TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPATIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA: A CASE STUDY OF JIANGSU PROVINCE

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities

2011

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td>Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Countryside Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agriculture Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Commission of European Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Communist Party of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCLG</td>
<td>Department of Communities and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETR</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIACT</td>
<td>Inter-ministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (France)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurostat</td>
<td>Statistical Office of the European Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAFF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOHURD</td>
<td>Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People’s Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBSC</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSRCP</td>
<td>New Socialist Rural Construction Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODPM</td>
<td>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTPI</td>
<td>Royal Town Planning Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEC</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVE</td>
<td>Town and Village Enterprise</td>
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ABSTRACT

Towards The Development of a Spatial Planning Framework for Rural Development in China: A Case Study of Jiangsu Province

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15 September 2011

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Abstract: After being neglected for two decades, rural areas in China are experiencing another wave of reform. There has been increasing attention from central government on rural issues and a series of rural resurgence policies were published with a central idea of ‘urban-rural integration and New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’ (State Council, 2010b). Planning as a policy tool to guide development has just began to cover rural areas in China. There is a need to develop a framework, both theoretically robust and deliverable, to guide rural planning in China. ‘Spatial planning’ has been widely adopted as a planning approach in Western Europe, including the UK, to achieve sustainable development. Hence, the research aims to use the concept of ‘spatial planning’ to identify potential ways to integrate rural areas into the complex planning system that currently exists in China. The research was carried out through a case study approach in three municipal cities in Jiangsu province, China.

The newly developed rural planning system in Jiangsu province mainly focuses on the development control of towns and villages, physical land use regulation and the renovation of settlements through town and village distribution planning and village planning. There is a lack of development planning for rural areas. The findings also show that the new urban and rural planning system generally fails to integrate urban and rural development, though in some developed areas more attention has been put on urban-rural integration planning. Moreover, it is found that, in many areas, the new urban and rural planning framework tends to be urban-centre-led and economically driven, which has led to the loss of rural landscape and characteristics. The research also identifies the weakness of planning at the local scale in coordinating policies and projects of different sectors. In addition, local government plays a leading role in the making and delivery of rural planning in China and, in some areas, local government activities in rural development and planning are much more a political response to the national and provincial government’s policy rather than the local demands. Based on these findings, the research provides some policy recommendations for modifying the current rural planning framework in China to overcome these problems in the short and long term by making reference to some of the key ideas of the spatial planning approach.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or other university or other institution of learning

Hui QIAN
September, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Looking back my four years’ PhD life, I am very grateful for all the encouraging, concern and support I have received throughout these years.

To my principle supervisor, Professor Cecilia Wong, she has my deepest thanks and gratitude. Thanks for her broad knowledge that always inspired my ideas, her patience in revising my writing and her encouragement that pulled me out of those stressful and upset researching days. Her support not only helped me with my thesis but also helped me to become strong and tough which I will cherish as a precious gift for ever. To my second supervisor, Dr Mark Baker, he also deserves big thanks from the bottom of my heart. He was always willing to help and give his best suggestions. Thanks for his help this thesis could finally come out smoothly. I also want to thank them for those happy times with them and Viola in their house. Those sweet memories are the colour in these four years of my life, alone and far away from my family. I would also like to thank Professor Hongyang Wang from Nanjing University. He was the person that encouraged me to start my academic life and was always there when I need help. I really feel lucky to have Cecilia, Mark and Hongyang around in my life. Without their support, I would not be able to finish my research.

Professor Gonghao Cui, Professor Jingxiang Zhang, Dr Zhendong Luo, and Dr Chunxiao Huang deserve special thanks. They have helped a lot for the fieldwork of my research. To other partners from ECURBS, I would like to thank you for supporting my research.

I also want to thank Dr. Adam Barker, Dr Philip Bell, Dr, Stephen Hincks and Dr Andreas Schulze-Bäing for your help with my research. To Kai, Brian, James, Ruth, Ally, Celesta, Ting-I, Rocco and others in the department, it was great to be friends with you. Thank you for those wonderful moments we spent together.

Finally, my sincere gratitude goes to my family. Dear Daddy, Mummy and my little brother, thank you for your support in my life. Your love is the spiritual pillar in my life abroad.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Since 1978, China has experienced substantial economic reform and associated social change. Under the transition from a plan-based economy to a market-based economy and a simultaneous open-door policy, China has sparked a rapid growth. Between 1978 and 2009, China’s GDP per capita grew from 381 to 25,575 RMB and average income per capita grew from 133.6 to 3,254.9 RMB in rural areas. The social welfare system also has experienced great improvement. According to Chinese Government Statistics, by the end of 2005, more than two hundred million people are covered by social insurance and other welfare systems.

The institutional reform in China has two milestones: the first is the 3rd conference of 11th NPC (National Population Congress) in 1978; and the second is Deng Xiaoping’s speech in south China in 1992. These help to demarcate two phases of the reform: the beginning stage was from the end of 1970s to early 1990s and the reform mainly happened in rural areas; and the second is from early 1990s to the present, which mainly focused on urban areas (Shi, 2002). The first stage of the reform did contribute to the development of the rural area and brought economic growth for the whole country. However, it is the second stage, the urban institutional reform that really drove China’s extraordinary growth. The rural area, on the other hand, experienced a severe depression during the second stage unlike its increased prosperity at the beginning of the reform. In the past twenty years or more, rural areas have fallen behind by their urban counterpart.
and have been marginalized in modern China. This means that the three decades reform in China, while making amazing economic progress, has led to severe developmental imbalances between urban and rural areas. Rural China now becomes a symbol of poverty. While China’s urban areas are among the most developed in the world, the low-level of rural development is the main obstacle on its way to be a fully developed country. The market-based economic system and open-door policy has pushed the underdeveloped rural China directly into the global market which tends to aggravate the plight of rural development. Recently the government has begun to realize the importance of rural development and has started to pay more attention to rural areas after many years of urban-focused policy. Some new policies have been introduced to address rural issues. For example, the government brought forward a ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’ to revive the development of countryside in 2005. The reduction of the urban-rural gap and the achievement of sustainable rural development has become one of the foremost priorities of central government’s policies.

In spite of this shift of government policy, planning is also rooted in the urban tradition and the countryside was not included in the formal planning system until 2008. The changing government emphasis on rural areas has left planners bewildered. Without a normative framework, they do not know how to approach planning to achieve sustainable development in rural areas. This greatly challenges the theoretical field of planning in China to develop a rational framework for its countryside planning.

It is against this changing policy context that this research focuses on developing a sustainable rural spatial planning framework to integrate the rural area into the planning
system to achieve a more sustainable future. It is, however, important to first highlight some background issues on rural development and rural planning in China.

1.1.1 Development dilemmas in rural China

There are two major changes to China’s rural areas since 1978: the transition from collectivism to a household-responsibility system; and the transition from a planned economy to a market-based economy. The first reform gave farmers the right to use the land and the second helped to bring a free market price to their produce, though still under state monitor to balance the price between agriculture and industrial products. The household-responsibility system resulted in a significant surplus workforce in rural areas, and with the constraint of household registration system, these people cannot freely move to find jobs in cities. The national policy at that time encouraged farmers to ‘leave the earth but not the countryside, enter the factories but not the cities’ to pursue economic betterment and prosperity. This had stimulated the boom of rural industry and Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs). These changes in rural areas at that time improved the agriculture production and the framer’s income and contributed to national economic growth, and were once considered as a big success of China’s reform. However, they failed to build a rational economic system for rural areas. Since the early 1990s, while cities were experiencing rapid growth, rural industries experienced a recession when failing to compete with urban industries and lost government support policies for its extensive development; the side-effects of the reform gradually came out with stagnated rural development. The dilemmas faced by rural areas include:
Chapter 1: Introduction

Lagging economic development

The early reform solved the subsistence problems for the peasants but did not help them to become richer. The agriculture technology and productivity in rural areas did not make much major improvement. This was partly related to the fact that the TVEs accounted for the majority of the government input into the rural area and there was not much resource to develop agriculture and rural infrastructure (Zhao and Wong, 2002). In addition, the household-responsibility system makes it difficult to have large scale agricultural production. So when the rural industry collapsed, agriculture still remained at low level and failed to be the new economic driver. Hence, since the early 1990s, the economic development of rural China has stagnated and the pattern was further exacerbated by exposure to the open market.

Growing environmental pressure

There are three environmental problems in rural China. First is the pressure caused by the low-level agricultural activities and improper land cultivation. Second, the water and soil are contaminated by the daily-life waste due to antiquated infrastructure. The third issue is pollution penetrated by rural industries including both the TVEs and some industrial parks due to urban sprawl (Liu, 2007; Yang, 2007). It is because most of China’s environmental policy and input are for urban areas, the environment problems in rural areas have been neglected and there is little environmental infrastructure in place. The environmental problems of rural areas have thus become major challenges to the government.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Shrinkage of arable land

According to national statistics, arable land is decreasing every year while the rural population is increasing. This conflict has become even more serious in recent years. The main reasons for this are caused by urban sprawl and the abundance of land by peasants to work in TVEs or migrate to work in cities. This problem does not only challenge the food-supply system, but also brings other economic and social problems.

Lack of a social welfare system

With a longstanding urban-rural dual system, there is a great inequality between the urban and rural welfare systems. According to national statistics, while about 70 percent of the whole population live in rural areas, only 10 percent of the national social welfare input is used in rural areas. The input per capital in urban areas is 20 times of that in rural areas. Most of peasants in China are not covered by the social welfare system.

Large unstable migration

Since the middle 1980s, more and more peasants tend to work in cities to pursue more income. Some studies estimated that about one third of the present urban population are rural migrants (Zhao and Wong 2002). This flow of people from rural to urban areas, on the one hand contributes to the construction of the cities, but on the other hand brings development problems for both urban and rural areas. For urban areas, these people become a new development pressure; most of them are not covered by the social service system. For rural areas, the migration of these people indicates a loss of workforce which aggravates agricultural development pressures and the abandonment of farmland.
and also causes a lot of social problems such as social conflict in urban areas and an aging society in rural areas.

1.1.2 Rural areas: the missing link in the stationary planning system

In China, rural areas were not covered by the statutory planning system until 2008 when the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ was published. According to the 1989 ‘Urban Planning Act’ (the only Act for China’s planning) with effect from April 1st 1990, the target area of planning includes ‘city districts, inner suburban districts and those areas needed for urban development and construction within the city administration region’ (‘Urban Planning Act, 1989’ Para. 1.3). The Ministry of Construction (MOC)\(^1\) promulgated a ‘Town and Village Planning Criteria’ in 1994, and later substituted it with a new ‘Town and Village Planning Method’ in 2000. However, these two documents are for the construction of the town and village. Although in some places, local governments make ‘town and village system planning’ and ‘town and village construction planning’ for rural areas, they seldom follow this method. In addition, neither of these two types of planning is included in the official planning system. The new planning system established in the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008’ includes rural villages in the planning system. However, the guidance on the making of these plans is very simple and the link between urban and rural planning is weak. Hence, there is no integrated planning for the development of rural areas as a whole. Since the 1990s, some local planning practice tried to extend the planning system to rural areas,

\(^1\) MOC is now replaced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of People’s Republic of China (MOHURD)
but most of them just covered rural areas in the urban fringe, and simply applied urban planning frameworks to these areas. This means the coverage is both patchy and ad hoc. Under the central government’s new rural construction programme in 2005, a lot of new rural planning projects were introduced at different scales; all these plans are different to each other in terms of aims, contents and methods. The gaps in planning practice call for the development of theoretical ideas to help understand and define more appropriate ways to integrate rural areas into the planning system. The new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008’ has made some progress, but there have not been any substantive outcomes yet.
1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to examine alternative approaches to develop a spatial planning framework for rural development in China. The focus will be on how to apply the concept of ‘spatial planning’ to integrate rural areas into the complex planning system in China to achieve sustainable rural development. To achieve this, the research addresses five main objectives:

- To review the changing context for rural development in China since the ‘Open Door’ Policy and socio-economic reforms in 1978, and to identify the emerging issues in rural development in China.
- To review the trends and key issues of rural development in the EU and some of its member states and to identify different approaches used to address rural development issues.
- To review different institutional frameworks and forms of planning from the western experience that could be used to integrate rural areas with urban areas to achieve the vision of sustainable development in China.
- To examine the changing institutional structure of the complex planning system in China and to ascertain the gaps and weaknesses of the system in addressing rural issues.
- To explore the strengths and weaknesses of the existing planning framework in China from the perspective of key actors at different government levels via a case study approach, and to assess to what extent the western planning framework could be applied in China.
• To synthesize the findings and to make recommendations on future development of a rural planning framework in China to address the need for sustainable rural development.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural areas have been experiencing substantial changes over the past 50 years. The changes are clearly evident in the physical landscape, such as the sprawl of settlements and industries, different forms of building, the extension of new roads and infrastructure, new patterns of fields, and deforestation. However, more importantly, structural changes are also taking place. Rural society has transformed by changing economic activities and demographics. All these factors are reshaping the rural space and prove the need to reassess traditional thinking on rurality and rural development. At the same time, the state is rethinking the mode of intervention in the rural economy and society triggering different local responses.

This chapter first briefly reviews western theories on the definition of ‘rural areas’. Following that, it considers recent structural changes in rural areas of western countries under the new context of globalisation. Finally, it reviews recent planning reforms in relation to rural development under the influence of the ‘spatial planning approach’ in EU and some of its member states.
2.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF RURAL AREAS

How to define ‘rural areas’ or ‘rurality’ is very important because it helps to set the key tone for plan-making. However, the definition of rural areas has been a matter of longstanding debates. Hence, it is not easy to find a normative definition. There are broadly four types of approaches: first, the descriptive approach which focuses on the non-urban characteristics or important elements of rural identities; the second approach is from a political-economic perspective which tends to question the rural areas’s representation of distinct localities; the third approach highlights rurality as a social construction; and finally, the deconstructionist approach which claims that symbols become detached from referential moorings in a post-modern time and those scholars in this approach try to reflect the detachment of social construction and actual geography of daily life in rural areas (Cloke and Goodwin, 1993; Cloke and Thrift, 1994; Phillips, 1998; Bengs and Schmidt-Thome, 2004). Not all of these different notions of rural definition are directly linked with the purpose of planning, though they do have some influence on the interpretations of rurality in practice (Murdoch and Pratt, 1993; Cloke and Little, 1997; Bengs and Schmidt-Thome, 2004). Moreover, the defining of rural areas has also evolved with the spatial transformation of urban and rural areas during the process of urbanisation, in accordance with the changes of urban-rural relationship. Briefly, the definition of rural areas has experienced three stages: the urban-rural dichotomy; urban-rural combination with urban bias; and urban-rural integration (Schulz-Bäing, 2007). Definition in each stage focuses on different contents. The strict differences in economic, social, environmental and spatial conditions between cities and countryside during the pre-industrialisation and pre-urbanisation led to a strong urban-rural dichotomy. During this period, most of the definition focuses on physical
characteristics, for example the simple ‘bricks and mortar’ approach which defines the continuously built-up areas as urban and everything else as rural. Later, as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation, the concentration to cities caused development problems and disorder of cities. The fast growth of urban areas has also influenced the development and spatial structure of their rural counterparts especially the countryside in periphery areas. All these changes suggested that the traditional perception of urban-rural separation was outdated. The researchers started to seek solutions from a regional perspective such as the early ‘Garden City’ theory of Howard (1965) to combine the advantages of urban and rural areas. More attention was paid to urban and rural linkages as more and more flows of people, goods and information were noticed between urban and rural areas (Tacoli, 2003). Rural areas were under the influence of urban economic and social representations which shaped new rural spatial structures. All these have created a new discourse for urban and rural definition which went beyond the former urban-rural dichotomy and the simple geographic morphology. Most of the definitions in this period began to take account of the contents of economic and social characteristics of rural areas. However, the early idea of an urban-rural dichotomy has influenced urban and rural research for a long time. Urban and rural definitions in this period still had some urban-bias and tried to build an urban-rural hierarchal system. The attention was mainly on rural urbanity, the economic, social and cultural impact on rural settlements of the city-regions, metropolitan areas and so on. New terms, such as ‘spaces of flow’ (Castells, 1996) and ‘emergent city’ (Lacour and Puissant, 2007), were developed to explain the changes to rural settlements. With the recent changes such as the ‘post-productivist’ mode (Halfacree, 1997) and gentrification of rural areas, the rural research has entered into the third phase. The process of counter-urbanisation has caused the deterioration of the inner city and enhanced the development burden in rural
areas. The rationalisation and modernisation of rural areas in the past years was expected to lead to the homogenous rural areas and the loss of their distinctive traits. The new attention in this phase includes the following two points. First, there is a criticism on classifying rural areas as one broad category. Instead of just urban-rural differences, more attention is paid to the intra-differences of rural areas (Schulze-Bäing, 2007). Against the uniformity, local distinctiveness becomes more significant in defining rural areas. Secondly, more attention is paid to the cultural perspective. Rural areas are also seen as a representation of ideal way of life that is different from the urban lifestyle. This is especially important in Britain where there is a long history of a traditional vision of the ‘rural idyll’.

In practice, the defining of rural areas is also influenced by the spatial scale and the data available. Under the traditional influence of urban-rural dichotomy, during the past years, most of the rural definitions in practice have been based on the geographic boundaries or eco-social indicators that can identify urban-rural differences such as population density. However, recent years have seen a movement toward more complex classification systems of urban and rural definition beyond the former dichotomy approach. These new systems can be divided into two major types: differentiated ordinal and nominal classifications (Schulze-Bäing, 2007). The definition also differs in differential cultural contexts. Each member state has its own classification system, and even the definition used in EU documents may also have different interpretations. The ESDP (EC, 1999), an important document on planning, does not give an explicit definition either. Table 2-1 shows some definitions of rural areas in EU and some of its member states.
Table 2-1: Definition of rural areas in EU and some of its member states

| EU (OECD, 2005) | No harmonized definition, most times using OECD’s definition (2005):
|                 | (1) Local units are identified as rural if their population density is below 150 persons per square kilometre.
|                 | (2) If more than 50% of the population of the region is living in rural communities, the region is identified as Predominantly Rural Region (PR); If 15% to 50% of the population of the region is living in rural communities, the region is identified as Intermediate Region (IR); If less than 15% of the population of the region is living in rural communities, the region is identified as Predominantly Urban Region (PU);
|                 | (3) If in a PR region, there is an urban centre with a population larger than 200,000 representing no less than 25% of the regional population, then it is re-identified as IR; If in a IR region, there is an urban centre with a population larger than 500,000 representing no less than 25% of the regional population, then it is re-identified as PU |
| Britain         | Based on hectare grid squares, two measurement criteria (figure 2-1):
| England and Wales (ONS, 2004) | (1) Settlement form: each hectare grid square is associated with a particular settlement type: dispersed dwellings, hamlet, village, small town, urban fringe and urban (>10K population)
|                     | (2) Sparsity: each hectare grid square is given a sparsity score based on the number of households in surrounding hectare squares p to a distance of 30km. The definition classifies in different spatial scale of Output Areas, Wards and Super Output Areas. |
| Scotland        | The countryside and settlements of 3,000 population or less |
| France          | Communes with a population less than 2,000 are defined as rural |
| Netherland      | Green areas and Non-urban areas |
| Ireland         | Spatial units consisting of small towns and villages, with |
populations of less than 1,500 or 3,000 inhabitants respectively and their hinterlands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Regions with a population density of 100 inhabitants per square kilometre with a urban centre of 100,000 and more and regions with a population density of below 150 inhabitants per square kilometre without a urban centre of 100,000 or more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>100 inhabitants per square kilometre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2-1:** The broad structure of urban-rural classification in England & Wales

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2004

From Table 2-1, it can be seen that population size and density are still the major criteria to define rural areas. Due to different national contexts, the size criteria and the basic territorial units differ from one country to another. Some definitions are based on the local unit level (e.g. France and Ireland), while others (e.g. EU and German) are based on the regional level. The definitions used in EU and England & Wales go further than physical demographic characteristics. It is also argued that the OECD approach depends too much on the size of local unite and neglects the characteristics of adjacent areas (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2008). Besides, they also emphasize the importance of
remoteness in reflecting intra-differences of rural areas. Indicators such as commute
time to measure the remoteness of countryside compared to city centres are suggested to
be included in defining the urban-rural category (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2008). The new
ONS definition in England & Wales includes a wider spatial context than settlements
taking into account eco-social characteristics and other factors that are seen as important
rural characteristics (DEFRA and MAFF, 2004). It also connects well with the
classification for policy typology, which will be discussed in the next section. However
at small spatial scales, more detailed categories can be used to classifying the different
spaces. Based on the census, a category of areas differentiated by the socio-economic
structure of the population living in respective areas is developed (Vickers, Rees and
Birkin, 2005). It differentiated urban and rural areas into seven categories: ‘blue collar
circumstances’, ‘typical traits and Multicultural’, during which the cluster ‘countryside’
is further divided into three types: ‘village life’, ‘agriculture’ and ‘accessible
countryside’. This classification of urban and rural areas in England & Wales is more
sophisticated than the definitions of other member states as an example of the definition
approach in third phase. A series of variables in economic, social, demographic, cultural,
local traits and so on are developed to define local areas (Figure 2-2).
Figure 2-2: An example of variables used to classify urban-rural group

Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2005

The Scottish definition is similar. By separating the settlements and countryside, it takes into account of the different eco-social and environmental characteristics of rural areas from their urban counterparts. Hence it is important for the Scottish definition to add a detailed explanation for the ‘countryside’. Netherlands is considered to be most urbanised country in EU (OECD, 2008). It is difficult to find from its planning documents an explicit definition for rural areas. The most words used for rural areas are ‘green areas’ and ‘non-urban areas’. It represents partly the functions of rural areas for urban development, which is important but again not enough to describe rural areas.
2.2 THE PROCESS OF RURAL RESTRUCTURING

2.2.1 Globalisation and rural areas

Many research studies have explored ‘globalisation’ in different contexts (For example see: Harvey 1990; Carnoy et al, 1993; Sklair 1997; Sassen 1996). ‘Globalisation’ is widely seen as a process driven by a combination of economic, socio-cultural, political and technological forces. It is a process in which different localities are interconnected and hence local phenomenon are transformed into a global dimension. The most important tenet is the change of global economic structure which is gradually dominated by the emerging ‘international capitalist classes’ of transnational corporations as well as international global institutes like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Barnet and Cavanagh, 1994; Dicken, 1998; Bruinsma, 2003). These supra-national institutions are the key driving forces that shape contemporary patterns of socio-economic development. This also signals the concomitant weakening of the national state’s power to intervene in local economic development. The interaction of economic power and political institutions has created tensions in the regulatory structure of global economic systems and shifted the power structure between institutions of different spatial levels. Globalisation also has a cultural dimension which is seen as a homogenization process of different values, the spread and enforcement of certain western values and principles on a global scale (Woods, 2005).

However, the focus here is globalisation’s influence on rural development. Research on this topic tends to focus on the impact mainly on the agro-food system (McMichael,
Moreover, the impact of globalisation is multi-dimensional: global economy, hyper-mobility in globalisation and cultural globalisation (Friedman, 1994; Curtis, 2001).

Globalisation has caused a time-space compression in the modern era which results in the centralization of control, increased flexibility of production and the market, and hence the decentralization of space (Harvey, 1990; Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). This places significant impact on the world agro-food system. Global corporations (including the global retailers) have become the most powerful actors who organize the market supply and the production process. New relationships are created between them, consumers and producers through capital accumulation, material investment, new knowledge and technology (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). The new global food system is characterised by mass production for mass consumption. With the emergence of global retailers, the food supply and distribution networks have been restructured and fostered disconnection of the food system from places and time (Klopperburg et al, 1996). The present food system excels at breaking apart foods into ingredients that can be sourced from different places around the world. In such a way, local farmers are integrated into the world food production systems only as the growers of those ingredients for global corporations. In this food system, farmers are specializing in the production of one sort of crop or animal and rely on the standardized production methods (Barndt, 1999; Bonanno and Constance, 2001; Pritchard and Burch, 2003). All these changes have broken the traditional rural economic structure by changing the local rural economy into a consumption-oriented one. In addition, local markets in many rural areas have been replaced by global retailers – the global supermarket. This has also influenced the lifestyles of local people. However, it is also argued that, in the current
agro-food system, much knowledge on agriculture and food, from planting, managing with nature, to cooking skills and even the taste, is lost (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002). The standardized mass production system means it becomes more difficult to serve smaller and differentiated markets. This creates tension in the global-local relationship as more and more people today prefer seasonable, organic and local grown food, have concerns about food safety and the ecological soundness of the industrialised food system, and pay more attention to economic and social justice of smaller farmers and rural communities (Dudley, 2000; Woods, 2005). In order to be competitive, local rural areas face the problem of either engaging in the global mass food production system based on technologies and capital to survive on the margins or focusing on the ‘product-oriented, consumer-driven and end-user approach’ to fit the local niche market (which is currently a rather small) (Drabenstott, 2002).

Since rural areas are integrated into the global system, there is a concomitant diminution of national power over local rural economies. International institutions such as the WTO become the most powerful architects over the regulatory framework in rural localities. Meanwhile, individual farms and rural communities become more important and active in organising their rural economy in response to the demands of the global network (Woods, 2005).

The mobility of information, commodities and capital are more important, the people have also transformed the rural landscape as the process of globalisation has resulted in the compression of space (Edwards and Usher, 2000). With the development of transportation and communication systems and the more relaxed policy, people can
travel freely around the world and the global labour market has thus become more complicated. Mass migration has been a significant driving force in rural restructuring for a long time. The global mobility of people has changed the traditional migration structure in rural areas. The migration in rural areas today is not only about mass out-migration but also in-migration. The origination and destination of the migrants are not only within nearby urban areas but in different parts of the nation and even the world.

Two major types of in-migration to rural areas are found. The first group is the international agriculture workers in the labour-intensive farms, who tend to be in either seasonal or long term. It was estimated that 69 percent of the seasonal farmer workers in the United States are not American, most of whom are from Mexico (Mitchell, 1996). The other type of in-migration consists of those who seek a different life style. This typically includes commuters who choose to live in the rural areas or buy a second home in rural areas. The second is related to the global mobility of people. For instance, more and more British people have purchased a second property in rural France (Hoggart and Buller, 1995). These changes suggest that people in rural areas today are less tied to a particular place than before. Such human mobility and flows in rural areas have led to changes in rural society and sometime led to conflicts with the native population expressed in cultural, ethnic, and language tensions.

The third influence that globalisation has on rural areas is on culture. First, this is about the influence on people’s image of rural areas or ‘rurality’. Most people, especially the younger generation, get their rural images from books, internet, movies, and TV programmes instead of real countryside life experiences (Hanbury-Tension, 1997). But the rural life portrayed in these mass media ways is a stylised one that is very different from reality and ignores regional distinctions (Woods, 2002). This can lead to a lack of
knowledge on rural life and rural condition, and may cause conflicts over practices in rural areas. Meanwhile, global culture also impacts on rural development. Western values and principles have spread rapidly on a global scale to different localities and have been established as the mainstream culture. Some of these values bear resonance to those of rural areas, for example, the protection of the natural environment, the promotion of animal rights, and the increasing attention on food safety and organic farming (Woods, 2005). These values influence the activities of local rural people when they are put into practice, and sometimes they are in conflicts with the local traditions or production styles.

In summary, under the influence of globalisation, rural development has become more diversified and shaped by international forces and is less constrained by factors at a local and regional scale. This means the future trajectory of rural development becomes more complicated. Following this, the next section will discuss the complicated restructuring process experienced by rural areas under the influences of globalisation.
2.2.2 Process and issues of recent rural restructuring

Rural areas are seen as evolving into a new era of ‘consumption countryside’ (Marsden, 1999) or ‘post-productivist countryside’ (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Halfacree, 1997). A full-scale of socio-economic restructuring process has been taking place which impacts on the economic, social, cultural and spatial dimension of rural development.

Rural economic restructuring

Agriculture

Traditionally, the rural economy is closely connected to the natural environment and the production of primary goods while the urban economy is preoccupied with manufacturing and service sectors. The restructuring process in rural areas is seen as the result of the continuous evolution of (Woods, 2005): the productivist agriculture, the farm crisis and the post-productivist transition (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Halfacree, 1997). In the productivist agricultural time, the production system of agriculture has undergone structural change under the influence of the agro-food system in the process of globalisation and modernisation. It moved from the traditional parameters of local nature, social and other factors. Instead, it is reoriented by the market demand system, and increasingly depends on a complex web of international agro-food companies, global retailers and other market agencies. Their control, intertwined with the state agricultural policy, has made a new ‘social-technical regime’ (Rip and Kemp, 1998; Van de Ploeg, 2006) as a dominant regulation mechanism on agriculture production. Agriculture in this period is characterised by changes in intensification, concentration and specialization (Bowler, 1985; Ilbery and Bowler, 1998). Based on his own literature
review, Woods (2005: 47, 48) defines these changes as: intensification aims to maximise the agricultural productivity by investment in agricultural machinery, infrastructure systems, new chemical fertilizers, biological and other scientific technologies; concentration is through the reorganisation of local and regional farms to create large farm units, which aim to reduce the production cost through the economies of scale effect; and finally, specialisation leads to standardisation of production methods and remoulds traditional agricultural geographical patterns. Local farms gradually specialise in producing one type of product and are re-organised as part of the global food producing line. As a result, in the socio-technical regime of the productivist period, agriculture has undergone the process of capitalisation and commoditisation. It has gradually been detached from space and has become a universal standardised activity instead of traditional localised one (Bonanno and Constance, 2001; Pritchard and Burch, 2003). These changes, while improving agricultural productivity, have also caused negative consequences. First, there is the impact on the rural environment and physical landscape, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Secondly, as agriculture was detached from space, ties between agriculture and the local community, both in the labour market and consumption market, were weakened. However, the strongest negative impact is found in agriculture itself as modernisation has led to the crisis of overproduction in most developed countries (Ilbery, 1998). Governments have to intervene in the market by buying surplus products, which results in an increasing fiscal burden and fierce competition. Mega-farms which are economically effective, however, gain the advantage over small farms in the competition. The result is the loss of many small farms with limited resources, which directly leads to a reduction of wealth of the local rural communities. The specialisation of product makes the local agriculture sector vulnerable to the changes (Van De Ploeg, 2006). Moreover, the dominance of the
agricultural production system by mega-farms is proved to make local economy vulnerable. Unlike small family farms, mega-farms will choose to cease production and shift capital and resources to other products or even sectors when the profit margin of the current products is too low, which tend to be underpinned by the changes in the common market. When more people begin to think about issues like food safety and quality, ecological impact, and economic and social justice to the small farm holders, an increasing number of niche markets start to appear to bridge the market gap that the mass supply system fails to meet. The response to the agricultural crisis is labelled as the ‘post-productivist’ restructuring. In fact, though the phrase ‘post-productivist’ is widely used, it is hard to find an explicit definition for it. It tends to be used to describe the most recent changes that move away from the modernized characteristics. However, the ‘post-productivist’ transition of agriculture in these discussions has some common trends. Woods (2005) characterised the process as the extensification and diversification of agriculture, with more attention placed on countryside stewardship and value-adding on agricultural products. Extensification, as a counter activity to intensification, calls for cutting down the external inputs including capital and chemical and artificial resources in agriculture and promoting farming economically through the development and reproduction of internal resources. This style of farming pays more attention to sustainable food production and the viability of small farms. Diversification can be understood as the way to increase economical efficiency through plural-activity. It means not only the development of non-traditional enterprises on the farm but also the introduction of off-farm resources or activities which can increase the income gained from agriculture (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998). The emphasis on countryside stewardship actually can be considered as another type of diversification. It recognizes other roles that agriculture can play in rural development besides primary production. For example,
it can contribute to rural landscape, natural values, and preservation of the rural idyll by encouraging farmers to restore hedgerows, grass-lands, and ponds to improve the craftsmanship of local farmers. More important, all these changes will enhance the value of products, mostly by specializing in quality ‘regional branded’ produce that can be sold at premium prices.

In summary, ‘post-productivist’ transition can be understood as a reconsideration and reorganization of agricultural resources, and a process of ‘broadening’ and ‘deepening’ of agricultural development. During the process, the previously neglected cultural, ecological and social resources are brought back to agriculture, which changes the intrinsic pattern of agricultural development. The reintegration of cultural, ecological and social capital into agriculture is also described as the repositioning, extended re-grounding and self-regulation of agriculture as responses to the crisis brought by the productivist farming style.

**Manufacturing**

It is important to note that manufacturing jobs in rural areas have significantly increased since 1940s following the urban-rural shift in manufacturing. With the changes in agriculture, manufacturing has been playing an increasing important role in the rural economy. Due to the process of modernisation and technical innovation, the manufacturing production system becomes more flexible. Firms are more ‘foot-loose’ in their production location and shift production to places where they can minimise production costs to maximise profits. These destinations tend to be rural areas as well as developing countries. The decentralization of manufacturing to rural areas is a
complicated process. Based on the analysis of empirical observation from developed countries, theories have been developed to explain the basic reasons for the shift such as the production cost theory (Tyler, Moor and Rhodes, 1988), filter-down theory (Markusen, 1985), constrained location theory (Fothergill and Gudgin, 1982; Fothergill, Kitson, and Monk 1985), capital restructuring theory (Dunford, 1979; Walker and Storper, 1981) and residential preference theory (Gould and Keeble, 1984). Though expressed in different terms, most of these theories emphasis the advantages of rural areas in cutting down production costs such as in labour and resource costs compared to urban areas. Besides this, the capital restructuring theory (Dunford, 1979; Walker and Storper, 1981) also highlights that the innovation and technological changes reduce the dependence on agglomerated skilled labour in urban areas. The filter-down theory (Markusen, 1985) future links this to the moving of aging industries to lower cost rural areas while the constrained location theory highlights the availability of space in rural areas for expansion of firms driven by continuing displacement of labour by machinery. Moreover, the amenity of the countryside is also considered by residential preference theory (Gould and Keeble, 1984) as an attractive factor for manufacturing. However, these theories have not been widely accepted as they are considered to be partial focusing on different specific aspect of the comparative advantages of rural areas.

A new series of theories emerged in the 1990s to understand the key factors facilitating rural industrialization from a more holistic perspective. The ‘enterprising behaviour theory’ developed by Keeble and Tyler (1995) suggests that industry in accessible rural areas can benefit from favourable innovative milieu and succeed with innovative business strategies. The ‘constrained behaviour’ theory, developed by North and Smallbone (1996), highlights the constraints of remote rural areas on innovative milieu
and suggests labour intensive development strategies for such rural areas. Compared with the theories in the 1980s, which focus on comparative advantages of rural areas to their urban counterparts, these theories recognize the spatial diversification and characteristics of different rural industries and attempt to identify the broad context that shapes these rural economies. However, these theories simplify the relationship between ‘context’ and ‘outcome’ and are limited to the idea of ‘environmental determinism’.

Based on empirical research, Jarvis and Dunham (2003) developed a more critical perspective to see the development of rural industry being influenced by both the structural environment and the contingent environment. The structural environment refers to the broad social, economic and political context and three types of relationship are important to rural industry (production – consumption, supply – demand, and governance in local, national and international scales). The contingent environment refers to both personal characteristics of individual decision-makers and the local conditions prevailing outside individual establishments such as the characteristics of local areas. The nature of individual organization, the nature of products and markets, institutional support and the wider competitive environment are seen as four important factors in the contingent environment (Jarvis and Dunham, 2003) (see Figure 2-3).
Figure 2-3: The decision making process of rural manufactory development

Sources: Jarvis and Dunham, 2003 (Page: 253)

Rural manufacturing has its own characteristics as reflected in the process of urban-rural shift. First of all, the manufacturing shift from urban to rural areas is sector specific and tends to be associated with light engineering, high-tech industries, and niche goods production (Woods, 2005). These new manufacturing industries gradually substitute the traditional rural sectors such as food processing, timber production, and textile to be the mainstream of rural industry. Most of these new sectors are less dependent on local resources and are not locally owned, which weakens the link with their local communities, except for its contribution to local employment. Secondly, the growth of rural manufacturing and its importance differs from region to region. Manufacturing in accessible rural areas tends to be more innovative while those in remote rural areas are
more labour intensive (Patterson and Anderson, 2003). The third characteristic that rural manufacturing has are the constraints they face, in particular, the less accessible of transportation and the lack of suitable skilled and professionally trained staff. Fourth, rural manufacturing is more dependent on export markets than their urban counterparts because of the limited size of local rural markets and their distance from the main centres of population. Finally, while cheap production costs facilitates the urban-rural manufacturing shift, it also makes rural manufacturing more vulnerable when competing with developing countries. If the local area fails to build up its own endogenous capacity during the process of rural industrialization, any corporation shifts to the developing country will result in a large amount of jobless people and derelict environments.

**Tertiary sectors and new economic activities**

Recent years have seen a steady increase in service sector activities in most rural areas, while rural manufacturing has experienced a fluctuation period. Tertiary sector now plays an increasingly important role in rural economic development and has become a major part of local employment. One of the main reasons for the prosperous rural tertiary sector is increasing government attention on greater the coverage of public services in rural areas such as schools, hospital and other service organizations (Gallent et al, 2008). This has contributed to an increase of employment in the public service sector.

The restructuring of the agricultural sector in rural areas means that many new economic activities such as tourism (including the leisure and related recreation
activities) has become the main growth sector. The natural distinct cultural, historic and ethnic characteristics of rural areas offer ‘a natural development path’ for rural Europe, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas (Hegarty and Prezborska, 2005). Rural tourism is considered as a potential way of regeneration especially in those depressed rural areas where agriculture and manufacturing are declining. Rural tourism first appeared as a by-product of agricultural restructuring in many European countries as an off-farm diversification (Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Roberts and Hall, 2001). This agri-tourism gradually became more commercial, targeting specialist markets. The type of rural tourism varies across different rural areas, ranging from nature-based tourism to highly developed recreational services. The development of rural tourism also provides opportunities for other related service sectors such as retailing and catering industry, which results in employment opportunities and raises the income of local people. However such development has some disadvantages. In particular, rural tourism is a seasonal activity and its related economic activities only bring in profit for part of the year (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier and Vanes, 2001).

The recent development of service sectors and new economic activities in rural areas has two characteristics. Firstly, the spatial pattern of service sector development varies in different rural areas and is differentiated by the types of serving sector industries. Accessible rural areas benefit more from the relocation of financial and business service from urban areas, while remote areas are more dependent on tourism and public service activities. Besides, the service sector employment in accessible rural areas has also increased to serve commuting workforce from nearby urban areas. This highlights the urban-centric nature of the rural service sector and the infrastructural barriers to the further expansion. Secondly, the recent development of service sectors can also be seen
as a process of service sector restructuring in rural areas. Traditionally, most villages in European countries had their own bank, post office, store, church, shops, and bars. Together, they become a symbol of country life. However, they are gradually disappearing in recent years and replaced by new service sectors invested by large corporations as part of their market expansion schemes (Woods, 2005).

**Summary**

The whole rural economy, not only individual sectors, has undergone the restructuring process triggered by the driving forces of modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation. The complex web of relationships between different external and internal factors from the global to the local level has greatly influenced rural economic development. It is a result of local response to external forces. Rural economy becomes much more market oriented than before. Decision-makers now pay much more attention to the market and adopt more market-oriented strategies for development. The development of the rural economy is also changing from production-based activities to consumption-based activities. The restructuring of the rural economy can be considered as a process of re-organisation and re-commodification of rural resources. Rural areas become spaces for consumption rather than just spaces for production. Hence, current rural economy are more fragmented and fluid. It is gradually deviating from a traditional single-industry (agricultural/manufacture) dependent development mode. In most rural areas today, agriculture is no longer the dominant industry, though it still plays a fundamentally important role in rural development. Service sectors are experiencing rapid growth, while the growth of manufacturing is slowing down. Current rural economy is
characterised by its plurality of activities which leads to a more diverse rural economic structure.

Finally, the development of the rural economy has led to spatial diversification. It cannot be simply described as traditional/modern economy; instead, it is a patchwork of diverse local economic activities. Marini and Mooney (2006) described the contemporary spatial diversification as: rent-seeking economies, dependent economies and entrepreneurial economies (Figure 2-4). Rent-seeking economies are usually in remote rural areas as economic development in these areas still depends on agriculture and extractive industries. Most of these areas are marginalized and trapped at low economic development levels. Dependent economies refer to those rural areas that depend on external private and public sources. These areas are more accessible and benefit from the urban-rural economic shift because of their comparative low costs and better environment advantages. Entrepreneurial economies tend to take place in rural areas that are close to metropolitan areas. Most of the recent ‘post-productivist’ economic activities are taking place in these areas. Economic development in these areas depends on the valorisation and re-commodification of rural resources. Rather than trying to attract external investment, they adopt market-oriented strategies by producing high-quality goods (including the high quality food with local cuisine, horticulture, local craftsmanship, hobby farming, rural tourism and so on) to meet with consumer demand. Entrepreneurial economy is the higher stage of dependent economies. Some research suggests that dependent economies may move towards to entrepreneurial economies if the local workforce acquires entrepreneurial skills and attitudes from the external investment (Hirschman, 1977)
Rural social recomposition

A series of complex social changes are appearing in parallel with the process of economic restructuring in rural areas. Changes in rural society can be understood from three perspectives: counter-urbanization, social relationships and rural gentrification.

Counter-urbanisation

The phenomenon of counter-urbanization is not new in developed countries. Way back the 1970s, the trend of people moving from urban areas to rural areas was already appeared in some localities. Recently years has seen a strong trend of counter-urbanization in many western countries where rural areas have experienced higher
population growth than their urban counterparts. It is argued by Champion (2000) that their suburbanisation is a result of a range of process and factors which he describes as a ‘trilogy’ of ‘flight’, ‘quest’ and ‘flow’. In general, these main reasons for counter-urbanisation include the shift of employment to rural locates, lower house prices and better living environments, continuous improvement in transportation and communication to compress travelling time and distance and the government’s policy to promote rural development and improve the public service also helps to attract more people to rural areas (Champion, 1989; Halfacree, 1997). Though counter-urbanization is a general trend in developed countries, the circumstance and the detailed conditions of counter-urbanization may differ. Even in the same country, according to empirical evidence, counter-urbanization also exhibits regional differences. It is also important to recognise that rural depopulation coexists with counter-urbanization. Even in areas of population growth, there can be pockets of local depopulation at the local level. For example, the government’s policy to promote rural development may focus on some target areas which may displace population from surrounding rural areas (Spence, 1997). Murdoch and Marsden (1994) also point out that middle class residents tend to oppose development to protect their property values by ensuring the exclusivity of certain rural communities, which would also cause the stagnation or decline on population.

