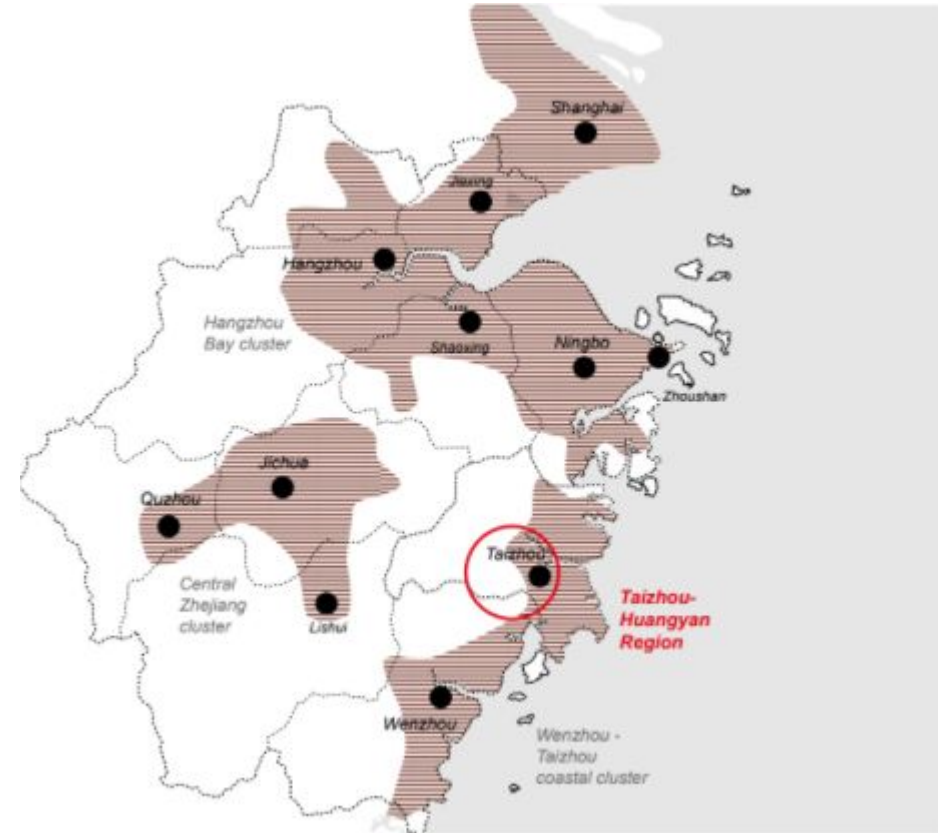# Urban-Rural Assembly / Urban-Rural Nexus
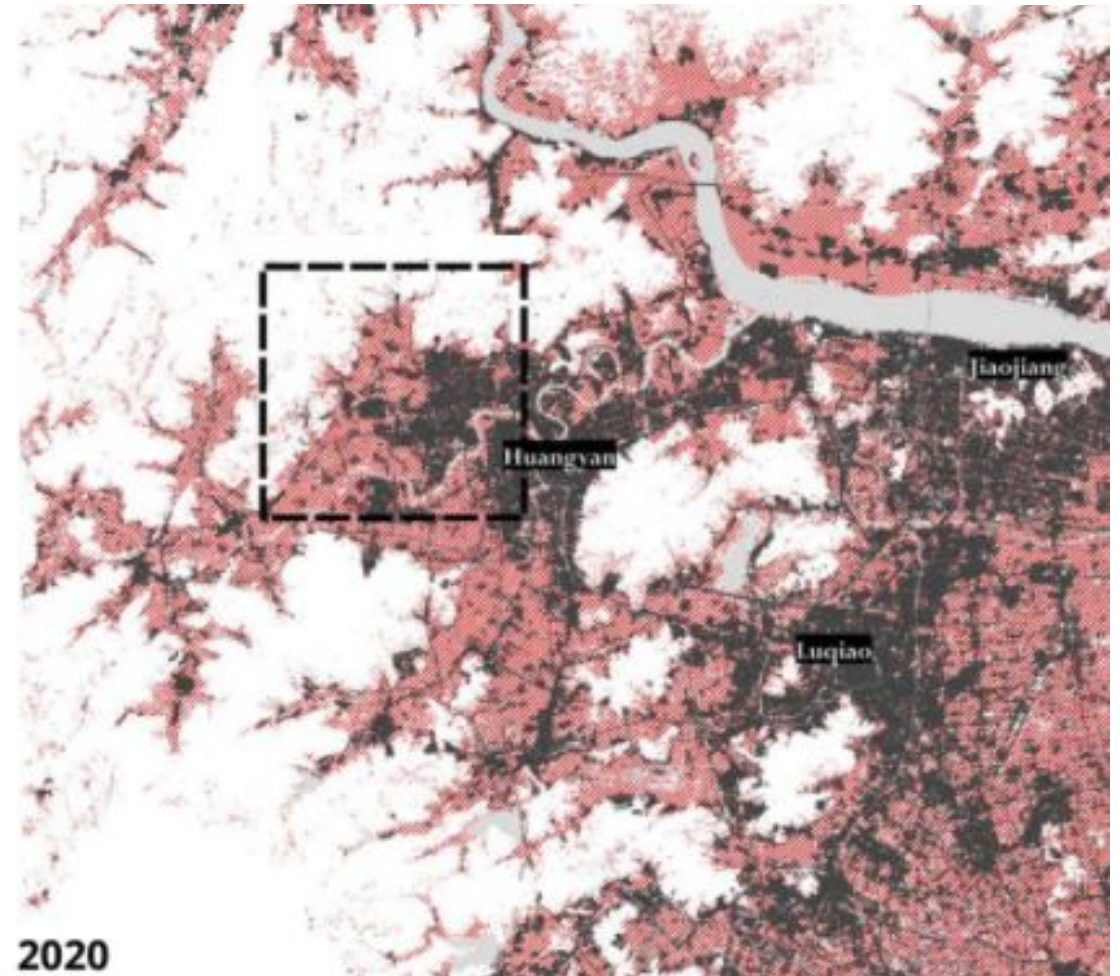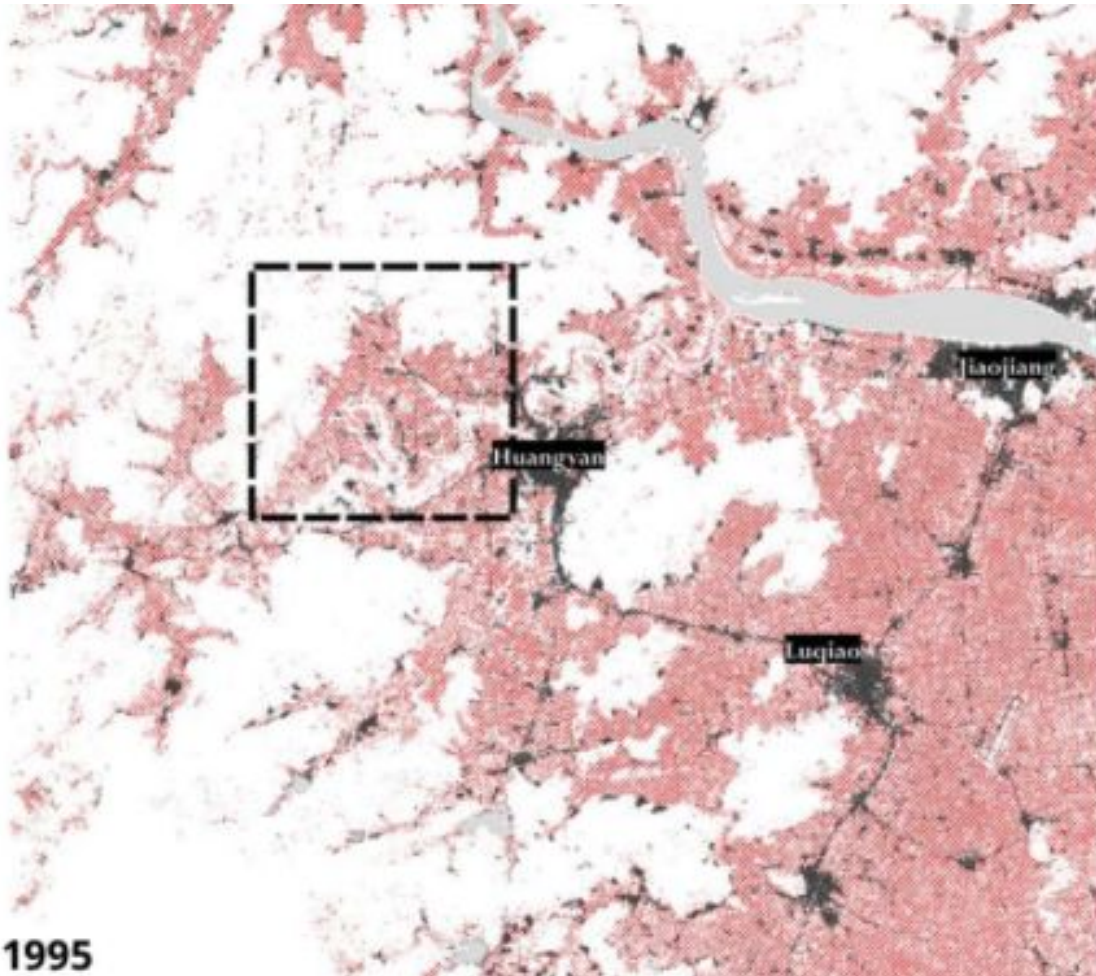
URA research context:
Taizhou-Huangyan region
URA 项目研究背景：台州–黄岩 (浙江)
Zhejiang Province, China

