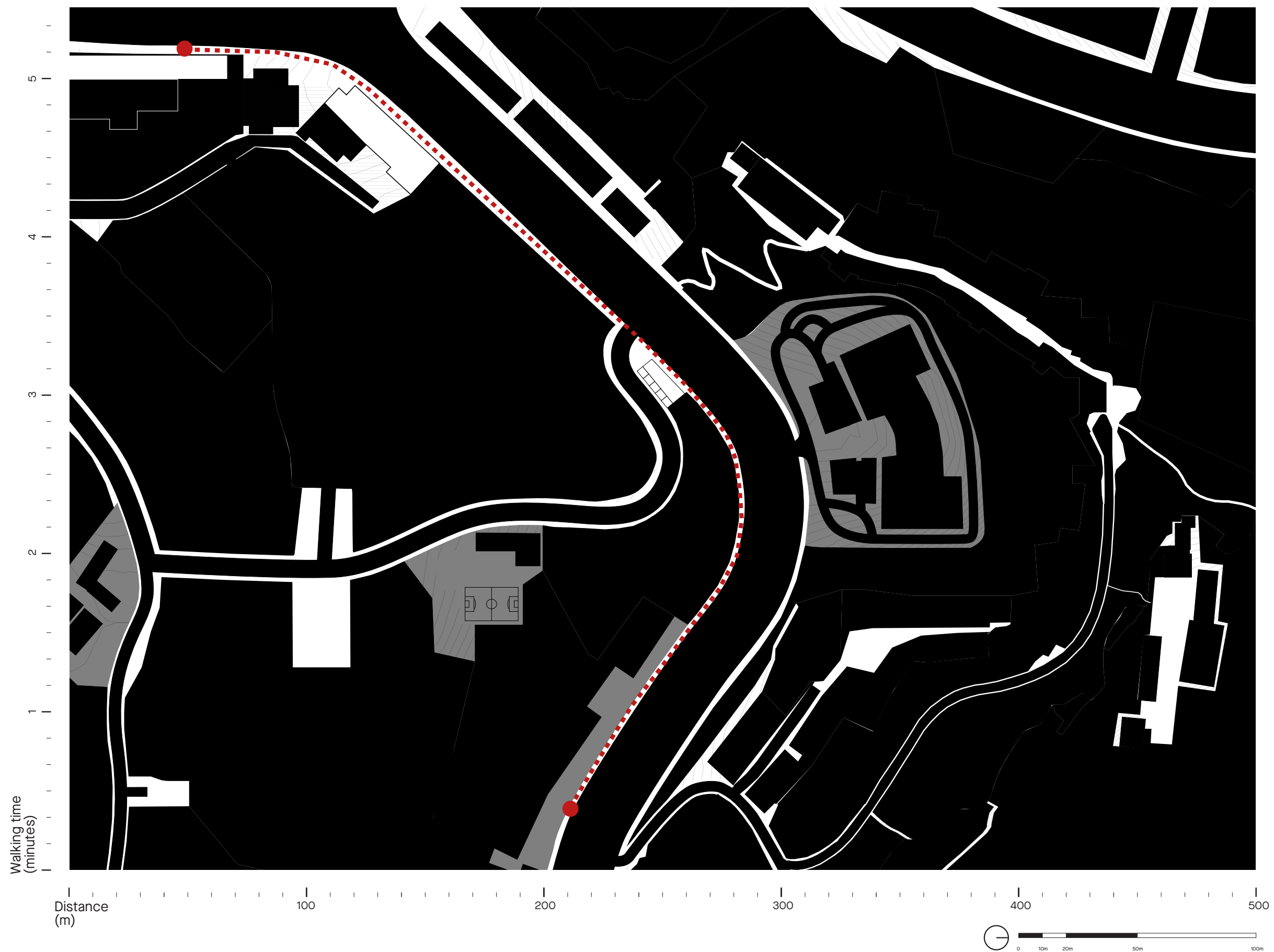












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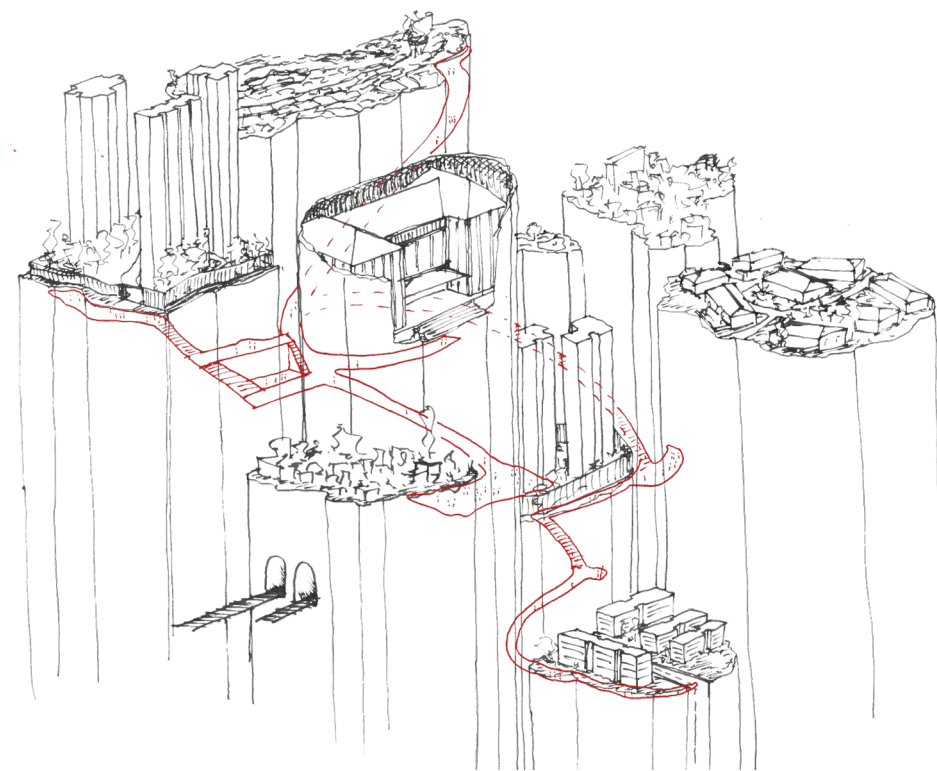
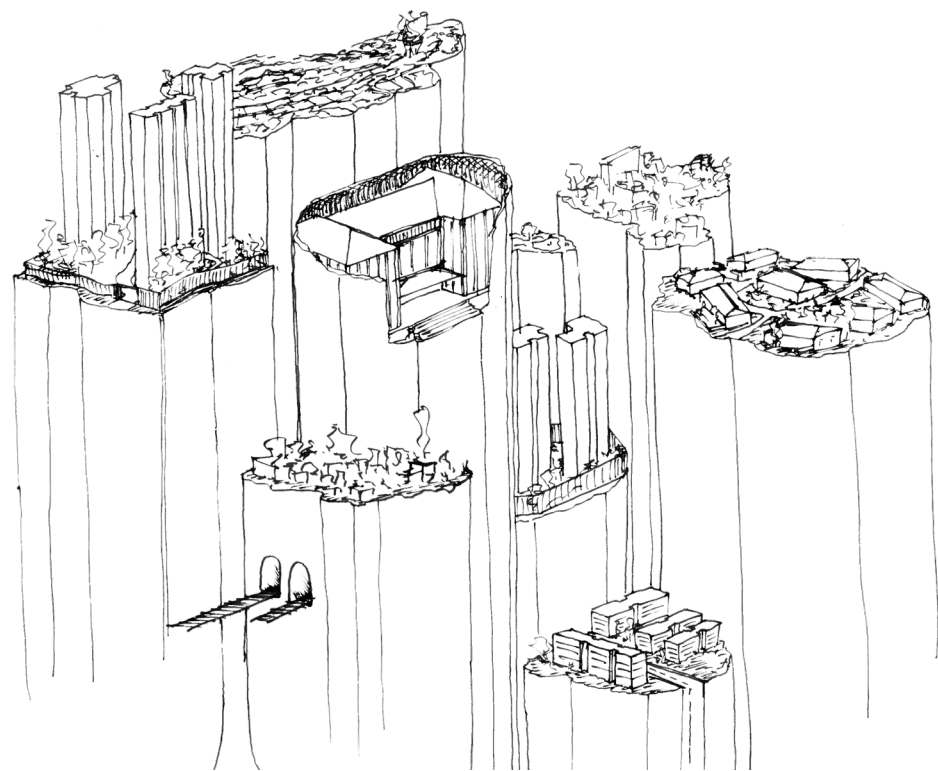
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Can I design something that improves connections, and that adds a new kind of space non existent in the present landscape.



Delegate; Thomas Verbeek