**Changing social relationships**

Middle class migrants have changed the social composition and the structure of many villages in rural areas (Allanson and Whitby, 1996). Migration to rural areas has altered the age and class of some locations. Recent years, there has been an increase in retired people moving to rural areas. The census data shows that there is an increase in
professional, managerial and intermediate workers in places such as southeast England while the proportion of semi-skilled, junior non-manual and unskilled workers is declining (Hamnett, 1986). These changes were found to be brought by counter-urbanisation. From the political-economy perspective, social change is a result of changes in economic relations of property, consumption and commodification (Marsden and Murdoch, 1990; Lowe, Murdoch, Marsden et al, 1993). Migration to rural communities is thus considered as the driving force of the shift from a manufacture-centred economy to a service-centred economy which leads to the emergence of ‘service class’ in rural communities. The new ‘service class’ creates new social relations in rural communities, which are based on skills and qualifications, consumption decisions and political power created through corporations and state bureaucracies (Phillips, 1998).

The influence of the middle class migrants on rural areas is seen as a reconstitution of the social structures in rural areas. Traditionally, rural society has been characterised by kinship networks and close social co-operation (Harper, 1989). The move of the middle classes to the countryside is part of the searching process for new forms of belonging (Bell, 1994) and a different lifestyle to be close to nature. Once the middle class migrants settle down in the countryside, they will attempt to build up new relations, identities and develop a sense of belonging, which in turn shapes the rural space to be a place with their identities. Lash and Urry (1994) argued that the significance of the countryside came out from a heightened ‘aesthetic sensibility’ amongst the middle-class groups, who based their identity on the marking of the past in their social and physical fabrics. Hence, counter-urbanization creates new social institutions and associations that are more dynamic and flexible that the traditional ones (Wittel, 2001). This dynamic
new network is known as ‘network sociality’ and is seen as the outcome of the process of counter-urbanisation.

It is, however, important to recognise that the middle class is not the only one that reshapes rural areas recently. Though maybe in a marginalised role, rural areas in many respects could be a racialized, nationalized, aged and gendered space (Cloke, Phillips and Thift, 1995; Agg and Phillips, 1998).

**Rural gentrification**

One of the most important aspects of social change in rural areas is the issue of ‘rural gentrification’. The term ‘gentrification’ was first used in 1960s to describe the social changes in London that ‘working-class areas were being invaded by the middle classes who were up-grading residential properties and displacing the original working-class occupies, thereby changing the social character of these areas’ (Glass, 1964: xvii; Phillips, 2001). Later it was used in rural research to describe the middle-class urban migrants to the countryside and the changes caused by it (e.g. Cloke and Little, 1990; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Urry, 1995).

Most research studies on rural gentrification are about the modification of urban gentrification theory to adapt to the study of rural areas. From the ‘production-side’ perspective, the ‘rent-gaps’ theory was used to see gentrification as a productive investment of capital to the area to seek profits from the revalorisation of properties and a result of cycles of disinvestments and investments of capital (Smith, 1982; Smith, 1996; Phillips, 2005). This theory was first used to explain urban gentrification (e.g.
Clarke and Gullberg, 1991) and later applied to rural areas where the emphasis shifts from the movement of capital to the movement of people (Cloke and Little, 1990). The immigration of middle class residents to the lower or green residential space is considered to be central to the process of rural gentrification.

The influences of gentrification on rural development include demographic changes, social displacement (upgrade) and local property market restructuring. Population change and social displacement are about the influence of the middle-class migrants in rural areas (as discussed earlier) with regard to the restructuring of local property markets (Gallent et al, 2008). Similar to the process of urban gentrification, middle class investors and immigrants purchase relatively cheap properties in rural areas and refurbish them to increase their value. A significant proportion of rural residents also undertake building work on their properties to increase their exchange value (Little, 1987; Phillips, 1993). The conversion of agricultural property into residential property leads to the theorisation of the concept of ‘marginal gentrification’ to explain the purchasing and renovation of dilapidated dwellings or formerly public owned council housing into marketable properties (Rose, 1989). Finally, another influence of gentrification on the rural property market is the purchase of a ‘second home’ or ‘holiday house’. The seasonal occupancy characteristic of this second home or holiday house may have a negative impact on the social cohesion of local community. It reduces the permanent population in local communities which leads to difficulties in providing services. In addition, cultural conflict with local residents is also considered to be a major problem such as in parts of Wales (Woods, 2005).
Environmental changes

The natural environment is considered to be one of the most important assets of ‘rurality’. The recent process of economic and social restructuring has brought significant, and mostly negative, impacts on the rural environment. The main impacts include the degradation of the environment caused by modern agricultural development and the pressures brought by urbanisation and the expansion of physical development.

Agriculture

The modernization and intensification of agricultural production has caused many environmental problems in rural areas through the overexploitation and inappropriate change of land use. Modern capitalist agriculture methods focus on improving productivity and minimizing the unused land to reduce the fragmentation of farm lands. These modifications of farm land cause the other land use change such as turning hedgerow and grassland into farm land (Woods, 2005). Besides, the mass production of modern agriculture also results in growing single crops in each area, which reduces the diversity of natural land use and the ecosystem and leads to the loss of habitats, flora and fauna (Green, 1996). Moreover, the removal of vegetation can also accelerate soil erosion and cause other serious environmental problems such as desertification.

Pollution of modern agriculture is another major issue. The pollution is not only the use of chemical pesticides and herbicide, but also the use of inorganic fertilizers especially those with nitrates and phosphates (Cassman, 1999). More and more species of wildlife are disappearing because of the use of pesticides and the loss of nesting sites (Hector et al, 1999; Tilman et al, 2001). The use of inorganic fertilizers leads to the depositing of excess elements in the soil which will influence the growth of natural plants. They can
also contaminate drinking water and cause more serious environmental problems such as eutrophication.

**Physical development**

The increase of physical development activities in rural areas is related to different types of activities. The sprawl of development in the urban fringe, the shift of industry to rural areas and the process of counter-urbanisation all bring new development activities to rural areas. The changing economic and social structure also generates demand for the construction of new infrastructure such as roads and sewage systems in rural areas (Woods, 2005). Finally, the exploitation of rural areas for new activities such as tourism also leads to physical construction in rural areas. For example, the promotion of rural tourism induces demand for the construction of new infrastructure and facilities. The expansion of development activities puts new pressure on the rural environment (Gallet et al, 2008). Impacts such as the removal of vegetation, disruption of hydrological systems, segment of rural land, and destruction of habitats are some examples.

The rural environment is also influenced by changes in the global environment. Climate change has been the most important issue and had a big impact on agricultural production. The impact varies across different areas as productivity may increase in high-latitude regions and decrease in tropical regions (Rosenzweig and Hillel, 1998). This influences the traditional geographies of agricultural production.
Changing urban-rural relationships

Compared with the vast literature on rural economic and social restructuring, changes in the urban-rural relationship in the restructuring process is not much discussed. There is a common notion that the urban-rural boundary is blurring. From the process of rural restructuring, it is clear that many recent changes in rural areas are closely linked to the urban areas through migration of population and manufacturing activities. The EU, however, has been examining the new urban-rural relationship by moving away from the traditional urban-rural dichotomy and a single one-way exchange approach to adopt a more complex approach to view the relationship as a dynamic web of interdependencies. The urban-rural continuum is justified by the visible and invisible flows of people, capital, goods, information and technology between urban and rural areas (Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé, 2006).

Preston (1975) identified a framework for analysing urban-rural relationships in terms of different types of flows between urban and rural areas: the transfer of people; the flows of goods, services and energy; financial transfer through trade, taxes and state disbursements; the transfer of assets; and the flow of information, including technical information and social ideas. Based on this, Nadin and Stead (2000) developed a framework illustrating the main flows between urban and rural area for the West of England (see Figure 2-5).
The relationship between urban and rural areas is not only a physical one but also expressed in other functional dimensions such as economic links. Since it is not easy to quantify these flows, it is not easy to identify and understand urban-rural relationship. A set of key issues are identified by Nadin and Stead (2000) for managing the urban-rural relationships (Table 2-2). These include demographic change, education and training, recreation and cultural activities, natural resources, pollution, shopping and commerce and work.
### Table 2-2: Key issues for managing the urban-rural relation

| Population and migration | • improving preferences for urban living  
|                          | • protecting greenfield sites from development  
|                          | • encouraging the use of brownfield sites  
|                          | • tackling the isolation of less mobile rural residents |
| Education and training   | • improving education standards in urban areas  
|                          | • improving access to education and training in rural areas  
|                          | • combining provision and use of buildings for educational and other services in rural areas |
| Recreation, tourism and cultural activities | • promoting joint marketing for main attractions  
|                          | • providing more sustainable transport services and facilities (for public transport, walking and cycling) between main attractions  
|                          | • promoting more sustainable tourism and recreation routes, not only for visitors but also for local residents |
| Food, water and other natural resources | • promoting self-sufficiency in the use of resources within the region and with near neighbours  
|                            | • promoting local markets for local produce to reduce food miles  
|                            | • promoting water efficiency in homes and businesses |
| Waste and pollution       | • promoting waste minimisation and recycling as ways of reducing the demands for waste disposal |
| Shopping and commerce     | • maintaining and enhancing the position of city-centre shopping areas  
|                            | • reducing the dependence on the car for out-of-town shopping  
|                            | • maintaining rural shops and commercial services |
| Work                      | • addressing the demand for new housing in accessible rural areas generated by new urban employment growth  
|                            | • introducing green travel plans for businesses  
|                            | • promoting sustainable transport routes for walking and cycling to work |

Source: Nadin and Stead (2000)
These key issues are related to urban-rural functional complementarities to enhance sustainable development for both urban and rural areas. The idea is to promote the effective cooperation and integration between urban and rural areas.

2.2.3 Different theoretical perspectives on rural restructuring

In the past, research on rural changes tended to come from the political-economy tradition. However, a new trend of social-cultural approach was introduced to rural research in the 1990s. In addition, an evolutionary approach used in rural economic research was also introduced to study issues of restructuring. This section aims to introduce these different research perspectives on the nature of rural restructuring.

Political-economy approach

The political-economy approach is about the study of the relationships between production, distribution and capital accumulation, the regulation of economy and the impact of economically determined relations on social, economic and geographical formations. It provides a framework to contextualise rural areas in a wider economic and social process. Rural areas are not isolated, but are closely linked to the wider external spatial context and influenced and shaped by regional, national and international capitalism and the political-economic regulation and governance (Perkins, 2006). Most research on contemporary rural changes comes from the regulatory perspective of political environments which see the social reproduction of capitalism to be secured though a range of social norms, mechanisms and institutions. The key concern of regulation theory is how to regulate contradictions and tensions in capitalism.
Regulation theorists conceptualise rural changes as a shift to post-Fordism (related to the word ‘post-productivist’) and this is linked to the reformation of the relationship between production and consumption which should be understood within the regulatory regime from local to global level (Marsden and Murdoch, 1990). Rural change is not just about economic restructuring, but also the social recomposition and cultural changes, as well as the associated changes in rural power structure and regulation (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992). Woods (2005) identified four key areas of concern of the political-economy approach: (1) agriculture as a capitalist enterprise which focuses on the agricultural crisis in the new political-economic context; (2) change in the rural economy which is connected to the wider process of capital transformation (that is, the recommodification of rural areas and the diversification of rural economic activities); (3) class which focuses on the examination of counter-urbanization and the corresponding recomposition of social-demographic structure; (4) the state which examines the changing power structure and regulation arrangements in rural areas.

While the regulation framework emphasises the wider context that shapes the multi-dimensional nature of rural changes, it has its own limitations by focusing on ‘local’ rather than ‘rural’. Hence, it is difficult to identify the common and distinctive characteristics that would allow for the positioning of ‘rural’ as a discrete objective of enquiry. Besides, the political-economy approach tends to focus the research on structural changes, which means that individual factors are marginalized.

**Social-cultural approach**

As a counter approach to that of the political economists, the focus of the social-cultural approach to rural research is on the concept of ‘rurality’. The understanding of ‘rurality’
is always closely linked with the term ‘rural idyll’. Rural areas are considered as a green and pleasant land which is safe, clean, healthy and enjoyable (Aitchison, Macleod and Shaw, 2000). The image of rural life is regarded as an ideal lifestyle that has been lost in the process of urbanization and industrialisation. In Britain, these images are greatly influenced by the middle-class values from TV programmes and other media (Phillips, Fish and Agg, 2001). The cultural focus on rurality provides new perspectives for rural research. First, the interpretation of rurality is underpinned by material and symbolic factors that are closely related to the recent rural changes. For instance, the recent re-resourcing of rural spaces and the re-commodification of rural areas can be seen as responses to technological innovation and diversified market, but also the result of changes associated with social-cultural factors such as population class, lifestyle, cultural value, and fashion. Secondly, the emphasis on the nature-society relations highlights the significant role of nature in the constitution of rurality. Third, the cultural perspective also pays attention to how rurality is represented and how such representation contributes to the reproduction of the discourse of rurality (Woods, 2005). Fourth, actor network perspective is introduced in some research by arguing that rurality should be seen as a hybrid concept composed of social, technological and environmental actors and networks of relations between them (CLooke and Little, 1997). Finally, the cultural approach is open to different moral positions by focusing on issues such as rural poverty and the marginalised groups.

However, the social-cultural approach also has limitations. Cloke (1997) argued that research on rurality tended to either focus on the seductive high cultural texts rather than the daily lives of normal people, or undertake partial studies of marginalized groups in the rural without empathetic and ethical contextualisation. Finally, he questioned the
extent to which the social-cultural approach to research can influence the policy-makers and policy practice.

**Evolutionary approach**

The evolutionary approach is mainly applied to the study of the rural economy, though some of the basic principles are also very useful to studies of rural development. Modern evolutionary theory sees the economic and sociological discourses on the rural economy as a complex, open and dynamic system, which has the ‘self-organization’ capacity (Silverberg, 1988; Allanson, 1996). Hence, within the rural economy, the interacting among economic, social, cultural and political actors can be identified and they are considered to be undergoing a process of mutual co-evolution. Changes in the complex system is thus considered as modifying the context which previously shaped it, and is the result of the interaction between internal variability and the external environment. The interaction between the external macro-economic environment and the local system is important in shaping the future economic trajectory. The evolutionary approach has been applied to the study of the the differentiation of the countryside. Rural restructuring is seen as the local expression of the broader political, social and economic process, which results in uneven spatial development in 1980s (Rees, 1984) and local modes of social regulation (Flynn and Marsden, 1995). Besides, the evolutionary perspective views rural change as socially constructed from fairly localised processes which involves the reshaping and re-ordering of existing sets of social relations (Goodwin, Cloke and Milbourne, 1995).
Summary

The political-economy, social-cultural and evolutionary approaches provide different ways to understand and conceptualise recent changes to rural areas. They have different strengths and limitations on rural studies, but are all evolved in the capitalist context of developed countries. This means that the wholesale application of these approaches in a different institutional context such as China may prove to be inappropriate. However, these approaches do highlight some important principles for rural studies.

First, these approaches highlight the importance of understanding the nature of the restructuring which is usually related to the changing roles and functions of rural areas. Secondly, restructuring is not just about sector-specific changes or qualitative social changes. Instead, they are only part of the local expression of rural restructuring. From this perspective, rural restructuring involves fundamental readjustments in various dimensions where the process of change is linked within the rural locality (Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001). Third, recent process of rural restructuring cannot be considered as a simple leap from the productivist to the post-productivist era. Rather, it should be considered as a process during which a series of interactions and fundamental changes are taking place. Fourth, rural areas should not be considered as isolated, but the results of particular combinations of political, economic, social and cultural relations, operating at various spatial scales from the local, regional, and national to the international (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992). Hence it is important to emphasise the relationships between local characteristics and the external environment. Fifth, the context of rural development should be considered as a complex and dynamic system and rural changes are the response of internal variability and the external environment. Hence, to understand the
nature of changes, it is important to identify the internal and external factors and their interactions that drive the changes. Finally, while emphasising the fundamental structural changes taking place rural development, it is also important to pay attention to key individual actors involved in these change.
2.3 Governance for Rural Development

Following the discussion of rural restructuring and the need of regulation, this section of chapter 2 identifies the different types of governance in rural areas.

2.3.1 From government to governance

Changing economic and social conditions have created an environment which is dynamic for governments to manage. Such a new environment requires the government to be more flexible, innovative and adaptive (Andrew and Goldsmith, 1998) and calls for a shift from government to governance in Anglo-American literature. Government refers to the formal and institutional processes to maintain public order and facilitate collective order (Stoker, 1998), while governance is used to describe a different form of governing as discussed later in this section.

There are a lot of reasons for the increasing interest on governance. For instance, the new politics of European integration, the trend of devolution of powers across multiple authorities, the changing dynamics of local economies in the face of globalisation, changes in social welfare delivery and transfer payments, changes in the expectation of policy agenda and modes of politics (Amin and Hausner, 1997; John, 2001; Le Gales, 2002; Healey, 2006). Governance tends to involve actors from different levels of government, from international to local neighbourhood organizations in decision-making (Healey, 2006).
Governance itself is, however, a vague term used in different ways with different meanings (Rhodes, 1996). For instance, it is considered by Harvey (1989) and Jessop (2002) as a shift from the modes of government that are associated with a bureaucratized welfare state focusing on universal service delivery to more ‘entrepreneurial’ modes of government. Healey (2006) adopts a sociological institutional perspective and considers governance as the organisation of institutional relations to create a better and fairer living environment for the society. Governance is also about sustaining co-ordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors such as political actors and institutions, corporate interests, civil society, and transnational governments with different purposes and objectives (Pierre, 2000).

Stoker (1998: 18) put forward five propositions to help understand the meaning of governance. First, governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from, but also beyond, government. Second, governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities of the actors. Third, governance identified the power dependence between institutions who are involved in collective action. Fourth, governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of influencing actors. Finally, the capacity of governance does not rest on the government’s power and government in governance is just a tool to steer and to guide. These five issues point out the different characteristics of the governing mechanism. However, these issues also imply the possible dilemmas of governance. The first is about the weakness of governance in terms of legitimacy, as the exercise of power has to be legitimate. Governance creates a new, less formal institutional system, which has uncertainty in creating normative underpinning in public opinion because responsibilities are shared between different public and private actors (Miller and Dickson, 1996). The second problem is about
accountability. Governance system asks for blending together the resources and objectives of actors, and no actor alone can make the decision because of the power dependence in the governing system. Responsibilities are thus blurring between actors. The dilemma of accountability is created in several levels. There is difficulty in comprehending interactions between all the participants. It also creates an ambiguity and uncertainty about responsibility, which easily leads to denying responsibility to avoid blame for failures and difficulties and scapgoating in the complex governance system (Stoke, 1998; Benz, 2007). The governance system brings together the objectives of all the actors. Members may be dissatisfied with the constraint imposed by arrangement, which may lead to the failure of governance.

Recognizing these, there is a reconsideration of government’s role in governance. The tasks of government in a governance can be identified in three ways (Kooiman and Van Vliet, 1993): (de)composition and coordination by identifying key issues and key actors and developing effective linkages between them; collaboration and steering of relationships in order to achieve desired outcomes; and finally, integration and regulation to facilitate thinking and acting comprehensively beyond individuals to establish mechanisms for effective co-ordination (Stewart, 1996). However, it is argued that these new roles of government are not enough, and there is a need to re-design the institutional mechanism of governance by considering some basic principles such as revisability, robustness, sensitivity to motivational complexity, public defendability, and variability (Goodin, 1996). All these principles are about designing an institution with a sustainable life that has flexibility to adapt to the complex and dynamic economic, social and political environment. It is also important to recognise the limitation of human knowledge and understanding in the designing of institutions. Hence,
governance is, to a certain extent, time and space specific and has to take the cultural context and historical experiences (e.g. values, beliefs and expectations) into account (Andrew and Goldsmith, 1998).

2.3.2 Types of governance

Since the governance mechanism evolves according to the context, it is difficult to achieve consensus over what a governance structure should be, not to mention how to define different types of governance. Based on research and practical experience in America and EU member states, Marks and Hooghe (2004) conceptualised governance into two types (see Figure 2-6) according to jurisdiction of the decision-making process: (1) should jurisdiction be designed around particular communities or particular policy problems? (2) should jurisdiction bundle competencies or be functionally specific? (3) should jurisdictions be limited in number or proliferate? and (4) should jurisdiction be lasting or fluid?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I</th>
<th>Type II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General-purpose jurisdictions</td>
<td>Task-specific jurisdictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonintersecting memberships</td>
<td>Intersecting memberships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdictions at a limited number of levels</td>
<td>No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemwide architecture</td>
<td>Flexible design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2- 6: Two types of governance  
Source: Marks and Hooghe (2004: 17)

The first two lines of Figure 2-6 are about the variations of the jurisdiction, while the bottom two describe the systematic properties. A type one system is like a federal system in which jurisdictions are divided into different levels including international, national, regional and local. Each level is a general purpose jurisdiction with multiple functions including a range of policy responsibilities. The membership boundaries do not intersect and the whole system is constituted by a set of nested jurisdictions with
each limited to a particular territorial scale. The set of jurisdictions is supposed to be stable across time, though the allocation of policy competencies across jurisdictional levels can be flexible. The second type of governance structure is task oriented. It is fragmented into different functional demands to provide particular services and solve particular problems. The number of jurisdictions can be huge and the scale they operate is not fixed. Governance is organised across different levels and the jurisdictions may intersect each other or partly overlap. Since this type of governance is function-oriented, it is designed according to public needs and is flexible in time and space to adapt to changing citizen preferences and functional requirements.

These two types of governance do not contradict each other and they have different strengths. The first type of governance tends to be people-oriented and has extensive institutional mechanisms to deal with conflict. It bundles all the policies together to benefit from economies of scale and to avoid side payments. The second type of governance is more pliable. It creates a market for production and consumption of particular public goods. Instead of solving fundamental conflicts, they avoid them by allowing citizens to choose their preference. Hence these two types of governance can coexist and be complementary to each other.

2.3.3 Governance for rural development

There has been increasing research interest on governance in recent years though the pre-occupation as been on urban governance. There seems to be a reluctance by researchers to engage in debates over rural governance (Goodwin, 1998). Nevertheless, in Britain, a series of changes have been taking place in the governance of rural areas
since the publication of the Rural White Paper in 1995. Rural governance in Britain has evolved from an old paternalist era through a static era in mid-twentieth century and to the current era of governance (Woods, 2005). The change of governance in rural areas has been closely related to economic and social restructuring. In addition, changes in the EU’s rural development policy such as the Objective 5b funding have perpetuated further changes. More importantly, the continuous decentralization of power to the local level, emphasising ‘self-sufficiency’ and ‘self-help’ of rural communities and citizens has changed the formulation and implementation of rural development strategies (Murdoch and Abram 1998; Ward and McNicholas, 1998). In the English case, there are two major changes in rural governance reform. The first is the change to a more integrative approach. This involves cooperation between departments in dealing with rural issues. For example, the Rural White Paper (2000) was an outcome of cooperation between the Department for Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF). Later, a more integrated department for rural development, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was established by combining original rural related responsibilities in DETR and MAFF. Secondly, central government has a high expectation on the independence of rural people and their ability to take responsibility for themselves (DOE/MAFF, 1995), which sets limits on the scope of state activity. Rural governance in Britain takes a ‘bottom-up partnership’ approach which emphasises cooperation between the rural community, inter-governmental organisations, private groups, business forums, co-funding arrangements and other action groups for the decision-making and policy delivery of rural areas. This means the role of the state is no longer to govern the place but is just one of the actors in the partnership. The key feature of partnerships is stakeholder collaboration through an interactive and discursive process. For this to
succeed, Kearney et al. (1994: 21) argue that there must ‘be a shared desire to work towards common objectives, a high level of mutual trust, a willingness to cooperate, share responsibility, accept accountability, and where necessary to alter the prevailing administrative structures. The articulation of a common vision and the identification of the appropriate objectives and strategies should emerge from a strategic approach to planning’.

O’Donnell and Thomas (1998: 122) identified five key characteristics of partnerships. First, the partnership process involves a combination of consultation, negotiations and bargaining. Second, the partnership process is heavily dependent on a shared understanding of the key mechanisms and relationships in any given area. Third, the process reflects interdependence between the partners. The partnership is necessary because no party can achieve its goals without a significant degree of support from others. Fourth, partnership is characterised by a problem-solving approach designed to achieve consensus, in which various interest groups address joint problems. And finally, partnership involves trade-offs both between and within interest groups. Woods (2005) divided partnership working in rural Britain into three types. The first type is that of strategic partnerships that aim at coordinating policies and initiatives of various state agencies operating in rural areas. The second is the delivery partnerships which are formed at the local level to implement a particular policy or initiative. This type of partnerships tends to be programme oriented, in which local government works as the key actor. The third type is consultative partnerships which act as a mechanism for community engagement and active citizenship. This is achieved by enrolling community groups in partnership organizations to actively engage with citizens through the use of surveys, appraisal exercises and public meetings.
The new style of rural governance is still in evolution and some concerns have been raised about it. First of all, the general problem of legitimacy and accountability of these new forms of governance are questioned. Furthermore, the balance of power between partners with uneven resources may lead to the unequal position of different partners. As rural governance becomes an endogenous development mode of the local area; it may create geographical unevenness (Edwards et al, 2000). The short-term nature of programmes or funding oriented partnerships does not justify the considerable time and energy spent to securing their existence and may lead to unstable institutional framework (Edwards et al, 2000; Woods, 2005). Finally, questions have been raised over the nature of community participation in rural governance and the degree to which the opportunity to participate does actually empower rural people and rural communities (Murdoch and Abram, 1998; Little, 2001).

This decentralization of power to the grass-roots of rural governance is an increasingly common phenomenon in Europe and the USA, though it is still rare in Asian countries. Japan as is the exception as it has also recently experienced the process of decentralization of power. As one of the most developed countries in Asia, the Japanese government enacted a Decentralization Promotion Law in 1995 to clarify the roles of national and local government and to increase the independence and self-responsibility of local government. A decentralization promotion programme was established and a committee was created to conduct investigations and advise on the decentralization programme. This committee advanced several key recommendations for decentralization (Koike and Wright, 1998). The first is the abolition of central control of local elected officials by ministerial administrative hierarchies. New classifications based on intergovernmental function -- ‘autonomous functions’ of local government and
‘entrusted functions by law’ from central government were introduced. Second, the committee proposed general rules for intergovernmental coordination including the introduction of third-party organisations/agencies to solve intergovernmental conflicts. Finally, the committee emphasised the need to consolidate and strengthen small municipalities. Some of the suggestions have been implemented and the decentralization is still in progress (Koike and Wright, 1998).

Compared with the local governance shift in Britain, the changes in Japan have been limited both in scale and extent. The devolution of power is to local government rather directly to the citizens. The decentralisation to some extent loosens the tension between central government and local government, but the autonomy of local areas is still under the control of central government. Finally, although the role of non-governmental actors in governance cannot be identified, it is clear that local government plays the leading role in policy making and delivery of local development. Hence, the experience of Japan can be identified as a halfway house of decentralisation between top-down government and bottom-up governance.
2.4 Spatial Planning for Rural Development

2.4.1 Emergence of spatial planning

The 1990s have witnessed a new interest in spatial planning in Europe (Nadin, 2003). This enthusiasm was greatly promoted by the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999. Since then, a growing body of literature has developed in relation to European spatial planning. Most of this literature focuses on examining spatial planning documents and policies of the EU and their influences on the new planning discourse of the planning systems in its member states.

The spirit of spatial planning is not wholly new. In the 1960s, a strategic spatial approach was once dominant in urban and regional planning in many European countries. Later in the 1980s, it lapsed and the emphasis of planning was on large projects such as infrastructure and urban transformation projects. However, beginning of the new millennium witnessed a resurgence of spatial planning in the EU and its member states, promoted by EU initiatives (Albrechts, 2001; Flaudi 2002, Healey 2007). Rather than a simple return of theory deployed in the 1960s, the new emphasis in spatial planning can be seen as an evolution from the past and a response to the external and internal impacts on urban and regional development.

According to the planning literature, the reasons for the resurgence of spatial planning can be summarized as:
Increasing complexity of spatial relationships

The most important reason for the resurgence of spatial planning is the changing nature of spatial development patterns. The rapid development of economic globalisation and telecommunication networks has altered the spatial relationships between places (Castells, 1996). Because of the development of communication and transportation technologies, economic and social activities are less locally constrained and there is more freedom than before as people travel more often and further, and investors can go anywhere in the world. This kind of mobility creates different types of flows and dynamics between places, which changes traditional socio-economic spatial relationships into a much more complex set of relationships (Albrechts and Mandelbaum 2005).

The change of spatial patterns raises two questions for planning. The first question is about the geographic extent of planning. The flows between places have attracted much more attention on cross-boundary issues at different scales, which makes the ‘functional area’ much more important than ‘administrative areas’ (Richardson and Jenson 2003). This greatly challenges traditional planning systems which focus on landuse regulation in a certain administrative territory and calls for a system that can reflect these cross-boundary spatial relationships. Secondly, it is widely recognised that the development of an area should be understood as a dynamic process which is too hard to predict and cannot be planned in a linear way (Healey, 2007). In such a case, the traditional end-state planning is much more difficult and almost meaningless. This brings up the need to re-conceptualise the nature of planning. Instead of controlling changes and prescribing development in a fixed spatial area, planning should put more emphasis on
analysing the dynamic and multiple webs of relations in and across the area (Healey, 1999). There is a need to understand the spatial impact brought by other public sectoral strategies or policies, to establish the drivers of the spatial development, and to develop a generative instrument to elicit attention from a wider range of players for capacity building (Healey 2004).

**Growing emphasis on sustainable development**

In recent years, the worldwide interest in sustainable development is another main impetus for the evolution of spatial planning. In many countries, the increasing conflicts over land use and development call for planning to address the issues of environmental sustainability. On the other hand, the new global economy and network society highlight the importance of the quality of cities, regions or any other territorial areas which is understood as comprehensive competitiveness. Besides economic competitiveness, the meaning of the quality also includes the environmental sustainability, social cohesion and culture diversity. All of these are included in the agenda of sustainable development (OECD, 2001; Healey, 2004; Nadin, 2007).

The achievement of sustainable development requires joined-up working in and across traditional sectors, professions and administrative boundaries. It helps to expose and coordinate conflicts in public polices and demands a more holistic approach to integrate policy and action and to evaluate policy outcomes (Cowell and Owens, 1998). This shifts the traditional thinking of planning and places an emphasis on planning as a tool for policy integration.
Changing role of government in the new market economy

The competitive global economy and free market have brought changes in the power structure between central and local government. Local government increasingly plays a more active and important role than central government in fostering local development, which leads to a shift of power from central to local (Allmenginger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2006). The new economy leads to a reorganization of the public and private sectors in local area. There is a change from clear separation of public and private spheres to new forms of partnership between the state and the market (Stoker, 1998). As a response to the market, cities are experiencing continuous changes with increasing uncertainty over the future. Hence, it is much more difficult for the government to predict possible future situations and to manage development. The role of government in development has gradually changed from controlling physical land use and providing services and facilities to developing long-term strategy and framework within which different agencies and sectors can cooperate to deliver services and facilities and promote development (Healey, 1997).

Impetus from the EU

The enthusiasm of the European Union over spatial integration has greatly contributed to the development of spatial planning (Zonneveld, 2005). However, there has been a longstanding debate on the necessity of European spatial planning and the EU’s competence in planning as some EU member states oppose the EU dimension of planning and worry about the its intervention in their territories. It was finally agreed that the coordination of some policy aspects is important at EU level with the definition of EU’s role in planning as ‘territorial cohesion’ (Faludi, 2007). Under this
circumstance, the ‘European Spatial Development Perspective’ was published in 1999 and hence provided a new context and introduced the spatial approach for planning development in its member states. Planning is seen as a method of securing convergence and coordination between various sectoral policies (Bastrup-Birk and Doucet, 1998).

### 2.4.2 What is spatial planning?

There has been a lot of debate over the definition of spatial planning. The understanding of spatial planning varies a lot in the EU and its member states. The Compendium of EU planning system (EC, 1997) defines spatial planning as ‘methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space’. Later, the CEC put more emphasis on the territorial coordination of sectoral policies (Bastrup-Birk and Doucet, 1998). ‘Territorial cohesion policy’ becomes the core of European spatial planning. ESDP (EC, 1999), as an important reference, highlights three basic goals of spatial planning as economic and social cohesion, sustainable development and balanced competitiveness of the European territory. It is thus argued that the purpose of European spatial planning can be summarised in three ‘Cs’: cohesion of the arena, coherence to the goal and cooperation to the mode of operation (Falud, 2010). Based on understanding at the EU dimension, its member states make their own interpretation of spatial planning according to their own institutional context (Healey, 1997). In Britain, for example, spatial planning is defined in PPS1 as ‘goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function’ (ODPM, 2005: para. 30). This highlights the concern on spatial planning
as the coordinator, integrator and mediator of various policy streams (Wong et al, 2008). Meanwhile, in one of the report made for the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) (UCL and Deloitte, 2007: 11) spatial planning is summarised as ‘the practice of place shaping and delivery at all spatial scales’. Based on the understanding of what spatial planning should do, it further defined the aims of planning as to ‘Enable a vision for the future of regions and places that is based on evidence, local distinctiveness and community derived objectives; translate this vision into a set of policies, priorities, programmes and land allocations together with the public sector resources to deliver them; create a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes economic, environmental and social wellbeing for the area; and coordinate and deliver the public sector components of this vision with other agencies and processes.’ (UCL and Deloitte, 2007: 11). In addition to ‘cohesion, cooperation and coordination’ emphasised in the government and organisation definition, spatial planning is also seen by some scholars as a political governance process where the market, government and other actors interact in development. This process involves action from the formal planning policy institutions, the wider policy networks and stakeholders who are involved in shaping spatial changes (Healey, 1997; Friedmann, 2004). Though the definition of spatial planning changes in different times and different places, together they highlight some shared concerns of spatial planning. UCL and Deloitte (2007) advanced in their report to RTPI five general principles of spatial planning as ‘broad-ranging, visionary, integrating, deliverable and participative’ (see Table 2-3). Meanwhile, similar criteria have been used by other academics like Wong et al (2000) to identify the nature of spatial planning. Haughton, Allmendinger and Counsell (2010) define the general emphasis into four key dimensions:
an emphasis on long-term strategic thinking and the creation of future vision in the form of agreed spatial strategies;

planning as a policy tool for bringing coherence to increasingly fragmented systems of governance;

central role of spatial planning in moving society towards sustainable development; and

the emphasis on inclusivity, reflected in an opening up of planning consultation mechanisms to wider groups in society and in great attention to addressing social inclusion issues with in spatial strategies.

Table 2-3: General principles for spatial planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad-ranging</th>
<th>Concerning the assessment of the spatial dimensions of various activities and sectors, and interactions between them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>By opening up planning to a range of participants, and by relating processes of planning policy-making to notions of place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>Through bringing together spatial issues relating to the development and use of land, and the users of planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverable</td>
<td>Applying strategy to programmes for action, through proactive processes, involving coordination and choreography between different over-lapping sectors and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Planning is a facilitator and dependent on new forms of partnership and engagement with a range of bodies, stakeholders, businesses and communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adopted from RTPI, UCL and Deloitte, 2007: 11

The central focus of spatial planning is about territorial cohesion and policy coordination. This includes horizontal coordination of sectoral policies, vertical coordination across different levels of government and cross-boundary cooperation or
inter-regional collaboration. Since different sectoral policies have different territorial units and time scale, and their formation and application have different procedures, it is thus a big challenge for spatial planning to integrate policies across different sectors.

The spatial dimension of spatial planning is however very flexible. The definition does not constrain the activities to any one spatial scale. Hence, in principle, spatial planning can be applied to any territorial level from the national to the local level. More importantly, spatial planning is not constrained by administrative boundaries. It is best carried out for relevant functional areas within which the economic relations, environmental systems and daily life time-space patterns can be better understood (Wong, 2002; Wong et al, 2006). With the increasingly complex cross-boundary relationships, focusing on administrative boundaries is not enough to reflect real problems and opportunities for future development. Spatial planning allows a rescaling of the planning scale by adopting the tactics of ‘soft spaces and fuzzy boundaries’ which are best for planning delivery instead of constraint by legal fixed boundaries (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009).

On the one hand, the development of European spatial planning has been largely influenced by the planning tradition, in particular the French regional economic planning and the comprehensive integrated planning approach of Netherlands as well as Germany (Faludi, 2004; Duhr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010). On the other hand, the European spatial planning approach has influenced the planning reforms in most its member states. In the English case, the 2004 planning reform is considered as something of a paradigm shift (Gallent et al, 2008; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010). There had been increasing criticisms of traditional landuse planning for its complexity
and procedures; delays and uncertainty in directing development; rigidity in responding to future changes; and weak public engagement. Economic globalisation has highlighted the efficiency of the local level in improving economic competitiveness (Morphet, 2009). Meanwhile, governance reform with devolution to the regional\(^2\) and local level requires a rescaling of the planning function (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010). It is against this background that the concept of spatial planning was introduced to reform the planning system in 2004. While the traditional landuse system before 2004 focused on ‘landuse plan-making’ and ‘development control’, the new spatial planning approach shifts to the idea of ‘place-shaping’ and focuses on addressing the factors that influence the nature and function of the place to achieve a sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes (Wong, Baker and Kidd, 2006; Wong, Qian and Zhou, 2008). The spatial planning approach also puts emphasis on an evidence-based and action-oriented approach. The focus is making clear implementation mechanisms to ensure the objectives and polices are achieved (Baker and Wong, 2006; Wong, Baker and Kidd, 2006). It is also argued by Morphet (2008) that the role and function of spatial planning has now been focused on delivery within a wider local governance system which moves far from just policy integration. In general, based on their own literature survey, Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) summarised the advantages of spatial planning to regulatory landuse planning as: encouraging long-term strategic visions; providing the spatial dimension to improved integration across a range of sectoral plans and activity; supporting ‘balanced’ approaches to sustainable development; and improving engagement with stakeholders and the public.

\(^2\) The regional level government has recently been removed in England
It has also been argued that the conception and principles of spatial planning is not something totally new (Wong, Qian and Zhou; Shaw, 2008) and many of the principles have been embedded in early conception of strategic planning and regional planning. Strategic planning became popular in Britain in the 1960s. This form of planning is distinct in terms of its action and implementation orientation, extensive participation and communication among decision-makers and stakeholders, strong emphasis on analysis and scanning, adaptability to changes and development of alternatives, and emphasis on future implications of present actions (Bryson and Einsweiler, 1988).

These resemble many of the principles of spatial planning such as the call for community engagement and extensive coordination; flexibility to managing the dynamic changes; focusing on actions to shape the future; and a strong evidence-base to formulate strategies. In addition, the process of strategic planning tends to consist of goal setting, SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threatens) analysis, and strategy making, which is very similar to that addressed in the ESDP (EC, 1997) as shown in Figure 2-7.
There are, however, two distinct differences between spatial planning and strategic planning. The first is the planning process. Spatial planning is a political governance process involving stakeholders to achieve mutual goals, while the strategic planning process focuses on contextual analysis to inform decision making. Secondly, when compared with strategic planning in the 1960s, the current spatial planning approach places more emphasis on policy integration and collaboration, as well as with very clear articulation on the need to achieve sustainable development and keeping a balance between the economy and the environment. In spite of the fact that both strategic and spatial planning have no spatial constraints, spatial planning has a much stronger
concern for the interconnections across different spatial levels. The discussion here highlights the fact that many ideas of spatial planning can be traced back to earlier conceptions of strategic planning. Interestingly, even in the heyday of strategic planning, it was not seen as a brand-new theory as academics found its basic principles contained in earlier ideas (Kaufman and Jacobs, 1988).

A major claim of spatial planning is its emphasis on coordination and integration of different sectoral policies through a spatial approach. The focus is to address all the factors that influence the nature of places and how they function, including all the economic, social, environmental, cultural and physical issues. As Wong et al (2008) argue, the need to integrate polices and programmes of production, reproduction and consumption can be traced back to the 1920s and 1930s when Patrick Geddes developed the similar ‘place, work and folk’ vision to explain the relationship between economic and socio-cultural well-being within the region. The evidence-based principle of spatial planning also echoes Patrick Geddes’s principle of ‘survey before plan’ and that the plan is based on the understanding of surrounding economic-social-natural environment (Hall, 2002b). Following Geddes, Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, Benton Mackaye and their Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), explicitly called for regional planning within a broad economic-social-technological context.

The coordination process of spatial planning comes with a more broad and effective participation. There have been longstanding debates on participation in planning. For example, the advocates of ‘advocacy planning’, have argued that diverse participation will lead to a more insightful and responsive planning (Davidoff, 1965; Goodman, 1971;
Clavel, 1983). Others also have called for a more extensive public-private partnership during the planning process (Catanese, 1974; Branch, 1983).

The concern of sustainable development has long been discussed in planning history. Many academics have called for a more sustainable planning approach. Mumford, for example, in developing regional planning theory, advocated an organic and ecological planning approach to balance the needs of the social world with those of natural ecosystem (Hall, 2002a). Environmental planners also based their practice to argue for a broader environmental context, which required the examination of the natural systems of the planning area. Even the ESDP’s objective of building a polycentric urban system can be traced back to RPAA’s conception of a planned polycentric city system which emphasised on the anti-sprawl development pattern, with balanced interconnection of individual cities at the regional scale (Wong, Qian and Zhou, 2008).

Based on all the discussion here, spatial planning is not a brand new innovation, both in terms of its conceptions and its principles. However, it is not merely an ‘old wine in new bottle’ trick either. Its real and biggest contribution lies on its synthetic power that brings together those ideas what good planning should be into a holistic framework. At the same time, the importance of each element is highlighted and their interrelationships are stressed. This also provides flexibility to develop different styles and approaches to spatial planning. The publication of the ESDP (EC, 1997) was particularly timely and provided a substantial policy framework for others to adapt to their own contexts.
2.4.3 Spatial planning for rural development

In recent years, European rural areas have experienced fundamental economic and social transformations, under which a diverse landscape of rural development began to emerge. Changes have also taken place in the EU’s policies for rural planning and development. The rural policy, mostly via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), changed from sectoral policy to territorial development policy for a more competitive rural Europe. For rural planning, ESDP (EC, 1999) tries to integrate rural and urban development at regional level by introducing a new ‘urban-rural partnership’. Also, it is widely acknowledged that the publication of the ESDP (EC, 1999) has built a new spatial planning discourse for EU and its member states. However, a review of recent literature on spatial planning shows that little attention has been paid to its impact on policies and plans in rural areas (Scott, 2006; Hadimichialis, 2003). This part of this chapter will analyse spatial planning in rural areas in the EU and its member states. The aim is to find out whether spatial planning has led to a rethink of a strategic spatial discourse for rural development in Europe by focusing on the adoption of spatial planning for rural development and the treatment of urban-rural relationships in planning.