Taizhou-Huangyan Region

Graphics by Habitat Unit, TU Berlin (Ava Lynam)

Rapid transformation across Taizhou-Huangyan through urbanisation process

Key challenges regarding the urban-rural nexus

"Spatial transformation - is a more hidden network of **material and non-material interrelations**, **everyday flows of people**, **of goods and financial investments**, that result in new complex spatial constellations."

"Who are the **everyday changemakers** at the intersection of urban - rural spaces and places, what are their motivations and challenges, and how can these be integrated?"
– Kit Braybrooke

"How can we **qualify the material flows and the related actors** between urban and rural areas?"
— Bing Xue

"**An imbalance in water development** between urban and rural: more reservoirs and water supply projects are under construction or proposed vs. the intensive human intervention."
— Maria and Yulin

"How to **measure and indicate the dynamic landscapes in urban and rural areas**, materials, energies, mobilities?"
— Bing Xue

URBAN - RURAL ASSEMBLY

URA approaches to strengthen urban-rural linkages

Interdisciplinary Research

Urban-Rural Living Labs

Science-Policy Dialogue

URA approaches towards urban-rural nexus

"**Assembly** is a word used from an engineering perspective to describe connection. Maybe the connection is already there, but unbalanced and needs to be rethought and rebalanced."

— Suili Xiao

"From a circular economy perspective, **promoting waste management and optimizing resources allocation and flows** between urban and rural areas."