Changing rural planning approaches

It is widely acknowledged that the publication of the ESDP inspired a shift from landuse to spatial planning in EU member states. However, the extent to which this new spatial discourse changes rural planning is still unclear. The discussion here aims to compare the different planning approaches for rural areas in several EU member states.
The purpose is to find out: first, whether it is necessary to have a spatial planning system for rural areas; second, the spatial dimension in which rural problems are dealt with; thirdly, what are the key issues that rural planning focuses on; and finally, the influence of the EU’s idea on rural development in its member states.

Towards the end of the 1990s, there has been a change from a sectoral to a more integrative approach of forming territorial strategies for rural development. The ESDP (EC, 1999) has provided a new approach for rural development planning at the regional level. It highlights the role of rural areas on offering an alternative landscape and living style and places strong emphasis on the partnership of rural areas and their urban counterparts. The other focus of the ESDP (EC, 1999) is to deal with the general changes in agriculture as the economic base for rural development by classifying rural areas into three types according to their status of agriculture development, which is then used to form respective policy for these areas.

Most member states are in the process of introducing new spatial planning systems. Each country has its own mode of spatial planning, and it is the same for rural planning. Table 2-4 provides a summary of the different planning systems for rural areas in a selection of EU member states. It is clear from the table that not all member states have a separate and integrated rural planning system from the national to the local level. For some countries such as England, rural areas are part of the mainstream planning system. There are general planning statements for rural development, such as PPS 7. The local development plans in rural areas very much follow the guidance of these statements and other relevant planning and sectoral policies. For most member states, rural areas are
treated as a separate area, with their own planning objectives like their urban counterparts. However, rural planning works as an integrated part of the spatial planning system though the spatial focus is on rural development. Some areas including Scotland, Netherland and Ireland, have national perspectives and policy for rural development with elaborated policy and implementation strategies in regional and local plans. Other countries such as Germany and France focus rural development at the regional level with detailed action plans at local level. There is national spatial planning in France but mainly focusing on ‘physical areas’ such as mountainous and coastal areas. However, it can be argued that, at the national level, the spatial dimension to solve rural development problems is over generalised. It is difficult to draw out substantial guidance from national policy for regional and local plans to address the diverse sustainable development issues in rural areas (Scott, 2006). However, no matter at which spatial scale they focus, all these planning systems encourage good horizontal cooperation between planning and other related sectors like agriculture and environment departments, and vertical cooperation between governments at different levels.

Table 2-4: Rural planning system in EU and its member states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Planning hierarchies for rural areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Focus on regional level; highlights the role of rural areas as an alternative landscape and quality of life for society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain England and Wales</td>
<td>No separate rural planning system; General planning guidance at national level, work with other planning policies to be tailored to fit local conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>A series form national, regional to local levels through the integrated planning system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>As part of planning system; no national planning perspective; General guidance at regional level; elaborated local policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Netherland  | Considered as a separate entity in the planning system, from national level to regional level and local level.
--- | ---
Ireland  | Integrated in the planning system; a national perspective and general guidance; elaborated policy in regional and local plans.
Germany  | As part of the planning system; no binding national plan; focus on lander and regional level with different modes and principles; implement plans at local level.

Sources: EC, 1999; Department of Agriculture, Fishes and Food of Ireland, 1999; Inter-ministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT, France), 2006; Scottish Executive, 2002; Scottish Executive, 2004; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, UK), 2000; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM, UK), 2004; Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR, Germany), 2001.

Another important key issue is how to achieve sustainable rural development in the EU and its member states though planning policy. It is commonly believed that the European countryside has experienced fundamental changes since the 1990s. Rural areas are now in a new ‘post-productionist’ era (Marsden, 1998). The most important changes are the decline of agriculture as the backbone of the rural economy and the emergence of a multi-functional countryside. These changes call for a rethink of planning policy to meet the realities in rural areas and to provide a more coordinated policy framework for rural development. There is a transformation from sector-based policy to a place-based policy approach. Meanwhile, rather than restricting development, recent years have seen an adoption of the concept of ‘multi-functionality’ in planning to beneficially combine different functional activities across economic, social and environmental dimensions (Gallent et al, 2008). Planning policy in most of the EU member states tends to focus on how to contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas (Table2-5), in spite of their very different spatial planning approach. In addition, there are some common themes in their policy frameworks for rural
development: 1) economic development: encouraging diversification of economic activities to exploit the new economic potential while retain the important role of agriculture; 2) living opportunities: building sustainable communities, improving the accessibility and quality of service, and providing new development opportunities for rural residents; 3) countryside conservation: improving environmental quality, landscape, open space, natural and cultural heritages; and 4) support systems: promoting modernization of facilities for new economic activities and decent living condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>England and wales</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Netherland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living opportunities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside conservation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support system</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: EC, 1999; Department of Agriculture, Fishes and Food of Ireland, 1999; Inter-ministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT, France), 2006; Scottish Executive, 2002; Scottish Executive, 2004; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, UK), 2000; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM, UK), 2004; Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR, Germany), 2001.

There has been a shift of attention from the traditional urban-rural dichotomy to rural diversification. This means more a refined understanding of different rural contexts is required. Different criteria are adopted by different countries to classify different types of rural areas. The most common used criteria are population density, economic
development level, and distance to cities. However, more than one criterion can be used to define different rural types. For example, EU uses agricultural strength as the main criteria to classify rural areas into three types of intensification areas, diversification areas and extensification areas (EC, 1999). In England and Wales, rural areas are first classified into sparse and less sparse areas based on population density and then further classified into town and urban fringe, village and dispersed areas based on their distance to cities (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004.) while in Scotland rural areas are classified into more accessible and densely populated areas and less populated areas mainly based on population density (Scottish Executive, 2002). The French government classifies rural areas into countryside closed to cities, new countryside and vulnerable countryside based on their economic strength and distance to cities (Inter-ministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness, 2006). Unlike the classification in England and Wales, it is also clarifies in its planning documents that such a classification is only for policy making purposes.

The disparity in rural areas requires a typology of rural policy. Most of the member states provide policy priorities for different types of areas in addition to general guidance for rural development. For example, EU’s rural policy suggests for the modernisation of agriculture for intensification areas, non-agricultural activities such as tourism for diversification areas and nature protection for extensification rural areas (EC, 1999). In Scotland, the accessible and densely populated areas are encouraged for new development with the emphasis on a balance between development and conservation to keep the quality of these areas. Meanwhile, in less populated areas, small towns should be self-sufficient and work as centres for surrounding rural areas and more attention
should be paid to develop environment friendly agriculture with high quality (Scottish Executive, 2002; Scottish Executive, 2004). Similarly, in France, the government encourages different development activities in the urban fringe countryside and new countryside. While the former should have more urban-oriented development, the emphasis on the vulnerable countryside is environmental conservation and enhancement (DIAC, 2006). Though there are different focuses and in different terms, these policy disparities have some similar patterns. In general, a more locally sensitive approach is taken in rural development. Rural areas with development potential are encouraged for an endogenous development based on an efficient use of local resources and their relationships to urban centres with more emphasis on the balance between development and environment.

Urban-rural relationship in rural planning

It is widely known that the ESDP (EC, 1999) promotes a new urban-rural relationship as a ‘partnership’ to overcome the dualism between cities and their hinterlands to achieve the objective of territorial cohesion. It also provides a series of policy directions on forging such an urban-rural partnership. Such a partnership is based on the functional complementarity between urban and rural areas. It calls for a joined-up thinking of urban and rural areas and a rethink of how urban and rural areas can cooperate to achieve a better for the region and themselves. ESDP (EC, 1999) also outlines a series of strategic policy to facilitate this partnership: (1) Maintaining a basic supply of services and public transport in small and medium-sized towns in rural areas, particularly those in decline; (2) Promoting partnerships between towns and countryside aimed at strengthening functional regions; (3) Integrating the countryside surrounding
large cities in spatial development strategies for urban regions in order to achieve a more efficient planning of land use and paying special attention to the quality of life in the urban surroundings; (4) Promoting and supporting partnership-based cooperation between small and medium sized towns at a national and transnational level through joint projects and the mutual exchange of experience; and (5) Promoting company networks between small and medium-sized enterprises in urban and rural areas (EU, 1999; Zonneveld and Stead, 2007).

Also, an increasing attention has been paid to urban-rural relationships in most EU member states. In the British case, the concern has firstly been focused on urbanisation in the industrial revolution in the past and then counter-urbanisation in recent times focusing on the impact on urban areas. Now there is more balanced view of the impacts on both urban and rural areas. The new focus is on urban fringe areas with an increasing interaction between city and its surrounding rural areas. As discussed earlier in this chapter, most rural areas experiencing restructuring are in the urban fringe while urban-oriented drivers play an important role during the process (Marsden et al, 1993). The Countryside Agency has paid a lot of interests on ‘rural-urban fringe’ and argues that a well-managed rural-urban fringe has the potential to make a huge contribution to a sustainable future of both town and country (Countryside Agency, 2005). From a planning perspective, the spatial planning approach responds to the ‘rural-urban fringe emphasis’ in two aspects. The first is the rise of the ‘city-region’ as the spatial structure for rural planning as spatial planning focuses on functional regions and territorial cohesion (ODPM, 2006; Gallent et al, 2008). Recently in England, new unitary authorities have been introduced under local governance reform to reduce the problems

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3 Sometimes, Countryside Agency also use ‘the countryside in and around towns’ instead
of town and country separation under the former country-district structure (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). Secondly, spatial planning provides a ‘multi-functional spatial strategy’ with an integrated delivery process which was considered by the Countryside Agency (2006) as sitting well with their vision for the rural-urban fringe. Meanwhile, similar approaches are evident in other member states to encourage urban-rural partnership. For example, the Netherlands also encourages a combination of urban and rural development in the city-region and around urban-rural integration in provincial planning. Also, the French planning defines a new type of planning area as ‘Pays’, which are unrelated to administrative boundaries but are commune-based planning and project areas. The ‘Pays’ usually cover a town and its hinterland or sometimes fall within conurbation areas. Based on this, a local partnership of ‘Contract de Pays’ to build common objectives with efficient delivery process is established (DIACT, 2006).
2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter first discussed the restructuring experienced by rural areas in western countries. It is argued that rural areas in western countries are experiencing a consumption-oriented shift to a ‘post-productivist era’ under the influence of globalisation, informationisation and modernisation. This shift is a dynamic process and is characterised by the intertwined restructuring of the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions. This restructuring has increased the diversification of rural areas. At the same time, rural areas are more closely related to their urban counterparts, which shows an increasing urban-rural interaction in recent years.

This chapter then discussed the recent reform of governance in the EU and some of its member states. There has been a shift from government to governance through the devolution of power to lower levels of government and key relevant public and private sectors involved in the decision-making process. This shift to governance has triggered a change of governance mode in rural areas in most EU member states. In England, a ‘bottom-up partnership’ approach has taken place in rural governance which involves local stakeholders in the decision-making and policy delivery process. Similar changes have also been observed outside western countries, such as in Japan. The governance shift in Japan is not yet as deep as there is still a strong leading role for traditional government.

The restructuring of rural development and government require a more integrative and coordinated planning approach. The reform from a landuse planning approach to a
spatial planning approach has met this requirement by focusing on territorial cohesion and policy coordination. Though these planning frameworks have been developed in different contexts to China, and differ from each other, they provide some valuable experiences with some similar trends. Firstly, more emphasis should be paid to the regional and local level to solve rural development problems with an encouragement of local endogenous development. More local sensitively approach should be developed to meet the local needs based on local knowledge and evidence and foster local distinctiveness. Secondly, an integrative place-based approach is necessary to develop territorial strategies for rural development. Thirdly, ‘multi-functionality’ becomes a central concept of planning to beneficially combine different functional activities across economic, social and environmental dimensions to achieve more sustainable rural development. Finally, more attention needs to be paid in rural planning to enhance urban-rural interaction through emphasising the city-region as an integrated functional space.

After the review on rural development and planning in western developed countries, the next chapter will introduce the policy context of rural development in China and local governance background of Chinese rural areas. It will also reveal the previously missing link of rural planning in China’s planning system and analyse the recent planning practice response to rural issues.
CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN CHINA SINCE 1978

China is known as a large agricultural country. According to Chinese Government Statistics, till the end of year 2009, 53.41% of China’s populations were farmers. Since 1978, rural areas in China have experienced a series of socio-economic reforms. Recent years have witnessed increasing attention on the development of China’s rural areas after a long time of neglect. This chapter first reviews the changes in rural definition in China, It then reviews the changing policy context for rural development and highlights the current policy focus. The third part analyses the governance structure and planning policy and practices in rural China.
3.1 Understanding ‘Rural Areas’ in China

It is not easy to give an explicit definition of ‘rural areas’ in China. The understanding of rural areas needs to be examined from two perspectives: the spatial coverage of rural areas and the meaning of rural areas. There is a big difference between the meaning of ‘rural areas’ in China and European countries. To understand rural areas and untangle its complicated relationships with urban areas, it is necessary to briefly explain the current administrative structure in China. The current administrative structure mainly includes six levels (with some complexity at the lowest levels) as shown in Figure 3-1.

![Spatial Administrative Structure in China](image)

Figure 3-1: The spatial administrative structure in China

Source: The author

It is clear that, in China, rural areas are under the jurisdiction of cities. The official criteria to divide urban and rural areas are based on the administrative boundary. However, for a long time there have been complicated and vague. The criteria set by state council in 1955 were mainly based on population, population density and the property of non-agriculture population. It is commonly agreed that, after many years of fast urbanisation, these early criteria cannot distinguish the difference between urban and rural areas any more. Hence, the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC) modified the criteria in 1999 and, its new form has been commonly accepted and used.
by other sectors. In the last couple of years, the continuing fast urbanisation has increased the interaction between urban and rural areas and blurred urban-rural boundary. Regional differences in development have also made it unpractical to use measures of population density to define rural areas in different regions. Hence in 2006 the NBSC set a new criterion mainly based on administrative jurisdiction instead of population and population density. Table 3-1 shows the changes of the definition of rural areas.

Table 3-1: The changes of official definition of ‘rural areas’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Document</th>
<th>Definition of rural areas</th>
<th>Major criteria to divide urban-rural areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Council (1955), ‘Regulation of the criteria to divide urban and rural areas’</td>
<td>Areas outside of cities and towns</td>
<td>Total population, administrative centre, and the percentage of non-agricultural people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBSC (1999), ‘The criterion to divide urban and rural areas in statistic field’</td>
<td>Area outside of urban areas including market towns, counties and villages</td>
<td>Populations density, administrative designation, the coverage of continuous urban built-up areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBSC (03.2006), ‘The temporary criterion to divide urban and rural areas in statistic field’ and the ‘Notice of NBSC on the regulation of urban-rural division’</td>
<td>Areas outside of urban areas</td>
<td>Administrative designation, the coverage of urban public services and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBSC (04.2006), ‘The notice of NBSC to start the work of dividing urban-rural areas’</td>
<td>Areas outside of urban areas and urban-rural combination areas (urban fringe areas)</td>
<td>Administrative designation, the extent of the coverage of urban public services and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the other hand, there has been a longstanding dispute over the meaning of ‘rural areas’ (nongcun) and its relations with ‘countryside’ (xiangcun) in rural research. For some scholars, rural areas are the same as countryside. They both mean areas outside of cities and town which rely on agriculture production and are the residential areas of farmers (Wang, 2001; Xiao, 2004). However, for some other scholars, the countryside is a much broader conception than rural areas as it includes all the non-urban areas. Rural areas are the main part of countryside which includes rural communities and agricultural production areas. Besides, ‘countryside’ is an administrative conception while ‘the rural area’ has a functional meaning for agriculture and peasants (Xiao, 2004). For a long time, planning in rural areas has mostly taken the latter understanding and has been mainly about the development of towns and villages. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

From the discussion above, it can be recognized that some fundamental progress has been made to China’s official rural definition. The most recent definition has reflected the trends to go beyond the urban-rural dichotomy. More characteristics besides demographic and administrative factors are considered in this definition. However, it still has a lot of limits. First, it still has a very strong urban bias. All the criteria are set for the urban areas and few factors to reflect rural features can be seen in the definition. Secondly, though more factors are taken into account in the definition, all of them are physical characteristics. Few economic, social or cultural characteristics are considered. Thirdly, the definition is largely based on the administrative boundary. It is very arbitrary to define the whole area as urban just because its settlements are accessible to modern facilities. Finally, it still uses a broad urban-rural category. The focus is still on
urban-rural differences. However, it is necessary to notice that, as China is a big country, the differences between rural areas are also remarkable. Hence the simplistic approach to define rural areas as a unitary category is not appropriate.
3.2 Changing Policy Context

The development of rural policy is a very complex web which is hard to unravel in detail here. This section only highlights some significant policy changes just to describe the general policy context in rural areas. A lot of research has been done on China’s rural development policy, but most of them are in economic and social research fields rather than in planning research. Since the socio-economic reforms in 1978, central government has tried different measures to develop rural areas. It is widely agreed by scholars that Chinese rural development policy has evolved through several different stages, though no agreement has been achieved on how to divide these stages (Wen, 1999; Zhang, 2006). This research roughly divides past Chinese rural development policy into three phases which includes more detailed policy changes: 1) 1978-later 1980s: economic and institutional reform; 2) later 1980s – mid-1990s: weak policy on rural areas and 3) end of 1990s till now: further steps in institutional reform and the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme.

3.2.1 1978-mid 1980s: economic and institutional reform

The communes system in rural China has existed for nearly 20 years until the later 1970s when new economic and institutional reforms took place. Policy changes in this period cover several different areas:
The complement of household responsibility system

In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCP) of China started a new development stage for rural areas in China. In this conference, the government confirmed its plan on economic and institutional reform in rural areas. The reform began with the land tenure system. From 1978 to 1983, the communes system was gradually abolished and a household responsibility system was introduced instead.

The liberalization of market and price

The reform of land tenure system greatly improved agricultural production in rural areas. Under the new system, farmers could use the allocated land to grow crops and could sell the surplus products on the market after they completed their production quota. However, in the early years, though the government re-opened the market for agricultural products, the state procurement system was still dominant. Most of the state procurement prices were still quite low and the free agricultural markets were soon saturated which led to a shrinking of the margin of profit for farmers. In such a situation, the government started a new policy to liberalise the market and the price of agricultural products. The policy gradually abolished the central planning system, freed most agricultural commodities from government control and reduced the central control on the price of most of agricultural products which largely increased the prices of major agricultural commodities. This reform, together with the household responsibility system reform, changed the responsibilities to the peasant family and helped them to maximise their resources (Croll, 1994), which largely improved the income of farmers in rural China.
The encouragement of Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs)

Another development policy for rural areas in the 1980s was the encouragement by government on Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs). The household responsible system greatly improved rural productivity and farmer’s enthusiasm. However, the later development of agriculture made an increasing labour surplus from the agricultural sector. With the strict constraint of the residential registration system (Hu kou zhi du), such people cannot enter into cities and were stagnated in rural areas. In such a case in the early 1980s, a new policy to support the development of TVEs came out which encouraged surplus labours to ‘leave the land but stay in the village, enter the local factories rather than the cities’. In the collective system of rural China, local government had the primary power to control and allocate development resources. Most of the TVEs were export-oriented. Through the policy, such enterprises got support from local government and even more autonomy while local government also got profits from their development. In the 1980s, an unprecedented development of TVEs, normally understood as rural industrialisation, took place in China, especially in southeastern rural areas, and this fever lasted up to the middle of the 1990s.

It was during this period that China’s rural areas experienced the fastest development. It is hard to define, in more detail, the stages of the reform policies in this period because most of the reform took place in the first 10 years. The major point of this period’s reform was to transform the central command-and-control economic development system to a largely free-market one based on a change in the land tenure system, and to encourage rural industrialisation. To promote the reform, from 1982 to 1986, central government summarised the development experiences in practice from local farmers
and published as reform policy, known as the ‘No.1 document’ (see Table 3-2) to promote them across the whole country. This series of No.1 documents covered most of the important reform policies from the central government and greatly influenced local rural development.

Table 3-2: Major policies of the five years as set out in No.1 documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major Policy Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Officially admit the validity of household responsibility system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Encourage the development of industry and commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Open market, liberalize the commodity circulation, encourage competition in rural areas,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Abolish the central command-and-control system, adjust industrial structure, free farmers from agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Increasing agricultural investment, adjust urban-rural relationship, provide more balanced development chances for farmers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Council, 1982a; 1983; 1984; 1985; 1986

3.2.2 From the later 1980s to the mid-1990s

In the early years of economic and institutional reform, rural areas experienced rapid economic growth and became the leaders for the whole country. However, since 1984, the reform and development focus of the government shifted to urban areas. Hence, after the No.1 documents of 1986, the central government’s rural policy mainly focuses on the continuation of previous actions such as in the landuse system, reducing the burden of farmers, increasing the service system in rural areas, and regenerating rural economy. There were some new policies such as encouraging marketization of agriculture and the development of cooperative organisations for agricultural
development. Most of these new policies did not result in big changes for rural development in practice.

3.2.3 From the later 1990s until now: further steps in institutional reform and ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’

The neglect of rural areas continued into the later 1990s when a lot of problems of rural development were noticed. Rural areas have experienced a severe depression and have been greatly marginalized in China’s fast development. Rural areas in China have now become a symbol of ‘poverty’ and ‘under-development’. After many years urban-focused development, the new century has witnessed a re-emphasis of government policy on rural development. During this period, the government’s policy on rural development has covered three areas.

Further steps to liberalize the land tenure system

Further steps were taken to liberalize the land tenure system (Chen and Davis, 1998). This policy guarantees farmers their rights to use and rent out the land, while protects them from the local government who tend to make profit from taking farmer’s land for industrialisation. The recent Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the CPC once again emphasises the regulation of the rural land use system (Hu, 2007). The new policy now allows some transferring of land if the landuse type has not changed. Meanwhile, it also strictly prevents the use of farm land for non-public good development to gain profit.
Structural changes in rural investment

The second area of new policy is to change the investment in rural areas and eliminate the farmer’s burdens. In the 1990s, the investment was mainly on agricultural infrastructure to improve rural production. In the new century, the government enlarged the coverage of rural investment. More and more money has been invested on rural public services, infrastructure, the welfare system and direct subsidies to improve farmer’s income and life equality (Table 3-3).

Table 3-3: Changes in rural investment in the past several years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Investment focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Agricultural production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Rural electricity network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Road to connect poverty-stricken county to the outside world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Inter-county roads improvement, rural school and clinic, reform of rural taxes and administrative charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Reduce agriculture tax and agriculture specialities tax, direct subsidy to grain producing farmers, and subsidy for seed variety and agriculture tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Eliminate agricultural tax, implement agricultural comprehensive direct subsidies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Urban-rural integration and the New Socialist Rural Construction Project (NSRCP)

China has a longstanding urban-rural dualism. Urban and rural areas were considered as two separate systems (will be discussed in detail in the next section). The fast urbanism and industrialisation greatly aggravated the urban-rural imbalance in development which caused severe urban-rural conflict and also blurred the urban-rural space especially in the urban fringe areas. More recently, there has been a trend of urban-rural
relationship changing from the previous dualistic to an interactive one. Rural areas become to be important to urban and regional development. In such a case, in the past several years, the central government published a series of policies to integrate urban-rural development such as establishing an urban-rural uniform labour market, removing the institutional obstacles of land exploration system, and improving the access to facilities and services to rural migrants. In 2003, on the Third Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCP) of China, the central government advanced its ‘five-integration policy’ which puts urban-rural integration in a primary position. In January 2004, another conference on rural development emphasised the importance of the rural development issues and put them as the first priorities of the central government’s agenda in the future. After that, in 2005, the ‘The 11th Economic and Social Development Plan’ (passed on the fifth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCP) of China), advanced the ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Project (NSRCP)’ which set the future vision for rural China in economic, social, political, cultural and environmental development. The vision is described as a ‘Development of production, well-off life standards, civilization of local custom, clean and tidy environment and democratic administration’ in the report. Since then, a series of No.1 documents has been published from 2004 by central government on different rural issues such as improving farmers’ income and agricultural productivity. These recent policy changes will be analysed in detail in Chapter 5.
3.3 **RURAL GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING IN CHINA**

3.3.1 Rural governance structure in China

**Institutional urban-rural dualism**

It is widely acknowledged that, in China, urban and rural areas are two separate systems with strong institutional differences, among which the most important ones are the different landuse and household registration systems. According to ‘The Law of Land Administration of the People’s Republic of China 2004’ (State Council, 2004a, para: 2.8, 2.10), the lands in the central city belong to the State while lands in rural and suburban areas belong to rural collectives. Farmers can use farm land and housing sites allocated to them by the rural collective but cannot trade them in the market. However, as long as the land type is not changed, the transferring of farm land between different users is allowed. Urban development cannot use land belonging to rural collectives but the urban government has the power to transfer them to state-owned land through a certain procedure and then use the land for urban development. In principle, the transferring of farm land for urban development is strictly controlled and the amount of land transferred for urban development is also strictly controlled by central government. The household registration system divides people in urban and rural areas into two groups: citizens and farmers. Based on the landuse system and household registration system, two different social service systems have developed. While urban citizens have a social welfare system such as medical insurance and endowment insurance, farmers can only rely on their farm land. Farmers in cities such as peasant workers cannot get into the urban social welfare system and have equal access to the public service system. These
two systems are considered as the roots of urban-rural dualism and the major obstacles in integrating urban and rural development as they block the free flows of people and resources between urban and rural areas. Over the past several years, the central government has put in more resources to build rural social welfare system and local government has tried a lot of ways to connect the urban and rural land use systems (to be discussed via case study in Chapters 5 and 6). However, there is no sign that central government intends a fundamental reform of the two systems.

**Governance system in rural areas**

The governance system in rural China is very complicated. It can be seen from Figure 3-1 that rural areas (county, town/township and villages) are under the administrative control of cities. From this perspective, urban and rural areas are administratively united. However, the actual rural governance system is a more complicated combination of ‘state administration and village autonomy’.

**From city to town**

Since 1982, the state introduced the ‘city – district/county (county-level city) – street/town (township)’ (Figure 3-1) governance structure to make a united control on urban and rural development. The responsibility system is slightly different between ‘city-street’ and ‘city-town’. In general, county and town as an independent administrative role have more power than districts and streets. From a planning perspective, county and town have the power to make plans while the planning responsibility of district and streets is taken by the city. This governance structure is good for promoting urban development. However, it has caused the exploitation of rural
resources for urban development and hence led to conflicts between city, county and
town. Since 2000, some provinces such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu have started to change
the ‘city-county-town’ governance structure. There are two main ways of changing:
administrative structure adjustment to change county to district and applying province-
led-county (county-level city) structure (Luo, 2007: 100). The second way can be
considered as devolution of power to the county level. The extent of devolution to the
county varies in different provinces. For example, the devolution of power to counties
in Zhejiang province covers nearly all the economic issues and even some social issues,
while in Jiangsu’s change to province-led-county (county-level city) system only the
fiscal revenue system has been devolved. The administrative structure adjustment
contributes a lot to the development of metropolitan areas. However, it has caused a lot
of problems and conflicts for rural development and planning which will be discussed in
Chapter 6 via case studies. The province-led-county (county-level city) structure brings
more opportunities and resources for county development but may also lead to more
pressure in regional coordination (Luo, 2006).

From town to village

The town (township) is the bottom level of the current administrative structure. The
villages are run by the villager’s committee which is elected by residents of villages.
The main function of villager’s committee is to manage the public affairs and mediate
disputes among the villagers, maintain public order, express villagers’ opinions and
requirements to local government and assistant local government’s work in rural areas
(State Council, 2010a, para: 1.2, 1.5). In principle, local government should not
intervene in the autonomy of villages. In theory, the relationship between town
government and the villager’s committee should be like a partnership. However, in fact, the villagers’ committee is more like a branch of town government in villages and its main function becomes the delivery of upper level policy (Shen, 2006; Li, 2008). In the planning dimension, town government is directly responsible for rural planning and landuse regulation in the villages. This leads to a loss of direct planning responsibility when the towns are changed into urban streets during the adjustment of administrative structure. Recently, central government has started to encourage multiple forms of co-operation between local government, villages and the private sector in the delivery of public service systems as the way to reduce financial burdens.

3.3.2 Rural planning in China

Rural planning in China is always a controversial topic. It is widely known that planning in China has a traditional urban-bias. Until the publication of the new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ in 1 January 2008, there was no official plan in rural areas.

China’s planning system

According to the ‘Urban Planning Act’, the planning areas are the built-up areas of cities and the areas which are considered as the future built-up areas of cities. For a long time, rural areas are not covered by the official planning system (Figure 3-2). On the other side, though different sectors such as the agricultural department and the construction department have their own plans in rural areas, there is little communication and coordination between these plans. Hence, there has been no official integrated development planning for rural areas in China. However, the recent
increasing emphasis on rural issues and the new NSRCP programme have caused a new boom of rural planning in China. From the 1 January 2008, the new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ takes the place of the former ‘Urban Planning Act’. A new planning system that covers the rural areas has been built into the new Act (Figure 3-3).

According to the Act, all the rural areas should make township plans (village spatial distribution plan) and village construction plans (both were only informal plans previously) to guide the future development of villages and construction in rural areas. However, the emphasis of the new planning system in rural areas is on the construction of the villages instead of the development of the whole rural area. Besides, though the new Act adds rural planning into the official planning system, it only sets broad principles for rural planning. Few detailed guidelines on how to make and carry out these plans is included which brings difficulties in practice. These changes in the new planning system in respect of rural planning will be analysed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Figure 3-2: The previous official planning system in China
Planning policy for rural towns and villages

Though not included in the formal planning system until 2008, planning in rural areas actually has a long history which can be traced back to the early 1980s. After the socio-economic reforms in rural areas in 1978, the rural towns and villages have experienced rapid growth. There was a fast increase in development activities in rural towns and villages which mainly consisted of housing construction. The rapid expansion of towns and villages brought heavy pressure to the surrounding open farmland. It is at this time that the government started to think about town and village planning. A ‘Rural Construction Regulation Bureau’ was established under the ‘Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction Environment Protection’ (does not exist anymore). A series of documents were published to control the development activities, the major ones of which includes ‘An urgent notice on stopping using farmland for rural housing development’ (State Council, 1981), ‘Land Regulation on housing development in towns and villages’ (State Council, 1982b) and ‘Town and village planning principles’

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4 It was replaced by the Ministry of Construction in 1988 which now changes into Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
(National Construction Committee\textsuperscript{5} and National Agricultural Committee, 1982). The main objective of these documents was to control and regulate housing construction by local people.

Later, the fast development of TVEs and the booms of towns in 1990s brought a large amount of development activities extending beyond just housing development and led to greater development pressure. Under this background, the central government has paid more attention to planning in rural areas, especially the towns. A series of planning policies were published with more detailed content and broader coverage than the previous policies for town and village planning. The most important ones include ‘The notice on the cooperation on the adjustment of town and village planning and the decision on the location of basic farmland’ (Ministry of Construction and National Land Regulation Bureau\textsuperscript{6}, 1996), ‘The standards on town and village plan’ (Ministry of Construction, 1993), ‘Regulation rules on the development of market towns and villages’ (State Council, 1993), and ‘The guidance for town and village plan making’ (Ministry of Construction, 2000). Compared with the early stage, the planning policy for rural towns and villages is much more improved and extended. The focus moves from the housing development control to the arrangements of all development activities. The main purpose of planning is seen as the physical landuse arrangements. These have formed the bases of town and village planning in China. However, the town and planning system developed in this period had some limits. Since the 1990s, the development of towns in rural areas was encouraged by central government as the development focus of rural areas, underpinned by the development of rural industries.

\textsuperscript{5} It became part of Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction Environment Protection in May 1982.
\textsuperscript{6} It becomes the Ministry of Land Resources now
Though all the planning policy was made for towns (both market towns and designated towns) and villages, most planning in practice was actually concerned with towns. As town and village planning was not included the formal planning system established in the ‘Urban Planning Act 1990’, they were not compulsory. Local government decided whether they needed to make a plan or not. However, the situation became a little complicated in respect of town planning. With the central government’s enhanced emphasis on towns, the ‘Urban Planning Act 1990’ takes towns as cities: ‘City in this act includes cities directly under the control of the central government, other cities, and towns’ (Urban Planning Act 1990’, para: 1.5). In such a case, town planning becomes formal and compulsory. The situation of village planning is, however, very different. As it is not compulsory, and the government’s emphasis is on cities and towns, village planning has been neglected by local government. Moreover, the focus of town planning is the central town and does not include the surrounding rural areas. Hence, it can be seen that, from the very beginning, planning in rural areas is a missing link in both formal and informal planning.

More recently, with the central government’s increasing emphasis on urban-rural integration and the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme, more policies have been published for town and village planning with new attention given on village renovation. These latest changes in planning policy will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Planning practices in rural areas

In practice, since the mid-1990s a lot of planning activities have tried to extend the planning system to rural areas in different locations, though with different names used such as ‘urban-rural integration plan’, ‘urban (shiyu) master plan’ and ‘urban and rural master plan’.

The emergence of urban-rural integration plan can be traced back to the middle 1990s. The making of this type of plan is still occurring but the methodology of plan-making has markedly improved. This research selects two urban-rural integration plans from the early stage and a more recent one as examples. The ‘Nanhai City7 Urban-rural Integration Plan (1995-2010)8’ (Figure 3-4) and ‘Wenling City Urban-rural Integration Plan (1999-2020)’ (figure 3-5) are the most widely known pioneers in urban-rural integration plans.

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7 It is now the Nanhai district of Foshan city in Guangdong province
8 This plan was rewarded by the Ministry of Construction
Figure 3-4: Nanhai City Urban and Rural Integration Plan, this figure shows the built-up areas in Nanhai central city and the surrounding towns.

Figure 3-5: Wenlin City Urban and Rural Integration Plan, this figure shows the built-up areas in Wenlin central city and the surrounding towns.
The background to the making of these two plans was very similar. Both the cities had a very strong rural economy and increasing interaction between urban and rural development especially in the economic and spatial dimensions, while they faced similar problems of the disordered development expansion in the countryside and unnecessary competition between towns and towns and cities.

In content, the Nanhai City Urban-Rural Integration Plan is similar to an urban master plan. However, it takes into consideration the development arrangements for all the towns (townships) in its area and includes specific objectives and development modes for them. Based on landuse evaluation, it also strictly defines the areas protected from development such as ecological sensitive areas and farm land protection areas. Moreover, this plan tries to extend some urban services into rural areas, particularly in respect of the transport system.

Similarly, the Wenling Urban-Rural Integration Plan also makes a comprehensive arrangement for the future development of its central city and all surrounding towns. It divides the urban and rural areas into five development areas (pianqu) mainly based on their economic connections and administrative boundaries and sets out development arrangements based on these development areas. It also concentrates the dispersed villages and small settlements and adjusts the urban-rural settlement into a new hierarchical settlement system of ‘central city-central town-normal town-central village-village’. Moreover, it also makes arrangements for regional transport, infrastructure and service systems and coordinates the conflicts between towns.
It can be seen from these two plans that some progress has been made to include coverage of rural areas into the planning process. However, most of the focus is still on towns. Most rural areas are seen as a background of farmland and ecological protection areas. The main objective of these plans is to coordinate the future development of towns and introduce more efficient land use in rural areas. Also, the making of these plans can be seen as the simple application urban planning frameworks to rural development areas.

With central government’s increasing emphasis on urban-rural integration and the introduction of the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme, more and more practices have been undertaken to integrate rural areas into the urban and rural planning system. The most famous example is the Chongqing Urban and Rural Master Plan (2007-2020) (Figure 3-6) which is considered to have largely influenced the establishment of the urban and rural planning system set out in the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008’.
Figure 3-6: Chongqing Urban and Rural Master Plan. It shows the development areas in the Chongqing metropolitan areas.
Chongqing is also one of the central government’s experimental areas in urban-rural integration development. The most famous and successful innovation of this plan is the development of a new urban and rural planning system (Table 3-4). This planning system breaks down the traditional urban-rural dualism and gives government institutions at different levels different powers in making master plans and detailed plans for their areas. The plan includes the contents of traditional planning system but is much more flexible by adopting the style of ‘metropolitan areas plan’ and development issues oriented special plans in rural areas. Moreover, it increases the rural planning regulations in both the villages (settlements and surrounding open spaces) and areas with special control.

Table 3- 4: Urban and rural planning system of Chongqing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning type</th>
<th>Main contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban master plan (whole city)</td>
<td>Urban system plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master plan of metropolitan areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural master plan and special plans in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural master plan at district and county level</td>
<td>Urban system plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master plan of district/town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural master plan and special plans in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural master plan at town (township)</td>
<td>Town master plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central town plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village plan and special plans in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed plan</td>
<td>Detailed plans in central city and towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village plan and settlement detailed plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning guidance for special areas which need strict control such as historic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This plan moves further than the urban-rural integration plans seen in the early stage. Further discussion on latest experiences in rural planning will be carried out in Chapter 5 and 7 via the case study research.

Though there are a lot of similar practices in rural planning, the reason for making these plans is normally due to the practical needs of local government. Most of them still have an urban-bias. Also, all these plans are different to each other in planning areas, aims, principles, content, and methodological approach. The quality of these plans depends on the quality of planners and hence varies in different areas. These problems in practice also require conceptual and theoretical rethinking in respect of some fundamental issues of planning to develop an holistic urban and rural planning framework for rural development.
Theoretical research in rural planning

There is much less theoretical research related to rural planning when compared to that of urban planning. However, more research has been carried out since 2000 with an increasing emphasis on rural development and practice in rural planning. Different ideas have emerged about the aim of rural planning. Xie and Zhang (2004) argue that the aim of rural planning is to coordinate policies for the natural environment, rural production and living activities, and the physical environment to achieve a harmonious relationship between human and nature. According to this aim, they argue that rural planning should think about how intervene in rural spatial arrangements based on the understanding of the intrinsic patterns and rural spaces that are shaped by time and the role and functions of rural areas in regional economic and social development (Xie and Zhang, 2004).

On the other hand, based on their practical experience, some planners make different suggestions for the future development of rural planning. For example, Zhang (2006) argues that the planning of rural villages should be based on the existing urban master plans and focus on two levels of distribution plan at the county level and the village plan. He also suggests a typology in making guidance for different types of rural villages. In addition, Yang and Dan (2006) argue that planning in rural areas should pay more attention to the regulation of different types of space at the town level such as non-development areas, development constraint areas and non-rural development areas and introduce zoning for each area. They also argue that the village plan should put more research into the issues of residential concentration, environmental protection and protection and restoration of local historic and cultural villages. It is also suggested by some planners that rural planning should be based on the better understanding of the
relationships between urban and rural development as well as the relationships between rural development and urbanisation (Luo, 2006). Meanwhile, based on their experience in rural planning in Jiangsu province, Zhang et al (2009) argue that the main job of rural planning is to make the landuse arrangements for various development activities to achieve local economic and social development goals. They suggest that rural planning should include two levels of village distribution planning and village planning. The main content of village distribution planning should be to decide the locations, scales and development modes for villages based on an analysis of urban and rural relationships, local development conditions and the context provided by the upper level planning. Village planning activities should include village area planning focusing on the arrangements of settlements, industry, infrastructure and service systems and natural resource protection, and settlement planning focusing on spatial landuse arrangements in residential settlements.

9 Here upper level plan means plans at county, municipal city and higher level such as urban system plan and urban master plan.
3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter gives a general picture of the policy changes, governance structure and planning development in rural areas in China. Since 1978, the central government of China has introduced a raft of policies to reform the rural development context in China. Recently, there has been more emphasis on supporting rural development and to reduce the urban-rural gap in economic development and social service and welfare systems. Rural governance in China has a very complicated structure with three parts: from city to town and the village. Though there have been some changes in terms of devolution of powers either to cities or to counties, the government still has overall control on development. The reviews also show the general neglect of rural planning issues within China’s planning system. Finally, the chapter reviews more recent planning practice in rural areas and the key theoretical research that underpins current activities related to rural planning.

Based on a review of western experiences in rural planning and China’s situation (as described here), Chapter 4 will further develop the theoretical framework and provide the detailed methodology for this research.
CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUALISATION AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter develops a conceptual framework for the study of rural planning approaches in China. It also explains the overall research methodology and the data collection methods used.
4.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section explains how the approaches used in western research have been adopted to develop the research framework to examine rural planning in China. The previous two chapters reviewed past research on rural planning in the EU and some of its member states and the analysis of the development process and the local response in rural areas, as well as the context for rural planning in China. Based on the earlier literature and policy review, a three step analytical framework has been developed for this research. The first step is to clarify the definition of rural areas in China with a more fine grained classification that can represent the different characteristics found in different parts of China. The second step is to conceptualise the development process and local response in rural China. Based on these two steps, the third step identifies the role of planning and develops an institutional framework for examining rural planning in China.

4.1.1 Defining ‘rural areas’ in China

The understanding of what constitutes a rural area is very important when developing the planning framework for rural development as it shapes the potential scenarios for future rural development. Different theoretical approaches have been used by academics to understand the idea of ‘rurality’. However, these approaches were developed in the context of developed countries in Western Europe, which cannot be directly applied to the context of China as it is in a transition state undergoing rapid economic and social development. Considering the very different characteristics and the differential rates of development in different parts of China from, for example, the more highly developed and urbanised eastern seaboard regions to the remote central and western mountainous
regions, it would be difficult and arbitrary to have a general definition of rural areas for the whole country. This research therefore focuses on the eastern region of China which has already experienced a very high level of urbanisation and is currently in a mixed process of urbanisation and suburbanisation. This means that the use of Western Europe as the reference point is more relevant for rural areas in this part of China. Based on the review in Chapter Three, a mixed approach is developed to for defining ‘rural areas’ in China.

The proposed approach largely follows the basis of the social representation approach (Halfacree, 1993) because it is neutral and creative and is adaptable to different environments (Woods, 2005). This approach sees rurality as a social representation of space. It is discourse-based and focuses on characteristics and symbols that people think as rural and uses this knowledge to identify different rural areas. From the planning perspective, the policy discourse developed by Frouws (1998) is adopted by including: agri-ruralist discourse that considers agriculture and farmers as principle to rural socio-economic and cultural space; utilitarian discourses to integrate rural areas into the wider market and socio-economic structures; and finally, the hedonist discourse which emphasise natural attractiveness and considers rural areas as a space of leisure and recreation. However, the social representation approach detaches rural areas from the geographical locality which is very important for planning. Hence, the idea of the function-based approach is also adopted to supplement the social representation approach. From this perspective, the understanding of ‘rurality’ is based on the multi-dimensional roles and functions of rural areas which include economic structure, social characteristics, cultural traits, physical landuse and the settlement structures. Moreover, considering the increased diversification of rural areas, any single approach to their
definition is not going to reflect reality. A more comprehensive area typology, based on urban-rural integration (Schulze-Bäing, 2007), is therefore used to classify rural areas into different types for a better understanding of the characteristics of rural areas and devising more appropriate policy making.

In summary, a mixed approach is developed in this research to define rural areas in China by adopting the theoretical principles of the social representation and function-based approaches and to combine them with an area typology. The area classification tends to classify different types of rural areas based on an indicator system developed from the conceptual definition of ‘rurality’. Indicators that capture the multi-dimensions of rural development include economic, social, environmental and cultural characteristics as well as urban-rural interaction are normally used to develop the area classification scheme. This will be discussed later in the case study section of this chapter.

4.1.2 Conceptualising the process of rural development and planning

Rural change is a dynamic process of spatial transformation driven by both the local forces and the wider external socio-economic context of change including regional, national as well as global factors. The transformation is best understood as the interaction between market forces and policy intervention. The development of rural policy should be based on the understanding of the state of rural development, while rural status can be conceptualised as the outcome of rural policy. Four components are
identified to help to understand the dynamic process of rural development: (1) the identification of the problems and potential in rural areas and the internal and external drivers of change; (2) the identification of local policy responses and the analysis of the roles and institutional relationships among the key players and agencies involved at different levels of government; (3) building future scenarios for sustainable development for the development of more realistic strategies and policy framework to balance the needs of different interests in rural areas; and (4) the assessment of the implementation and the effects of rural policy (See Figure 4-1).
Figure 4-1: Conceptualisation of the dynamic rural development process

- **Rural Changes: what is the situation?**
  - Identification of the problems
  - Understanding the nature of change
  - Identification of the challenges and opportunities.

- **Rural Governance: how to respond?**
  - Local response to changes
  - Identification of the key players in the process
  - Coordinate and balance their values, objectives and interests

- **Policy development: what can be done?**
  - Building future scenarios
  - Developing integrated strategies
  - Developing policy frameworks

- **Policy delivery: how to implement?**
  - Instruments to implement the policy

**Global factors**
- New production-consumption system of food
- New international division of labour
- Modern knowledge and skill
- New information and communication technology
- Global climate change and the related international agenda

**National context**
- National rural policy
- Sectoral policy
- Planning system

**Regional context**
- Planning system
- Sectoral policy
- Sectoral policy

**Local socio-economic context**
- Spatial Planning process
Rural issues

Different approaches have been used to analyse rural development. The main idea behind adopting an integrative approach (Wong et al, 2008) in this research is to build an analytical framework for recent rural development in China. The integrative approach entails a set of economic, social, cultural, environmental and institutional relationships that, together, share the identity of a place. From this perspective, the analysis of rural development is spatially based and multi-dimensional. Instead of the sectoral perspective, the multi-dimensional nature of this approach deals with rural issues in a comprehensive way to combine the economic, social, environmental, cultural and urban-rural dimension (Cloke and Little, 1997; Woods, 2005). Moreover, the understanding of rural development goes beyond the simple adding-up of changes in each dimension but rather sees these changes as intrinsically inter-related. From the social-cultural perspective, the social networks and culture-nature relationships are considered as fundamental factors to understand rural development and the production-consumption relationship.

Figure 4-2 describes the application of the multi-dimensional analytical framework in the context of China. Since the beginning of 2000s, rural areas have entered a new phase of redevelopment in China. In the socio-economic transition, rural areas are more open to market forces, both internal and international. Recent years have witnessed a series of structural changes in the rural economy. There has been a decline in the importance of agriculture in the rural economy; instead, rural industries and the service sector play a more important role. Moreover, in most rural areas in China, the competitiveness of agriculture is weak because of the slow pace of modernisation and
the low level of the technology and antiquated land use systems (Lu, 2001; Liu, Zhang and Huo, 2004). According to the household responsibility system, land in rural areas belong to the rural collective but are allocated to peasant households on a per capita basis. Although this system improved agricultural productivity in the early stages of rural development, it is now considered to reduce the potential for large-scale agriculture and restrict the improvement of productivity - because of the fragmentation of land use it has caused and its restriction on free market transactions of the land use rights (Huang and Wang, 2008). Besides, rural industry also faces the challenge of restructuring from the former labour, resource and land extensive sectors (such as TVEs in the manufacture of agricultural products, metal metallurgy, textile, and construction materials) to those more sustainable sectors, such as high-tech manufacture and cultural industry, under the national policy of ‘Scientific development strategy’ and ‘New path of industrialisation’ in rural areas (Wang, 2005). In recent years, there has been a trend of diversification of rural economies as new economic activities such as horticulture and rural tourism have started to emerge, especially in the periphery of rural areas (Cao and Zhang, 2006). Finally, there has been an increasing imbalance in the rural economy. While most of economic growth happens in rural areas in the city-regions, most of the remote rural areas have been deprived and are becoming more marginalised following the decline of agricultural development.

There are a number of key issues in relation to social development in rural China. Firstly, the large and unstable volume of rural-urban migration leads to both loss of human resource and changes in demographic structure of rural areas (Zhao and Wong, 2002). Secondly, rural areas in China have suffered from a lack of a social welfare system and insufficient provision of public services for a long time (Zhao and Yao,
2003). Thirdly, in recent years, peripheral rural areas around big cities, especially in the more developed eastern China, are experiencing a mixed process of suburbanisation which has introduced new social groups and changes to the social structure in these areas. Finally, poverty and deprivation is still a big problem in remote rural areas.

Most rural areas today are facing growing environmental pressures. The pressures from urban extension and local development have led to the loss of natural amenity. In addition, pollution caused by agriculture, daily life and rural industry has been increasing (Liu, 2007; Yang, 2007). The shrinkage of arable land and water shortages remain a key concern (Liu, Zhang and Huo, 2004). Following the rapid pace of urbanisation, the cultural identity of rural areas is under threat. The problems faced include the loss of cultural traits such as traditional rural lifestyle and historical/cultural relics in rural areas (Jiang et al, 2004). Another important issue for current rural development in China is the changing urban-rural relationship. Generally, there is still a gap between urban and rural development. However, recent years have witnessed a growing urban-rural linkages and a trend of urban-rural integration for future development, especially in city-regions (Yang, 2005).

The model of development used to tackle the problems for rural areas is the endogenous development model, which is based on the discovery and exploitation of potential development resources. The central idea of this development mode is the ‘multi-functionality’ of rural areas. It calls for the re-assessment and re-organization of rural resources including social and environmental, as well as economic, capital for future development.
Chapter 4: Conceptualisation and Methodology

Figure 4-2: Multi-dimensional analysis on China’s rural development. The arrows mean the interactions between different factors which the thickness of the arrows means the strength of these linkages.
Rural governance

The multi-functionality of rural areas calls for a review of the governance structures for rural development. Though recent years have witnessed devolution of development powers to the regional and local level, China is still under the strong control of central government. At the regional and local level, the government has overall power over the decision-making process of development. Hence, the decentralised bottom-up partnership approach of governance (Gallent et al, 2008) that has developed and is widely used in western context cannot be applied directly in the case of China. In recent years, there has been increasing attention paid on governance issues in China to address the new context of socio-economic transition and global influences. More recent Chinese research highlights the recent shift towards entrepreneurial governance (Wu, 2007) in cities and the increasing emphasis on territorial governance at the regional level (Xu, 2008). The key idea behind urban entrepreneurship in China is to involve various private sector partners to form coalitions with the government though the government still plays a leading role in the coalition (Zhang and Wu, 2008). The new focus of regional governance is to provide a spatial framework for cooperation between different levels of government vertically as well as between different governments horizontally within the region (Xu, 2008). Although the focus of the research is on cities and regions, it still helps to provide an important basis for governance in rural China.

Based on recent Chinese research and with reference to rural governance experiences in western countries, a government-led partnership approach is proposed in this research for rural areas in China. It can be considered as an eclectic way of having decentralised partnerships within a context of strong centralised government. This approach has three
fundamental principles. The first is the re-division of the inter-governmental functions and the devolution of power of development to local government. This highlights the horizontal and network-based relationships between local government as well as the hierarchical interaction between different levels of government. In some circumstances, for example when there is a large event that involves different levels of government or when a consensus among neighbouring local government bodies has to be reached on specific issues, new types of organisation tend to be introduced to coordinate intergovernmental conflicts for the common benefits. One example is the Mayors’ joint conference of the Yangtze River Delta. Consensus is achieved through the conference to coordinate the conflicts and competitions in economic development between cities for a better integrative development of the whole region, as there is no official regional organisation because the Delta crosses Shanghai and two provinces. Secondly, the government still plays a key and leading role in strategic decision-making, though with consultation with players who are engaged in the development. The aim is to develop an integrative policy framework to coordinate the interests of various key stakeholders including government sectors, agencies, private enterprises and local farmers. Thirdly, the delivery partnership is adopted to develop cooperation between the state and agencies as the main instrument to implement policy. However, this is only a proposition which has to be tested and verified with empirical data from fieldwork.

The analysis of the mode of rural governance in China involves a number of steps: (1) to examine the role and function of government at different levels; (2) to identify inter-governmental conflicts on development control and the current approaches and mechanisms used to deal with them; (3) to find out the current and potential key players involved in the development of rural areas and their values, strategies and interests; and
(4) to examine the current relationships between government and the non-state agencies. The findings will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

**Spatial planning framework**

Based on the review in Chapter Two, a spatial planning approach is adopted in this study as the potential policy framework for the new spatial governance context to achieve sustainable rural development. According to the review in Chapter Two, spatial planning can be considered as a new planning approach that ‘goes beyond traditional land-use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the nature of places and how they can function’ (ODPM, 2005, para. 30). It focuses on addressing factors that influence the nature and functioning of the place and aims to achieve sustainable development by efficient use of the development resources (Wong, Qian and Zhou, 2008). To achieve this, the spatial planning approach should include a number of key principles (adopted from work of Wong et al, 2000; RTPI, 2001; Baker and Wong, 2006):

1. Planning should develop a spatial vision for sustainable development that based on evidence, local objectives and distinctiveness, and translate them into priorities, policies and programmes of land allocations for delivery;

2. Spatial planning should work as a coordinator, integrator and mediator of spatial development by providing a framework for policy and programme delivery across different sectors at different spatial levels;

3. The development of policy ideas should be based on coherent functional areas rather than the arbitrary administrative areas;
(4) It should be more collaborative and participative in strategic planning-making processes;

(5) Planning policy should be linked to a delivery mechanism to make sure the spatial objectives can be delivered to provide feedback to policy framing; and

(6) A consistent monitoring system is required to analyse the outcomes of planning policy.

This shift towards a spatial planning approach is also shaping a new discourse for rural planning in Western European countries. Though developing in different national contexts, the spatial planning for rural development in Western European Countries shares some similarities besides the general principles listed above:

(1) Planning should move from sectoral policy towards territorial policy for the development of the whole rural area;

(2) Planning should recognise the close intertwining of economic, social and environmental factors in the restructuring of rural areas and apply an integrative and multi-functional approach to coordinate the economic, social and environmental challenges in shaping rural space;

(3) Planning tends to be more positive in developing rural areas by reassessing and utilising countryside capital in a more sustainable way;

(4) Planning should recognise the differentiation of rural areas and take a place-sensitive approach which calls for topology of policy for different types of rural areas;

(5) A more close relationship between regional and local planning is needed as the regional function has a great influence on framing rural policy; and
(6) The urban-rural relationship has a heightened emphasis in rural planning as the development of rural areas is closely related to cities. A series of policies have been developed to promote urban-rural partnership for the future development. Also, the ‘city-region’ has become a strategic framework for planning of the rural areas surrounding cities.

Considering the differences in national context, few existing western planning frameworks can be directly transferred and used in China. But the western experience nevertheless has some important implications for developing a rural planning framework in China.
4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Research questions

The overall aim of this research is to examine alternative approaches to the development of an institutional spatial planning framework for sustainable rural development in China. In order to achieve this overall aim, there are six research objectives, each of which has to be addressed by a number of more detailed research questions.

**Objective one**: To review the changing context for rural development in China since the ‘Open Door’ Policy and socio-economic reform in 1978, and to identify the emerging issues in rural development in China.

This objective requires a broad literature review on the broad context for rural development and planning in the post-reform years of China (since 1978). The review has to focus on the following research questions:

- What have been the main changes in the broad policy context for rural development since the socio-economic reform in 1978 in China?
- What are the major problems emerging for rural development in China and what are the key factors that are related to these major rural development issues?

The key emerging issues and the underlying factors will be elaborated and tested through the case study in Chapters Six and Seven.
Objective two: To review the trends and key issues of rural development in the EU and to identify different approaches used to address rural development issues.

This objective requires a broad literature review on rural development in the EU and some of its member states. The review focuses on the following research questions:

- What have been the significant changes in rural development, and the key drivers of these changes, in Western European countries in recent years?
- How do local rural areas respond to these changes and who are the key actors engaged in the process?
- What are the relevant approaches and experience for analysing rural issues?

Review in Chapter Two has examined the development process and governance modes of European rural areas and identifies different approaches used to analyse rural issues and changes.

Objective three: To review different institutional frameworks and forms of planning from western experience that could be used to integrate rural areas with urban areas to achieve the vision of sustainable development in China.

This objective requires a broad literature review on both the academic research and policy documents on the theory of spatial planning and its influences on the reformation of rural planning frameworks in the EU and some of its member states. The research questions to be addressed are:
• What is spatial planning and why has there been a change from traditional physical landuse planning to spatial planning approach in EU and its member states?

• How does the spatial planning discourse influence the planning system in rural areas in the EU and its member states?

• How does a spatial planning framework address key rural issues and establish the institutional relationships between different actors to guide rural development?

An extensive and intensive review of academic research and policy documents on spatial planning and changes of rural planning framework in the EU and some of its member states have been set out in Chapter Two. These have been incorporated into the conceptual framework for this research.

Objective four: To examine the changing institutional structure of the complex planning system in China and to ascertain the gaps and weaknesses of the system in addressing rural issues.

This objective requires a broad review of policy documents on China’s planning system. The research questions include:

• How does the planning framework address the key rural development issues in China and how does it deal with the institutional relationships between the key actors engaged in the rural development process?
• What are the recent development trends in planning practice that are related to rural development in China and what are their implications for future rural planning?

An extensive review of the policy documents on the planning system in China has been covered in Chapter Three. It will be further elaborated in Chapter Five.

**Objective five**: To explore the strengths and weaknesses of the existing planning framework in China from the perspective of key actors at different government levels via a case study approach, and to assess to what extent the western planning framework could be applied in China.

To apply the analytical framework to analyse rural development in the case study areas to investigate rural planning, the research issues to be asked include:

• What are the key strategies, and the influence of these strategies, on rural development?

• How do the key actors related to rural development deal with their relationships?

• What are the key elements for a rural planning framework that can truly address rural development issues in the case study areas?

The analysis is reported in Chapters Six and Seven.
Objective six: To synthesize the findings and to make recommendations on the future development of a framework for rural planning in China to address sustainable development issues.

The research questions include:

- What recommendations can be made for development a planning framework for sustainable rural development in China?
- What are the contributions and limitations of this research to further develop the Chinese rural planning research agenda?

The findings are reported in Chapter Eight.

4.2.2 Research strategy

This research mainly adopts a qualitative research strategy. A case study approach is used to identify current rural issues and planning processes in China. A statistical analysis of development indicators is used to classify different types of rural areas and select targets for analysis in the case study areas. Documentary analysis and in-depth interviews are carried out to collect data in the case study areas which are then manually processed to analyse the rural planning frameworks in case study areas.

The Case study research approach

A multiple case study approach is used in this research. Three different rural areas in Jiangsu province have been selected as case study areas. The use of a specific research
strategy normally depends on three conditions: the type of research question, the control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and the focus on contemporary or historical phenomena (Yin, 2003). In general, the case study approach attempts to capture the reality of a particular environment at a point in a time. It is preferred when the research focuses on a ‘how/why’ question about contemporary events which are not under the control of the researcher. This type of approach is commonly adopted in planning research. Case studies can be single-case or multiple-case. Multiple-case studies are more robust and more compelling in evidence (Herriott and Firestone, 1983). Hence, compared with single-case, multiple-case studies are more substantial. This research is about how to use a spatial planning approach to achieve a sustainable rural development in China. The research covers questions like: in what ways are rural areas restructuring, why does this happen and how can a spatial planning approach be applied? The use of a case study approach is therefore appropriate for this research. Considering the varieties of China’s rural areas, it is also considered appropriate to use a multiple case study approach rather than a single case study approach. The criteria used to choose the case study areas are explained in the next section.

Selection of case study areas

Jiangsu Province, a large province in Eastern China, has been select as the broad study area (Figure 4-3). There are several reasons for such a choice. First, Eastern China is where rural areas in China are most developed and have been experiencing fast urbanisation and suburbanisation which makes them more suitable to learn from the experiences from western developed countries (Table 4-1). Jiangsu province is one of the most developed provinces located in the Yangtze River Delta, one of the most
developed areas in China. Some of its rural areas are among the richest in China, and they used to be the leader in rural industrialisation in later 1980s and early 1990s. It has the main characteristics, and most the common problems, of rural development in Eastern China. Secondly, rural development in Jiangsu province is very diverse. There are big gaps in rural development between southern and northern Jiangsu. Hence the research on Jiangsu may have broad implications for other rural areas of China. Finally, Jiangsu is a leading province for planning research and innovation in China.

Table 4- 1: Development differences between rural areas in different regions of China (Year 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total value of agricultural products (billion)</th>
<th>The added value of rural industry (billion)</th>
<th>Incomes of peasants per capita per year (yuan)</th>
<th>The value of fixed investments in rural areas (billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern China</td>
<td>2242.82</td>
<td>4566.2</td>
<td>5504.9</td>
<td>1324.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle China</td>
<td>1701.98</td>
<td>1838.7</td>
<td>3896.9</td>
<td>415.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western China</td>
<td>929.26</td>
<td>395.1</td>
<td>2908.8</td>
<td>242.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data sources: www.china.com.cn
Rural areas in three different cities in Jiangsu province with significant different characteristics have been chosen as case study areas. Based on the conceptualisation of the understanding of rural areas in China in the first part of this chapter, a classification system has been developed here to divide rural areas with different characteristics in Jiangsu province. A criteria system which is made up of a series of indicators from economic, social, and environmental perspectives is developed here to assess the rural development in the case study area – Jiangsu province. Traditionally in China, the
indicators used to assess rural development are mainly drawn from the socio-economic dimension such as levels of urbanisation and population density. Recently, with the Chinese government’s new attention on urban-rural coordination and rural development, more research have been undertaken on the new construction of rural areas. More indicators from economic, social and environmental dimensions are being used to measure urban-rural differences in development (Meng and Huang, 2004; Chen, 2007; Luo and Zhang 2007). Based on these, and the available data sources of the case study area, the indicators selected to evaluate and classify rural areas in different cities of Jiangsu province include three broad types as following:

(1) Economic indicators (Table 4-2)

- Gross Domestic Products (GDP) per capita: The average market values of goods and services produced by per person per year in the rural areas of the province;
- Proportion of agricultural products: The percentage of the total values of agricultural products in the total GDP in the rural areas of the province;
- Proportion of agricultural employment: The percentage of the numbers of employees in agricultural sector as part of the total numbers of employees in rural areas;
- The proportion of employment in the second sector (industry and manufacturing): The percentage of the numbers of employees in the second sector in the total numbers of employees in rural areas.
Table 4-2: Economic indicators of rural areas in cities of Jiangsu province (Year 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>GDP per capita (Yuan)</th>
<th>Proportion of Agricultural products (%)</th>
<th>Proportion of agricultural employment (%)</th>
<th>Proportion of second sector employment (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>32377.47</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>43.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuxi</td>
<td>75088.04</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>60.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuzhou</td>
<td>10315.83</td>
<td>22.84</td>
<td>46.62</td>
<td>29.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changzhou</td>
<td>34777.41</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>22.99</td>
<td>51.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>87519.28</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>16.03</td>
<td>60.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantong</td>
<td>22977.98</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>27.77</td>
<td>40.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianyugang</td>
<td>8365.305</td>
<td>26.39</td>
<td>53.38</td>
<td>25.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huai'an</td>
<td>11211.53</td>
<td>24.81</td>
<td>45.38</td>
<td>19.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancheng</td>
<td>15102.27</td>
<td>22.25</td>
<td>42.58</td>
<td>24.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou</td>
<td>20767.85</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>26.45</td>
<td>44.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenjiang</td>
<td>40474.44</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>49.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taizhou</td>
<td>20103.78</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>35.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suqian</td>
<td>8987.102</td>
<td>26.97</td>
<td>45.93</td>
<td>25.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data of the indicators highlighted in italic are data of counties and towns; Data of the indicators highlighted in blue are data of the whole city.

(2) Social indicators (Table 4-3)

Social development indicators for rural areas normally used can be divided into three types: indicators of living standard; indicators of the coverage of service and social welfare systems and indicators of educational characteristics of the population.

Indicators of the living standard:

- Income per capita per year: The average net income per capita per year of rural people. The net income means the surplus income after the total earnings from all the channels minus the expenditures to gain these earnings.

- Ratio of urban income per capita to rural income per capita
Engel coefficient: The proportion of expense on food in the total consumption expense. It has been used to evaluate people’s living standard for a long time in China. Normally the larger the value of the coefficient is, the lower of the living standard.

Indicators of service and social welfare system:

- The coverage of endowment insurance: The percentage of the workforces having rural endowment insurance in the total workforce in the rural area. The rural endowments insurance system is for the workforce in agricultural sectors and other economic activities in rural areas that are not covered by the urban endowment insurance system.

- The coverage of cooperative medical service: The percentage of rural residents having rural cooperative medical insurance in total rural residents. The rural cooperative medical insurance system has been developed specially for rural people in China. It is based on the household instead of per capita and rural residents only pay part of the insurance while the government pays the other part.

- The number of doctors per thousand people

Indicators of educational characteristics of the population:

- The average length of education of rural workforce\(^{10}\): It is an indicator that is largely used in recent year to evaluate the quality of the human resources and as a reference for the development potential of rural areas.

\(^{10}\) Cannot find credible data from the website but may find them in the local statistic year book
Table 4-3: Social indicators of rural areas in cities of Jiangsu province (Year 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Endowment Insurance (%)</th>
<th>Cooperative Medical Service</th>
<th>Income per capita per year (Yuan)</th>
<th>Urban/ Rural income</th>
<th>the number of doctors per thousand people</th>
<th>Engel coefficient (%)</th>
<th>Population density (person/hectare)</th>
<th>Urbanisation level (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8020</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuxi</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10026</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuzhou</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>5534</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>7.61</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changzhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>9033</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10475</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6905</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianyugang</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4828</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua’an</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>5010</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancheng</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6092</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou</td>
<td>58.57</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>6586</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenjiang</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>7668</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taizhou</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>4649</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suqian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>4783</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data of the indicators highlighted in italic are data of counties and towns; Data of the indicators highlighted in blue are data of the whole city.

(3) Environmental indicators (Table 4-4)

The environmental dimension is mainly focused on the construction of infrastructure, especially the construction of sanitary facilities and roads, as one of the main objectives of the recent new rural construction policy is to improve the quality of the physical environment in rural areas. The indicators used are as following\(^\text{11}\):

- The coverage of sanitary toilets: The percentage of numbers of household using a sanitary toilet in the total numbers of households in rural areas.

\(^{11}\) Lack of credible data on the website, but may access them from the local documents
• The use of clean energy: The percentage of numbers of household using clean energy in the total numbers of households in rural areas.

• The rate of wastewater treatment

• The density of motor ways in the countryside: It is an indicator that is normally used in China to assess the accessibility of the area.

• The percentage of road with pavements in villages

These indicators are frequently referred to in planning and reports of provincial and local government as the indicators for their objectives on the regeneration of rural villages. However, few of them have formal statistics data in practice. Even the local officials do not know the exact data of these indicators though they have set objectives on them.

Table 4- 4: Environmental indicators of rural areas in cities of Jiangsu province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>The rate of wastewater treatment</th>
<th>The coverage of a sanitary toilet (%)</th>
<th>The percentage of road with pavements (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wuxi</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuzhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changzhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>90.67 (2008)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantong</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianyungan</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>57.13 (2008)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huai’an</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancheng</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>33.53 (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenjiang</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taizhou</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>68.15 (2008)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suqian</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the data provided above, a summary of the development of rural areas in these cities is made in Table 4-5. The development level of rural areas in these cities are divided into five levels from extremely high, high, middle, low to extremely low. This research aims to choose case study areas with typical rural characteristics. According to Table 4-5, there are large gaps between the development levels of rural areas in different parts of Jiangsu province. The development of rural areas of Jiangsu province varies a lot from highly developed, developing to deprived. In such a case, this research chooses three cities in which the development of rural areas are categorised as with the top, middle and bottom level in the province.

Based on Table 4-5, the rural areas in Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou are highly urbanised and more developed, as most of the indicators of overall development, non-agricultural economy, social welfare and environmental improvement are high or extremely high while indicators of agricultural issues are low. Compared with them, rural areas in other cities such as Nantong, Yangzhou and Taizhou are lagging in development processes. Most of their indicators are at the middle level, especially the rural areas of Taizhou. Hence, the rural area of Taizhou is selected as typical rural areas in the middle development level. On the contrary, the rural area in another city, Suqian, is considered to be typical of a deep rural area as it is low in the overall socio-economic and environmental sanitary development with an economy highly dependent on agriculture.
Hence the case study research will need to choose one city from Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou as a representative case of highly urbanized and developed rural areas, Taizhou as the case of developing rural areas and Suqian as the case of deep rural areas in Jiangsu. The current redevelopment of rural areas is to a great extent a top-down governmental activity and led by the central government’s ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’. Hence, to choose from the four cities, it is important to take into consideration these political factors. Compared with the other cities, Nanjing has more political advantages as it is the capital of Jiangsu province and part of its rural areas (Jiangling district of Nanjing city) is designated as a national experiment district for New Socialism Rural Construction Planning. Hence, rural areas of Nanjing, Taizhou and Suqian are finally chosen as the case study areas for the research.

Table 4-5: The evaluation of economic development of rural areas in cities of Jiangsu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GDP per capita (Yuan)</th>
<th>Proportion of Agricultural products (%)</th>
<th>Proportion of agricultural employment (%)</th>
<th>Proportion of second sector employment (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuxi</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuzhou</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changzhou</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantong</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianyugan g</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huai’an</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancheng</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenjiang</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taizhou</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suqian</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-5 (continue): The evaluation of social development of rural areas in cities of Jiangsu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>The coverage of social welfare system</th>
<th>Income per capita per year (Yuan)</th>
<th>Urban/rural income</th>
<th>the number of doctors per thousand people</th>
<th>Engel coefficient (%)</th>
<th>Population density (person/hectare)</th>
<th>Urbanisation level (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Extremely low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuxi</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuzhou</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changzhou</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzhou</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantong</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianyugang</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huai'an</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yancheng</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhenjiang</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Extremely high</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taizhou</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suqian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Data collection methods

Documentary analysis and in-depth interviews are the main data collection methods for this research. Generally, there are six sources of evidence in case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artifacts (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2003). This research aims to explore the development issues, governance and planning mechanisms in the case study areas. The use of current and archival documents and interviews is particularly appropriate.
Documentary analysis

The documentary research focuses on the existing situation of rural planning in China and the rural planning experiences in EU and its member states. Hence the first part of documentary analysis focuses on the review of rural development, policy and planning in China. The documents that was utilised include the following four types:

- Central government reports and policies of state council on rural development since the year 1978;
- Central government reports and the policies of state council and the ministry of housing and urban-rural development on the planning in rural areas development since year 1978;
- Documents relating to the ‘Urban Planning Act (1990)’ and ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act (2008)’;
- Research documents relating to rural development and planning in the case study areas.

The analysis of these documents helps to understand the contextual changes, current issues and the future trends of rural development and identify the gaps between the planning activities of government and rural development issues in China.

The second part of the documentary analysis focuses on the recent restructuring of rural development and planning. Three broad types of documents are used in this part:

- Documents about spatial planning in the EU;
• Documents about spatial planning and rural planning of some of EU member states;
• Research documents on recent rural development and rural planning in EU and its member states

The analysis of these documents aims to identify the nature of rural restructuring and changes on rural planning in the new spatial planning discourse across Europe.

Finally, the documentary sourced data needed for the interviews in the case study areas include four types:

• The provincial government reports and policies related to rural development and planning;
• Local government reports and policies related to rural development and planning;
• Statistical documents on rural development at the provincial and local levels
• Plans for rural development that have been prepared recently.

The first two types of document help to understand the current situation of rural development, policy framework and planning system while the third one helps to show the experiences and challenges in planning practice.

The documents of the European countries were mostly sourced from the library of the University of Manchester. In addition, some of the government reports and policy documents were downloaded from governmental websites. The academic research on China’s rural development and planning were obtained via the libraries of the
University of Manchester and Nanjing University in China. Some of the government reports and policy documents on China’s rural development are from the Chinese government’s websites while others were collected from the governmental departments directly during the fieldwork.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are used as the main method to collect data as they are one of the most important sources of case study information. The multiple-case study strategy focuses on three typical types of rural area with very different characteristics. The interviews are carried out to explore the nature of rural development and planning in the case study areas. The target interviewees are the key players and important stakeholders in the rural development process. Hence, the target people selected for the interview include four types: government officers, planning academics, planners and other related actors in rural areas.

The government officers selected include officers from national, provincial and local government. Under the central government’s ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’, new offices have been set up at different levels of government to deal with rural problems and balance urban-rural development. Meanwhile, the Development and Reformation Committee at the provincial and local levels is the department responsible for formulating the major objectives and strategies for future development.

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12 In China, most planning academics also work as planning consultants
13 Planners here means planning consultants
14 As the Development and Reform Committee’s work on making development objectives and strategies are under the guidance of government office, hence, in some cases, officers from government office can be selected as interviewees if officers from the Development and Reform Committee are unavailable
Hence, besides officers from planning sectors, the interviewees also include officers from these two departments. As planning for rural development occurs at both regional (provincial) and local levels, planners selected for interviewing include both those with experiences in regional rural planning and those who have participated in local rural plan-making. At the provincial level, the interview targets are mainly government officers and planners. Table 4-6 shows the numbers of different types of interviewees at the provincial level. The interviews at the local level should also pay attention to the key actors in the local development process. These types of actors include those actors in local businesses, representatives of local farmers and people from other related local agencies. Table 4-7 shows the numbers of different types of interviewees at the local level. In addition to officers, planners, and local actors, academics in rural development and planning are included as interviewees in this research (Table 4-8). Besides, in order to ensure knowledgeable result, the interviewees selected in government and related agencies are mostly in high positions, the representatives of local farmers are local leaders, and at least two interviewees were selected for each type of interviewee in each case.

Table 4-6: Number of different types of interviewees at provincial level (Planned and Actual)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview target</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Socialist Rural Construction office</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Reformation Committee</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning officer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planners from planning institution and consultancy making rural plans in regional level</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-7: Number of different types of interviewees at local level (Planned and Actual)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview target</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Each city</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental officers</td>
<td>New Socialist Rural Construction office</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Reformation Committee</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>Nanjing, 1 Taizhou, 2 Suqian, 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning office</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>Nanjing, 3 Taizhou, 4 Suqian, 4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses, farmers and other interest parties</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planners from planning institution and consultancy making local rural plans</td>
<td>8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-8: Number of academics for interview (Planned and Actual)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview target</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning academics</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-end and semi-structured form of interview is used in this research as it is flexible and exploratory in collecting information. Before the interview, analysis was undertaken of documents relating to rural development and policy and related plans for rural areas in the case study areas to gain a better understanding of the background and to set the focus of interview questions. Generally, the interview questions covered three broad fields: rural development, rural governance and rural planning. However, considering the different types of interviewees, the focus of the interview questions for each type of interviewees were different. Questions for government officers mainly focused on the challenges in rural development, possible activities in response to them, and the institutional relationships between the key players. Interview questions for planners focused on the successes and problems of current planning frameworks and the challenges they faced in plan-making and delivery processes. The emphases of
interviews with local people related to the interests of local actors and their expectations of rural planning. Finally, interviews with planning academics aimed to explore their critique and comments on recent rural changes, key issues for future development, current planning framework for rural areas and future possibilities in developing such rural planning frameworks.

The interviews actually carried out in the case study areas were undertaken much as planned. However, the researcher did face some practical difficulties during the fieldwork. The contacts with national officials for interview were turned down. In such cases, the research therefore makes references to the recent public speeches of some of the officials from related national departments in rural development forums and workshops. It proved much easier to get in touch with provincial and local officers. However, most government officers were very cautious about what they were willing to talk about as they did not want to take unnecessary responsibility and potentially get into trouble. There was one more difficulty in interviewing officials. Sometimes, it will be difficult to get another interviewee from the same organisation if an officer in higher position in the department (eg, the head) had been interviewed. In general, the interviews were carried out smoothly. All the interviews were taped and noted with the permission of the interviewees. Also the use of data from the interviews used in this research received the permission from the interviewees. After the fieldwork, the data was transcribed and analysed in a manual way. The findings from the interviews are reported in Chapters Six and Seven.
4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has developed the conceptual framework behind this research (Figure 4-1). Based on an understanding of experiences in rural restructuring and planning frameworks in Western European countries and China’s context, the research first identifies the emergent issues and the responses in China’s rural development process and the failure of the current planning framework in dealing with rural issues. It aims to develop a planning framework under the new mode of spatial governance for future sustainable rural development in China. Based on this conceptualisation, a case study approach is selected as the primary research methodology. Rural areas in three cities in Jiangsu Province with different rural characteristics were chosen as the case study areas. The next chapter reports the findings of the first part of the conceptualisation explaining the mismatch of the current planning system and rural development issues in China, and the findings in case study areas will be reported in Chapters Six and Seven.
CHAPTER 5: PLANNING POLICY

FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

– A CASE OF JIANGSU PROVINCE

This chapter aims to provide a thorough discussion of the planning framework for rural development at different spatial levels in China. The planning framework includes the central government’s rural planning related policy, planning guidance from the provincial level government and the emerging policies for local rural areas. Since Jiangsu Province is the case study area of this research, the examination covers planning policy for rural areas from central government, Jiangsu province and the local cities of Nanjing, Taizhou and Suqian.
5.1 **NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING GUIDANCE**

One of the most important drivers raising attention to rural planning issues has been the central government’s recent policy emphasis on rural development. Government policy has greatly influenced the trends of rural planning development at the different spatial levels. In order to understand the planning responses to rural changes, it is important to step back and consider the wider policy context of rural development. China is a country with a long history of government intervention, which includes the management of development in rural areas. Hence, the recent resurgence of rural development can be considered as a top-down approach led by central government. Rural development is a broad topic and involves many different governmental sectors. However, there are three key departments: the Rural Work Leader Team, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) (Figure 5-1). The Rural Work Team, established in 1993, consists of high ranking officers in the rural related sectors charged with the task of managing and coordinating works in rural areas and to make strategic decisions on agriculture, economic and other rural issues. The nature of the Rural Work Team is more like that of a council and coordinator of rural issues rather than a traditional government department. The major task of the Ministry of Agriculture is to make strategic decisions and policies on agriculture and rural economic development, while the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD) is responsible for rural planning.
Figure 5-1: The hierarchy of key government departments at different levels working on rural development and planning

Source: The author


5.1.1 Key polices for rural development

Central government has published a series of new policies on rural issues since 2004 to re-emphasise the importance of rural development. The original focus of the government’s policy was to improve agricultural productivity and rural income, which was published in the form of the ‘No.1 document’. Central government advanced the idea of ‘New Socialist Rural Construction’ by proposing the preparation of the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (the National 11th Five-year Plan) (State Council, 2005b) to bring together all the former policies and set up an overall objective for future rural development in China. The National 11th Five-year Plan (State Council, 2005b) later developed a chapter to interpret and elaborate the details and key issues of the ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’ (NSRCP). Following that, the government’s ‘No.1 document’ on NSRCP set up a framework for the implementation of future rural development. In the last few years, the central government’s report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Hu, 2007) and ‘The Central Government’s Decision on Several Key Issues of Rural Reform and Development’ (State Council, 2008b) once again emphasised the necessity of rural reform and the implementation of NSRCP and reiterated the key policies on rural issues. Meanwhile, the central government’s ‘No.1 documents’ between 2007 and 2010 continued to cover policies on key rural development issues, including the modernisation of agriculture, the improvement of agriculture infrastructure and rural income, and urban-rural integration.

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15 ‘No.1 document’ is the first document published by the State Council in the year, which means that the issue in the document will be the top priority of the government’s work of that year.
With rural development as one of the top priorities of China’s modernisation process, the overall strategy on rural development can be summarised as ‘promoting urban-rural integration and constructing new socialism rural areas’ (State Council, 2010b). The emphasis on urban-rural integration to promote rural development is very important. The policy of ‘integrating urban-rural development’ was formally announced as the first of the ‘five-integration16’ tasks in the report to the Third Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Since then, urban-rural integration has become a fundamental principle to guide policy-making on rural development from national to local levels. It is, however, important to point out that very little can be found over the interpretation of ‘urban-rural integration’ and the recommended measures to deliver the policy in these national documents. This has led to the adoption of very diverse approaches to implementation and practice, which will be discussed in the next section.

The terminology of ‘new socialist rural areas’ was not that new. In fact, ‘The central government’s decisions on several key issues on agricultural and rural works’ (State Council, 1998), report to the Third Plenary Session of the Fifteenth Central Committee of the CPC, has already set the rural development target by stating that ‘new socialist rural areas with Chinese characteristics’ should be built by 2010, which covered rural economy, culture, governance and social service. However, this report did not command further policy attention on rural development and fell into silence. It was not until the

16 In October 2003, the Third Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China passed the report of ‘The Decision on Optimising Socialist Market Economic System’, in which the government set the task of ‘Integrating urban-rural development, integrating regional development, integrating economic and social development, integrating the harmonious co-existence of human and nature, and integrating domestic development and the requirement of the open-door policy’ which is generally referred to as ‘five-integration policy’ and has a fundamental influence on the future policy-making.
Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the CPC in October 2005 that rural development once again became one of the government’s central tasks and was later written into the National 11th Five-year Plan. This Session’s report has developed the idea of ‘new socialist rural areas’ by identifying different objectives for economic, social, cultural, environmental development and rural governance, which were summarised in a slogan ‘developed productivity, prosperous life, civilised local custom, clean and tidy environment, and democratic governance’ (State Council, 2005b: Para 3.6). In order to achieve this, the central government plans to increase inputs in agriculture and rural areas, to raise its investment in rural public service, to develop a supportive mechanism for rural development with cities, to develop rural construction planning and to improve the quality of farmers. In addition, local government should implement these policies with reference to local conditions and local residents’ preferences. The central government re-emphasised the importance of rural reform by placing ‘integrating urban-rural integration and constructing new socialism rural areas’ as the top priorities of its major tasks in the Seventeenth National Congress of the CPC in October 2007. With the vision of building ‘new socialist rural areas’, the central government has published a series of documents on different rural development topics, which provide a detailed policy framework for rural development (Table 5-1). By reviewing these key policy documents, a number of core objectives and key issues can be identified.

Table 5-1: Key central government documents on rural areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central government</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 State Council’s Ideas on Some Policies on Improving Farmers’ Incomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 State Council’s Ideas on Strengthening Rural Work and Improving Agricultural Productivities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: State Council, 2004b; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010b

**Urban-rural integration**

In almost all rural development policy documents, ‘integrating urban-rural development’ comes out as the first basic principle. The main idea of ‘urban-rural integration’ mainly focuses on two points. The first is the policy of ‘giving more, taking less and loosening restriction’, which aims to increase inputs in rural areas. The measures include increasing the financial inputs in agriculture and rural areas;
transferring the government’s key spatial infrastructural investment to rural areas; improving the tax policy on developing arable land and encouraging land sales\(^{17}\) profits to improve the quality of arable land and agricultural infrastructure; arranging financial inputs to rural areas comprehensively and efficiently; and making policies to attract more private investment to rural areas. The second point is to break the dualistic urban-rural divide by building a new urban-rural relationship under which agriculture can benefit from industry and urban areas can provide development opportunities for rural areas. The measures include: building a new system that can offer equal employment opportunities to urban and rural residents; improving the social welfare system in rural areas; providing an equal public service system in urban and rural areas; and building a market-oriented integrated urban-rural resource system.

**Rural economy**

Economic development is always the foremost objective of government in rural development. Most of the economic development policies are about agriculture and rural income. Though explained in different ways, the central government’s No.1 documents since 2007 are all about the improvement of agricultural productivity. The main idea is to increase the government’s inputs to modernise agriculture through different policy instruments. These instruments include:

1. Grain-production: the policy aims to ensure the balance of demand and supply of agricultural products in terms of production quantity and food safety.

\(^{17}\) According to China’s Land Act, urban lands are owned by the nation, rural lands belong to the rural collective. Hence land sale in China normally means the trade of land usage.
(2) Increase in government subsidies and funding: to improve the types and standards of agricultural production and to raise farmers’ enthusiasm and ability on agriculture.

(3) Science and technology: to increase public financial and policy support on the development of new agricultural science and technology and their applications in rural areas.

(4) Modern agriculture: to reform traditional mechanism and methods of farming and gradually develop mechanised farming and to introduce new technologies and standardised production to promote efficient, intensive and resource-saving agriculture.

(5) Physical conditions for agriculture: to improve the conditions by strictly protecting arable land; improving the quality of farmland and agricultural infrastructure, especially the irrigation system; and putting in more effort to prevent and control animal and plant epidemic diseases.

(6) Sustainability of agriculture: to increase sustainable practice by encouraging the development of environment-friendly agriculture, green agriculture, cyclic agriculture and organic agriculture, and by controlling and treating pollution and other environmental problems caused by agriculture.

(7) Multi-functional agriculture: to upgrade agricultural production structure and encourage rural areas to develop distinct agricultural products based on local natural and cultural advantages to meet the diversified market demands. The government also encourages villages to develop their own competitive products with their own brands, ‘one village one brand’, and to develop specialised agricultural products with local characteristics.
(8) Commercialised agricultural operation: to gradually improve the market system and build a modern circulation system for agricultural products to integrate rural markets into the urban market system; and to encourage the development of leading agricultural enterprises and different forms of cooperative organisations to link market demand with agricultural production.

(9) Food quality and safety: to ensure safety standards related to both the import and export of agricultural products by improving detection technology and the regulation system of food quality and safety and encouraging the reduced use of agricultural chemicals in the production of organic agricultural products. The policy aims to encourage a more efficient and flexible regulatory mechanism for the import and export of agricultural products to meet the challenges of worldwide markets.