— Bing Xue

"**Promoting socially inclusive rural-urban transformation trajectories**, by identifying drivers behind migratory flows, and understanding how social groups interact with each other, their institutional barriers and their daily experiences."

— Ava Lynam

"Taking a **Rurban Landscape Approach to development:** This concept emphasizes the relationships between natural conditions, human activities, and economics, and also includes the temporal dimensions."
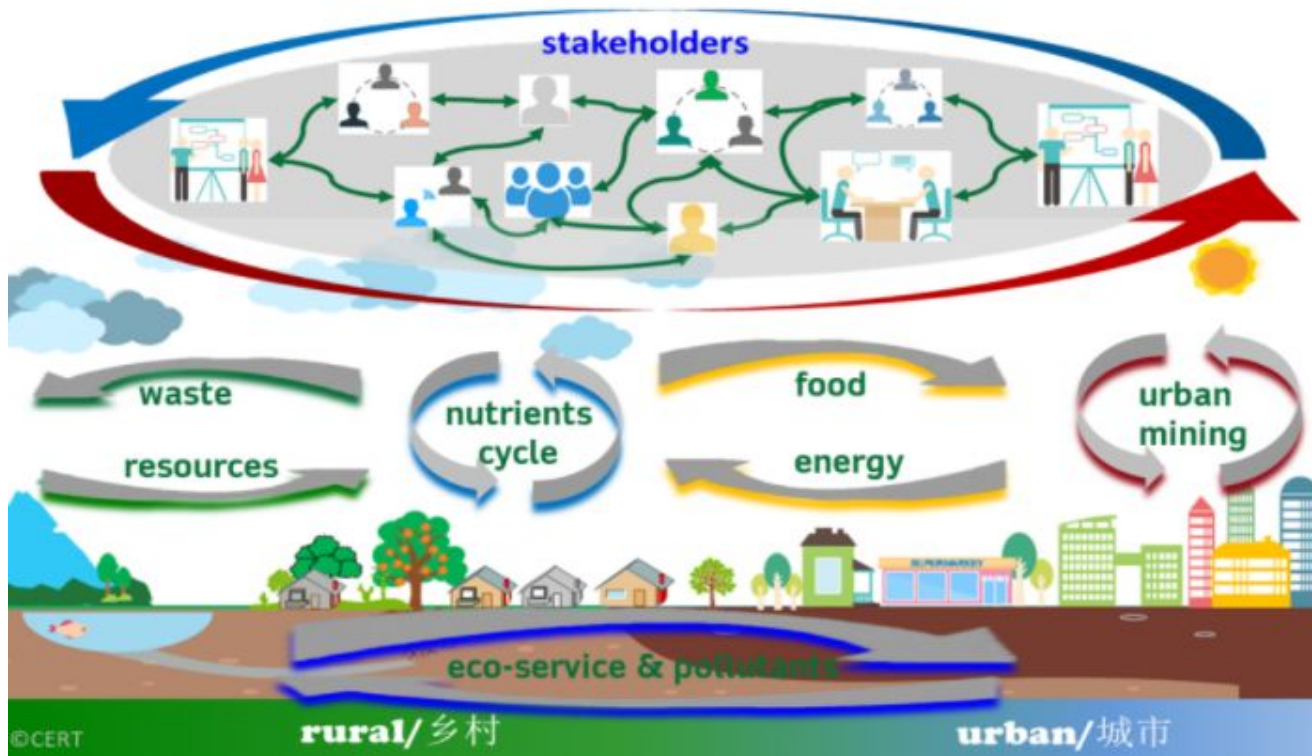
— Maria and Yulin

Interdisciplinary research methods

- Serve as a **shared guiding principle** and **binding framework** for future action and implementation among urban-regional planning, state administration and politics

- Are the basis for the **preparation of spatial plans** and the application of **specific spatial planning instruments**

- Enable the development of **multi-level governance tools** which support state, region and municipalities along their intersectional coordination and collaboration

- **Strengthen cooperation** beyond spatial, sectoral and institutional borders

- Lay the groundwork for **supplementary planning instruments** and/or tools of **participatory engagement** in urban-rural development

Interdisciplinary approach 1: circular economy

Research aim

- A holistic view on production and consumption, along the value chain and lifecycle of products at the local state