Another focus of recent rural economic policy is to increase farmer’s incomes through: diversification of rural industry, development of the rural financial system, and poverty alleviation. Though the government still sees agriculture as the foundation of the rural economy, it encourages rural areas to develop manufacturing and other new economic activities to provide new support to the rural economy. The development of manufacturing can be based on upgrading the former TVEs and giving priority to labour intensive industries. Considering the problems caused by the TVEs, the policy requires all the enterprises to be placed in industrial parks. Local areas should develop new economic activities such as rural tourism, horticulture and agri-tourism based on local natural and cultural resources.
Central government also advances various financial support policies in rural areas. The main ideas are to build a modern financial and banking system for rural areas and to provide more financing channels by introducing more methods of credit operations. In addition, rural tax reduction and extra subsidies were introduced to reduce farmers’ burden and to help them get capital for development. The policy also emphasises coordination of funding invested in rural areas to make the best use of investment.

Alleviation of rural poverty is considered as a long-term government policy. The policy calls for an improvement in national poverty alleviation strategies and delivery actions by integrating the minimum standard of subsistence allowance system and the poverty alleviation policy. The government has planned to set a new poverty alleviation standard by paying more attention to poverty problems in poor areas. The objective is to gradually include all the low-income rural population in the poverty alleviation targets, which can be achieved by improving poor people’s own ability to get out of poverty, building a social support system for those with disability, and encouraging international cooperation in poverty alleviation.

**Social welfare**

Another important issue frequently featured in government policies is to improve social services in rural areas. These include the improvement of the social welfare system and public services in rural areas to the same standard as those in urban areas (State Council, 2006; 2010). The latter is considered as one of the most important parts of current ‘urban-rural integration policy’. The policy aims to provide a broad coverage, multi-level, and sustainable social welfare system in rural areas. It seeks to combine urban and
rural endowment insurance for the aged population by building a new social endowment system for rural aged residents (widely known as ‘new rural insurance’). It also includes policy on social insurance for farmers who lose their land for development to maintain a minimum standard of living. In addition, the policy includes a better support system for farmers who suffer losses from natural disasters, improvement in social charity systems, and better services for the disabled population in rural areas.

The policy on public services in rural areas focuses on education, medical services and cultural services. The policy requires rural areas to improve the education environment and quality, to ensure the full coverage of compulsory education and to encourage better training to farmers to improve their uptake of modern technology and their skills to do other jobs in rural areas. It also requires rural areas to accelerate the pace of establishing a new type of cooperative medical care system to cover public health services, medical services, medical security and medicine supply. This new system aims to provide rural residents with a safe, effective, convenient and affordable medical and health service. More importantly, the new system is expected to improve the three-tier rural health care network in county, town and village levels.

**Physical environment**

Central government’s policies on the rural physical environment largely focus on the construction of the rural infrastructure system and planning in rural areas (State Council, 2005b; 2006; 2010). In order to improve the basic infrastructure for daily life and production, improvement of the water system and drinking water safety is of top priority. All counties, towns and villages are also expected to gradually improve their
accessibility with paved roads and extension of urban public traffic system to cover rural areas. The policy also encourages the use of renewable, clean, economical energy sources in rural areas. Rural areas are required to improve housing sanitary facilities and sewage systems, and apply central collection and treatment of the garbage system. It also encourages rural areas to integrate broadcasting and telecommunication networks and the internet into one system, and to improve other public services such as the postal service.

It is also interesting to note that the policy requires local government to pay more attention to village planning and village renovation. Local governments are expected to provide funding for plan making and some villages have been selected as pilots. The major task of planning is to improve the physical living environment of rural residents. The making of rural plans should be based on local conditions and residents’ needs and preferences as well as a number of other key principles. The first principle is saving construction land and strengthening control of housing land provision. Secondly, planning should promote housing designs that are economical, safe, and less resource intensive in terms of land, energy and materials in rural areas. The third principle is to include disaster precaution and fire control in planning. The fourth principle is that planning should emphasise rural distinction and local characteristics by protecting historic villages and houses with great cultural values. Finally, the improvement of buildings and facilities should focus on the reuse of existing fabrics rather than massive demolition and rebuilding which will increase local residents’ burden.
Institutional reform

Institutional reform has been introduced to meet the challenges of new development in rural areas. The most important institutional reforms are found in the land use system and the management system (State Council, 2005b; 2006; 2010). A household-based land contract system has been introduced as a long term land use policy to stabilise and improve land contract relationships. The government aims to improve the market for land transfer by respecting farmers’ views and protecting farmers’ interests and management rights in accordance with the law and on a voluntary and compensatory basis. Generally speaking, the land use type cannot be changed after transferring. The government has also introduced a policy to strictly protect basic arable land from development and to require planning to strictly control the scale of development in rural areas. The use of arable land for construction should follow the guidance of comprehensive land use plans. The extra land re-gained from village renovation should be cultivated as arable land to compensate for the arable land loss in village development. The policy also calls for a reform of the collective system of forest rights.

With regard to the reform of management, the government is encouraging rural areas to explore different types of collective systems to meet the needs of new economic development. The government is keen to give more financial and policy support to the development of cooperative organisations and to encourage the modernisation of agricultural management.
Democracy

Central government has introduced policies to improve the local governance system at the village level. The focus is to strengthen the leadership of local CPC, to improve the quality of leaders by encouraging more talented people and people with higher educational backgrounds to work in rural areas, and to increase the level of public participation in the village’s decision-making process. It also requires village committees to make village affairs public to local residents and encourages residents to express their needs to the government.

5.1.2 Key issues in rural development policy

The review of policy documents show that the national government’s rural policy in recent years seems to cover all the aspects in rural development. Also, annual policy approaches advocated have been very similar from 2004 to 2010. However, based on the analysis of the public speeches of key government figures, some of the topics have received more attention and were subject to wide ranging discussion. These key issues generally fall into three fields: agriculture development, urbanisation and urban-rural integration, and the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme.

Agricultural development

It is widely accepted that agriculture, as the key economic sector in rural areas, is an important area of rural development policy. Following the central government’s policy discussed in the earlier section, there have been ideas on the approaches for the modernised development of agriculture. However, there are several issues that attract
more attention. First, in addition to improving agricultural technology, some officers argue that the government should put more emphasis on reforming the delivery mechanisms to develop market-oriented agriculture and that they consider the ‘household responsibility system plus specialised cooperative organisation’ as an appropriate and effective mode. Secondly, it is noticed that more and more environmental problems are found to be related to agricultural development such as a decrease in the quality of arable land and an increase in pollution:

‘...More attention should be paid to the specialisation and multi-functional changes in agriculture……To improve the production mode is of significant importance to improve agriculture……for now and the near future, more attention should be paid to develop green agriculture and circular agriculture to protect the environment and make more efficient use of agricultural resources……another issue is to improve the operating system of agricultural production……One way is to encourage the cooperative organisations based on household responsibility system to develop massive production mode……’

(Song’s speech at a national forum on urban-rural integration, 2010)

‘...47% of current environmental pollution is caused by agriculture……we should pay more attention to think about how to reduce the environmental cost of agriculture……’

(Wen’s speech at a national forum on urban-rural integration, 2010)
Hence, the central ideas are to improve both the efficiency and sustainability of agriculture. More attention is suggested to encourage more efficient use of agricultural resources and low environmental impact caused by agriculture.

**Urbanisation and urban-rural integration**

It is generally considered that China is still going through a rapid urbanisation process. Urbanisation and the urban-rural relationship thus play an important role in shaping rural development. However, the urban-rural development gap continues to grow in the last few years, though more and more policies have been published and implemented in rural areas. There is a general consensus that urbanisation, for a long time, has been considered from an urban perspective. This has led to some serious problems in rural areas including: demographic problems, land use problems and supporting system problems. Firstly, the demographic problem is mainly about the migrant workers from rural areas to urban areas. More and more farmers have lost their land during the urbanisation process and have to go to find jobs in cities. According to a report of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2011), there are nearly 40 million to 50 million farmers that have lost their land in urbanisation. Those who stay in rural areas are mostly women, children and old people. However, peasants working in cities cannot enter urban society as urban residents and they can only become migrant workers who are marginalised by the urban society (Liu, 2010; Chen, 2011). Migrant workers do not have equal chance of employment, cannot afford a decent dwelling, and do not have equal access to the social service and welfare systems (Wang, Shen and Liu, 2008). This is not seen as good for rural development as well as urban development in a longer term.
Secondly, Land use problems are considered one of the most severe problems in rural China. Currently, there are different land systems in urban and rural areas and the officers think that the land use policy has caused adverse effects on farmers:

‘...The current land use policy has led to strong damage on farmers’ benefit. The root of this problem is that government works as both the operator and supervisor of the land market......’

(Duan’s speech at a national forum on urban-rural integration, 2010)

Land in urban areas belongs to the state, while land in rural areas belongs to rural collectives (normally the village collective). Rural families can use the arable land and housing sites allocated to the household by the village collective. As a result of urbanisation, the Department of Land Resource of cities will nationalise the land owned by rural collectives through a formal procedure for urban development. Farmers losing land are supposed to get compensation from the government. The amount of compensation is mainly decided by the government rather than the land market. Normally, the urban government buys a piece of land from a rural collective by paying a low compensation. In most circumstances, the compensation paid to the peasants is not enough for them to make a living or buy a new property in cities. Though the central government has paid a lot of attention on the arrangements for landless peasants, it is argued that the policies have not yet made any significant changes to address the difficult situation of peasants. This is evident from public speeches of one officer:

18 Here urban areas mean administrative areas of the central city.
‘...urban land and rural land has the same value but different prices, in China the highest ratio of urban land and rural land price is up to 18:1......about the compensation, local governments of the county (town) take more than 70%, village collective and sectors responsible for helping to arrange the labour take around 20%, and only around 5% is left for landless peasants...’

(National officer in a group workshop, N 1, 2009)

To solve the problem, it is suggested that potential reforms to the current land use system is needed. The first is to let the market, instead of government policy, determine the price of rural land. The major role of the government is to supervise land transfer and transaction. The second is to treat peasants as key stakeholders of rural land by either allowing them to join future development projects on the land or awarding them a financial bonus from the profits of the development. The third suggestion is to encourage the government to spend the land profit gained from rural land to improve public services for farmers.

‘......To solve the problem, it is necessary to put urban and rural land in the same and fair market. Let the market rather than the government decide the price of rural land and whether it worth to use rural land......It is also important to treat to farmers instead of the collective as the stakeholder. The profits got from rural land should be used for farmers to meet their need’

(Kong’s speech at a national forum on urban-rural integration, 2010)
The final problem concerns the supporting institutional system. It is argued that to achieve urban-rural integrated development will require institutional reform to build a new supporting system. The reform is generally considered to include three points. The first point is to remove the institutional restriction on rural workers in cities. Rural labour in cities should have the same accessibility to public services and the welfare system and get the same treatment as urban residents. This helps to attract more rural workers into cities to support the process of urbanisation. The second area is to improve the urban-rural relationship by developing an integrated urban-rural market system:

‘...One of the key issues of the urban-rural relationship is the lack of a homogeneous factor market and inequality of transaction...’

(Kong’s Speech at a national forum on urban-rural integration, 2010)

The third point is to reform the current fiscal system in rural areas. They argue for a fairer fiscal system for rural areas by providing more public finance for the development of public service and infrastructure. It is considered that the government and/or the relevant developer, rather than the rural people, should pay for public services and infrastructure:

‘... The development of service sectors and the infrastructure can follow the rules of the market economy. They can be invested by the private sector. For some important and large infrastructure, the government can cooperate with private sectors to develop them. It does not need to be the government’s pressure or rural resident’s burden to pay for them ’

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In summary, with the increasing rural problem caused by urbanisation, greater attention has been paid to consider urbanisation from a rural perspective. The key point is to think about in what ways ‘san nong’ (agriculture, farmers and rural areas) can benefit or be supported by urbanisation.

**New Socialist Rural Construction Programme**

The New Socialist Rural Construction Programme has generally been considered to have brought new development opportunities and has led to substantial changes to rural areas. However, there are also comments that the implementation of this policy currently focuses too much on the physical environment of rural areas, and more emphasis should be paid to economic development to bring long term vitality:

‘...The basic point to change rural areas is to improve its economy. firstly, we should encourage the modernisation of agriculture and increasing the development of agricultural product processing industries. Secondly, we should upgrade rural industries. The third is to develop the service sector to support rural industries and daily life. The fourth is to encourage urbanisation to absorb surplus labour. Finally, modern management system should be developed...’

*(National officer in a group workshop, N 1, 2009)*
This new emphasis on rural areas and the publication of a new rural development policy has also provided a new context for rural planning. A new framework has emerged for urban and rural planning. The next section of the thesis will therefore discuss the new planning policy that is being developed for rural development.

5.1.3 Planning policy for rural areas

Planning in China has a long history of urban bias, hence for a long time, rural areas were not covered by the formal planning system. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development has made some bylaws and guidance on town and village planning. However, without formal status, they have very limited effects. In 2008, a new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ was published to advocate the building of a new urban and rural planning system (Figure 5-2) and to start a new era of rural planning.

Urban and rural planning system

With the central government’s increasing emphasis on rural areas, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the PRC (MOHURD) started to pay attention to planning in rural areas as planning is seen playing a fundamental role in guiding development. Since 1st January 2008, a new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ came into force to replace the former ‘Urban Planning Act’. It was the first time in China’s planning history that rural areas were included in the formal planning system (Figure 5-2). The Act built a basic two-level framework for rural planning -- town plans and village plans. It requires local government at county and higher levels to decide which areas should make town plans and village plans. Towns and villages outside
these identified areas are, however, encouraged to make rural plans. Local government at the town level is responsible for making rural plans which should then be approved by county government. The key tasks of town plans and village plans are to designate planning areas, to make land arrangements and development guidance for production and service facilities (e.g. housing estates and public infrastructures), and to protect natural and historic resources. The town plan should also make arrangements for the development of its villages. According to the Act, town plans should focus on the arrangement of infrastructure and public services in rural areas to support rural economic and social development and the structural adjustment of local industry. Village plans should provide appropriate guidance on the best use of land for construction to improve the physical environment and the living and production conditions in rural areas. Development such as industry, public services and housing should avoid the use of arable land and, if necessary, change of land use should be made according to the ‘Land Management Act’.

Figure 5- 2: Urban and rural planning system developed in ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act (2008)’
The new planning framework includes rural areas into the planning system which is considered as a step change. However, it is argued that there are still some key problems of the national planning system which need to be solved in the future. First, the current urban and rural planning system follows the administrative system, in that the urban master plan focuses on the development of the central city while paying little attention to other areas such as the urban fringe.

‘The current planning focuses too much on the central city. There is a lack of enough attention to the urban-rural combination areas which are connection between urban and rural areas and are exactly the most active areas in the development process.’

(National officer in a group workshop, N 1, 2009)

It is also noticed that the current extension of the planning system to rural areas is far from enough to effectively integrate urban and rural areas, as the origin of the current planning system was designed to address the issue of urban development. It is thus necessary for planning to break away from the institutional obstacles that exist between urban and rural areas such as the landuse system.

‘Planning needs to break the urban-rural dualistic constrains. The land system is a key problem. Planning should pay more attention to the collective land use system in rural areas and the transferring of rural land and integrating land use in urban and rural areas will be a trend in future development. To achieve this,
more research should be carried out on both the plan-making methods and the planning management system.'

(National officer in a group workshop, N 1, 2009)

Moreover, usually after the publication of a Planning Act, guidance on plan-making will follow to explain the Act in details. The guidance aims to enrich the planning framework and to give concrete guidance for plan making. However, until now, plan making guidance for the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’ has not yet been issued which has caused a lot of confusion and difficulties in plan making and delivery in practice.

Town and village plans (2000) and town and village system plans (2006)

Rural areas were not included in the formal planning system before the publication of the recent Planning Act. However, MOHURD has published a few documents on planning in rural areas which are still in effect. The most important documents are: ‘The Guidance for Town and Village Plan Making (trial edition)’ (MOHURD, 2000) and ‘The Temporary Guidance for Town and Village System Plan Making in County’ (MOHURD, 2006). According to ‘The Temporary Guidance for Town and Village System Plan Making in County’ (MOHURD, 2006), county government should take responsibility to organise the making of town and village system plans for the administrative area of the county. The aim of this plan is to implement the requirements of the higher level urban system plan by arranging the development and layout of towns and villages and guiding the town and village master plans and construction plans.
The making of the town and village system plan is to focus on a number of tasks:\(^{(19)}\):
making a county development strategy based on local condition; making an appropriate
urbanisation strategy with scientific population projection; integrating urban-rural
development strategy; making arrangements for industries, infrastructure and public
services and extending the standard of development to cover rural areas; protecting
natural environment and historical sites by area classification (i.e. areas not permitted
for development, areas for restricted development and areas suitable for development)
to control the use of land; defining town and village system with a settlement hierarchy
(i.e. central county, central town, normal town and central village); deciding the location,
scale, function and development standard of each town; making development strategies
for key towns and areas and setting up the spatial layout for different types of villages;
and making short-term development plans.

Different planning guidance is provided in the 2006 document for different rural areas.
Town and village system plans in developed areas are advised to place more emphasis
on the integration of urban and rural areas in terms of their functions and spatial
resources. This involves more intensive use of land and space, environmental protection,
retention of local characteristics, and efficient use of urban and rural spatial resources.
In addition, planning in developing areas should pay more attention towards
strengthening the role of towns as the development centre of the area by arranging
infrastructure and public services at the county level, improving urban and rural
industrial structure and spatial layout, and steering the economic and social
development in a gradual and scientific way.

\(^{(19)}\) The key points here are summarised from the key rural planning documents and guidance. A list of
these documents is provided in the appendix.
According to ‘The Guidance for Town and Village Plan Making (MOHURD, 2000)’, town and village planning should include two hierarchies: town and village master plan and town and village construction plan. The master plan should aim at making arrangements for development projects in towns and villages and has four main tasks. The first is to define the role of towns and the villages in them and the future developing directions of the town. Secondly, it is supposed to project population and land use growth at the end of planning period. The third task is to make physical land use arrangements and guidelines for developing infrastructure and public services to serve the administrative area of the town. The final task is to implement the policy proposals.

The construction plan, however, aims at arranging development projects in the planning areas of towns and villages. Hence, there are town construction plans and village construction plans. One of the main tasks of the construction plan is to decide the spatial layout of different land use types and set the boundaries for each type based on the analysis of available land resources (i.e. the land use quota per capita). Secondly, it is supposed to coordinate the conflicts arisen from the development of different types of infrastructure by devising certain principles. Thirdly, the plan should establish the process and approach of regeneration and make guidance for buildings in town centres and other important areas. The fourth task focuses on environment protection and disaster precaution. Finally, action plans should be prepared for short-term construction projects. Furthermore, village construction plans have to make reference to the town construction plan and make modifications according to local conditions.

20 There is a common use of the term ‘construction plan’ in planning field of China. Here the construction means the physical development activities. In Chinese, the word ‘construction’ focuses on physical environment while the word ‘development’ has a more broad meaning.
5.2 The Planning Framework for Rural Development in Jiangsu Province

Jiangsu province, the eastern coastal region of China (Figure 5-3), is one of the most developed provinces and contributed to 10.1% of national GDP in 2008. The total population of Jiangsu province is 76.8 million, with 35.1 million living in villages and 16.6 million living in towns. Urbanisation of the province continues at a slow annual rate of increase. As a developed area, agriculture covers only 6.9% of GDP in 2008 and the proportion decreases every year. Though rural areas have experienced fast growth in recent years, the gap between urban and rural areas continues to enlarge. Jiangsu province is divided into three regions: southern, middle, and northern on the basis of their level of development. Rural areas in these three regions differ a lot in terms of socio-economic development, environment, custom and physical characteristics. This will be further explained when analysing the case study areas as they were chosen on the basis of these three regions.
5.2.1 Key policies of rural development

In order to have a better understanding of rural development policy, it is important to first examine the institutional context for rural development in Jiangsu Province. The Provincial Government, the Provincial Branch of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Standing Committee of the Provincial People’s Congress, and the Provincial People’s Political Consultative Committee are the four leaders of the province, with the former two being responsible for the development of the province. The Provincial Branch of CPC decides the direction and makes strategic decisions for future development of the province, while the Provincial Government formulates detailed delivery policy under the supervision of the Provincial Branch of CPC. Similar to the situation found in the central government, there was no designated department for rural
development in the province for a long time. Instead, there were several related departments such as the Provincial Agricultural Commission, Provincial Department of Land and Resources, Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, and Provincial Department of Environmental Protection. The Agricultural Commission has always been concerned with rural areas. However, it focuses on agricultural and rural economic development. With the introduction of the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme policy, a new Rural Work Office was established (based on the former Office of Poverty Alleviation) in the Provincial Branch of CPC to manage government affairs in rural areas. It mainly aims at exploring and analysing key rural issues; investigating socio-economic development patterns of rural areas and their development context; and arranging and coordinating activities of different sectors in rural areas to implement national policy and strategic decisions of the Provincial Branch of CPC. In recent years, more and more governments at different levels have set up such an office for rural development. However, the role of this office varies in different areas. At the Provincial level of Jiangsu, it acts more like a coordinator than a direct policy implementer, which may differ from the role of those in municipal cities (which will be discussed later in this chapter). In addition, the Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development has the responsibility of making plans for urban and rural areas. However, the Department’s planning sector only focuses on the urban system and urban development planning. Planning in rural areas is part of the job of the Town and Village Development Sector. This sector aims to make policy for town and village planning and arrange the development of pilot towns and the villages and key centre towns at provincial level.
With the central government’s emphasis on rural development, the provincial government of Jiangsu has also paid more attention to rural development. At the beginning of every year, a working conference on rural development is held by the Provincial Branch of the CPC and the Provincial Government. The conference has three objectives: to analyse the patterns of rural socio-economic development, to review policy delivery in rural areas and to publish their own ideas on rural development based on the central government’s new year policies. Most of the discussed ideas in the conference will be published as the ‘Provincial No.1 Policy’, the content and wordings tend to follow those in the national documents. 2005 is a milestone of rural development policy as the idea of ‘New Socialist Rural Construction’ was formally advanced by the central government in October 2005. This has focused attention on rural development policy at other spatial levels. The following analysis on provincial rural development policies are mainly based on the documents in table 5-2.

Table 5-2: Key rural development policy in Jiangsu Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jiangsu Provincial Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Urban and Rural Construction; Provincial Government’s Ideas on Policies to Improve Agricultural Productivity and Increase the Incomes of Farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The Outline of the Eleventh Five Year Plan of Jiangsu Province; Provincial Government’s Ideas on Promoting Urban-Rural Integration and the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme (No.1 document); Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving the Mechanisation of Agricultural Development; Provincial Government’s Ideas on Encouraging the Development of High-efficiency Agriculture;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Provincial Government’s Ideas on Deepening Reform in Rural areas; Provincial Government’s Ideas on Developing Modern Agriculture and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The provincial policy of rural development can be divided into three phases. The first stage was the period before 2005. The first No.1 Policy in the new millennium, ‘Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Farmer’s Income’ was published in 2004. It mainly focused on traditional topics of ways to improve agricultural development (e.g. agricultural infrastructures, agricultural science and technology, market system, quality of products, and upgrading agricultural structure), to improve farmers’ income (e.g. reducing tax, increasing subsidies in agriculture and other rural development), to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Policy Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Agricultural Infrastructure and Improving Farmers’ Incomes (No.1 document); Provincial Government’s Ideas on Supporting the Employment and Self-employment of Farmer; Provincial Government’s Announcement on Increasing the Support on Agricultural and Food Production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Provincial Government’s Ideas on Facilitating the Stable Development of Agriculture and the Continuous Increase of Farmers’ Incomes (No.1 document); Provincial Government’s Announcement on Improving the Development of the Farmers’ Cooperative organisations; Provincial Government’s Ideas on Reforming Agricultural Development Pattern and Improving the Development of Modern Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Provincial Government’s Ideas on Increasing the Effort on Integrating Urban-rural Development and Enhancing The Development Foundation of Agriculture and Rural Areas (No.1 document).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

develop non-agricultural industries, to train surplus rural labour and to alleviate poverty in rural areas.

The second phase was between 2005 and 2009. The No.1 policy of the 2005 document, ‘The Ideas of Provincial Government on Policies to Improve Agricultural Productivity and Increase the Incomes of Farmers’ (Jiangsu Provincial Government, 2005b) still focused on agriculture and rural income, and had a broad coverage of topics such as the development of the social welfare system, physical environment improvement, urban-rural integration and institutional reform in rural areas. However, the 2006 No.1 policy, ‘Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Urban-rural Integration and Accelerating the Development of New Socialism Rural Construction Programme’ (Jiangsu Provincial Government, 2006b) has gone further to cover almost every aspect of rural development, including the development of agriculture, economy, public service, social welfare system, culture, planning for towns and villages, physical environment, poverty alleviation, institutional reform, local governance, and the urban-rural relationship. Since then, the No.1 policy became a full-scale development policy for rural areas (see Table 5-2). Though the No.1 policy documents have a different focus in terms of topics every year, there is no major difference in the thematic content. However, each document can be considered as an enriched and refined version of last year’s document. For example, the 2007 document has added more emphasis on the development of more efficient and multi-functional agriculture, local specific agricultural products, development of major central towns as the links between urban and rural areas, the pilot development of the economic management system, financial and insurance system, land transferring policy, various modes of cooperative organisations, and different ways of coordinated cooperation in poverty alleviation. The 2008 document formally advanced
the idea of ‘the integrative development of basic urban-rural public service’ and ‘the overall coverage of planning for urban and rural areas’. The 2009 document formally advanced the policy of ‘five integration of urban and rural socio-economic development’ known as ‘planning integration, infrastructure integration, basic public service integration, employment insurance integration and governance integration’.

2010 marks the final phase of development. A new No.1 policy, ‘Provincial Government’s Ideas on Increasing the Effort on Integrating Urban-rural Development and Enhancing the Development Foundation of Agriculture and Rural Areas’ (Jiangsu Provincial Government, 2010), was published early this year. It is again a full-scale rural development policy, but with stronger emphasis on urbanisation and urban-rural integration than before and taking them as an important way to improve rural development. It advanced many new measures to break the institutional dualism of urban and rural development. These include improving the capacity of towns to attract the rural population, reforming of the household registration system in urban and rural areas, providing a joint urban and rural infrastructure and service system, integrating the urban and rural land use system, and introducing pilot measures to attract rural population to cities and towns (e.g. exchanging a land use contract for urban social insurance and exchanging a rural house site for an apartment in cities and towns.).

Besides these No.1 policies, the provincial government and different government sectors have published other documents for rural development, the content of which tend to cover similar ground to these No.1 policies.
Apart from providing a general policy context for rural development in Jiangsu, the provincial government also organised some rural projects. The most important ones are the farmer transferring project, the development project and the poverty alleviation project. The provincial government set a target of transferring 500,000 farmers from the agriculture to non-agricultural sector by 2012, which involves training skills and developing an equal urban-rural employment market. The development project began from ‘Five Practical Activities’ in 2003 and has completed two rounds of work. Currently, the third round projects are in progress. Each of the former two rounds of projects focused on five different development issues in rural areas. However, more activities have gradually been covered in the third round (Table 5-3). For the poverty alleviation project, the provincial government has selected around 1000 poor villages to receive more public funding and resources to achieve the goals of the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme. Moreover, the provincial government has also paid attention to regional diversity in development by issuing different directions on agricultural development in different regions. For instance, southern Jiangsu is encouraged to develop high-tech agricultural parks and agricultural tourism, while middle and northern Jiangsu is encouraged to develop market oriented agriculture with local specific products based on the cooperation between companies, farmers and other cooperative organisations.

Table 5-3: Rural development projects in Jiangsu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First round (2003-2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing safe drinking water system; Repairing old and dangerous houses; Improving road system; Developing new rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 ‘Five Practical Activities’ is the provincial government’s major development project in rural areas which aims to focus inputs on five development issues. The government has plans to achieve the development objective of each issue in 3 or 5 years.
cooperative medical service; Reform of tax.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second round (2006-2008)</th>
<th>Improving education and training; Improving road system; Improving medical service system; Physical environmental renovation; Cultural development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third round (2009-2010)</td>
<td>Improving education and training; Improving medical service system; Improving drinking water system; Developing village service centre; Integrating public transportation in urban and rural areas; Developing garbage treatment system; Developing information system; Improving physical environmental; Cultural development; Alleviating rural poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.jiangsu.gov.cn

5.2.2 Rural planning framework

Jiangsu province is a pioneer in rural planning. It is the first province in the country that advances the full spatial coverage of planning on both urban and rural areas of the entire administrative area to realise the idea of urban-rural integration. Actually, early in 1994, the provincial planning department published a document, ‘Regulations on town and village planning and development of Jiangsu province’ (The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 1994, 1997 and 2004) to provide some principle guidance for planning towns and villages. However, as these plans were not included in the formal planning system and were optional, for some reasons such as lack of funds, very few local government paid attention to planning in rural areas. Hence, despite the guidance, in practice, very few rural areas were covered by planning. In such a case, the attempt at having formal planning in rural areas started from the ‘Town and Village Distribution Plan’ in 2005. The current provincial planning

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22 Town planning has a very ambiguous status in China. Whether it should be considered as part of urban planning or rural planning is very controversial.
framework includes two levels: the town and village distribution plan and the village plan. The development of these two plans is explained below:

**Town and Village Distribution Plan**

At the beginning of 2005, the Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development started to prepare a town and village distribution plan for the whole province which was later agreed by the provincial government and taken as one of the priorities for that year. The uppermost task of the plan was to develop an appropriate spatial distribution system for the region. This plan was successfully completed at the end of 2005 to achieve full spatial coverage of planning for the entire province.

The Provincial Housing and Urban-Rural Department published guidance to direct the making of the town and village distribution plan. According to the guidance, the aim of the town and village distribution plan was to develop a new vision for rural areas with moderately agglomerated villages (rural communities) to improve the efficiency of facilities, enhance local distinctiveness and historic culture, save land resources and improve the potential to apply large scale mechanised farming. Hence, the major tasks of this plan were to re-arrange the spatial distribution of villages by merging scattered small villages together with making arrangements for roads and infrastructure building that extend from towns to villages and to decide the locations of public facilities by considering the spatial arrangements of industry and the need of arable land protection. This guidance included some central ideas that plan-making should follow. Urban-rural integration was considered as the prime principle of this plan which requires the plan to put rural areas within a broad regional and urban-rural interactive context. Another key
principle was known as the ‘three concentration’ principle: concentrating people into cities and towns, concentrating industries into industrial parks, and concentrating housing into key residential sites (communities). These two also formed the basic principles for other rural plans which will be discussed later in this section. The central issue of the plan was how to decide on the number and location of villages. The Provincial Planning Department listed a series of key factors to consider, including farmer’s working distance, arrangement of facilities, convenience of accessibility, local characteristics, away from natural hazard areas, efficient use of land and resources, regional context, and local urbanisation and development level. With this plan, the government’s future inputs would only be given to villages covered in this plan.

It is important to point out that the Provincial Planning Department organised the preparation but did not make the plan. Instead, the tasks were allocated to local areas. Each city made the town and village distribution plan for their respective administrative areas and submitted it to the provincial planning department. In this way, Jiangsu succeeded to have complete coverage of all urban and rural areas in one combined plan.

In 2008, a modification of the Town and Village Distribution Plan was carried out by the Provincial Planning Department as more and more problems emerged in practice, and resulted in a lot of concern and criticism of the original plan. This will be discussed within the empirical research in the next chapter.

**Village Construction Plan and Village Plan**

The provincial government continued to focus on town and village planning after 2005, especially village planning which was hardly undertaken before. Local government,
mostly at town level, was required to make plans for villages (rural settlements) in its administrative area. For those villages outside the administrative area of towns, the municipal-level city government should take the responsibility for their plan making. The government’s policy on town and village planning has changed several times and the preparation of these two types of plans continues to progress. The government has designated a group of normal major central towns and about 100 major central towns as of provincial importance. The government aims at strengthening the land policy, investment policy and financial support on the development of these 100 major central towns. The objective of the master plan of these towns is to develop them into a regional economic and cultural centre for the surrounding rural areas, with appropriate scale, scientific layout, comprehensive function, good environment and strong economic potential. The plan for normal major centre towns is for improving their economic and living environment to attract surrounding rural residents. The government has a vision of having compact cities and open countryside with major central towns as the link between them. Recently, the government started to support the development of towns with distinct landscape or tourism resources. The government’s latest idea on developing major central towns has been under preparation and will be published in the near future. In addition, trial work on regulatory detailed plans (a type of plan originally made in urban areas to provide guidelines and regulations of development) has been carried out in major central towns and for the major functional areas in normal towns.

23 In China’s administrative hierarchy, the administrative area of the municipal city are divided into two parts, districts and counties/county-level cities, districts have streets while counties/county-level cities have towns and towns have villages. Districts and the built-up areas of counties/county-level cities are considered as urban; while others are considered to be rural (the built-up areas of towns are always controversial). In recent years, because of the fast growth of cities, there have been a lot of adjustments of administrative areas, some towns, even counties, have been administratively taken by the cities as their districts or streets though a lot of areas of them are still countryside and still have villages in them. However, different from counties/county-level cities and towns, districts and streets do not have the legal right to make plans.
The major rural planning task of the Provincial Planning Department since 2006 has been organising plan making for villages. There are two types of village plans: plans for four types of special villages (large scale villages, villages with abundant heritages, villages with complicated topography and landforms, and designated pilot villages for renovation), and plans for other normal villages in the town and village distribution plan (The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2008). Local government is required to make village construction plans for the four types of special villages and plain layout plans for normal villages (which can be considered as a watered down version of the village construction plan). The village construction plan focuses on the built-up area of the village to arrange the layout of residential sites, infrastructure and service facilities, which resembles the detailed plan for cities and towns. Considering the large amount of villages and limited resources, the making of a plain layout plan is given priority to villages that have recent building demand. The government strengthens the principle that planning should improve production levels and the living quality of residents, and emphasises the development of special countryside industries such as rural tourism, protection of special topography and traditional culture. The Provincial Planning Department, therefore, has put a lot of effort into researching the characteristics of villages, and devised different ways to make plans for different types of villages. This has led to the publication of a ‘Guidance on village construction plan’ (The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2006) to guide village construction plan-making across the province.

In 2008, the Provincial Planning Department changed village construction plans to village plans and published a new ‘Guidance on village plan’ (The Provincial
Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2008) to replace the 2006 version. The village plan consists of two parts: the village administrative area plan and the construction plan. The target area of the first part is the whole administrative area of the village, and the plan makes spatial arrangements for settlements, industries and service facilities, defines the boundaries to protect arable land and other natural resources, and make guidance for development in village areas. The target areas of the construction plans are settlements of the village and the plan provides arrangement for the spatial layout of settlements, basic facilities, roads, landscape, green land, and clean energy resources. Moreover, the 2008 guidance modified the 2006 classification of villages to two broad types: villages in the urban fringe and remote villages. Different planning guidance has been issued for them (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4: Planning guidance for different types of villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village types</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Planning focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Villages in the urban fringe</td>
<td>Villages located outside of urban built-up areas and future built-up areas but in planning control areas for urban development.</td>
<td>the control of scale; the connection with public service in cities; the improvement of living environment considering the impact of urbanisation and industry development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote villages</td>
<td>villages locate outside of planning control areas for urban development.</td>
<td>Reserving existing spatial structure and social network with local countryside characteristics; appropriate arrangement of infrastructures and service facilities based on an overall consideration of natural geography, construction condition and demand, and industrial characters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2008
Remote villages are further divided into four types: fish and livestock breeding villages, rural tourism villages, industry villages, and villages with historic and cultural values (Table 5-5).

Table 5-5: Planning guidance for different types of remote villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village types</th>
<th>Planning focuses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish and livestock breeding villages</td>
<td>Putting together the breeding industries; improving sanitary and anti-epidemic facilities, paying attention to pollution controlling and treatment and environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural tourism villages</td>
<td>Emphasising tourism planning, arranging infrastructure and service facilities in coordination with tourism characteristics and prospective, developing tourism with a proper utilisation of service facilities and folk houses, protecting tourism resources and natural environment and protect the local residents from the interference of tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry villages</td>
<td>Forbidding the development of industries with pollution and moving the existing industries with pollution to industry parks in towns, concentrating industries in convenient areas and segregating them from villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages with historic and cultural values</td>
<td>Making a special historic and cultural protection plan, protecting the existing traditional and characteristic villages in good condition, renovating buildings that damage the traditional landscape, and coordinating new buildings with old traditional buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2008

In addition to the task of developing village plans, the Provincial Planning Department has advanced a new project of ‘demonstration village with better-off housing’ (The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2004; 2006) to improve the living environment of rural areas.
With the publication of the new ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act’, Jiangsu also started to make bylaws (not yet to be published) as a provincial interpretation of the Planning Act. However, since the pilot work on rural planning has been going well, the publication of new Planning Act has not brought any big changes to their own work on rural planning. Instead, the inclusion of rural planning in the formal planning system under the new Planning Act has given a formal status of plan-making in rural areas of Jiangsu, and to some extent, supported the provincial government’s task on rural planning. The provincial planning department continues to make regulations on managing and controlling town and village development. Besides the practice of rural planning, the provincial planning department has implemented two research projects related to village planning. One of the projects is to research on the possible circulation modes of collective land to improve land use efficiency in rural areas. Another area of research has been on rural housing, which aims to develop a policy to improve the condition of housing construction in rural area by adopting clean energy resources such as solar energy.
5.3 PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL CITIES

5.3.1 Nanjing

Nanjing is the capital of Jiangsu province. The total population of Nanjing is 7.6 million, and 23% of them live in rural areas. Like other cities in southern Jiangsu province, Nanjing is currently in a mixed process of urbanisation and suburbanisation. The urbanisation level is still increasing, though at a slowing pace, while more and more people are moving to suburban districts. Agriculture only accounts 2.9% of the GDP in 2008. Even outside the central city, more than 90% of the GDP is from non-agricultural industries and only around 26% of the rural labour force work in agriculture. When compared to other municipal level cities, rural areas in Nanjing are at a much more developed level, though the gap between urban and rural areas is still growing.
Figure 5-4: The rural areas of Nanjing
Key policies for rural development

With central and provincial government’s increasing emphasis on rural development, more attention has been paid to rural development in Nanjing. A local Rural Work Office was established to take charge of the development of New Socialism Rural Areas. The role of this office is to research on rural development policy based on national and provincial rural development policies by considering local development conditions, the coordination of different sectoral policies and the effect and impact of these policies on rural areas. A lot of departments are involved in the process of rural development, the most important being the Agricultural Commission and the Urban Planning Bureau. The Agricultural Commission is a new department established in 2010 which brings together the former Agricultural and Forest Bureau, the Agricultural Resource Exploitation Office, the Government Rural Economy Office and other rural related departments. The Commission is responsible for agricultural and rural economic development, and the Urban Planning Bureau is responsible for rural planning.

Nanjing has published a series of rural development documents in the past few years, most of which follow national and provincial documents and cover almost all issues from upper government’s policies. As a city with high development levels, Nanjing goes further than many other cities, especially those in middle and northern Jiangsu, in promoting rural development. While implementing the provincial government’s rural projects, the local government goes further to ascertain their own development mode based on the local socio-economic development conditions. The latest idea of local

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24 Considering the limited space of the thesis and large amount of local documents, the list of local document on rural development and planning in Nanjing, Taizhou and Suqian is provided in appendix.
government is to achieve balanced urban and rural development by coordinating the processes of county industrialisation, urbanisation, agricultural modernisation and the local culture (Nanjing Government, 2010b). It aims to foster positive interactions between urban and rural areas by building integrative urban-rural industries, infrastructure, services and other support systems.

Intensive metropolitan agriculture is encouraged to replace traditional agriculture. Industrialisation, standardisation, market-orientation and environment-friendly are the government’s new principles on agriculture. The government also encourages the diversification of agriculture, and agricultural tourism and agricultural science parks will play a more and more important role in future agricultural development. Advanced manufacturing is considered as the future economic pillar of the counties. The government calls for the planning of comprehensive arrangements for industrial development in the city administrative area. Increasing attention has been paid to improve rural services to the same level as those in urban areas while carrying out the provincial government’s rural development projects, it further extended the ‘five issues’ to ‘eight issues’ to improve eight types of rural services and facilities (that is, road, drinking water system, farm land protection, education, culture, environment, health, and minimum subsistence allowance) (Nanjing Government, 2005; 2009; 2010a). The government has put a lot effort into developing a unitary urban and rural infrastructure and service system. Nanjing is the first city in China to make local legislation to build an urban-rural integrated minimum subsistence allowance system (Nanjing Government, 2004). Policies have also been made to build a new rural cooperative medical insurance system, an endowment insurance system and a childless old people helping system (Nanjing Government, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2010c). There are also other policies to
improve the basic recreation and sports facilities in villages and to form a scientific, healthy and civilised lifestyle and social custom.

**Rural planning framework**

The local government of Nanjing goes beyond the provincial requirement on rural planning to develop its own urban-rural integrated planning framework to take into account local demand. The local rural planning framework consists of three levels: urban and rural master plans, town and village distribution plans, and village plans.

The making of the new master plan of Nanjing (2007-2020) is still in progress. The plan sets the future vision of Nanjing as ‘an urban-rural integrated metropolitan area’ and the objectives of its rural development are to develop ‘new planning, new institution, new energy, new water source, new countryside, and new hometown’. The master plan includes a special issue of urban-rural integration plan which considers urban and rural development issues from a metropolitan perspective. The rural area is considered as a functional part of the whole metropolitan city. It makes comprehensive arrangements for industries, public services system, transportation, infrastructure and land use for all urban and rural areas. A new five-level urban-rural spatial structure of central city, new urban areas, new cities, towns (normal towns/new metropolitan towns), and villages (normal villages/special villages) is developed in this plan. According to the plan, there will be 16 metropolitan towns, 25 normal towns, 1,900 normal villages and 206 special villages in rural Nanjing. The urban-rural integration plan has decided the basic roles and functions and provides instructions for future development in these areas. The
making of this plan has been coordinated with related plans such as the land use master plan and the ‘thousands of acres of fertile arable land project’25.

The town and village distribution plan is not the core planning policy of Nanjing. As part of the master plan of Nanjing, the urban-rural integration plan has formal status and has replaced the town and village distribution plan in practice. The town and village distribution plan is kept mainly because it is part of the requirement from the provincial planning department. The local government introduces the village plan following the guidance of the Provincial Planning Department. As the master plan has set out guidance for the future development of villages, the village plan plays a similar role to that of detailed plans in cities by guiding development in villages.

25 ‘Thousands of acres of fertile arable land project’ is a project carried out by the Land and Resource Department of Jiangsu Province. The major objective is to improve the amount of arable land and development land by concentrating the scattered arable land, concentrating rural population into residential sites, towns and cities, and concentrating industries into parks. This project started from pilot areas in municipal cities at the end of 2008 and was gradually extended to cover more areas.
5.3.2 Taizhou

Taizhou is in the middle of Jiangsu province. The total population of Taizhou is 4.6 million, 50.9% of whom live in rural areas. Unlike Nanjing, Taizhou is still undergoing a fast urbanisation process. Agriculture accounted for 7.8% of its GDP in 2008 but its contribution to GDP is reducing every year. Only around 26% of the labour force in rural areas work in agriculture. Manufacturing has become the main sector of local economic development. Rural development in Taizhou has diversified a lot but more in the southern than the northern areas. For example, in a southern county-level city (Jingjiang), agriculture only accounts for 3.7% of the GDP, which is similar to the level in southern Jiangsu, while in a northern county-level city (Xinghua), agricultural covers 16.6% of GDP. The urban-rural gap is still growing in recent years.
Key policies for rural development

The major local government sectors for rural development are the Local Rural Work Office of Taizhou (the former Office of Poverty Alleviation), Taizhou Agricultural Commission and Taizhou Urban Planning Bureau. The major task of the Rural Work Office is to assign rural development tasks to related governmental sectors to implement the national and provincial rural development policies based on local conditions. The policy focus of the Agricultural Commission is on agricultural and rural economic development with a recent emphasis on modern efficient agriculture. The Urban
Planning Bureau has responsibility for plan-making in rural areas which recently has been mainly concerned with the renovation of villages. This will be discussed later in this section.

The Taizhou government has published several documents for the local implementation of national and provincial policies in the last few years, for example, ‘The Ideas of Taizhou Government on Implementing National No.1 policy and the Provincial No.1 documents’ (Taizhou Government, 2009a). These documents, together with the local 11th five-year plan (Taizhou Government, 2005), provide a general policy context covering all the key rural development issues for different sectors for plan-making in rural areas. Though with a full-scale policy framework, the local government of Taizhou pays extra attention to some specific issues and has published additional policies on them. These specific issues include modern high-efficiency agriculture, agricultural insurance, urban-rural integrated employment system, ‘5+1 practical activities’ \(^\text{26}\) and endowment insurance in urban and rural areas (Taizhou Government, 2006a; 2010). Special work teams were set up by the government for the development of some of these issues. Taizhou has a good modern agricultural basis and produces nationally famous agricultural products. It has four modern agricultural parks of provincial importance under the direct control of the provincial government. The government encourages the development of hierarchical modern agricultural parks for cities, counties and towns, and agricultural industrial clusters. More private investments in agriculture and better competition are encouraged to improve the cooperation between enterprises, cooperative organisations and farmers to develop local band agricultural

\(^{26}\) It is a rural development project that is extended from the provincial government’s development project of ‘Five Practical Activities’ by local government.
products. The government plans to have more than 40% of farmers in cooperative organisations by the end of 2010. The ‘Government’s Ideas on the Delivery of Fund-raising Project for Farmer’s Cooperative Organisation’ (Taizhou Government, 2009b) was published to support the development of cooperative organisations. A development plan on modern agriculture was made to provide spatial arrangements for different types of modern agricultural parks. Taizhou has put a lot of emphasis on agricultural insurance development. Between 2008 and 2010, the government published ‘The Announcement on Developing Agricultural Insurance’ (Taizhou Government, 2008a; 2009c; 2010) every year to gradually increase the coverage of the insurance and to improve the operation and government support on agricultural insurance. In 2006, the Taizhou government published ‘The Implementation Plan on Integrating Urban and Rural Employment’ (Taizhou Government, 2006b) to improve the employment of rural surplus labour by building a unitary urban-rural labour force market, improving the training of rural workers and protecting their rights, and improving the social insurance system of rural workers. Another document, ‘The Ideas on Encouraging Rural Workers to Develop Their Own Business’ (Taizhou Government, 2008b), was published in 2008 to give more policy support to encourage rural workers outside of the city to set up their own business in their hometown to stimulate local economic development. This policy was later extended to cover all the farmers who want to start their own business. Based on the provincial government’s second round of the five-issue rural development project, the local government of Taizhou has added the issue of ‘rural endowment insurance’ to it. In the same year, the government published the ‘Taizhou Urban and Rural Endowment Insurance Implementation Plan (trial edition)’ (Taizhou Government, 2008c) to carry out pilot work in developing urban-rural unitary endowment insurance system in the administrative areas of the central city.
Since the development level of rural areas varies a lot in different regions of Taizou, the government has developed different policies for different regions. For the more developed areas in the urban fringe and areas along the Yangtze River, an urban-rural integrative policy mechanism is built to accelerate urban-rural interactions and to balance urban and rural development (Taizhou Government, 2005). For the remote countryside, the government aims at improving the development of towns as the growth poles in rural areas and improve the physical living environments of villages based on the principles of ‘protection, utilisation, renovation, development’ to protect the rural idyll and local distinctiveness (Taizhou Government, 2005). For those very lagging areas, the government provides more resource inputs to alleviate poverty levels (Taizhou Government, 2005). Special policies were made to help these regions, such as sending municipal governmental officers to supervise the development and requiring each municipal department to support a village.

**Rural planning framework**

The development of the local rural planning framework in Taizhou mostly follows the provincial guidance. The local rural planning framework consists of two parts: the town and village distribution plan and the village plan. According to the town and village distribution plan (Taizhou Planning Bureau, 2005), the current 10,963 natural villages (settlements) will be gradually merged into 2,700-2,800 villages. According to the plan, no development is allowed outside of these villages and the government will gradually reduce inputs in other villages. A detailed plan is required for each major central town to improve the habitat and environment and their potential as the development pole in rural areas.
As the work on town and village plans was completed in 2005, the local government focuses its attention on village planning. The local planning department has organised workshops to learn plan making experiences in different areas and carried out research on ways to protect local distinctiveness, promote rural tourism and improve the quality of village plans. While following the guidance of the provincial government, village plan in local areas put strong emphasis on the renovation of villages to improve the living environment of local residents. The renovation is coordinated within the local government’s ‘5+1 practical activities’ and was first carried out in pilot villages selected by provincial government for environmental renovation. For villages not included in the provincial pilot villages, the local government has recently selected some to improve their environment with their own objectives and will gradually extend this to cover all the others. According to the government’s policy, renovation should be based on local conditions and focus on the most pressing problems of local residents such as sanitary problems and basic infrastructure. Based on a successful experience, the work will gradually be extended to cover all villages in the town and village distribution plan. Town and villages with better economic development conditions are encouraged to do pilot work on sanitary sewage disposal, energy-saving buildings and the use of other new technologies.

Moreover, the local government promotes intensive use of rural land resources. It calls for the coordination between village plans and the land resource department’s work in respect of the land use master plan and the ‘thousands of acres of fertile arable land project’. The local government also tries to link increases in the urban land use quota with the reduction of rural development activities.
5.3.3 Suqian

Suqian is the poorest city in Jiangsu. The total population is 4.7 million, and 64.1% of them live in rural areas. Suqian is a traditional agricultural city. Its three counties and a district form the national commodity grain production base. Agriculture accounted for 20.4% of the GDP in 2008. More than 45% of the rural labour works in agriculture. The average urban-rural income ratio is lower than Nanjing, because of the narrower income gap between urban and rural areas. The rural income per capita in Nanjing is 1.6 times of that in Suqian, while the urban income per capita in Nanjing is 1.9 times of that in Suqian.
Chapter 5: Planning Policy Framework for Rural Development – A Case of Jiangsu Province

Key policies for rural development

As with the other two cities, Suqian has paid increasing attention to rural development in recent years. The governmental sectors related to rural development are same as the other two cities: the Local Rural Work Office, the Agricultural Bureau\(^\text{27}\) and the Urban Planning Bureau. The major difference is the role of the Local Rural Work Office. The

\(^{27}\) Recently, there were some changes in the governmental sectors. In some cities, the Agricultural Bureau was merged with other sectors such as the Forester Bureau to be a new sector of Agricultural Commission. Some cities still keep the old sectoral structures.
function of this office is very broad including the analysis of the broad contexts and local conditions of rural development, research on the delivery of national and provincial policy based on local conditions, coordination of related sectors’ work on rural development and the monitoring of the implementation status and outcome of these works. It, therefore, acts as much more than just a coordinator.

Compared to the other two cities, Suqian has published a huge volume of documents (over 30) on rural development between 2005 and 2009. These policies mainly cover specific issues of rural development such as the financial system, social insurance for farmers who lost their land, the use of clean energy, agricultural insurance, new rural residential sites, endowment insurance, modernisation of agriculture, agricultural irrigation system, safe drink water system, new cooperative medical insurance and medical services, social support system, and ecologically friendly villages. Generally, the government’s ideas on these issues can simply be summarised as putting more emphasis on, and giving more resources in respect of, financial and policy support.

In addition to these documents, the local 11th five-year plan (Suqian Government, 2005) has set out a general policy for rural development which highlights agriculture, rural service, and rural democracy as the three important issues. The government encourages the development of modern efficient agriculture to improve productivity and develop competitive agricultural products by encouraging innovative cooperation between enterprises and farmers, improve the support system (such as infrastructure and agricultural service system) and provide skills training to farmers. Based on the provincial ‘five practical activities’, the government aims to improve the physical
environment and the living conditions of local residents by increasing inputs on the improvement of infrastructure, service facilities and the social welfare system. The improvement of rural democracy generally follows the provincial government’s guidance to improve the public participation system to assure local residents’ right to participate in the administrative agenda and to explore suitable democratic approaches for the supervision, management and service delivery in villages.

**Rural planning framework**

With the provincial government’s emphasis on planning in rural areas, the local government of Suqian has published a series of documents on rural planning. The local planning framework, following the provincial guidance, consists of the town and village distribution plan and the village plan just as the situation in Taizhou. As the town and village distribution plan was organised by the provincial planning department that means the plan of the local government mostly follows the provincial guidance. Hence, there is little innovative local policy in the town and village distribution plan.

The local government’s documents on village plans largely focuses on concentrated residential sites, with the exception of some policies to encourage the overall coverage of planning in both urban and rural areas and on construction activities in rural areas. The local government intends to combine the original 12,028 settlements into 2,566 concentrated residential sites. These concentrated residential sites include the original villages, extension of original settlements, and newly built settlements. The decision behind concentrating residential sites is based on the principles of saving land resources and the focus on original villages, and all the construction in rural areas should thus be
made in these sites. The concentrated residential sites are divided into two types: demonstration villages with better-off housing and residential sites with distinctive characteristics as set out in the town and village distribution plan, and normal residential sites. The demonstration villages are the current focus of local government and they are required to make a village plan following the provincial guidance. Normal residential sites can make village plans or make layout plans following the guidance made by local government and adapted to their local conditions. The layout plan is a watered down version of the village plan. It focuses on the construction areas of residential sites instead of the whole administrative area. The major tasks involve the allocation of land use, the arrangement of roads, basic public services and infrastructures, and the reduction of some other landuses such as landscape planning.

Instead of following the provincial village classification, the local government has developed its own system. Based on location, the residential sites are divided into three types: sites on the urban fringe, sites in urban areas, and sites in the countryside. The characteristics and planning tasks of each type of residential sites are provided in Table 5-6.

Table 5-6: Planning tasks for residential sites classified by location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Planning tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites on urban fringe</td>
<td>They will gradually become urbanised area. Traditional agricultural will be replaced by manufacturing, tertiary industries and efficient agriculture</td>
<td>Encouraging the development of multi-story buildings instead of rural houses; arranging service facilities and infrastructures according to urban standard or the upper limit of rural standard; allowing the development of environmentally-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the topography, residential sites are divided into three types: sites on the waterfront, sites in low lying areas and sites in the countryside. The planning tasks of each type are provided in Table 5-7.

Table 5- 7: Planning tasks for residential sites classified by location topography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Planning tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites on the waterfront</td>
<td>Improving the dredging of rivers to protect the current waterfront and keeping the local distinctiveness of villages; protecting historical sites, plants and culture; renovating the physical environment and enhancing the ecological system; improving the renovation of waterfront to build a pleasant environment; making an agricultural irritation plan based on the water system and coordinating with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites in urban areas</td>
<td>They will gradually become part of urban areas. Residents will gradually work in the second and third sectors and can be covered by urban social welfare services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites in countryside</td>
<td>Developing multi-story building instead of rural houses by considering space for agricultural tools, production and storage; arranging service facilities and infrastructure according to the urban standard or the upper limit of the rural standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites in countryside</td>
<td>Highly efficient agriculture will become the dominant industry. The mass concentrated rearing of livestock will replace traditional family raising modes. Pollution-free industries and household workshops are allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites in countryside</td>
<td>Encouraging the building of row dwelling houses; design rural housing by considering the space for agricultural tools, products storage and airing and other needs; protecting the rural idyll; coordinating the arrangement of different types of space for the entire administrative area of the village.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Suqian Planning Bureau, 2008.
Residential sites in low areas

Building both multi-storied buildings and rural houses to meet the needs of different types of family; designing the houses considering the space for agricultural and aquiculture tools; arranging service facilities and infrastructures according the upper limit of rural standard; encouraging the combination of fishing cultural exhibition, production sales and the construction of streets and community centre; encouraging the use of production forest to build green systems to protect the ecological system.

Residential sites in sloping land

the direction of road and houses should follow the topography; improving the drainage system; renovating the physical environment; encouraging the using of production forest to build a green system; coordinating the green system with the natural environment to protect ecological characteristics.

Based on the industries, the residential sites are divided into five types: sites for planting flowers, trees and fruit trees, sites with household workshops, sites for livestock breeding, sites with aquiculture, and sites with markets. The planning tasks of each type are provided in Table 5-8.

Table 5-8: Planning tasks for residential sites classified by rural industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Planning tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites for planting flower, trees and fruit trees</td>
<td>Renovating the physical environment to protect ecological characteristics; enhancing the coordination between economic development and ecological environment; making a suitable arrangement of market and production space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites with household workshops</td>
<td>Making appropriate spatial arrangements for production and development in the public centre of the village; designing houses with the consideration of space for storage of raw materials and products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential sites</td>
<td>Comprehensively planning for the whole area to arrange the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of livestock breeding | living and livestock breeding space; designing houses with the consideration of space for the storage of breeding tools

| Residential sites with aquiculture | Most of them are in urban areas and the urban fringe

| Residential sites with markets | Spatial arrangements should consider the characteristics and demands of the market to make a convenient connection in between the market and the outside; in the long term, most of the building should follow the upper limit of the rural standard. Some pollution-free industries are allowed to develop in these areas

Source: Suqian Planning Bureau, 2008.

Moreover, the local government requires coordination between the residential site plan and the land resource department’s work on land use master planning and the ‘thousands of acres of fertile arable land project’. The local government also developed the land reserve centre for rural areas which tries to reserve land resources in rural areas through the land market and to link the urban and rural land use quota. However, currently the transferring of rural land use quota into the urban area is only found at the county-level and in the development zone. These quotas are only allowed for public use.

After publication, the new planning framework for rural development has been swift applied in Jiangsu province. The next section provides a review on selected rural planning cases at different spatial scales in Jiangsu province.

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28 To control urban sprawl, China has strict control on the increasing of land use amount for new development. The department of land and resource decides new increased land use quota for the city. The link of urban and rural land resource helps to give more land use quota for urban development, as the concentration and renovation of villages will reduce the total amount of built-up areas. As rural areas have reduced the amount of land use and these lands will be re-cultivated as arable land, the cities and towns can have the same amount of extra land use in addition to their own quota.
5.4 Rural Planning Cases in Jiangsu

The case-study plans have been selected from three typical types of plans made at different spatial levels in Jiangsu after the application of the new urban and rural planning framework including: the Jiangsu town and village system plan, the urban-rural integration plan (in Nanjing and one of its districts) and the village plans. It is argued in Chapter Two that the concept of ‘spatial planning’ has built up a new discourse for planning development in most western European countries and has stimulated debate on rural planning and development. The review of spatial planning in Chapter Two also identifies several basic principles of the spatial planning approach which includes a spatial vision, an integrated policy framework, a focus on functional areas, collaboration and coordination, effective delivery mechanisms and consistent monitoring systems. The application of the spatial planning approach to rural planning helps to derive a number of key principles, for example, introducing a territorial policy framework, integrating economic, social and environmental issues into a spatial context for sustainable development, providing a topology of policy for different rural areas, encouraging a closer relationship between regional and local planning, and new emphasis on urban-rural relationships as discussed in Chapter Four. This section will evaluate the rural plans in Jiangsu Province by applying the criteria discussed earlier. The aim is to find out whether the practice of rural planning in Jiangsu has followed the principles of spatial planning.
5.4.1 The Jiangsu town and village system plan, 2005

As discussed in earlier section of this chapter, this plan (Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Jiangsu, 2005) was organised by Jiangsu Provincial Government and then assigned to municipal cities to complete the making of the plan. The plan is, therefore, a collage of the town and village plans of its municipal cities. Figure 5-7 shows part of the plan in the three case-study cities. This plan includes three major parts: defining the hierarchy and future spatial distribution of towns and villages in areas outside the central cities of municipal and county levels; defining the major functions of towns and sizes of towns and villages; and outlining the arrangement of regional transportation, infrastructure and other service facility systems for towns and villages. This plan largely focuses on the built-up areas such as central towns, village settlements and industrial parks, as the original intention behind it is to concentrate rural development. Other areas are divided into two general types of farmland and ecological important areas and principle guidance is provided for them. More importantly, the amount of different types of land before and after the implementation of this plan is calculated for each town. Hence, it is clear to see in this plan how much development land will be saved for future use after the blueprint is achieved. As a type of regional plan, it also tries to address cross-boundary coordination between towns, such as the co-construction and sharing of infrastructure facilities and the development of industrial parks, though most of the coordination is quite simplistic and in the form of general principles.
Chapter 5: Planning Policy Framework for Rural Development – A Case of Jiangsu Province

Figure 5-7: Part of the town and village distribution plan in the three case-study areas (From left to right: Nanjing, Taizhou, and Suqian)

The vision of this plan ultimately provides an urbanisation objective and a blueprint for the broad development of rural areas across the whole province. The total number of villages will be reduced to less than 20% of the current number, while the number of towns is to be cut by nearly a third. The idea of this plan came from the elites in the provincial planning department, and was followed by the political process in which local elites such as planning officials of cities, counties and towns and town mayors were involved in helping planners to decide the development vision of the plan. The idea of this plan seems very attractive to some local elite players. They use it as a way to get more available land for urban development. This motive to some extent makes the vision of rural development even more concentrated than originally expected by the provincial planning officials. However, little attention has been paid to action plans and the delivery mechanisms in this plan. Local government is supposed to make their own action plans according to their local conditions.

This plan theoretically should coordinate sectoral policies. In practice, the coordination focuses on the provision of transport and infrastructure. Most of this coordination has
been carried out after the making of this plan as part of the approach that helps to achieve the planning vision. Moreover, the making of this plan has never incorporated a public participation process. A combination of the ‘top-down’ and the ‘bottom-up’ approach is supposed to be used in this plan. In practice, the making of this plan is largely top-down motivated, while the municipal government plays a strong role in the plan making and delivery.

As a provincial regional plan, it covers the whole administrative area of the Province. However, the focus is on the town and rural settlements. Central cities and counties are neglected, while the broad farmland and other areas outside the rural settlements are treated as background. Separate policies are provided for farmland and green land in principle. The adjustment to rural settlements is basically made according to the administrative boundaries. Since this plan focuses on physical landuse, the concerns of integrated socio-economic and environmental development is limited. More importantly, the knowledge base to underpin the spatial structure of future towns and villages is very weak, with simplistic analysis of current conditions and a lack of robust evidence and effective prediction of future development scenarios.
5.4.2 The Nanjing urban-rural integration plan, 2009

The making of the Nanjing urban-rural integration plan went through a unique and complicated process. Originally, the urban-rural integration plan was made by the district government of Jiangning, one of Nanjing’s suburban districts. Unlike other districts in central city, Jiangning district has both urban and rural areas. Hence, the district government needs a comprehensive development plan to guide its future development which cannot be provided by the Nanjing Urban Master Plan. It was under this condition that the district government organised the making of the Jiangning urban-rural integration plan. At that time, it was an informal plan and was treated as a way for local government to express the development concepts of the district. Local authorities were very satisfied with the outcome of this plan as an experiment of a new planning type. Later, when the Nanjing government wanted to echo the central government’s emphasis on rural development and urban-rural integration policy in its new version of the urban master plan, this plan was taken as a successful model and was modified to cover the whole area of Nanjing city. It takes the form of a special section in the master plan, which is more like a research report on a specific topic, to support the related decisions in the main content of the urban master plan.

The Nanjing urban-rural integration plan was intended to develop a vision with balanced urban and rural development of Nanjing over the period of 2007-2020, with a focus on the spatial structure of the whole area of Nanjing. Most topic areas covered in this plan are related to developing new urban and rural settlement system and its

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29 The making of this plan started in 2007 and finished in 2009, so the planning period starts from 2007 rather than 2009
spatial arrangements. Though theoretically, this plan covers the whole administrative areas of Nanjing, the main focus is on the Nanjing metropolitan area which covers most of Nanjing except some remote part in northern Liuhe (one of Nanjing’s suburban districts) and most of the two southern counties of Lishui and Gaochun (which are normally not considered as part of the main city in most plans).

The vision developed for Nanjing in the Nanjing Master Plan is ‘a high quality metropolitan area with strong competitiveness’. It treats rural and urban spaces as two different functional areas with equal status and overcomes the bias between them caused by long-standing institutional differences. The major innovation is its focus on functional areas. It breaks administrative boundaries from the city to village to define the metropolitan areas into two types (the ‘metropolitan development groups’ and the ‘metropolitan green land’). Most development is restricted in the metropolitan development group. Development within the metropolitan green land should only be permitted for restrictive use of environment-friendly industries. Furthermore, a new settlement system of central city (zhong xin cheng qu), new urban district (xin shi qu), new town (xin cheng), metropolitan town (xin shi zhen) and village is set out in the plan. In theory, they are all high quality settlements with no hierarchy between them and are only different in functions and sizes. Moreover, the new urban districts and new towns are different from their traditional definitions. The definition of these areas is based on functional connection instead of administrative boundaries. Key functional areas are also defined in metropolitan areas, with different development policies and evaluation systems with different indicators developed for them. Finally, supporting systems are developed to achieve the vision. A specific contribution is research on the mechanisms to stimulate the urbanisation process such as training of the rural workforce to meet the
requirement of urban jobs and having social housing policy to support rural migrants to work in urban areas.

Figure 5-8: The spatial structure and sizes of major urban and rural settlements
This plan has a clear vision and objectives and has a good basis of research on delivery. Hence, its delivery part is much stronger when compared with the other plans. However, even more in-depth and detailed research will be needed to change these delivery mechanisms to improve the applicability of policies. Also, the action plans for each development phase are very simple, though development objectives have been set up for each stage. Local government is expected to make lower level plans to enrich this part. This plan intends to coordinate sectoral policies. It has actually made arrangements for coordination between the spatial structure of urban-rural settlements and for the provision of transport, infrastructure and public service facilities. However, this coordination is based on consultation with other sectors and the modification of their plans for this plan. Hence, whether other sectors will accept these arrangements and implement them in the future is the questionable. Local government is expected to keep this coordination in practice.
The making of this plan is partly driven by national rural policy as discussed earlier. It is partly because the local government of Nanjing has started to realise the importance of rural resources for future development. A better rural environment actually has the potential to bring more advantages for urban and regional development. This plan puts more emphasis on urban and rural sustainable development. Different regulation policies have been made for different regions based on the assessment of their environmental capacity. Environmental indicators are developed for future development. Nevertheless, economic development is still the major focus with a strong emphasis on the consideration of industrial development arrangements in urban and rural areas.

This plan has a much stronger evidence base than most other plans. Detailed investigations of local conditions were carried out while questionnaires were sent to local residents to collect their opinions on their needs. The plan develops its own conceptual framework based on the study of domestic and international experiences on the development of the metropolis and urban-rural integration. One of the problems is that it did not go through a public participation process during the plan-making process. Normal people cannot get access to it until it has finished the final approval process.
5.4.3 Urban-rural integration plan of Nanjing Binjiang new city, 2008

The making of this plan is organised by the local authority of Jiangning Street\textsuperscript{30} (Binjiang new city) in Jiangning district of Nanjing city. This area has a provincial development park, the Binjiang Development Park. It needs a master plan to guide its future development which cannot be provided by the Nanjing master plan. However, the local authority of Jiangning Street does not have the power to make the master plan. In such a case, an agreement was reached between the local authority of Jiangning Street and the government of Nanjing City for the local authority to make this plan to take the place of the master plan. The whole area was changed into Binjiang new city and later become one of the new cities in the Nanjing Urban Master Plan (2009). The aim of this plan is to regulate industrial development and the spatial structure of urban and rural areas and to avoid the previous cut-throat competition in industrial development between the new city (mainly referring to development park) and Jiangning district. The vision of the plan is to develop a competitive development pole and manufacturing base for Nanjing metropolitan areas with proper provision of environmental amenities. The main characteristic of this plan is that it divides the planning area into two parts: urban spaces and rural spaces. Separate spatial layout plans are made for urban spaces and rural spaces. The plan also seeks to make industrial development strategies and policies and to arrange transport, infrastructure and other public service facilities.

\textsuperscript{30} This is used to be Jiangning Town in Jiangning County. When Jiangning County was changed to be Jiangning district during the adjustment of administrative structure of Nanjing city, Jiangning town became Jiangning street.
This plan has a clear vision for future development. Apart from the development park, the Jiangning Street (former Jiangning town) was originally a small agricultural town with a weak economy. The vision is more or less the expression of the local authority’s eagerness to improve its economy by industrial development through the opportunity of incorporating the development park into the local authority’s area. The evidence base used to support the vision as well as the strategies and policies are not so strong. Moreover, it did not go through a public participation process either. Local people had few means of getting access to the plan and to express their aspirations on it. Like most master plans in China, the part on delivery is very simple and brief in this plan. No action plan was made to coordinate the development activities.

Figure 5-10: The spatial structure of urban and rural areas
Figure 5-11: The combination of spatial arrangement of urban and rural areas

As a replacement of the master plan, this plan covers broad topic areas. The coordination of sectoral policies focuses on transport and infrastructure facilities. This plan takes environmental amenity as part of the vision by making environmental assessment of the proposed landuse for each region. However, the plan remains more economic development driven as priority is given to the arrangement for industrial development. From Figure 5-10, it can be seen that the idea to develop industry between the ecological belt and the green land cannot be truly argued as environmentally friendly and sustainable. Theoretically, this plan covers both the urban and rural areas of the new city. In reality, it treats them separately and has not made any links between the two. Hence, it is more like a collage than an integration of urban and rural areas (Figure 5-10 and Figure 5-11).
5.4.4 Example of village plans in three case-study areas

The making of the village plans all followed the provincial government’s guidance and are therefore very similar in content. One or two village plans are therefore selected, as examples, from each of the case-study cities for further illustration here.

The two village plan cases selected here are both in the suburban districts of Nanjing. Zhenjiacun village is in Guli town in Jiangning district which is a pilot district designated by the central government for the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme. The village is located in an area of natural beauty with some famous historic sites. Prepared in 2006, this village plan aims to develop a village with a health living environment, beautiful landscape and amenity based on the extension of the current village. However, it mainly provides a blueprint for the layout of the village in the future. Reference to socio-economic and environment development issues are limited and rather simplistic. It also covers the infrastructure system, public services, landscape planning and transportation planning. However, all these arrangements are
also expressed in very simple terms. Moreover, the plan is mostly about the arrangement inside of the village. Consideration of the linkage between the village and the outside context is very limited. For example, it is suggested in the plan that the village should develop rural tourism as it located in an area of natural beauty and historic sites. However, no further policy recommendation is provided on how to develop such rural tourism and coordinate with regional tourism development. Also, no action plan is included in the plan. Hence, in general, this plan is more like a detailed land-use plan for future development regulation.

Another case selected in Nanjing is Cuijiayin village. This village is Tangquan town in Pukou district which is less developed and urbanised than Jiangning district. The plan for Cuijiayin village was made in 2008. Unlike the plan for Zhenjiacun village, the format of this plan is that of a simple layout plan; the watered down version of the village plan. The main contents cover arrangements in respect of the layout of building blocks, the road system, green space system, and infrastructure and public service facilities. There is hardly any consideration of economic, social and environmental issues. As with the plan for Zhenjiacun village, little horizontal and vertical coordination and action plans are included in the plan.

In summary, these two village plan examples represent a mechanical application of the provincial government’s model of village plans.
The case selected in Taizhou is the Xuqiao village plan made in 2008. Xuqiao village is in Jiangduo town in the northeast area of Taizhou. The village is on the fringe of the town and consists of four settlements. Many local village residents work in the town. Development pressures in the village are not very strong. The village plan mainly focuses on the renovation of the four settlements and the improvement of infrastructure and public service systems for the whole village as well as each settlement. It provides a future blueprint for the layout of the whole village. More attention has been paid to keep the traditional characteristics and landscape of the village. However, the plan does not
cover socio-economic development issues. Besides, though the plan coordinates the development of the four settlements, it lacks coordination with the development of outside areas. Also, there is little horizontal and vertical coordination with other related plans. However, compared with the other cases, this plan is more evidence-based. The plan process involved the investigation of the views of local residents on local characteristics and their requirements on the improvement of facilities. Hence, this plan is considered by local government as a successful example of village planning.

![Figure 5-14: Village plans of Yantoucun (left) and Sichangcun (right) (Suqian)](image)

The first case selected in Suqian is Yantoucun village which is in Xinhe town in east of Suqian. This village is near one of Suqian’s agriculture parks. The plan aims to develop a totally new settlement to concentrate farmers from the surrounding settlements. It is a plain layout format. Hence, the content is uncomplicated; mainly about the arrangement of building blocks and basic infrastructure and public service facilities for daily life. A second case, Sichangcun village, is located in the north of Suqian. It is one of the local government’s demonstrations for the delivery of rural development and planning. The plan aims to develop a new modernised villages based on the renovation and extension of an existing settlement. It mainly provides a blueprint for future landuses and the arrangement of transportation, public services and infrastructure systems. Both of these
the two plans are therefore like a simplified version of the detailed plan for urban communities with very little coverage of socio-economic development, local distinctiveness, and coordination with the external context.

In summary, all these village plans aim to build up a blueprint for future landuse in their village. Most of these plans focus on the central development areas of the settlements. They are more like detailed plans to guide construction rather than broader development plans. There is hardly any consideration of economic, social and environmental issues. Theoretically, the making of village plans should protect rural characteristics and local distinctiveness. However, only a few of the plans show much concern with these issues. Moreover, some of them may not even be recognised as village plans. Also, little horizontal and vertical coordination is included in these plans. To some extent, these plans can be considered as the outcomes of the mechanical application of the provincial government’s model of village plans.
5.5 DISCUSSION

5.5.1 Rural development policy

Though the central government has published a large number of documents on rural development, the central idea is to put more resources and give more support to rural areas. These policies, while helping to bring new opportunities to rural areas, have created some problems. Firstly, the government’s policies on rural areas are too broad and diverse covering almost every issue of rural development and involving policy changes in many sectors. However, none of these documents clearly articulate the inter-relationships between different policy issues and different government sectors. There is also a lack of attention on the relationship between rural conditions and the wider socio-economic and environmental context of the city-region. Hence, these documents do not provide an integrated rural policy. Instead, they are a collection of individual polices for related sectors. Secondly, these policies are very repetitive and general. Central government publishes an annual national document on agriculture, farmer and rural areas to direct works on rural issues. Although these documents cover different topics, they have similar content by referring to policies of all rural issues that are set out in the eleventh national five-year plan. They also fail to highlight the strategic issues for rural development which reduces the efficiency of the government’s effort in rural areas. Thirdly, these policies are non-spatial. Planning in these documents focuses on physical landuse and construction arrangements. It is considered as a tool to improve the physical environment rather than guidance for future development. They also pay little attention to the coordination between policy sectors, between different levels of government, and between government and other related interest groups. Fourthly,
despite the fact that ‘urban-rural integration’ was always highlighted as the first principle in rural development policy, very few documents explain the idea, analyse the urban-rural relationships, or provide guidance on how to implement the idea. Finally, these are general policies which do not attempt to differentiate regional differences in rural issues, with the exception of some special issues such as rural reconstruction after a natural disaster. The implementation of rural policy at the provincial level has encountered similar problems as the national level. The publication of provincial policy always follows the pace of upper level government. There is no major difference between the content of each year’s policy as most of them are general full-scale rural development policies. Instead, the rural projects developed by the provincial government are much more substantial and practical which provide clearer guidance on local rural development. This combination of broad policy and practical projects was found to be useful. It gives more freedom for local government and sectors to take action to address different circumstances.

The local government of the three case study areas operate in very different ways over rural development though they are all supposed to follow the provincial government’s policy\textsuperscript{31}. It can be noticed that Nanjing, as a more developed area, has gone further than the other two cities in rural development. Its rural policy focuses much more on the modernisation of rural economic and social development while an increasing emphasis has been put on urban-rural integrative development. In Taizhou, the government aims to develop an endogenous development mode of rural areas through the government’s policy support. It promotes a gradual process in rural regeneration to improve social

\textsuperscript{31} A list of major local policies on rural development and planning is provided in appendix
services and the physical environment in rural areas. Some attention has been paid in urban-rural integration but only in limited policy fields. In Suqian, the government plays a very strong role in rural development and has put a strong effort to the improvement of the physical environment. The government’s inputs in rural areas are the main forces to foster rural development. Though exhibiting different policy focuses, the three cities also have some similarities in rural policy. The most important one is the implementation of the provincial policy of ‘practical activities’ with modification based on their local conditions. The general coverage of national and provincial policy has given much more flexibility for local government as it can usually find related policy support from the upper level government, whatever projects it develop.

5.5.2 Rural planning framework

The new Planning Act has established a basic framework for planning in rural areas. However, this framework is very simple and more or less extends the former urban planning system to rural areas by closely following the administrative hierarchy. Moreover, without detailed implementation guidance, it is difficult for government at lower spatial levels and planners to put it into practice. Jiangsu, as a pioneer in rural planning, has developed a more detailed rural planning framework and has published detailed guidance and technology for plan-making in rural areas. The overall coverage of planning in rural areas has contributed significantly in guiding and controlling development in rural areas. However, it also has some problems. First, the provincial town and village distribution plan is proposed by collecting individual local town and village distribution plans, which means that the provincial planning department did not make the plan. Hence, in fact, there is no provincial plan for rural development and
urban-rural integration. The town and village distribution plan itself is thus very controversial. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, based on empirical evidence. Secondly, though changing from village construction plan to village plan, the focus of this plan is still on land use control in the built-up area and future development areas. Moreover, the making of each of these village plans is independent from each other, and there is a lack of comprehensive consideration of the development of these villages from a higher spatial level. Finally, the provincial government has neglected regional differences in rural areas and published a ‘one-size-fits-all’ planning framework and guidance.

Following the provincial planning framework, local governments have made their own way in plan-making and delivery in rural areas. Nanjing government focuses on developing an urban-rural integrated planning framework though it is still at a very early stage and the framework is rather simple. The local government of Suqian has modified provincial planning guidance according to its local conditions. The Suqian government has put a lot of effort into developing new residential sites to improve the physical environment for rural residents. However, as local development levels are low, most of the development depends on the resources and financial support of local government. Considering the large number of residential sites and the limited resources of local government, it is hard to think how the current level of work will be sustained in the future. On the other hand, the local government of Taizhou is more practical and sustainable by combining the development of new residential sites and the renovation of current villages based on its development level and economic capacity. However, it is important to notice that there is a traditional prejudice of the Chinese planning system which tends to restrict planning to physical land use. Though this idea is gradually
changing in urban planning, it still has a strong influence on rural planning which constrains rural planning to the physical environment of villages. This has been clearly expressed in rural planning practice in Taizhou and Suqian.

In summary, the government is still in a trial stage of developing appropriate forms of, and approaches to, rural planning. While making great progress, there are still a lot of problems. Policy delivery and plan-making has brought up a lot of controversies. After the discussion on rural planning policies, the next chapter will move to analyse the key actor’s views on rural development and planning based on the interviews carried at the provincial level and in the three case study areas.
Chapter Five analysed the recent policy emphasis on rural development at different spatial levels. It is against this backdrop of policy change that different attempts have been made to develop a new rural planning framework in response to key rural issues. With the development of this rural planning framework, a series of controversial issues on rural development and planning are emerging. Moreover, the implementation of the new planning framework in rural areas has also revealed some potential problems. This chapter, therefore, aims to highlight the key issues that have emerged in developing the rural planning framework. The discussion is based on an analysis of interviews with government officers at different spatial levels and local stakeholders in the three case study areas of Jiangsu province.
6.1 Rural Development and Policy

Chapter Five has reviewed recent policy published on rural development by the government. On the whole, annual policy approaches advocated by the government have been very similar from 2004 to 2010. However, some of the topics have received more attention and were subject to wide ranging discussion. In this research study, face to face interviews were carried out with government officers and stakeholders in other sectors to find out their view points and understanding of the rural development framework. Jiangsu province has played a leading role in rural development since the 1980s. It is also a pioneer in rural and urban-rural related policy research and development. As mentioned in Chapter Five, different policy packages have been carried out for rural areas in recent years. The interviews with provincial and local government officers help to clarify the focus of government policy and provide their own evaluation of policy performance.

6.1.1 Rural economy

Agriculture is considered as the foremost important rural issue by the government. As discussed before, a series of policies are published on agriculture annually. Most interviewees think that the agricultural policy is too broad and general to provide practical guidance of development. Actually, the whole rural policy packages from the annual provincial No.1 Policy tend to serve as a political sign that the government will put more emphasis on rural areas. What really worked in changing rural areas are the three rounds of ‘Five Practical Projects’ launched by the provincial government. However, the provincial officers argued that provincial government also has little choice.
On the one hand, the provincial policy (being regional guidance) cannot be too detailed but just provide some general principles, especially when rural conditions are very diverse in local areas. On the other hand, the provincial government itself is in an exploratory stage and does not have a clear or well developed approach for rural development.

‘In recent several years, there are a series of policies from central government on (sannong), covering nearly all the issues. This shows the state has put increasing emphasis on agriculture, farmers, and rural areas. Under the guidance of these policies, our province has published relevant policy as a response. However, these policies, both national and provincial, are instructional. For the actual development activities, our provincial emphasis is the sever rounds of ‘Five Practical Projects’. Of course, sometimes local levels complain the provincial policy and project guidance does not match the local condition. However, from the provincial perspective, this is inevitable, our rural areas are very diverse, southern, middle and northern areas are all different, we cannot do very detailed work.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J2, 2009)

As to agricultural development, though most interviewees agree that agricultural modernisation is the future trend, they doubt the extent it can be applied in Jiangsu’s rural areas. Agricultural development differs widely in Nanjing, Taizhou and Suqian as the representatives of southern, middle and northern regions.
Nanjing is well developed in its modern agriculture. This is mostly concentrated in rural areas surrounding the city and only found in a small part of the overall rural area. Generally, agriculture gets little attention from the local population as its economic profit is very low when compared to that from industries. Moreover, local officers argue that the geographic and land use conditions in southern Jiangsu make it difficult to extensively apply mechanised and large-scale production modes of agriculture. The future trends of agricultural development are likely to be based on urban market demands to develop high efficiency agriculture, urban agriculture, locally distinct agriculture and agricultural tourism.

By contrast, Taizhou and Suqian are still in a traditional mode of agricultural production. The household responsibility system divides up the farmland and allocates it to individual families and this has now become the biggest obstacle to apply mechanised and large-scale agricultural methods. Moreover, the new modes of diversified agricultural development such as developing highly efficient agriculture, urban agriculture and locally distinct agriculture are based on urban and market demands that rely on support and inputs from the government. These two cities have not yet had this capacity and the government’s emphasis is still on development in the city. Hence, it is easier for the government just to select some rural areas as experimental units to develop modern agriculture, but it will take a very long time for the government to fully develop and apply modernised agriculture for the whole rural area.

‘......Taizhou has some famous local distinct agricultural products. Also, there are some large agricultural parks. Normally the local government (both at town,
county-level city, and Taizhou level) get the enterprises and give policy support. These parks rent land from farmers and employ farmers (most the old farmers as the young people prefer to work in cities). Farmers are happy with this, getting rent and wages......'

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ5, 2010)

‘......Most of our agriculture is still in the traditional stage. The kind you talked about (urban agriculture and highly efficient et al), are not common here. Of course, we do have some agricultural parks running very well, and some very famous agricultural product brands, but not common. These types of agriculture, on the one hand, need strong urban market support, on the other hand need technology, instruments and capital support. We can do some as examples and trials, but promoting in large scale? Not now......'

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ1, 2010)

It is largely agreed by the officers that agriculture cannot be the base of future rural economic development in Jiangsu province as its economic contribution is decreasing in recent years. Moreover, agricultural earnings only account for a small proportion of local residents’ income. This trend is likely to carry on in the future and the development of rural areas will continue to rely on urbanisation and industrialisation. Most officers consider that industries will be the main economic base for rural economic development in the near future. As discussed in Chapter Five, the provincial rural policy has strictly forbidden the extensive development of industries in rural areas.
For most local areas, this creates a dilemma. All industrial development, both new and existing, must be concentrated in the industrial parks of towns, counties and cities. Some officers think this concentration of industries may contribute more to the economic development of the centre town (city) rather than the wider economic development of the outer countryside.

‘...Now all the rural areas in Jiangsu are not allowed for industry. It is right from the long term...now all the manufacturing are concentrated to towns’ and city’s industrial park. However, many local rural areas lost their major economic resource...Agriculture is basic but cannot be the way to make rural areas rich. The manufacturing, once in the parks, their financial revenue will go to towns and cities, depending on which level of governments the park belongs to...’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ5, 2009)

For the local peasants, if their land is taken for industrial development, they can benefit from the land rent. For most other farmers, the most significant contribution of rural industry is the employment opportunities it provides for them. From the provincial officers’ perspective, the aim of the provincial government is to improve the rural economy. However, the actual effect depends on the implementation of the local government.

As discussed in Chapter Two, rural areas in the western developed world are experiencing a socio-economic restructuring process towards a consumption-oriented development mode. One of the most important changes in this process is the
commodification of countryside by seeing countryside as economic assets and exploiting its economic potential and resources from a wider context. For example, there is an increasing attention on marketing the value of the rural idyll and the environmental quality in rural areas. All these have brought burgeoning new economic activities to the countryside such as rural leisure and related service sectors. However, when asked about such activities in Jiangsu’s rural areas, most officers think that this may only happen in rural areas surrounding the big cities like Nanjing. For most of rural areas in the other two cities, it is too early to consider these types of consumption-driven economic activities as they are still in the early development period. Some of them also admit frankly that they have not thought much about making policy to encourage these kinds of new economic activities in rural Jiangsu.