Research methodology

- Material flow analysis

- Stakeholder analysis

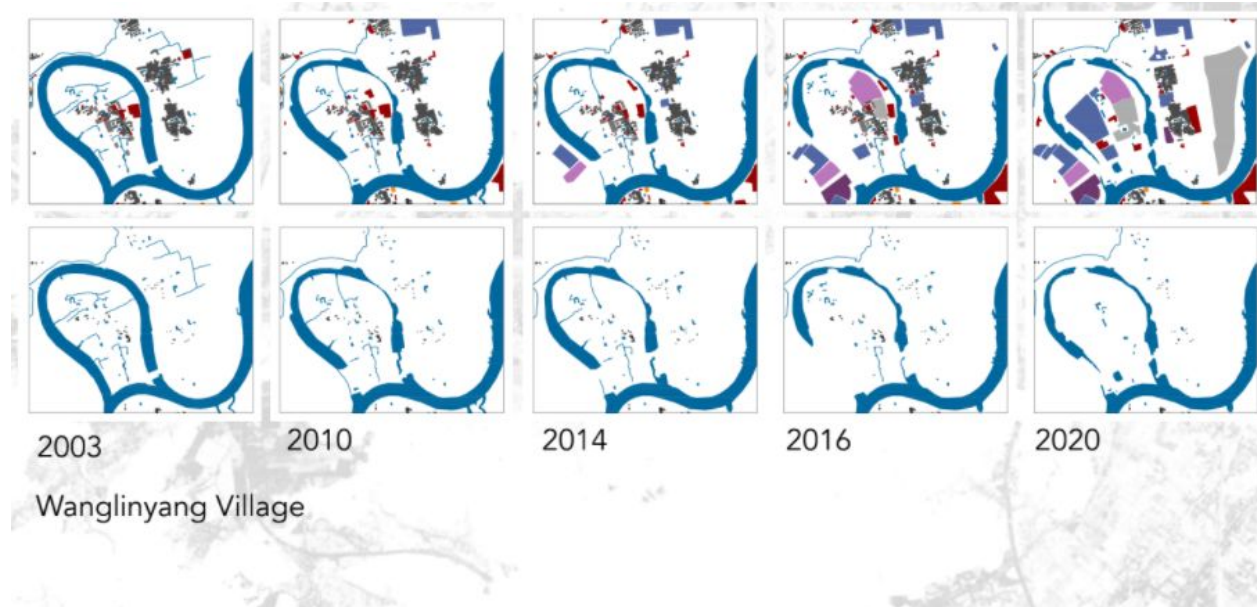- Material and stakeholder mapping

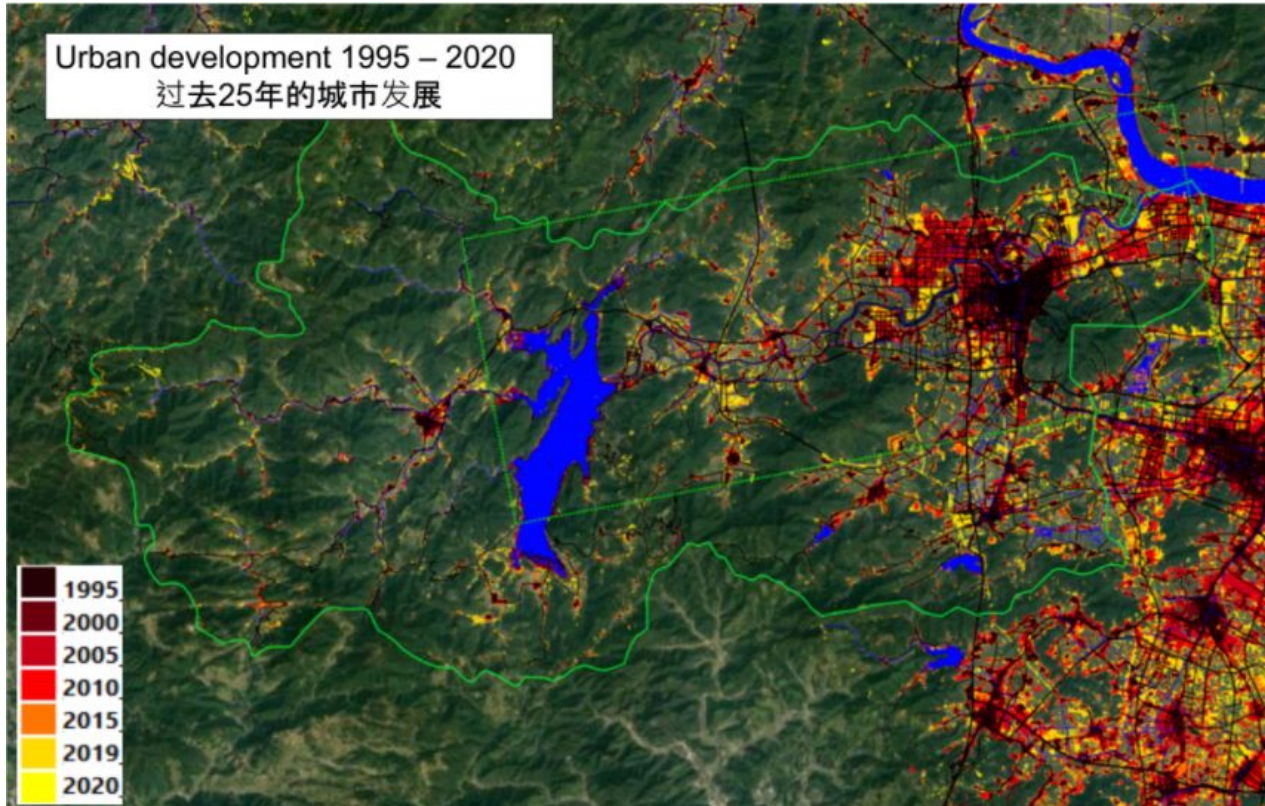# Interdisciplinary Approach 2: Urban-Rural Landscape Transformation

Research aim

- Decoding spatial typologies and scenario development

Research methodology

- The Rurban Landscape Approach

2003   2010   2014   2016   2020

Wanglinyang Village

URBAN - RURAL ASSEMBLY

Urban development 1995 – 2020
过去25年的城市发展

1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
2019
2020

Research Gap

- Unknown urbanisation impacts on ecosystems services and biodiversity in the rural areas

Research methodology

- GIS – land use model for the whole region

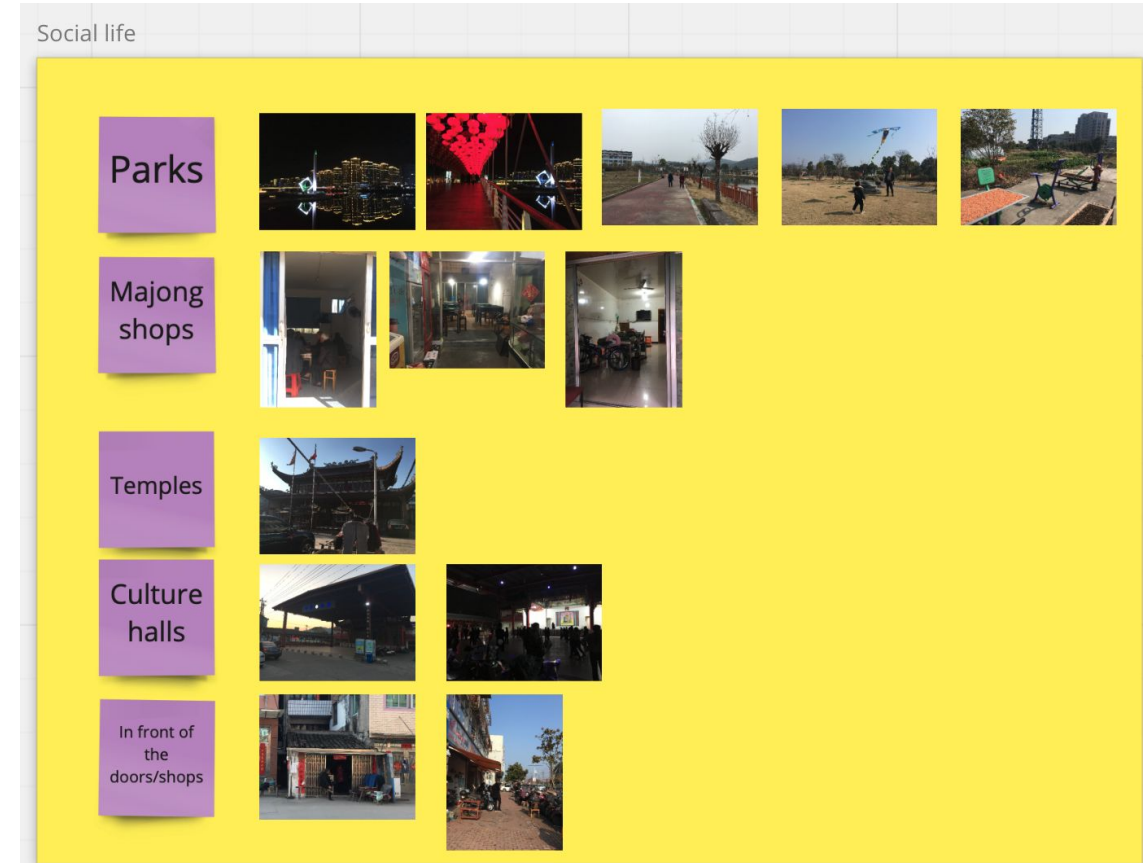- Assessment of biodiversity, water, recreation and local urban laboratory

Interdisciplinary Approach 4: Urban-rural migration, mobility & social inclusion
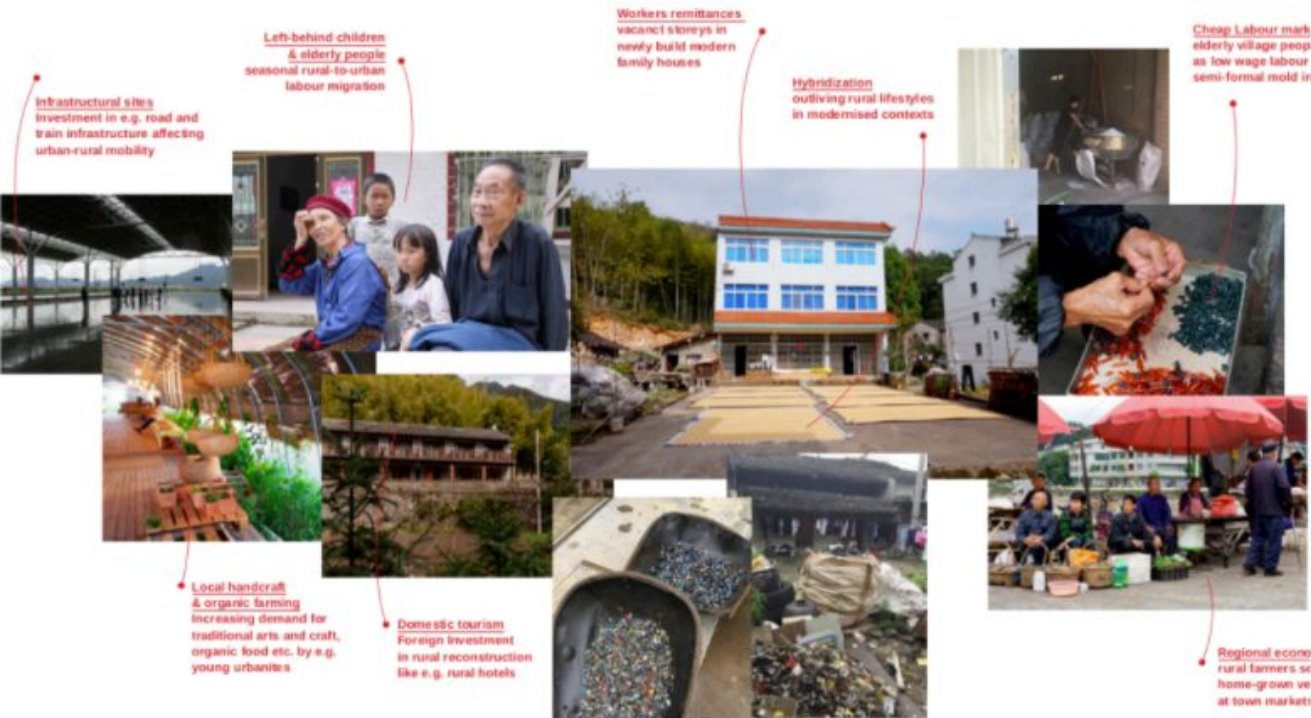
Research Context