‘I understand that kind of rural areas you talked about in European countries, but their experience cannot be used in China. Our condition is so different to theirs. Jiangsu is still in a fast development process. The biggest issue and concern is how to get rid of the lag condition of rural areas. Those issues you suggested, we have not thought of them yet. Even if the provincial government has the ideas, local governments do not have the ability to implement them.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J4, 2009)
6.1.2 Urbanisation and urban-rural integration

It was not until 2000 that the Jiangsu provincial government began to pay attention to the challenge of urbanisation. The national urbanisation policy focuses on vigorous development of townships as the drivers of economic and social development for the surrounding rural areas. However, the provincial government of Jiangsu think that the role towns can play in rural development is limited. A major development of township will also lead to significant problems such as wastage of land, environmental problems and other disadvantages associated with industrial concentration. The core focus of Jiangsu’s urbanisation is therefore to develop large cities as the driver of the wider provincial development. In the latest town and village distribution plan, the provincial government plans to develop only one third of the towns. However, some local officers interviewed in this study do not quite agree with the provincial government’s attitude on towns and argue that the development of towns is important for rural areas in middle and northern Jiangsu such as Taizhou and Suqian as these areas are less developed.

‘……Jiangsu provincial government think the contribution of towns on rural urbanisation is limited. Moreover, the expansion of towns in rural areas will lead to high cost of development, the waste of land resources, the environmental pressure…… The focus of Jiangsu is to develop big cities, metropolis and urban belts as the driver to improve the international competitiveness while reduce the amount of towns to one-third.’

*(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J3, 2009)*
'The provincial policy is to concentrate development......the development of towns is the same, to concentrate. This is mainly for the intensive use of land the integration of resources. From the local perspective, towns are still an important link between urban and rural areas and the centres for the wide countryside. '

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ5, 2009)

There is a general consensus that the development of rural areas is heavily reliant on urbanisation and industrialisation. Industrialisation helps to improve the production capability of rural areas. During urbanisation, the rural population will decrease. Hence, each farmer can make more money as the development resources per farmer will increase. Most officers are optimistic about the future prospect of urbanisation. Both provincial officers and officers in Nanjing are concerned about the mismatch between demand for the improved industrial structure and the skills of the rural labour force. According to current urbanisation policy, large cities will become the main hubs to absorb the rural workforce. However, the development of large cities requires highly qualified human resources, but most of the rural labour force does not meet these requirements. Research has been carried out by the provincial government to find a way to solve this problem.

'The urbanisation level of Jiangsu will continue to increase and finally reach the level of western developed countries when the agricultural population counts for 5%-10% and less than 30% people live in rural areas. Currently, the pace of economic development does not match that of urbanisation. It is difficult to have proper arrangements for urbanised rural population as the improving urban...
economic structure requires highly qualified technological workers. This is a big problem for the government."

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J3, 2009)

The policy idea of ‘urban-rural integration’ was first advanced by the provincial government in 2000. At that time, this idea was not understood or accepted by most people. Even today, the common understanding of this idea is largely based on the ‘five urban-rural integration policy’ of the Jiangsu provincial government. Though different people interpret this idea from different angles, with different theoretical and practical perspectives, their views can be summarised as two main points. First of all, it is generally agreed that urban-rural integration does not mean duplicating the urban development mode in rural areas and turning the countryside into cities. Instead, it is understood as the equal economic and social development of urban and rural areas. Urban and rural areas are different and have their own characteristics and have different development needs. The improvement of rural services should be based on the needs and characteristics of rural areas by providing services and infrastructure that are important for the livelihood of local farmers rather than profit-making projects.

‘……cities and countryside are different in nature. Urban-rural integration does not mean to develop urban and rural areas in the same way otherwise we will lose our countryside in the future. The development of rural areas will be improved if

32 Urban-rural planning integration, urban-rural public service integration, urban-rural infrastructure integration, urban-rural employment system and social welfare system integration, and urban-rural governance system integration
cites support rural areas and manufacturing help agriculture under the idea of urban-rural integration.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, NJ4, 2009)

‘Urban-rural integration and rural development should envisage farmers’ need for a modern life……rural modernisation is not exactly what we do now, extending all urban services to rural areas. Some services are supposed to be in cities like those financial services. What rural areas need is the coverage of some welfare systems such as medical and endowment systems. Sometimes, rural areas have their own types of services like the traditional market they have.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ1, 2010)

Secondly, urban-rural integration means that there are human and financial resource flows from urban to rural areas. There is a general thought that urban-rural integration should cover more areas than the five aspects put forward by the provincial government. For example, the integration should include the coordinated development of the ecological environment of both urban and rural areas.

‘Urban and rural areas are closer now especially when the city is still in rapid development process. For example, some industry parks and projects of Nanjing are in its surrounding rural areas. The five aspects of urban-rural integration is just a beginning which will extend to other aspects.’
Urban-rural integration as an idea has begun to be accepted by more and more people. Actually, one area of success considered by most officers is the gradual acceptance by local government of the importance of urban-rural integration especially in the planning field. However, how to put this idea into practice still proves to be a difficult problem. Most local officers complain that although both national and provincial policies have talked a lot about urban-rural integration, little clear guidance has been given on how to carry it out. Currently, local governments are actively engaged in pushing through the ‘five integration’ policy. However, the effects of implementation of these five aspects of policy are rather different, especially when the delivery of this policy needs large inputs from the government. Hence, areas with stronger economies tend to achieve better results.

‘Urban-rural integration, as an idea, is accepted by more and more people, especially people at local level......as a long-term project, current time is only at the trial stage. How to put this idea into practice still needs more research.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J3, 2009)

‘To be honest, every year there are policies from national and provincial government (about urban-rural integration), the direction is right, but a lot of them, it is impossible for us to carry out. Moreover, every year has new emphasis. At the local level, this is very difficult......Now most work focuses on the ‘five
practical projects’. The conditions are different. Villages with good economy cover more areas of the projects and with better quality, while villages not so rich sometimes do a simple job on this. ’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ6, 2010)

It is generally agreed that, under the ‘urban-rural integration’ policy, the government has paid more attention and put more resources to rural areas in the last few years when compared with the past. However, officers also admit frankly that the government’s focus is still on urban areas which will not change at least in the near future. Moreover, this urban bias becomes even stronger in lower level government and in the less developed areas. Hence, it is emphasised that more attention should be paid to urban-rural integration in the less developed areas such as Taizhou and Suqian.

‘……More resources are put into the development of cities than towns and villages. Though the delivery of the New Rural Socialist Rural Construction Programme has increased inputs in rural areas, most of the focus is on the central town of counties instead of villages…….’

(Personal interview with Local officer, TZ5, 2011)

‘……middle and northern Jiangsu should pay more attention to urban-rural integration as they are in the process of rapid urbanisation. The neglect of urban-rural integration during the urbanisation process has led to a wastage of a lot of land in southern Jiangsu…….’
6.1.3 New Socialist Rural Construction Programme

When talking about the recent New Socialist Rural Construction Programme, almost all officers hold a positive attitude towards it and they tend to link it to the issue of urban-rural integration. The implementation of this programme focuses on projects, some of which are also under the urban-rural integration policy or related to urban-rural integration projects. It is agreed that the implementation of this programme has generally improved the physical environment, public service, social welfare and living standard of rural areas.

There are two sets of issues that are frequently mentioned by the officers. Firstly, the delivery of the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme is a long term project. Currently it is only at the beginning stage and largely relies on the support of the government. This, in the long run, will be a heavy burden for the government. Hence, the development of a sustainable mechanism to achieve the objectives of New Socialist Rural Construction is a pressing issue for the government. Secondly, the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme covers a wide range of issues, which almost involves every governmental sector and each department has its own budget and project plans for it. In order to improve the efficiency and make the best use of resources, it is considered that a proper approach is needed to integrate and coordinate the projects and the investment involved. Provincial officers admit that this is an important, but weak, part of the present work. Local government as the main bodies to deliver the projects are
working hard by appointing Rural Work Offices to coordinate the work and integrate the financial capacity of different sectors.

‘New socialist rural construction is a system project. It involves a lot of departments such as industry, transport, social service, and environment. Rural development project have to coordinate different departmental work. The coordination at provincial scale is limited. Our administrative structure is a combination of ‘line and block’. So it is hard to integrate the money from different department, even in the provincial government’s ‘five practical projects’.

The local government did more in coordination. Normally the coordination is taken out by the Rural Work Office. RWOs are different in different areas.’

(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4 2009)

Hence, it can be seen from the analysis that the development and delivery of rural policy in Jiangsu province are not as optimistic as expected. Instead, most officers admit that Jiangsu is still in a very early stage in researching rural development and the current rural policy is imperfect. Although they think they go in a right direction, most officers have identified confusion and difficulties in the future work on rural issues.

33 Line and block means some departments have their own hierarchy from national to local level for example the transport department. Those departments at different scales are also under supervision of government at that level.
6.2 RURAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This section aims to discuss the interviews with government officers mainly in the planning department, some private developers in rural areas and rural residents. The interviews reveal different opinions and some successful experiences on rural planning and delivery. It also reveals the confusion and challenges they face and the gaps between the thoughts of government and planners and the aspiration of local people.

Before the reform of the national planning system, Jiangsu had already started to work on rural planning. The national planning system reform provided a chance for Jiangsu to review its practice of rural planning and to formalise its urban and rural planning system. The interviews carried out at the provincial and local levels help to shed light on both their successful experiences and difficulties in the implementation of the new rural planning framework.

6.2.1 Planning system

In general, officers at both the provincial and local levels prefer a holistic rather than a dualistic planning system for urban and rural areas. However, views on what kind of form is suitable have become very controversial. It is largely agreed that the planning system provided in the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act (2008)’ is far from adequate to guide policies at lower spatial levels. Its main significance is as an indication that planning will pay increasing attention to rural areas and more detailed delivery guidance is needed in the future. However, several officers also admit that it is impossible for
national policy guidance to be too concrete and pragmatic and it is much more likely that the guidance should provide them with the basic principles.

‘The trend is to put urban and rural areas in a single system. The new planning act has shown the direction. Jiangsu has already done this job for several years……national planning guidance is simple on rural part, but this is understandable. China is such a big area. Even in Jiangsu, rural development is so different. Planning guidance at high level cannot be so concrete and detailed.’

(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4 2009)

Provincial officers generally think highly of the recently revised planning system for Jiangsu (Figure 6-1). Based on this planning system, their next step is to extend specific project plans to cover rural areas in the future. It is believed that the new planning system succeeds in integrating rural areas into the development process from a planning perspective. The inclusion of town and village distribution plans and village plans not only contributes to the implementation of provincial urbanisation policy, but also helps to build a more scientific development approach for rural areas which is a big improvement compared to before. However, the provincial officers interviewed suggest that more research should be carried out to improve the planning system as it is newly implemented.

‘The town and village distribution plan and village plan is Jiangsu province’s innovation in planning. They have made good progress in rural development till now arranging developments in rural areas from the perspective of urban-rural
integration. This is a new developed system and we have found some implementation problems in practice at local level. So we are still working on and refining the guidance for local government.'

*(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4 2009)*

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**Figure 6-1: Provincial Planning System of Jiangsu**  
Source: The author

Compared to provincial officers, local officers have more diverse ideas about the planning system. Their views are largely based on their experiences and actual needs in practice. Actually, the views of the officers in different cities are strongly connected with the economic development level of the cities. Nanjing has moved further than the provincial government in considering planning system reform. Officers in Nanjing argue that an urban-rural integrated planning system is needed for rural development. They think it is arbitrary to make a ‘one-size-fits-all’ planning system for rural areas as
the development of local rural areas are much more diversified. They argue that the planning system should be a more pragmatic and flexible framework rather than following the administrative system in a simple and rigid way. To achieve this, several key issues are highlighted. The foremost concern is that an urban and rural master plan should replace the current urban master plan by covering the whole administrative area rather than just the central city. The urban and rural master plan should include urban-rural integration and rural development. It is more reasonable to divide the whole urban and rural area into different planning areas based on functional connections or development needs rather than administrative boundaries and the next spatial level plan under the urban and rural master plan will focus on these planning areas. Moreover, the scope, content and depth of plans for different planning areas can be different according to their actual needs. With regard to the lower level of the planning system, the form and details of village plans should be based on local needs. Finally, considering the complicated development conditions in local areas, some officers argue that specific project plans should be included into the formal planning system in addition to the main planning framework and specific projects can be carried out at any spatial scale where they are needed.

‘A complete planning system should be urban-rural integrated. Take Nanjing as an example, the Nanjing Master Plan should cover all the central city and rural areas in its administrative boundary and consider urban and rural development in a comprehensive way. It divides the whole area into different planning areas and makes general guidance on the contents and depth of the plans for these sub-planning areas according to their conditions. As to village plans, towns and
villages can their own minds on whether they need to do the plans based on their assessments on development need of villages.’

(Personal interview with local officer, NJ3, 2009)

‘......urban-rural master plan plus village plan is a more reasonable model. The urban-rural master plan makes arrangement for urban-rural system and includes sections on urban-rural integration policy and rural development...... thinking about what kind of plan is needed by the village in the context of urban-rural integrated development......we need a more flexible planning system. I think the idea planning system is a comprehensive plan for general development guidance plus some specific project plans according to actual needs......’

(Personal interview with local officer, NJ5, 2009)

The aspiration of the officers in Taizhou and Suqian to reform the planning system introduced by the provincial government is not as strong as that of the aspirations of Nanjing’s officers. The new provincial planning system covers both urban and rural areas. However, some of the officers in Taizhou and Suqian argue that they have just finished the planning of urban areas and the attention has been focused on the full coverage of urban areas. Hence, they do not have many resources left for rural planning. This is because in most local areas of middle and northern Jiangsu, the government’s focus is on urban areas as they are the key drivers for economic development. Hence, local areas of Taizhou and Suqian mostly follow the provincial planning system. They are working hard to improve the delivery of the provincial planning system, though
some of them also doubt the actual effect in practice. Moreover, they feel confused
about the role of planning at different spatial levels of rural development. In their own
words:

‘The provincial government started to include rural areas into planning coverage since several years ago. We support this idea, but as you might know, Taizhou is not in that stage yet. We are busy with improving the economy of the central city. No surplus resources for rural development really. You know, when the provincial government first advanced the idea, our urban areas are even not wholly covered with planning......we follow the provincial planning framework on rural areas, but if we look back out work on rural planning now, I dare say, most of the plans we made is unpractical and nearly 99% of them need to be modified.’

(Personal interview with local officer, TZ2, 2010)

‘......Generally, I think the planning system reform of our province is in the right direction. The rural planning part needs to be intensified and specified in the planning regulations. Our planning system follows the provincial guidance. We now have the full coverage planning system and have make rules for plan-making in every level......’

(Personal interview with local officer, SQ1, 2009)
As well as officers in Nanjing, officers in Taizhou and Suqian put a high value on specific project plans as they think they are problem-oriented planning. Their inclusion in the planning system will help to improve the efficiency of planning in practice.

6.2.2 Planning areas

According to the ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008’, the planning area of rural planning includes the built-up areas of the villages and the planning control areas of future rural development. Normally, the boundary of planning area is close to or the same as the administrative boundary. The ‘Jiangsu Provincial Urban and Rural Planning Regulation (trial edition)’ makes a further rule which specifies that villages in the planning area of cities, towns and counties\(^{34}\) are not included in the rural planning area. Instead, village development should follow the urban model.

However, this approach to defining rural planning areas does not work for all rural areas. On the contrary, it has caused a big problem for rural areas in the urban fringe, especially those in the planning areas of urban planning. Officers at lower spatial levels have more opinions on this problem. According to their experience, this problem comes from the conflicts between the policy and the recent change of local government structure. Since 2000, a major new round of local government reform took place in Jiangsu province. The main part of the reform is the change of counties in the urban-

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\(^{34}\) Because land use systems in urban and rural areas are different in China, normally the planning areas defined for in urban master plan are the administrative area of the central city. Jiangsu provincial government requires the urban master plan to cover the whole administrative areas of the city. Also because of the different urban and rural land use system and administrative structure of the government, the actual planning control areas are still the administrative areas of the central city and some other areas for urban development use. Most of the other outside areas are not the focus of urban master plan.
rural fringe into urban districts (towns become urban streets). Most officers consider this change of local government structure purely based on land consumption needs of urban development.\footnote{The lands of counties are under the rural land system which cannot be used for urban development. However, when counties are changed into urban districts, these lands are transferred into the urban land system.}

‘Urban development needs more land in a fast development process. The government tries every way, possible and proper, to get land. The adjustment of administrative boundaries last time concentrated the power to urban government from counties by changing them to urban districts, which makes urban government much easier to get the land for development…….’

*(Personal interview with a local officer, NJ5, 2009)*

The planning power of county and urban districts is very different. Counties and towns have the power to make all types of plan, from master plans to detailed plans, while urban districts only have the power to make detailed plans and the power of urban streets to make plans is even less. When changed to urban districts, these areas become part of urban planning areas, which means that their development should follow the guidance of the urban master plan. Local officers point out that, unlike the continuous built-up areas of the central city, most areas in these districts are countryside which need a specific overall policy package for future development (formerly provided by the county master plan). However, as the urban master plan focuses on the spatial scale of the whole city, it seldom makes policy packages for districts. They also argue that even
when the urban master plan makes policy for these districts, it is from the perspective of the whole city rather than the districts. This gap between the development pressure and the coverage of planning has led to chaos in practice. In some officers’ own account:

‘……districts and streets cannot make master plans. Urban master plans won’t make detailed policy for them. Sometimes, the plan even pays no special attention to these areas. You cannot blame the urban master plan. It is impossible for it to be so detailed, as it is for the city as a whole not for the district. Hence these suburban districts actually have no development planning guidance. It is a difficult problem ……’

(Personal interview with local officer, NJ3, 2009)

‘……The effect of the urban master plan on providing development guidance for suburban districts is very limited, and most of the time it is from an urban perspective…… For example, the ‘Nanjing Urban Master Plan (trial edition)’, a pioneer in urban and rural master plan, only makes development guidance for new towns in suburban areas. Even the guidance for these areas is not concrete enough. What about the other broad suburban areas? Without the development guidance, it is hard to make a project plan…… Currently, we can only have planning research, for example ‘urban-rural integration planning research’, to replace the master plan in districts. However, it is not a permanent solution as they have no legal power……’

(Personal interview with local officer, NJ5, 2009)
To solve this problem, some officers suggest that the suburban districts with large rural areas should be given the authority to make master plans for their development needs. They argue that these urban fringe districts, currently still have rural landscapes and rural characteristics though they will probably become more urbanised in the future. They think the making of master plans should not entirely follow the urban mode.

‘The powers of districts on making planning should be more flexible, especially today when there are lots of changes in administrative structure. Some suburban districts have large rural areas which have different landscapes. These districts should have the power to make master plans to solve their development need, deal with their urban-rural relationship and make arrangements for rural areas.’

(Personal interview with local officer, NJ5, 2009)

It is discussed in Chapter Two that recent years have witnessed a change in attitude towards rural-urban fringe areas in western European countries. Planning is suggested to build up a more strategic framework for an enhanced multi-functional use of space in socio-economic, ecological, aesthetic, environmental and historic dimensions, which highlights the urban-rural interplays and the maintenance and management of rural characteristics. However, when talking about this, the provincial officers consider that this idea is not applicable in Jiangsu as these areas will soon be urbanised. If including rural perspectives in the planning of these areas, they will become the current urban village in the future. Hence, these urban-rural fringe areas should not be counted in the coverage of rural areas.
‘...it is unrealistic to apply this idea in Jiangsu. Generally speaking, Jiangsu province is still in a fast urbanisation process. The speed of urban sprawl is still fast. If we work in the same way as developed countries, thinking about the peri-urban areas from a rural perspective, these areas will be urban villages in the future. Moreover, urban and rural areas have a different land system, even if we make a perfect plan for them, once these rural land are transferred into urban land, the plan will not be in force any more.’

(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4, 2009)

6.2.3 The scope of planning

It was discussed in Chapter Two that rural planning in western European countries is moving towards the development of holistic coordinated strategies for an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way. Meanwhile, recently in China, more and more planning academics agree that planning should not be confined to physical landuse arrangements and become more comprehensive to cover economic, social and environmental issues. The interviews with officers in Jiangsu about rural planning have revealed that planning practitioners seem to hold different ideas on this issue. While they agree that planning in principle should have multiple concerns, most officers, both at provincial and local level, consider that planning, as a responsibility of the housing and construction department, should focus on spatial issues (which in other words means physical landuse arrangement). Hence, when it comes to rural planning, the focus should be on the construction guidance of villages and settlements.
‘In theory, planning is related to nearly every issues of development. In fact, planning is mainly about land regulation. It finally falls on spatial issues. Hence, the focus of planning in rural areas is to deal with the development activities in villages.’

(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4, 2009)

According to the provincial planning framework, the most important role of planning is to prevent the extensive and disordered development activities in rural areas and to improve the living environment of rural residents. As to the coordinated rural development strategy, some officers argue that this is outside the capacity of the planning department as it needs the support and cooperation of many other sectors. Some officers in Nanjing argue that planning, in principle, should include the objectives, strategies, and spatial arrangements for rural development. However, rural development strategies could not be included in the village plan which focuses on spatial arrangements. Instead, they should be included in higher level planning, most possibly in the level of county master plans. However, their experience shows that county master plans rural areas concerns tend to be very weak which are mainly about the town and village system and the conservation of agricultural and green spaces. This is because the focus of the current county master plan is on the central county town. Rural development faces a lot of problems - economic, social, environmental and spatial. It is argued that it is unrealistic to rely on planning to solve all the problems. If a plan is all-embracing, it normally lacks practical significance. Hence in their opinion, the upper level government and the provincial government should make clear guidance on
different levels of planning about the scope and depth of their concerns in respect of rural development.

‘A whole planning should include contents from objective and strategies, development policy and spatial arrangement. The current village planning is more like urban detailed plan which is for landuse regulation. Rural development issues have to be considered at a higher scale. County level might be most suitable……. The concern of county planning on rural areas is very weak as they focus on the development of central town….. the upper level government has not provided a clear guidance on what planning should do or what planning can do for rural areas…….rural development is a big issue…….there are too many things to do, we do not know what planning can do or should do first’

(Personal interview with a local officer, NJ3, 2009)

6.2.4 Urban and rural integration in planning

The idea of urban-rural integration has become the basic principle of rural development, but there is no clear meaning given by the government. The interviews reveal that most officers’ attitudes on urban-rural integration are a little conflicting. On the one hand, the importance of urban-rural integration in rural planning is widely recognised. On the other hand, most officers also admit that they only have a limited understanding of the delivery of urban-rural integration from the planning perspective. The provincial officers argue that local governments can do a more practical and effective job in delivering urban-rural integration. The only thing that provincial government can do is
to provide policy guidance in principle. Moreover, planning is still considered by many officers mainly as a way for the government to arrange land use. Hence, it is considered by most officers that the task of the planning department in delivering urban-rural integration is to extend planning coverage from cities to the countryside, which obviously is the main part of the recent provincial planning system reform.

‘……It is superficial to consider urban-rural integration from the planning perspective. It is more important to carry out urban-rural integration in development projects at the local level……what the planning department do is to extend planning system to regulate rural space.’

(Personal interview with provincial planning officer, J4, 2009)

The views on how to combine urban-rural integration in planning vary in different local areas. For officers in Taizhou and Suqian, the biggest influence of urban-rural integration in planning is the extension of planning coverage to rural areas. Most officers argue that urban-rural integration can only be embodied in master plans, and thus emphasise on the necessity to improve the master plan of counties and towns. The main concern of urban-rural integration in master plans is the integrated arrangements of transportation, infrastructure system and public service in urban and rural areas. Moreover, some officers in Suqian argue that urban master plans should also think about how rural areas can work as a complement for urban areas.
‘Urban-rural integration can only be achieved through master planning, for example the arrangements of urban and rural infrastructure and transport systems all needs to be in master planning. The focus in Suqian is to develop towns as the link between urban and rural development. Hence, we have put efforts to improve master planning of towns and counties.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ1, 2009)

‘The urban master planning should also think about rural areas. For example, it has to think about the roles of rural areas, what the urban areas cannot do but rural areas can, such as developing industries which need large scales of land……’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ2, 2009)

Compared with officers in Taizhou and Suqian, officers in Nanjing do not think highly of the current reform of the provincial planning system as they think it is not enough to change the dualistic nature of current planning. They are looking for a way that they think can really apply urban-rural integration into plan-making. They put great emphasis on ‘urban-rural integration plan’ which is considered by most officers in Taizhou and Suqian as not really necessary for their current development stage. They expect this plan to solve problems that emerge from the urbanisation process and urban-rural interactions, and based on this to solve rural problems, at least the spatial problems. However, most local officers in Nanjing frankly admit that they do not know how to make an urban-rural integration plan and even do not know what this plan should look
like, though in the past several years they have done a lot of research on it. Based on their experiences, they currently think an urban-rural integration plan should focus on three issues: the improvement of cites as the driver of rural development, the arrangement of urban and rural industry, and the housing site policy for urbanised farmers. In their own words:

‘Many urban and rural problems cannot be solved alone. They have to be considered in an integrated framework. Hence, an urban and rural integration plan is necessary. However, the national and provincial governments did not give clear guidance on this type of planning. Those general principles are obviously not enough. We have no clear idea how to do this plan. There are many things we want to solve in the planning, but we are constrained by the urban-rural institutional dualism such as in landuse system. In the urban-rural integration planning, we focus on three issues of the helps of urban areas on rural development, urban and rural industries, and house site policy for farmers. These three are the priorities at this stage. Other issues we will think about them step by step in the future.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, NJ3, 2009)

6.2.5 Town and village distribution plans

The evidence so far suggests that the extension of the planning area of the urban master plan from the central city to the whole administrative area has not succeeded in dealing with rural concerns in master plans. Town and village distribution plans and village
plans have become the two major planning forms carried out in rural areas. Started in 2005 and revised in 2008, the town and village distribution plan aims to reduce the number of towns and villages through concentrating the development to reduce the waste and fragmentation of land and the cost of infrastructure and service arrangements as well as making the best use of the inputs in rural development as the resources will be concentrated in the reserved villages. The concentration strategy of the town and village distribution plan is considered by officers at various levels as a success and is high valued as an innovative progress of Jiangsu province in promoting urban and rural integration and rural planning. The provincial officers also argue that this plan will contribute to the preservation of historic and cultural resources and the protection of rural landscapes and local characteristics.

‘The idea of the town and village distribution plan comes from a rethink about the urbanisation process in the past years. The previous extensive urbanisation ended up with dispersed TVEs everywhere, the fragmentation of farm land, difficulties in developing services and high cost in arranging infrastructure. The town and village planning aims to deal with these problems through concentrating development, defining environmental protection areas and historical and cultural villages, integrating inputs in rural villages and making comprehensive arrangement for infrastructure and transport system.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J1, 2009)

However, besides these positive achievements, the town and village distribution plan is considered to have some problems in both plan-making and delivery. According to the
provincial officers, there are two major weaknesses of the town and village distribution plan. The first is about the reserved villages in the future. The plan making responsibility is assigned to local governments and has to be completed in a year. Though the provincial government has given financial support, it is a heavy and pressing job, considering the large number of widely scattered villages. Hence, the decision basis of reserving villages and their scales are considered to lack an evidence base and rational analysis.

‘At that time, we arranged a very tight schedule for the making of the town and village distribution plan. It was allocated to local cities and then towns as a one-year political task. Local government and planning consultants did not have enough time to collect and analyse data on local condition. Most reserved villages were decided by local governments and planning elites based on second hand data and maps. Later, local governments found the choices on some reserved settlements are not right. Some reserved settlements have already been urbanised when the local government started to make a village plan for them.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J4, 2009)

The town and village distribution plan describes the final blueprint of village system without an end year. It is seen as a plan of an ideal state which may not be achievable. Moreover, for some provincial officers in the planning department, this plan, together with the village plan (which will be discussed later), is an early attempt of the government on planning in rural areas. They do not have a clear idea on its future development trend.
‘……The provincial government did not set the end year for town and village plan. What the planning makes is the final blueprint of the localities of towns and villages. It is an ideal state thought by local governments. However, how to implement is not included in the plan. Local governments are supposed to think about the implementation……the current two plannings are the experiments on rural planning, whether this system will continue in the future, I really have no idea…..’

(Personal interview with provincial officer, J4, 2009)

The key concerns of the success and contribution the town and village plan made on local areas are similar to those at the provincial level. Local officers have identified a number of key issues. Firstly, in the town and village plan, the number of towns is to be reduced to one third and the number of villages will decrease by 83% from 248,890 to 42,495 in the future. Though this is accepted by most officers as necessary considering the speed and scale of the urbanisation trend of Jiangsu, a few local officers doubt whether it is realistic and reasonable to reduce so many villages. Based on the current situation, they do not think middle and northern Jiangsu can achieve the level of urbanisation as projected. On the other hand, they doubt whether the cities have the capacity to accommodate such a large amount of the rural population. However, they are not very certain of the future, as the provincial town and village distribution plan does not set the length of planning year.

‘We are in the middle of delivering the town and village distribution plan……. according to plan, the concentration extent is very deep in deed. Though we are
following the plan, we think it might be too concentrated......Another problem is that the quality of our city is not so high (here he means the city is not so developed) and its capacity to attract and accommodate so many farmers is limited.....’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ2, 2009)

Another controversial issue is about the criterion of the ‘reasonable farming distance’. The provincial government specified different farming distances for southern, middle and northern Jiangsu based on their agricultural development level: ‘walking distance in northern Jiangsu, bicycling distance in middle Jiangsu and driving distance in southern Jiangsu’. Different opinions on this criterion are found in Taizhou and especially in Suqian. Some argue that the provincial government is too conservative in making guidance for middle and northern Jiangsu, especially northern Jiangsu. Moreover, as the town and village plan is making the future blueprint, it should be based on the future instead of current development conditions. It is considered that the mechanised development of agriculture is gradually applied in middle and northern Jiangsu and the future agricultural development will be characterised by massive and mechanised production.

‘Now agriculture is gradually mechanised. The town and village distribution plan shows the final picture of town and villages. From this point, the provincial government’s idea on farming distance is a little conservative. In the future, farmers in middle and northern Jiangsu will also driving to work in their farms as those in southern Jiangsu......’
However, others argue that currently the villages in northern Jiangsu are already much concentrated and one of the important factors in the natural process of shaping villages was the farming distance. Hence, in their opinion,

‘The making of reasonable farming distance should depend on the analysis of the specific situation. For southern Jiangsu, farming distance is not a big issue, but it is important for middle and northern Jiangsu. Moreover, in northern Jiangsu, the level of mass production and mechanising of agriculture is not high. Hence, it must be careful to decide the farming distance which should meet the provincial government’s requirement to concentrate villages as well as being convenient for farmers. Actually, in northern Jiangsu, the forming of villages is largely based on the convenient distance for farmers to work.’

(Personal interview with local officer, SQ1, 2009)

The third issue is the implementation of the town and village plan. It is generally agreed by officers in different local areas that the town and village distribution plan is hard to carry out. The condition becomes more difficult when the local economy is less developed. According to the interviews, the main implementation problem of the town and village distribution plan comes from the plan itself. It has been agreed by officers across different levels that the delivery of this plan is a long term project and local government should not take radical action to demolish villages and move people to
achieve quick success. Since no further guidance or action plan has been made for it, local government officials often feel confused about how to carry out the plan.

‘The provincial government did not provide further implementation guidance in detailed though it encourages each local area to carry out the plan. Our plan is to gradually attract people to towns and reserved villages, but the outcome is not so ideal. The provincial government also know it is difficult work, which might be part of the reason why no further guidance came yet.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ2, 2009)

The implementation of the town and village distribution plan is also found constrained by existing local conditions and institutional context, especially the landuse system. Rural land belongs to rural collectives, but the precise meaning of a rural collective varies in different areas of China. In Jiangsu provincial, the rural collectives are settlements\(^3^6\) instead of villages. The adjustment of lands between rural collectives and the transfer of farm land to development land in rural collectives are very difficult, as it has to be approved by the Land Resource Department through complicated procedures. To concentrate the scattered settlements, it is necessary to re-arrange land in these settlements. The most pressing land problem faced in practice is the adjustment of development land for housing incoming residents in reserved settlements. Some of the rural population will be gradually concentrated towards the reserved settlements, these settlements need more land for future development. However, the planned land for the

\(^{36}\) Settlements are normally known as ‘production team’. Village is the bottom level of China’s administrative system. Normally, one village includes one or several settlements.
reserved settlements’ future development in the town and village distribution plan is the farm land in the Land Resource Department’s land use plan. This means that the land cannot be developed for the farmers moving to the settlements unless the Land Resource Department modify its land use plan to change the land use type. Though the Land Resource Department has started to grapple with this problem, this is a long term project which cannot be solved at once. Hence, rural residents who are not from the reserved settlements but have building needs will face a big dilemma if they decide to move to a reserved settlement that does not have spare development land -- they will not be allowed to build.

‘To concentrate rural settlements, how to adjust land is a big problem. In Jiangsu, rural land belongs to settlements rather than villages. In such a case, even moving people between settlements in the same village becomes a problem.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ1, 2010)

‘The concentration of rural settlements needs the cooperation of the Land Resource Department. It needs an advance on development land quota from Land Resource Department. Actually, the concentration may conflict with the plans of Land Resource Department. Sometimes, the space needed for new comers may still be farm land in the plan of Land Resource Department. However, it takes a long time for the department to modify their plan. If there is some problem, the land cannot be changed for development use in reserved settlements, the new comers cannot build their home, meanwhile, rural planning does not allow them
to build in their original settlements. This put us and the local residents into a
very difficult place. ’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ2, 2010)

Moreover, some argue that the making and implementation of the town and village
distribution plan and village plan is another round of the government’s exploitation of
rural land resources for urban development. As discussed before, due to the difference
in the urban and rural land systems, rural land cannot be used for urban development
unless it is transferred to urban land by the Land Resource Department. Many local
cities, especially those in southern Jiangsu, have used up the reserved land for
development and have a strong demand for more urban development land. However, the
national government has a strict control on farm land protection. Hence, it is very
difficult for local government to get the quota of transferring farm land to urban
development land. Compared with farm land, it is easier for local government to get
development land in rural areas for urban use, because local government do not have to
apply for additional land quotas for these development lands. Hence, local government
has made every attempt to save development land from their rural areas for the
development of central cities. The adjustment of the local administrative structure to
change rural counties to urban districts is one way. It helped to convert rural land
directly to urban land. Hence, the land quota collected in the villages of urban districts
can be used straightaway for urban development. On the other hand, as the
administrative structure adjustment is mostly on the urban fringe, local government tries

37 In the current administrative system, rural areas are under the jurisdiction of cities. Hence, the use of
rural development land for the development of central city does not count as occupying additional land
quota.
other ways such as making policy to link the urban and rural land use quota together for
the development of central city. The town and village distribution planning and village
planning is their new way. Hence, it is argued that sometimes the local governments’
focus is not on rural areas and farmers but more land for urban development. However,
arguments vary on this issue in different local areas. Officers in Nanjing admit that
finding more available land is indeed a very important reason and this is a very common
phenomenon in southern Jiangsu. In southern Jiangsu, developments are very scattered
because the strong local economy means people in rural areas are quite well-off and
many have moved to cities though still keeping their residence or resident sites in rural
areas. Hence, empty settlements and half-empty settlements are very common in rural
southern Jiangsu. Through the implementation of the town and village distribution plan,
local government can thus collect land use quota by cleaning up these empty and
scattered settlements for concentrated developments. In a local officer’s own words,

‘The pace of urbanisation and urban sprawl cannot be stopped. However, the
national control on the land use quota is very strict. How to get more available
land from farmer’s house sites under the guidance of urban-rural integration
through a reasonable and legal way is a question……. Most local governments try
every method to get land quota from rural areas, this is a helpless behaviour in
the large development context. It is common and understandable that local
government in large need of land quota use town and village planning as a way to
get urban development land……rural residents move to new community. They
living environment is improved. Government get its land quota. It a win-win to
some extent’
Officers in Taizhou do not think that the local condition in Taizhou is the same, though they agree with the situation in southern Jiangsu. According to them, it is impossible to get a land quota in rural areas for urban development through the implementation of the town and village distribution plan in middle Jiangsu. Large-scale land expropriations by concentrating farmers into resettlement or communities are often led by local government’s large development projects and need lots of land. Unlike southern Jiangsu, cities in middle Jiangsu do not normally have these large projects. They do not have the major demands for development land nor the economic ability. Hence, this type of land expropriation will not happen in middle Jiangsu’s delivery of town and village distribution plans.

‘Getting more land from rural village for urban development is normal in southern Jiangsu but not likely to happen here. On one hand, our development pressure is not as heavy as in southern Jiangsu. So we do not need for large scale of land. On the other hand, land expropriation normally need to government to move people to the concentration settlements. Without the economic backup from large development projects, local government do not have the ability to move people. This is very rare in middle Jiangsu……’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ4, 2010)
The rural economic level and urbanisation level are not as high as those in southern Jiangsu. There are not so many empty settlements in middle Jiangsu. Moreover, the amount of development land available depends on the population in rural areas. According to their research, rural population size will not decrease largely in the near future. Most urbanised farmers choose to keep their rural residence. Unless they give these up voluntarily, the government cannot compulsorily take over their residential sites. Hence, the amount of surplus development land that can be found through the implementation of the town and village distribution plan is limited.

‘The urbanisation driver is not so strong and the pace is not so fast in Taizhou. According to the urbanisation strategy, the rural population will decrease, actually, according to our investigation, at least in recent years, the rural population in Taizhou has not decreased very much. The rural population will not decrease as quickly as expected in urbanisation strategy. Moreover, a lot of rural residents do not want to give up their rural house when they moving to live in towns and cities. I do not think town and village distribution plan cannot save so many land here as in southern Jiangsu.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ3, 2010)

As discussed before, the implementation of the town and village distribution plan is a long term process. It is considered by officers that, during this process, the amount of development land used in rural areas is increasing rather than decreasing. The reserved settlements need more development land to accommodate incoming residents, while other settlements cannot be demolished at once but take time to diminish naturally.
Hence this process will need more development land. For these reasons, officers in Taizhou considered that it is unrealistic to save development land from rural areas for urban development in middle Jiangsu. In one officer’s own account,

‘The implementation of the town and village distribution plan has a lot of problems. People refuse to move to different settlements. This is also constrained by the land use system. The Land Resource Department has started to solve the problem. However, it is a long-term work. It is very possible that old settlements still exist when new settlements are developed. Hence, the fact is that the implementation process of town and village distribution plan may cost more development land rather than saving land.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ1, 2010)

The response and attitude of officers in Suqian on this issue is close to those in Nanjing. Though the condition in Suqian is similar to Taizhou, local officers consider that the implementation of the town and village plan should increase the development land quota available for future development of the central city. In their opinion, though the rural population will not decrease a lot, the amount of land use per capita in the new development is much smaller in the reserved rural settlements. Besides, they have made policy requiring rural residents to demolish their old houses when they move to the concentrated settlements. The local officers do not think the long term process of the planning implementation is a problem. Instead, they take the development land quota as an accumulative process for future urban development.
‘The implementation of the town and village distribution plan should think about save development land for urban development. The average land per capita set by the provincial government is much smaller than that per rural resident uses now. Hence, though the rural population decreases slowly and the delivery of the plan may take ages, it will make more available land for urban development.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, SQ2, 2009)

Another obstacle is that farmers, especially those in middle and northern Jiangsu, do not want to move to concentrated rural settlements. This is mostly because of social and cultural reasons. One of the important factors in forming rural settlements in China is consanguinity. A lot of rural settlements are developed from the same household and kinship. Hence, most rural people have a strong feeling of a sense of belonging to the settlements they live in, normally new-comers are excluded. Therefore, moving people to another settlement faces two difficulties that people do not want to leave their homes, especially the old people, and more importantly, they will not be accepted by the residents in the new settlement unless where they move to is a newly developed by the local government. This socio-culture tradition is considered as a problem by the local government as they have to negotiate with local residents to persuade them to support the development of concentrated settlements and the new comers. Another difficulty is that the reserved settlements are not attractive to farmers. According to the town and village distribution plan, the government’s input will focus on renovating the reserved settlements. As this work started years ago, the obvious improvement made helps to show people the advantages of moving to these settlements, however, moving to new settlements will make it inconvenient for farmer’s work.
'One big problem is to make residents in reserved settlements to accept people moving from other settlements. In a lot of rural areas here, residents in a settlement have the same surname. They have their social connections and feel that their territory is invaded when people from other settlements move in. Moreover, they think the new comers will divide their land. Hence, it takes the government long time and effort to coordinate with local residents to let them accept new residents.'

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ5, 2010)

The final issue is the conflict between the implementation of the town and village distribution plan and other sectoral policies. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

In summary, the town and village distribution plan aims to reshape rural areas with compact development and open countryside. It provides an ideal vision for rural development. However, it has two major weaknesses: the lack of a sound evidence base and feasible action plans. The latter is the main cause of the various identified problems in practice. It is argued that the current implementation of this plan does provide substantial advantage to farmers, and it should not become the government’s land expropriation tool to deviate from its original intention of improving rural development.

6.2.6 Village plans

The village plan is another main form of rural planning in Jiangsu province. Many officers think that village plans have greatly contributed to the improvement of the
environment of rural areas. Local governments in Jiangsu are putting great effort to make and implement village plans. However, Nanjing is an exception. Most local officers do not put a very high value on village plans and do not think the current village plan will work in rural areas. In their opinion, neither the provincial government nor the local government has figured out what to do to improve rural areas and that is why they cannot make clear and detailed guidance on village plan making. They would prefer making project plans and gradually improve villages to making improper plan to create more problems for rural development in the future.

‘The provincial government’s idea and guidance on village planning is immature. The technology of village planning also needs more research. We decide not to follow the provincial government’s guidance and do not require towns and districts to make village plans, if they want to, they can make, we do not make village planning as a task to them.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, NJ3, 2009)

Officers in provincial government and the two local governments in Taizhou and Suqian share some common views on the major problems and weaknesses of village plans. Village plans evolve from village construction plans by extending the planning area from the built-up area of settlements to the administrative area of rural villages. The change to village plans aims to enrich rural planning to cover more issues of rural development such as rural economy and industry. However, these new contents are general and simple. The main part of the village plan is still about physical land use
arrangements. The reason provided by provincial officers is that these new issues are mostly other departments’ responsibility and the Planning Department can only provide guidance because it does not have the power to interfere with other departments’ work.