- Inter- and intra- provincial migration have driven China's urbanisation

- Urban-rural interfaces characterised by socio-economic disparities and unequal service distributions

Research Aims

- Identify social groups, actor networks and (im)mobilities

- Map and describe spaces of segregation / inclusion

- Suggest approaches to increase possibilities for socio-spatial inclusion of the floating population

Interdisciplinary Approach 5: Urban-rural sociospatial practices
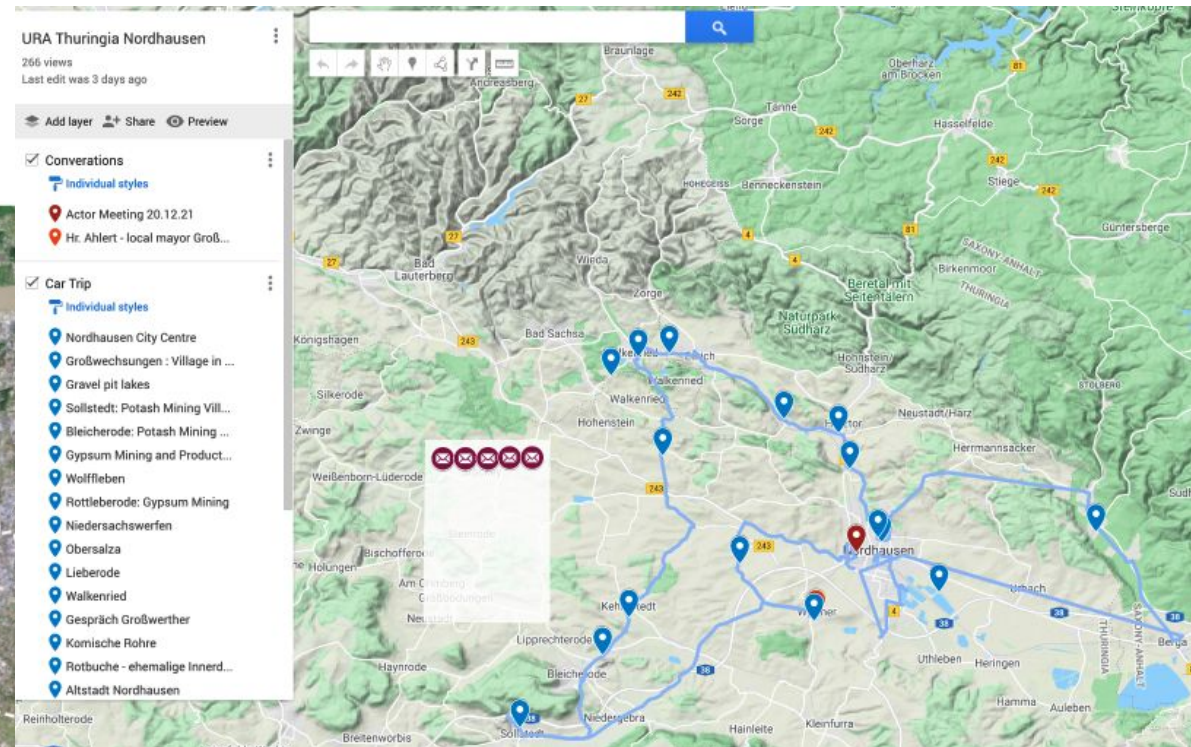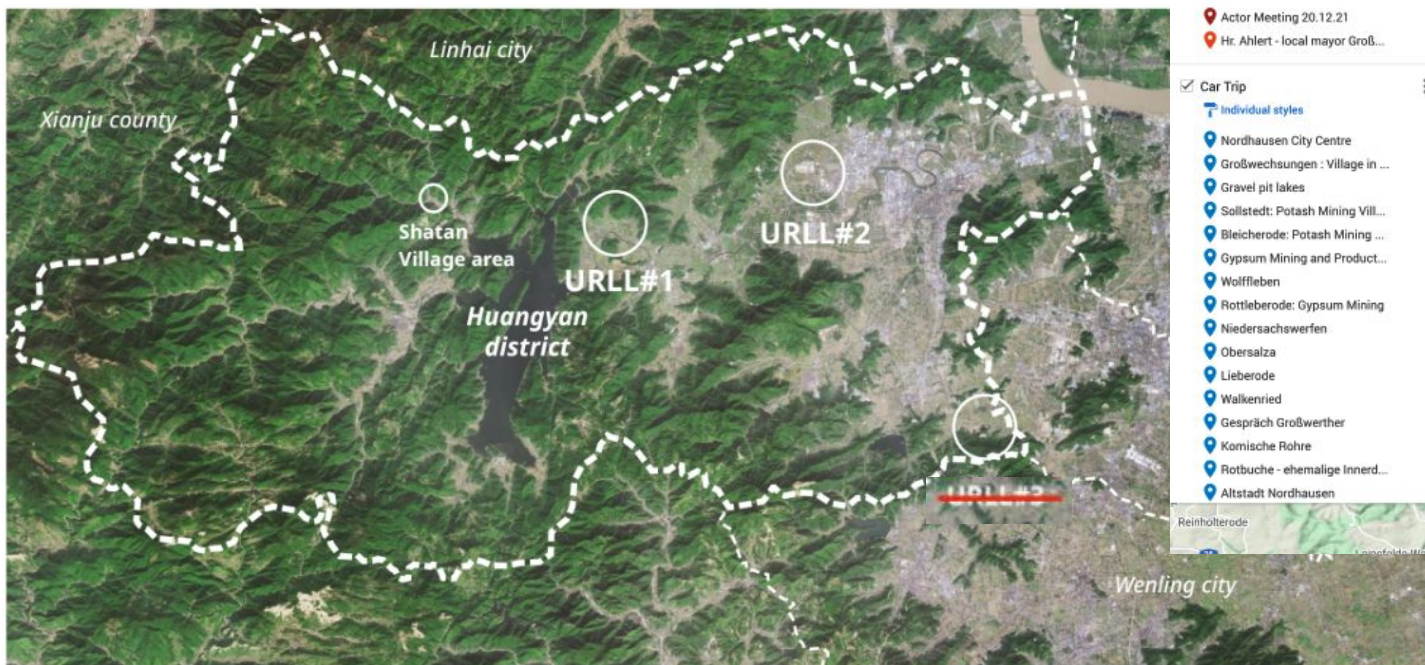

Research Context

- Socio-spatial practices are reinterpreting our traditional understanding of urban and rural livelihoods towards new forms of **hybrid, translocal, material and immaterial configurations** at the urban-rural interface in the Taizhou-Huangyan region and in Thüringen, Germany

Research Aims

- Actor-network analysis & GIS-based mapping

- Urban-rural spatial ethnographies

- Situated knowledge sets of key changemakers

3 Urban-Rural Living Labs

Three selected Urban-Rural Living Labs (URLLs), Taizhou-Huangyan region, Graphic: Habitat Unit, TU Berlin

Urban-Rural Living Lab #1, China

Organic waste disposal, wild rice harvesting, Beiyang Township,
Photo: CERT, TU Berlin

URRL#1 Beiyang Township Area: URA actions
URA在 "生活实验室1"–北洋镇的行动

- Stakeholder analysis and Material Flow Analysis (MFA) for agricultural sector (e.g. wild rice production)
- Spatial analysis of transforming urban-rural landscapes, typologies and ecosystems (GIS based)
- Qualitative research on transforming everyday socio-spatial practices and (trans-)local interrelations at the urban-rural interface (e.g. farming practices)

Aim: Develop future scenario (Raumbild) and project proposal addressing urban-rural integration through enhancing sustainable nutrient and waste cycles to support ecological food production and inclusive eco-tourism

URLL#2: Xinqian Urban Neighbourhood (Moulding Manufacturing)
"生活实验室2" 新前城市街道 (模具产业集聚区)

Risks
- Threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services (e.g. water, air and soil contamination)
- Lack in public space and green infrastructure
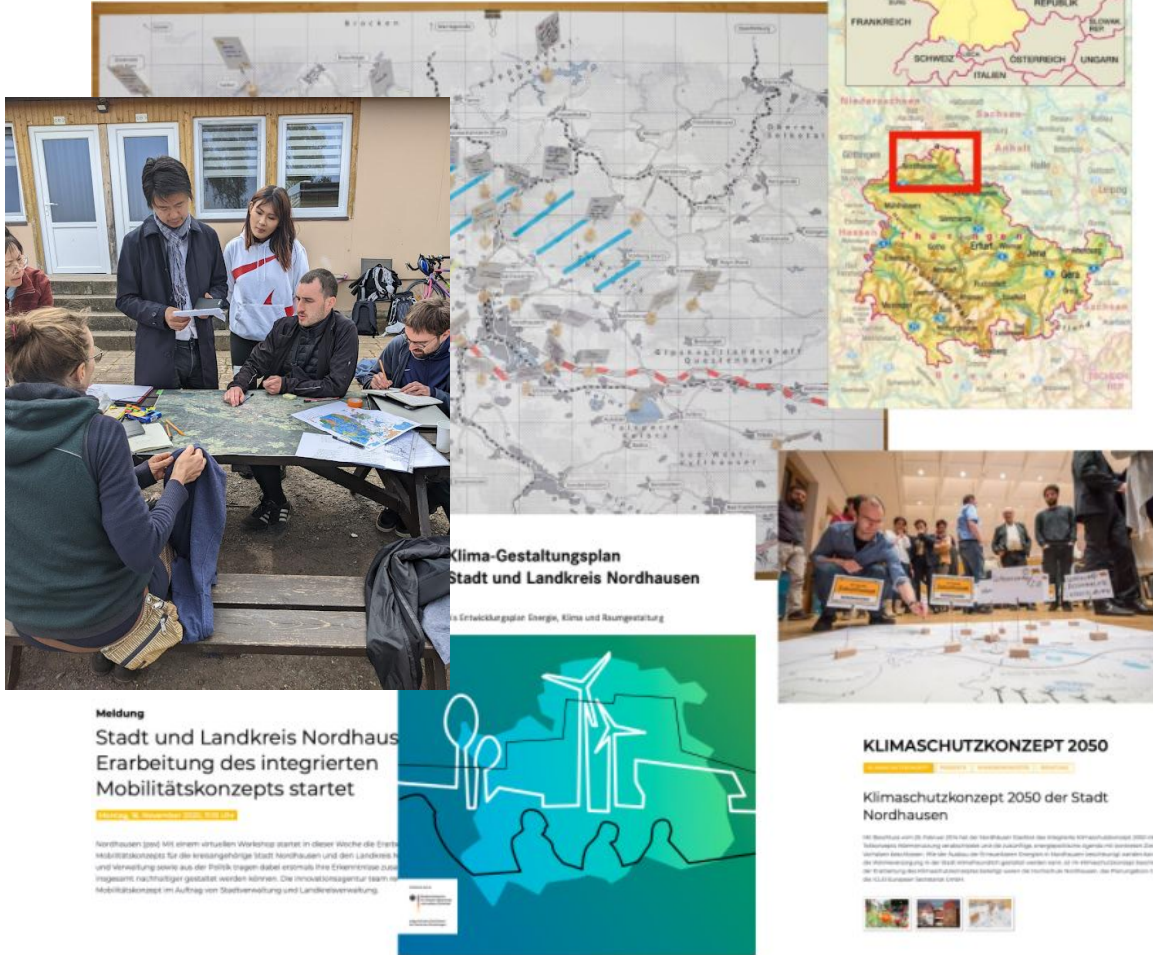- Housing and urban services in villages (including migrant workers)

Potentials
- Innovation potential of profitable globally-oriented businesses (e.g. organic plastics)
- Extended value chains: Multiple linkages between village populations/ migrants and businesses

Smart Moulding Town Development Plan
Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/205600744_756247

Urban-Rural Living Lab #3, Germany

URLL#3: Nordhausen region, Thüringen

• Similar dynamics in urban-rural transformation as in the Taizhou-Huangyan region (transformation of e.g. intricate water-settlement-patterns, cultural heritage, ecosystem services, food and energy flows, and socio-spatial practices)

• Numerous integrated development approaches already in place, or in process

• Pilot projects in the process of being implemented (e.g. climate district Nordhausen North, Sustainable Mobility concept „Werter Mobil" etc.)

• Promising and well experienced actor-constellations (e.g. Local Municipalities, Scientific institutions, International Building Exhibition, civil society like e.g. Energy Coops etc.)

Urban-Rural Nexus: New policies and collaborations

"Gaps between policy visions and policy knowledge: Concrete banks were believed by local government efficient for flood protection, however, not from a scientific point of view. Not only officials, but also the **general public** needs more knowledge of flood management."

— Suili Xiao

"Things are currently **government-led** at all levels, with limited stakeholder involvements."

— Maria and Yulin

"Sustainable rural areas require a systematic approach that **integrates policies** such as the environment and circular economy, as well as **tools** such as recycling and spatial planning. In particular, the dialogue mechanism of stakeholders should be strengthened."

— Bing Xue

"The recent hukou reform launched as is a **major step towards urban-rural integration**. However, we have observed a mismatch between policy and local perspectives on the ground."

— Ava Lynam

"When the **expertise of everyday people**, from farmers to migrant workers, is integrated into the planning process, the results are more sustainable and socially-just for the entire community at large."
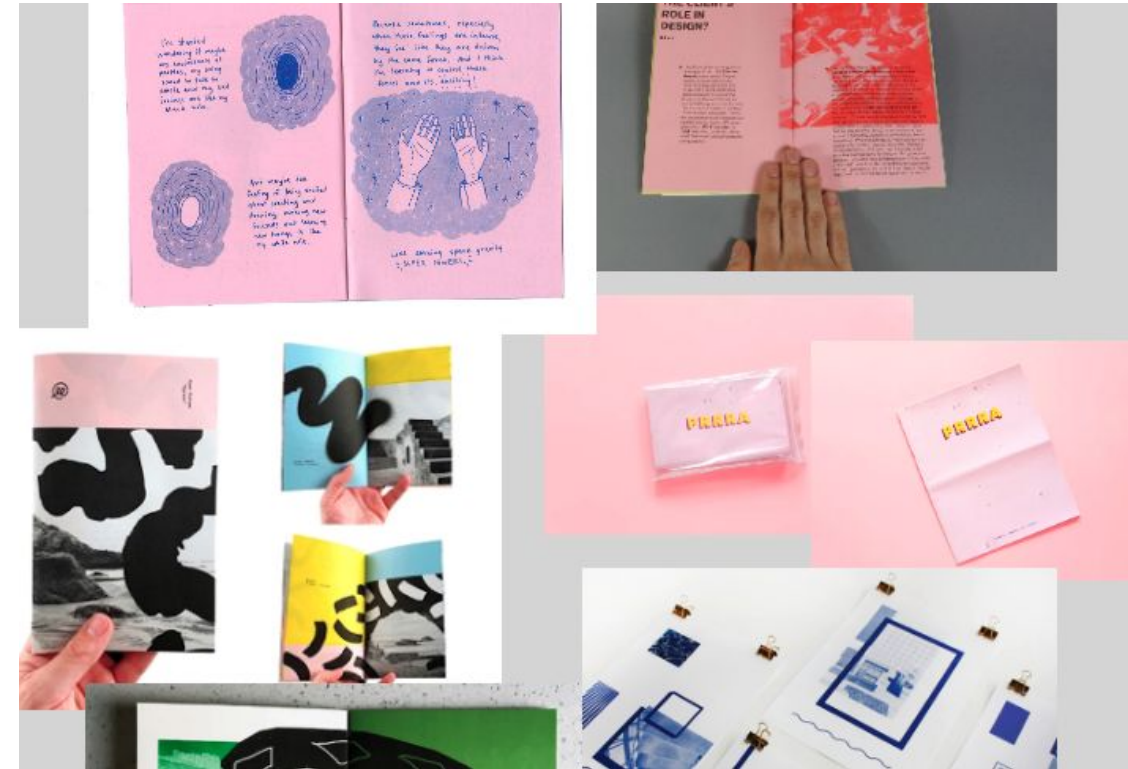
– Kit Braybrooke

Tools for collaboration: Science-policy dialogues, papers, zines…!

How to align urban-rural approaches between China and Germany, develop strategic tools, and set guiding principles that work across borders and disciplines?

Experimental initiatives like these help foster new means of transnational collaboration under difficult circumstances.

Thank you!

Dr Li Fan
Dr Kit Braybrooke

urbanruralassemly.com