‘From the village construction plan to village plan, we have made great improvement in the planning guidance. One of the big changes is the planning now is about the whole administrative areas rather than just settlement. More than regulating land in settlements, the new planning also deals with the industry and other issues. These parts have their own responsible departments. Planning aims to guide them from a comprehensive perspective. The guidance on them is general principles. Actually, in the village plans made after 2008, these parts are simple.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J4, 2009)

‘……the coverage of village planning on economic and industrial issues is far from enough. More emphasis should be put on these issues, because better arrangement on them will improve the local economy which will in turn improve the capacity of local areas to renovate the physical environment.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ2, 2009)

Another big problem is the loss of rural characteristics during the implementation of the village plan. The different characteristics between rural landscapes in southern, middle and northern Jiangsu are diminishing. Moreover, the demand for development is
gradually destroying the natural beauty in rural areas. The traditional rural idyll is disappearing as more and more rural settlements are developing in ways similar to urban communities. Though this has always been a problem during the process of rural modernisation, the introduction of village plan has worsened the situation. The provincial officers consider that local governments should take major responsibilities. The making of most village plans fell into a simple, rigid and set mode because they want to make them easy to implement within a very short period of time.

‘... lots of villages are renovated like urban communities, squares with hard pavements, large planted grassland, and exotic plants. It is a waste of money. Rural characters are destroyed. However, some local governments are very happy with this change. They think this is modernisation. They want to develop villages in the same way as cities....’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J4, 2010)

However, local planning officers argue that this is a dilemma to them. They agree that this round of village plans has a strong impact on the spatial structure and social mechanism of village development. Unlike cities, rural villages tend to gradually develop through the interaction between humans and nature. The arrangement of functional spaces is based on the daily habit of local people while the buildings are harmoniously combined with the surrounding natural environment. Unfortunately, according to their experience, few newly developed rural settlements have considered these factors. Most of them are copies of urban communities, especially those
developed in the early stage of the new round of rural development. This has led to the decline of traditional rural ways of living and the disappearance of some local customs. Several local planning officers sighed that there may be fewer and fewer chances for urban people to experience the tranquillity, pastoral landscapes and representative country life for recreation and relax in future rural areas.

‘Rural villages grow slowly and spontaneously from the interaction between human and nature. During the long process, they have formed their own pattern. The distribution of buildings may seem random to us but they have their orders and have a harmonious relationship with the nature. Rural people have closer relationships, special life styles and different customs. All these contribute to the current spatial structure of the village……’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ2, 2010)

‘Nowadays, villages are planned like urban communities. They are not rural villages. The countryside you see is not the country in my memory. There are fewer chances for urban residents to enjoy rural life in the future. We are losing our traditional countryside……’

(Personal interview with a local officer, SQ4, 2009)

From a planning perspective, they understand that, in principle, the rural landscape should be well preserved and developed. However, it is hard to put these principles into practice as there are too many constraints. The biggest constraint is the technical
difficulties of plan-making. Local officers complain that the provincial village planning guidance hardly provides any useful directions for plan making. Furthermore, planners do not have the ability and experience on village planning as most of them have little understanding of rural areas and tend to see rural areas from an urban perspective. Few planners have conducted in-depth studies on rural areas before making the village plan. Two typical examples are cited: the rigid array of housing which has been widely criticised, and the arrangement of some functional spaces such as the public green space. The officers argue that the arrangement of public green space in rural villages should respect the work and life of rural people. For instance, rural villages do not need central parks and squares with grass and exotic plants as planned in most village plans. Instead, planning should leave gardening land for each house, while green spaces in villages can be allocated to local farmers for horticulture and gardening to retain rural landscape as well as benefiting local farmers to earn a living. Moreover, the government will not need to spend money for the maintenance in the future. Hence, they suggest that planners should spend more time to study rural areas, their development trajectory and rural living life to understand the local needs and explore the potential of rural areas.

‘Planners do not know the need of rural areas and rural people. They were trained as urban planners. They have an urban-biased perspective. The life style of local people is changing. It is important to find out what people want and the potential of villages. The making of village plans should be from the perspective of renovating existing villages, other than developing new demonstration settlements based on the planner’s own ideas. For example, the arrangement of green spaces can be reused as gardens for local farmers.’
‘……rural settlements do not need large public space, instead, each family should have a courtyard in which they can plant vegetables and other plants. They can make their own choice on the plan. For most farmers, they may not want to take care of the public green space, however, if allowed to plant on the green space, they will be happy to take care of the land as they can benefit from them……’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, SQ4, 2009)

It is argued by local offices that planners are also constrained by the policy framework. One obvious example is the constraint of land use quotas. The new land use quota is not sufficient for each family to have a house and space for gardening and poultry and livestock rearing. Hence, it is difficult for planners to arrange the space to suit the requirement of rural life style. Some officers consider that village planning should not be strictly constrained by the land use quota as long as there is no wastage of land. Moreover, from a local governments’ perspective, though the urban community model will reduce rural characters, this nearly ‘one-size-fit-all’ approach is the easiest way for them to implement and achieve quick results. Besides, local governments do not have much money, time and labour resources for village planning which greatly reduces the quality of plan-making. Hence, some planning officers frankly admitted that the current way of doing village plans is an expedient measure and a more sustainable model is needed in the future.
‘It is hard for village planning to preserve rural characteristics. For example, the rural land use quota per family set in the provincial planning guidance is 120 m². This is just for a middle size apartment which is not enough if the family keeps a traditional rural lifestyle which needs backyards for gardening and livestock raising. The land use quota should be more flexible, decided according to the actual need.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ1, 2010)

‘This mass production of communities in rural area is understandable if you think from the local government’s perspective. Taking Suqian for example, every year we set targets for counties and towns on how many villages they have to finish. There are requirements on these villages such as they must have new library, sports area, supermarket …… In this case, a ‘one-size-fit-all’ community mode is the easiest, fastest and most cost-efficient way for counties and towns. However, in the long-term, this mode will not last long. More attention will be paid to rural features in the future.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, SQ2, 2009)

Moreover, local officers have very different understandings of what constitutes rural character and local distinctiveness. While some officers regret the loss of rural character during the development, others have little concern or understanding of the ‘rural idyll’. In their own words,
‘Rural areas here do not have special characteristics. Those national/provincial/municipal historical and cultural villages are Villages with distinctive rural characters. Most normal villages are not attractive and it is not pity to replace them with new communities. Farmers like urban life and modern communities.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, TZ5, 2010)

Another issue that attracts most local officers’ attention is the making and implementation of suitable village plans. Over the last few years, local government has just begun to emphasise rural development, they wanted to develop good examples of future villages. The development of concentrated settlements and renovation of reserved settlements were carried out in a high standard and almost relied on government’s resources (Figure 6-2).

Figure 6-2: Some photos of these high standard example villages
Considering the large number of rural settlements, local officers are worried that local governments do not have sufficient resources to develop so many rural settlements to such standards. Besides, little attention has been paid to the maintenance and upkeep of these settlements. Hence, most of those well developed and renovated rural settlements were back to the poor conditions of ‘dirty and disorderly’ within a year. Hence, local officers suggest that more resource should be put on the maintenance of rural settlements.

‘Most villages planned and developed now and in earlier times are in very high standard. One of the most important reasons is that we want to set a good example to farmers. These new and renovated settlements are modern with much better living environment than those old ones. Then, people will be attracted to move to these settlements. This is a major way to implement the town and village distribution plan. However, it is easy to build some sample villages. To develop every reserved settlement in such high standard is out of the government capacity. People will not accept lower quality settlements now. We have to find a way to get out of the dilemma.’

(Personal interview with a Local officer, SQ1, 2009)

‘Currently, planning has not thought about the maintenance problem. Local residents have to pay for the maintenance. However, unlike in cities, there is no tradition in rural areas to pay for maintenance. People are not happy to pay the money and they do not have the spare money to pay. So many new renovated and developed villages are back into their former condition in no longer than one
year’s time except those with good economy. This will be one of the major issues in government’s agenda in near future.”

(Personal interview with a Local officer, SQ2, 2009)

6.2.7 Coordination and cooperation in rural planning

Since 2000, there has been a gradual improvement in the involvement of stakeholders and other departments and transparency in plan-making in China. The development of rural planning guidance has taken the factors of transparency and equality into consideration. This means that improvement of cooperation between related sectors and between various interests is encouraged. The interviews with provincial and local planning officers have shown their increasing attention on this. Rural development involves almost the work of every government sector including the planning department. Planning as guidance for development is supposed to coordinate the policies across different sectors. However, the Planning Department is considered by the interviewees as a lack of the power to coordinate other departments’ work. Instead, the Planning Department will consult and seek advice from other related departments during the plan-making process of village plans and make suggestions to the government if there are conflicts before reaching the final decision. As discussed before, each department has its own funding and project plans for rural development. To make the best use of funding, local government lets the Rural Work Office to take the responsibility of organising different departments’ work. The interviews with officers from local Rural Work Office show that they have placed an increasing emphasis on the Planning Department as the importance of planning has been gradually noticed. Although from
the planning officer’s perspective, the power of the Planning Department to coordinate different sectors is limited.

‘Planning emphasise the coordination between different sectors. Planning will take references to other department’s ideas and policies. This is a hard job. The planning department does not have the power to require other department to follow planning department’s idea. Departments friendly with the planning department normally have good cooperation with us……but even setting a new department to coordinate between different departments, sometimes it is hard when different departments have projects with budgets.’

(Personal interview with a provincial officer, J4, 2009)

The rural planning guidance also requires planners to consult local residents and stakeholders during the process of the village plan and the final village plan should be approved by local residents or the committee of local residents. To many interviewees, one of the most important parts of planning is the communication between planners, the government and local people. It is also considered by most local officers that, unlike in urban areas, social factors have a stronger influence on the implementation of plan as the delivery of village plans has a direct impact on villagers’ lives and interests. If the village plan is not accepted by villagers, it is very hard to implement. The communication with rural people is, however, more difficult. There are several reasons for this, and one of the key issues is that the average education level of rural people is not high and they have little understanding of planning. Rural people also prefer to follow countryside regulations rather than planning arrangements. Hence, local planning
officers have tried various ways to improve the involvement of villagers in the plan-making process of village plan. The most common way is to ask the village head to find out villagers’ opinions on the plan and their aspirations and to coordinate the conflicts between planning arrangements and local demands. Most local officers think that they have carefully considered local people’s opinions during the making and delivery of the village plans.

‘Now planning is not government’s secret anymore. Planning requires public participation now. We investigate and gather the residents’ idea and give them to planners to analysis. After the draft of plans comes out, we exhibit them in the villages and collect responses from local people. We usually let the head of the village to do the job. It is complicated. Farmers do not understand planning or even care about it. They only care when there is a conflict with them. They won’t follow planning but they will listen to the head or elders in the village. So we let powerful people help us to negotiate with local residents.’

(Personal interview with a local officer, TZ5, 2010)

While some officers think that rural settlements are well developed and local people are happy with the development of these settlements, the interviews with local residents show that they have some dissatisfaction with village plan. Their concerns mainly include the loss of gardening spaces, inconvenience for rural working life, and the high house prices in new settlements.
‘Those settlements are good. There are new houses, apartments, good services and modern infrastructure …… I am not sure whether I would move there. It is not convenient for my life. For example, where do I put my farming tools? …… also, these apartments are not so cheap compared with those in towns. Honestly, if I have so much money, I would rather get one in the town than here.’

(Group interview with local residents, SQ8, 2009)

Moreover, in addition to local residents there are other related private sectors that are supposed to be involved in the process of village planning such as the enterprises running agricultural parks in rural areas. Most times, the village plans emphasise their importance in local development and make arrangements on the land they occupied in rural areas. However, the involvement of them in planning process is limited.

‘We do not have direct connection with planning. The only thing we do with the planning department is to apply the land we want to use. We follow the landuse arrangement in the plan, if there is any problem such as we want other places, we will talk to the village or the town government to discuss about it.’

(Personal interview with local stakeholder, TZ9, 2010)
6.3 CONCLUSION

In general, rural development and planning has attracted more attention than before. The interview with officers in fieldwork has revealed the differences in concerning rural development. The emphasis of local government on agricultural and rural development is not as strong as national government. In most areas, the development of rural areas relies on the input of government. From this perspective, in some local areas the development of rural areas, as well as the undertaking of rural planning, is treated as a political task by local government.

The importance of planning in rural areas has been recognised by more and more people. Currently, the main objective of rural planning is landuse arrangement in rural villages to reduce the waste of land and to provide more available land for urban development. The analysis of the interviews has highlighted the conflicts between government at different spatial scales and the problems faced in the making and implementation of rural planning. Some planning officers are clear about the problems of the current rural planning system and have a rough idea about the right direction for future development. They consider they are constrained by the current institutional context and do not know how to put their ideas into practice. They expect to improve the current rural planning system through fixing the problems faced in practice.

Following this, the next chapter will move to discuss the views of planner on rural development and planning.
CHAPTER 7: THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK: PLANNERS’ PERSPECTIVES

The analysis of interviews with officers and stakeholders in Chapter Six shows their different views on the development and practice of the rural planning framework at different spatial scales. As highlighted in Chapter Six, planners have played a very important role in the development and implementation of the rural planning framework. It also reveals that sometimes planners are blamed as one of the factors leading to the failure of rural planning. This chapter aims to establish the views of planners on Jiangsu’s attempt of rural planning and on the development of the rural planning framework. Planners involved in the research are from planning research institutes, planning institutes and private planning consultancy companies. It also discusses the tensions and difficulties planners faced in plan-making in rural areas, and their ideas and aspirations on a feasible planning framework for sustainable rural development.
7.1 The Changing Rural Areas

This section discusses shared ideas as well as the different views of planners on the recent changes that rural Jiangsu has undergone. Before the analysis, some explanation is needed here to clarify the interviewees in this chapter. The planners interviewed here are those planning consultants that make plans for the planning department not including those who work as government officials in the planning department. The planning consultants interviewed include three types: planning consultants in private planning companies, planning consultants in semi-governmental planning institutes and planning academics that do planning projects.

There is a general consensus that Jiangsu’s rural areas have experienced some major changes, especially in rural villages, on various aspects of economic, social, cultural and environmental development. However, very different views were held by planners on these changes. Over the last few years, the rural economy has been largely improved and average rural income has also increased. Most planners agree that the contribution of agriculture to the rural economy development is very limited and will be even less in the future, though national government has started to provide more policy support and resources to agriculture. They also argue that farmers pay less attention to agriculture as its economic benefits are much less than those from other industries, especially in southern Jiangsu. They have noticed an increase of diversified agricultural activities which include entrepreneurial activities and development that enhance the value of agricultural outputs such as agriculture-based tourism (nong jia le) and the production of local-branded agricultural products. Most of these activities are led by local
government. However, these only happen in a few prosperous rural areas and are not widespread in Jiangsu’s countryside. Hence, there is a consensus that agriculture cannot be the main driver of the future rural economy in Jiangsu.

‘The contribution of agriculture is declining. The economic benefit from agricultural development is very low compared with the manufacturing and service sectors. Hence, most farmers are unwilling to do farming anymore, especially in developed rural areas……some rural areas are doing metropolitan agriculture and local-branded agriculture, which are mainly due to their specific resources. They are mainly organised by local government. Local government promote local specific agricultural products to the market and attract investment to local areas. In such a case, whether the new agricultural activities have good development prospect really depends on the role of local government……’

(Personal interview with planner, P10, 2009)

Most planners interviewed tend to agree that rural manufacturing is the major driver of rural economic improvement in Jiangsu as a large part of rural resident’s income are already gained from manufacturing employment. The provincial government’s recent policy (see Chapter Five) has forbidden the decentralised development of secondary industries in rural areas. These industries should be concentrated into industrial parks of towns and cities. Several interviewees argue that this policy has posed local rural government a big dilemma, though they agree the government’s original intention to reduce land wastage and environmental pollution is right.
'In Jiangsu, secondary industry is not allowed in rural areas anymore. Unlike before, townships and villages cannot have their own factories. This is partly because of land wastage and environmental pollution caused by the development of Township and Village Entrepreneurships (TVEs) in the early years. So, it is hard to say, in the long term, whether the provincial government’s decision to forbid rural industry is right. However, it is impossible for agriculture to regenerate rural economy. Hence, it is really difficult for rural villages. They hardly have any income now.......Our experience has shown that villages doing well in delivering village plans are those with strong economic development capacity.......'

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

They have also noted the emergence of different new economic activities which is named by some planners as ‘the sprouting of tertiary industries’ in rural Jiangsu. These new economic activities mainly include rural tourism and real estate development and are mostly led by local government. In order to improve the rural economy, local government starts to find new economic development opportunities by exploring potential development resources in various ways. Hence, most of these new economic developments are in urban periphery countryside and in rural areas with good natural resources such as beautiful landscapes and historical sites. Planners who participated in the interviews argue that these economic activities, as well as the diversification of agriculture, helps to increase local farmer’s income as they provide more job opportunities and improve the rural economy. However, they noticed that it is the local
government, rather than local farmers, that benefits most from these economic activities.

In their own words:

‘……Now in a lot of rural areas, local government tries every way they can to develop the economy. Hence, in those rural areas with good natural resources or beautiful landscape, local government rent farmers’ land (except the basic arable land) and use forest land to develop tourism and real estate. Ecological resources become their new selling point. This kind of diversified economic development, if ran in a good way, can benefit farmers, investors and local government. However, in most areas, the benefits farmers get are tiny. Local government and investors become the big winner…… ’

(Personal interview with planner, P9, 2009)

‘…… In principle, these new economic activities in rural areas are good. Rural tourism, organic farms and other activities help to build up a stable economic mechanism and bring stable incomes to farmers. However, a lot of local government, driven by short term benefits, prefer real estate development, especially in those rural areas with high quality environment. This eventually deprives farmers’ benefits.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

Besides economic development, planners also tend to agree that rural areas in Jiangsu have experienced great improvement in their social development and physical
environment in recent years. They comment that the provincial and local government have put great efforts to improve social service provision and the welfare system as well as regenerating the built environment to improve the living quality of rural residents under the national government’s increasing emphasis on rural areas. Their descriptions of these changes are quoted as following:

‘In the past few years, rural residents’ living has been largely improved. The government has put a lot of resources to the development of social welfare, infrastructure and service facilities in rural areas. More supporting policies have been made to help more and more rural kids to go to school, to help rural residents to access medical service, and to help more poor people to use the social support system…..More resources are spent in renovating the physical landscape of villages. These are all big changes. They are the outcomes of the National government’s ‘New Socialist Rural Construction Programme’’

(Personal interview with planner, P12, 2009)

During the interviews, several planners also emphasise the disparities of rural development in Jiangsu which include the long term inter- and intra-regional differences and disparities in the development levels and patterns in southern, middle and northern Jiangsu. Their major concerns are the economic development disparities. Rural areas in the urban fringe, they argue, are more likely to get economic opportunities from urban development and to benefit more from urbanisation and urban-rural interaction.
'There are actually big economic differences among Jiangsu's rural areas. We are all very clear about the differences between southern, middle and northern Jiangsu. This is one aspect. On the other aspect, now the gap between rural areas in the same region is also enlarging. In simple terms, areas in the fringe of city normally get faster development. Now the connection between urban and rural areas is closer, these areas can get development opportunities from the industrial transfers. On the contrary, remote areas lack economic drivers. That's what happening now.'

(Personal interview with planner, P9, 2009)

The rural economy has attracted more attention because it is considered by most planners as underpinning the development of rural areas. As several planners explain in the interviews, others aspects of rural development such as the improvement of public services, the social welfare system and the physical built-environment, rely heavily on government inputs. Although there are financial budgets allocated from related national departments, local government pays most of the cost. Local experiences show that rural areas with stronger economies have made better achievements in the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme.

‘The basic issue of rural development is its economic development. When the economy improves, then the village will have income and has money to build roads, to improve the infrastructure, and to build more facilities...... You have to know that, the current situation is, the national government give tasks to provinces, then provinces assign them to cities, then cities assign them to town
and villages. Though the national government makes budget for these tasks, the amount each village can get is very limited. If the village does not have enough money, it cannot complete these tasks. They will become a big burden. Even if the upper level government gives them all the money to build these things, what about later? How can they do the maintenance? Still a problem......’

(Personal interview with planner, P7, 2009)

‘Rural problem are mainly about two issues. The first is economy. If the village has strong economy, nothing is a problem. If you go around in rural areas, you will find that the rich villages all are modern and beautiful, like urban communities. Most of those that have not been renewed are due to lack of money......’

(Personal interview with planner, P10, 2009)

However, though agreeing that the rural development trend is on a positive path, most planners interviewed are concerned about the future development for the vast rural areas in Jiangsu. As some of them argue, the current changes in rural areas are largely due to the changed national context and the increasing of national government emphasis on, and inputs to, rural development. They argue that government’s input can make noticeable changes in rural areas in the short term, however, it is not sustainable in the long term. In their opinion, in order to solve the root cause of rural problems, a sustainable endogenous mechanism needs to be built for rural development. As explained by some interviewees:
‘First, the current development of rural areas is closely linked to the rapid growth of the national economy which has provided a better and freer background for the rural economy. Meanwhile, the social and environmental improvement mainly relies on government’s inputs. Secondly, more policy has been published by national government to support rural development by reducing the burden on farmers and increasing inputs in rural areas. In these policies, the ‘New Socialist Rural Construction’ and ‘Urban-rural integration’ are considered to be significant as they have directly led to most recent changes in rural areas. Finally, government, especially the local government, have put great effort to build the ‘New Socialist Rural Areas’.

(Personal interview with planner, P12, 2009)

‘The substantial problem of rural development has not been solved yet. We have not found a suitable approach for rural development. In the long term, rural areas should be self-sufficient. A self-sustained mechanism has to be developed for rural areas……’

(Personal interview with planner, P3, 2009)

However, most planners did not go deeper to elaborate the approaches for sustainable rural development. They consider that rural development is such a broad and complex issue which goes beyond the scope of planning. However, the interviews have revealed some common principle from a planning perspective which will be discussed in the next section.
7.2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

7.2.1 Understanding of ‘rural areas’

The interviews with planners show that it is not an easy task to define ‘rural areas’ because their answers to ‘how to define rural areas?’ vary widely. Some of them follow the traditional definition and define rural areas as ‘areas outside of the urban administrative boundary where the majority of residents are farmers’, which is currently used in rural planning in Jiangsu. Recently, there is a change in official definition of rural areas by including a new part of urban-rural combination areas in the urban-rural classification (see Chapter Three). During the interviews, the researcher found that few interviewees paid any special attention to this change. They argue that it is difficult to define the urban-rural combination areas in space.

‘The definition of rural areas in planning is normally areas outside central cities, and the administrative areas of villages’

(Personal interview with planner, P15, 2009)

Some other planners go beyond the administrative landuse boundary to conceptualise ‘rural areas’ in a more complicated way. More factors, such as possible rural functions, urban-rural relationship and some institutional factors, are taken into consideration. Actually, rather than making a simple definition for ‘rural areas’, they try to highlight the unique features and distinctive characteristics that shape rural areas. There are several issues that merit most attention. It is argued that rural areas should firstly be
considered from a regional perspective. As part of the region, they play an increasingly important role in the socio-economic, environmental and cultural development of the whole region. In one planner’s own words:

‘Rural areas are not isolated. They are part of the region and closely connected to urban areas. With the fast urbanisation and urban-regional development, rural areas mean more than the production areas of primary industry and residential areas for farmers. Instead, rural areas have more active interactions with urban areas. Hence, to understand rural areas, it has to understand the economic, social and environmental roles it plays in the region and its functional connections with urban areas.’

(Personal interview with planner, P3, 2009)

Some planners pay more attention to the spatial perspective. They argue that urban and rural areas are two different settlement systems. All other urban-rural differences can be considered as deriving from the different settlement types. Unlike its urban counterparts, rural settlement is considered to be characterised by open and ecological green space and a harmonious combination of man-made and natural landscape. Some others also argue that, nowadays, the difference between urban and rural settlements is decreasing:

‘Rural areas are a different type of human settlements to urban areas. Urban and rural settlements are characterised by different production modes and life styles. The production and life in rural settlements are closely linked to the natural environment. Moreover, the functions of production and living in rural areas are
not spatially separated as those in urban areas. All these different features
together shape the different rural and urban spaces. Hence, rural settlement is
more open, green and ecological. It is a harmonious combination of man-made
and natural landscapes.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

‘……The development of transportation and communication has improved urban-
rural interactions and reduced the gap between the urban and rural life style.
Rural life is largely influenced by urban culture. Hence, nowadays, in many
developed areas, the differences between urban and rural settlement are less and
less.’

(Personal interview with planner, P1, 2009)

In addition to these, it has been found in the interviews that some attention has been
paid to the institutional factors in understanding rural areas in China. Some planners
argue that the ideological differences in considering urban and rural areas are more
important. Rural areas are different to cities in terms of the landuse system, social
welfare system and governance system. They argue that it is important to bear these
institutional differences in mind when conceptualising rural areas.

‘In landuse terms, rural areas are areas outside the urban administrative
boundary. However, the institutional differences beyond that are more important.
There are differences in their respective landuse systems, social welfare systems,
population registration systems and governance systems. It is all these
institutional differences that make the urban-rural relationships so complicated in China.'

(Personal interview with planner, P2, 2009)

7.2.2 Urban and rural planning system

Planners engaged in this research have lots of experience in rural planning. Hence, they are familiar with the changes in urban and rural planning system of Jiangsu in the past years. There is a general consensus among planners that a holistic urban-rural planning system is needed for more sustainable development of urban and rural areas. Most of them believe that considering rural and urban development in one system can make a better understanding of urban-rural relationships and make more suitable arrangements for both urban and rural development. Hence, most of them are happy to see the modification of the national planning system and the recent progress made in the provincial planning system. In their own words:

‘In the past few years, the planning system has been largely improved. The government has developed planning types for each spatial level. In general, I think an integrated planning system covering both urban and rural areas is more suitable, because the urban-rural relationship is getting closer. The general direction of the national and provincial planning system development is right. It is better for both urban and rural development.’

(Personal interview with planner, P8, 2009)
To most planners, the current work on improving urban and rural planning, either done by national or local government, is far from enough. Though the former gap of rural planning in the planning system has been filled, the content is really simplistic. They criticise that there is no effective connection between urban planning and rural planning in the current planning system, which has led to the lack of guidance from the upper level planning on rural planning. This further causes various conflicts between planning at different levels. Based on this, most of them suggest that an ‘urban-rural integration plan’ should be added to the urban and rural planning systems either as part of the urban mast plan or as a new level of plan between the urban plan and the town and village system plan.

‘Still, urban planning and rural planning are two separate parts of the planning system without effective connection. I think the development of rural areas should be considered as part of the development of the whole urban administrative area. Obviously, it has not been achieved yet. Conflicts between planning at different levels are big. The planning for towns is imperfect. The national planning system doesn’t pay much attention to it. Town planning also does not consider rural areas seriously. There is no higher level planning guidance for the village plan. I think a system of urban-rural integration plan, village distribution plan and village development and renovation plan will be better.’

(Personal interview with planner, P14, 2009)

However, like some officers, several planners have concerned about the future development of the urban and rural planning system. It is hard to tell the future
Chapter 7: The Development and Implementation of The Rural Planning Framework: The Planners’ Perspectives

development trend of urban and rural planning system as the government’s ideas on rural planning are always changing at the national scale as well as the provincial level.

‘It is impossible to expect the government to build a suitable planning system now. What the government does now is just filling the past gaps in the planning system. The government’s policy is always changing. We are not sure about how the planning system will develop in the future……’

(Personal interview with planner, P1, 2009)

7.2.3 Rural planning framework in Jiangsu

Rural planning is mostly considered as a tool to improve the quality of rural areas which mainly refers to rural villages. The analysis on officers’ views on Jiangsu’s rural planning framework in Chapter Six has revealed that one of the factors they blame for some failures in rural planning is the weakness of planners in planning rural areas. Interviews with planners have revealed their own opinions and experiences on the making and delivery of rural plans, which includes the formal town and village distribution plan and village plan as well as the urban-rural integration plan.

Urban-rural integration plans

Compared with the other two plans, the urban-rural integration plan seems to be the most controversial type of plan in Jiangsu. The general views on the idea of ‘urban-rural integration’ are positive. To most planners, urban-rural integration is considered as the opposite of urban-rural dualistic development and is an ideal urban-rural status in which
urban and rural areas achieve balanced and harmonious development. However, few of them give a more detailed explanation on the forms and approaches it may take to achieve it. Some argue that the achievement of urban-rural integration depends on the further development of urbanisation and the establishment of an effective mechanism for city to support rural areas. Others take a slightly different view and argue that China currently still has a strong urban-rural dualism in a lot of areas such as the landuse system which will not be changed in the near future and it is thus too early to talk about urban-rural integration. The increasing emphasis on, and inputs in, rural areas are actually an attempt to rectify the long-time urban-biased development approach.

‘Urban-rural integration is actually a correction of the past urban-bias and urban-rural dualism. It is a general trend. To achieve this goal needs a longer timeframe. In the long term, it needs the development of urbanisation to reduce the number of rural peasants and the continuous urban supports on rural areas to improve the rural development level’

(Personal interview with planner, P8, 2009)

‘China has an entrenched urban-rural dualism which expresses in a lot of areas. Urban and rural areas are two different settlement systems. They also have large gaps in their development levels. The institutional background of China won’t change in the near future. Also, it takes time to reduce the urban-rural gap. So, in my opinion, it is a little too early to talk about urban-rural integration now.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)
Currently, there is no orthodox paradigm for an urban-rural integration plan. The interviews have also revealed that the planners’ experiences in making urban-rural integration plans are very different and thus they have their own different opinions on the urban-rural integration plan. The spatial scale of the integration plan they made varies from the city level to the town (district) level. Hence, there are debates over which is the most suitable spatial level to integrate urban and rural development. Some argue that urban-rural integration should be carried out at the town (district) level. Urban-rural integration at this level should seek to provide the rural population with equal access to high quality services and infrastructure as the urban citizens. In addition to this, it is also argued that urban-rural integration plans at this level should make arrangements for industries in rural areas to improve the income of local rural residents.

‘Urban-rural integration is a big issue. It covers a lot of areas. To improve urban-rural integration, we need to find an area to cut-in. Town government directly leads rural areas and deals with rural issues. From the perspective of practice and feasibility, it is better undertaken at the level of the town. The main task should focus on the urban – rural integrative development of infrastructure and public service sectors to make rural people have equal access to high quality services as those provided to urban citizens. Attention should also be paid to integrative development of urban-rural industries to improve the rural economy and increase local farmers’ incomes.’

(Personal interview with planner, P7, 2009)
Others argue that urban-rural integration is a systematic work running from city to town levels. Governments at different levels should focus on different issues in integrating urban and rural development. Based on this, it is considered that the urban-rural integration plan should be made at the city or higher level, as part of the urban master plan or as an individual level in the planning system. One of the important reasons they provide is the need to have cross-boundary coordination between the towns as well as between towns and urban districts, which can only be achieved at the city and higher level. They argue that ‘economic functional area’ is more important than the ‘administrative area’ in recent years as there are more and more cross-boundary industrial developments in rural areas, especially in southern Jiangsu. Meanwhile, there are also similar industrial development and cut-throat competitions between towns and even between the city and towns. All these need coordination from the high level.

‘Some local governments think urban-rural integration should start in the town and then extended to the city level. We think the urban-rural integration plan should be made at city level......Urban-rural integration is actually a coordination and communication process. Now under the economic development pressure, there are more cut-throat competitions between towns and even between city and towns. Coordination is getting more and more important......’

(Personal interview with planner, P16, 2009)

‘......In southern Jiangsu, it is common to see the joint economic areas across several towns. Economic functional areas play a more important role than
administrative areas. To coordinate these cross-boundary conflicts, the urban-rural integration plan should be made at the higher level.’

(Personal interview with planner, P15, 2009)

Moreover, it is argued that the making of the urban-rural integration plan at this level should be as comprehensive as the making of the urban master plan and the regional plan with a full coverage in content.

‘This plan has to be similar to the urban master plan, or the regional plan, with a comprehensive coverage on topic areas such as: development strategies and principle guidance for urban and rural areas based on the analysis on urban-rural relation; reasonable urban and rural settlement systems; proper industrial arrangements to support rural areas, especially those lagging areas, proper policy mechanisms to support urban-rural integration such as policy to promote urbanisation, and integrative development of infrastructure and public service in urban and rural areas……’

(Personal interview with planner, P8, 2009)

While Jiangsu province is widely perceived as making more progress than others in the conceptual development and practice of the urban-rural integration plan, planners participating in the research are rather critical of the practice of urban-rural integration planning in Jiangsu. According to the planners, the effect of most urban-rural integration plans is not as good as expected. Some of them are too idealistic and difficult to carry out, while others focus too much on practical projects but overlook the
main part of urban-rural integration mechanism. Some planners further argue that often
the government has a different perspective on this plan. The government tends to focus
on the more practical issues that they can carry out and will take effect in the near future.
Another issue is that most of the current urban-rural integration plans still retain a high
level of urban bias. This is because the making of the urban-rural plan is mostly
required by local government based on their needs which is mainly for urban
development. Hence, the aim to make this plan is to manage the fast urban development
in fringe areas and get more resources for urban development. In their own words:

‘Jiangsu is more advanced in urban-rural integration than other provinces.
However, it is easier to advance the idea than to work out how to change it into
practical policies. Current works focus on the practical project. However, for the
long term, to build an urban-rural integration mechanism is the key point. If the
provincial government does not say, I myself cannot make it clear.’

(Personal interview with planner, P10, 2009)

‘……Sometimes, the reason for the government to make an urban-rural
integration plan is complicated. Like a plan I just participated in, it is largely
done because the government want more resources for development such as land
resources. On one level, it makes arrangements for rural development, but on the
other, it is through this process the government can sort out how much
development land is available for urban use in rural areas. This situation is
common in a lot of areas surrounding cities. So many times, the government is
driven by benefits. They prefer those plans that can be carried out in practice and deliver the effects and benefits.'

(Personal interview with planner, P5, 2009)

Since it is not included in the formal planning system, the making of the urban-rural integration plan is not restricted by the rules and regulations published for formal planning. This makes it more flexible in both content and form. Hence, local government at the district level sometimes uses it to take the place of the master plan\textsuperscript{38} to provide guidance for future development. Normally in such a case, though the plan takes both urban and rural areas into consideration, the focus is largely to make more land and resources for urban development, especially for the development of industries.

**Town and village distribution plans**

During the interviews, most planners did not talk very much about the town and village distribution plan. Their views on it were similar. The town and village plan is considered as the government’s planning project under its ‘three concentration policy’\textsuperscript{39}. From this perspective, it helps to concentrate the former sparsely scattered development to reduce the fragmentation and to improve efficiency of land use in rural areas.

Moreover, the concentration of villages also helps to reduce the governments’ inputs to improve the transportation, infrastructure and other service systems.

\textsuperscript{38} This mostly happens in urban districts in urban fringe areas. These urban districts still have a large part of rural areas and need master plan to guide future development. However, according to ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act 2008’, urban district does not have the power to make master plan. This becomes a difficult for these urban districts. Hence, some of them make urban-rural integration plan to provide guidance for detailed plan.

\textsuperscript{39} The ‘three concentration policy’ is: the concentration of rural residents into reserved settlements, the concentration of rural industries into industry parks and the large-scale agricultural production of (the concentration of agriculture).
‘The main objective of town and village distribution is concentration. This is decided by our national context. There are too many rural villages. They are scattered in the broad countryside. This has caused the extensive use and fragmentation of rural land. To concentrate them helps to improve the efficiency of land use. From another perspective, scattered villages cost too much money for the government to improve rural facilities. The concentration of villages also helps to reduce government inputs to improve the transport, infrastructure and other service systems. From these perspectives, the town and village distribution plan is the right policy.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

The critiques of planners on the town and distribution plan are similar to those of government officers and other stakeholders as discussed in Chapter 6, which mainly focuses on the defects of plan-making and problems faced in implementation such as inappropriate decisions on settlement sites (without sufficient investigation and research on local conditions), a lack of robust and well-defined criteria to decide reserved settlements as concentrated centres, focusing too much on blueprint plan and a lack of action plans, and insufficient consideration paid to local culture and customs.

One issue advanced by some planners is that little attention has been paid to ‘the appropriate concentration level’ of rural areas. They argue that over-concentration may destroy the traditional rural landscape and social networks. Based on this, some of them go further to criticise the research on the appropriate size of rural settlements for this type of plan is inadequate. It is argued that villages should be controlled in a suitable
size in order to retain the lifestyle, social interactions, and landscape with rural features. Though the provincial government has thought about the convenience of production and daily life in rural areas, it has not paid enough attention to these factors as it emphasises too much on ‘concentration’ to improve landuse efficiency. Based on this point, some further argue that it is not a good way for the government to just use indicators and criteria to guide the concentration of rural settlements.

‘The concentration of rural settlement should consider the reasonable size of a rural settlement. In some areas, some settlements are planned to be with 1000 people or even more. That makes a town not a rural settlement. It is not the larger and the more concentrated the better. How can traditional rural life style, landscape and development pattern be kept at such a big size? More research should be undertaken out on this issue. More factors other than farming distance should be considered when concentrating rural settlements’

(Personal interview with planner, P14, 2009)

The making of town and village distribution plans were criticised as being arbitrary and lacking a sufficient evidence-base (see Chapter Six). Planners were blamed as one of the reasons. Indeed, most planners with experience in making this plan admitted that it is true. During plan-making, they did not have enough time to do the field work as the government pushed them very hard to meet the timetable. Hence, their understanding of the planning areas was largely based on maps and second-hand data. Moreover, they argued that they have followed the provincial government’s guidance on this plan and
coordinated it with the local government about the concentrated rural settlement system. From their perspective, they have done their work.

Furthermore, some planners have found that the concentration of rural settlements in some areas was even stronger than planned. This mostly happened in rural areas surrounding cities where the development pressure is particularly heavy under the rapid speed of urbanisation and urban sprawl. The main driver for concentrating on villages in the making and delivery of this plan is the government’s need for development land. Hence, the driver in remote rural areas is not as strong as rural areas in the urban fringe. Some planners argue that this plan to some extent is another round of government exploitation on rural areas for development land. Some of their arguments are quoted as following:

‘One of the common problems in fast developing areas is that local government uses town and village distribution plans and village plans to get increased landuse quota for urban development or for local government to develop some industry such as real estate. More towns have been removed and changed to urban districts, and more villages have also been removed and residents have been resettled to concentrated communities in order to provide more available landuse quota. This can be considered as an exploitation on farmers of their land.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)
Hence, they comment that the provincial government was a little rushed in making these town and village distribution plans, which are considered by them as more like a political task from the provincial government. Most planners doubted whether it would continue in the future.

**Village plans**

Village plans, as the core of current rural planning framework in Jiangsu, have caught most attention during the interviews with planners. Planners also hold mixed reviews on the making and implementation of village plans. On the one hand, there is a general consensus that the provincial government has made much progress developing planning guidance on village plans between 2006 and 2008. Village plans made after the 2008 guidance are more detailed and include major contents of both the master plan and the detailed plan. The making of this plan helps to put rural development under formal regulation and contribute to the renovation of villages and improvement of local residents’ living environment.

On the other hand, the planners interviewed have seen problems in the making and implementation of village plans and they consider by far the biggest problem is that rural villages are planned like urban communities in the village plan. This does not only refer to the rigid arrangements of ‘building blocks’, but also the arrangements of infrastructure and public service system. Several planners argue that village planning should be more ecological and natural to keep rural idyll in the process of modernising the rural villages. It is argued that development in rural areas has accumulated day by day, over the years, and has established a harmonious relationship with the natural
environment. From this point, it is not right for planning to arrange a quick fix on village development without a proper understanding of the development trajectories and patterns of rural villages. They argue that planning must respect the existing spatial structure, the social network and local culture of villages.

‘Villages are shaped by time. The forming of the harmonious relationships with nature needs time. The biggest feature of villages is that they cannot be planned. The best way is to follow their own development trajectories and control those unhealthy development activities.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

Most of the current planning of infrastructure and service system for villages follows the experiences of planning for the urban community in terms of their types and standards. This is also pushed forward by the government’s policy of ‘integrated development of infrastructure and service facilities in urban and rural areas’. However, this is questioned by some planners. In their opinion, rural settlements are different from urban communities in the ways of their production and livelihood and their interaction with the environment. They argue that a new system and standard of infrastructure and public service facilities should be developed for rural settlements. Rural settlements should use eco-infrastructures which are more natural and environment-friendly. Also, the planning of public service sectors should respect the traditional social network, neighbourhood relationships and life-style of rural villages. More detailed explanations and examples are given in their own words:
'The rural village is a different type of settlement to cities. Villages are more close to nature. The point of integrated development of infrastructure and service facilities in urban and rural areas is to improve the quality of these things in rural areas, not simply extending urban system to rural areas. Villages need different types of infrastructure and services which are more ecological. Also, public service sectors should respect the traditional characteristics. For example, local village stores and markets are part of the rural landscape. The modernisation of rural service sectors does not need to replace them with supermarkets. Moreover, the using these infrastructure and service facilities will help local residents to save their money on building and maintaining them.'

(Personal interview with planner, P7, 2009)

This is further extended to the discussion on landuse types in rural planning. Several planners comment that village planning requires a new landuse classification system. They argue that rural villages have very different functional spaces when compared to urban communities, and some functions (or similar ones) may take a different form of space. For example, rural villages may need some space for agriculture and livestock breeding. Some of their arguments are quoted as following:

‘The current landuse classification system was developed based on the urban functions of spaces. It is necessary to develop a new land use type for rural planning as rural areas are different in functions or may different in forms with same functions to urban spaces. For example, rural villages have agricultural
spaces and do not need grass land and public squares as green and open spaces because they have vegetable gardens and planting yards instead.’

(Personal interview with planner, P8, 2009)

The development of the new landuse and facility system is also seen by many planners as important to retain rural characteristics because rural characteristic is a complicated and multi-faceted concept that includes natural landscape, open green space, building styles, landuse types, rural life style and local custom. Open space, natural beauty and the rural idyll can be seen as a competitive advantages for rural villages which, in the long run, will produce economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits. It is suggested that more research should be taken in this area. In some of their own words:

‘Modernising rural villages does not mean changing them to urban communities. Those specific rural functional spaces are different types of infrastructure and services are all part of the elements that help to define and shape rural landscape which differs from their urban counterparts. Taking these factors into account for rural planning is thus significant to retain rural distinctiveness……These characters with beautiful environment will become unique development capital in the future. They are the advantage of rural areas compared to their urban counterparts.’

(Personal interview with planner, P4, 2009)
Another controversial issue in village planning is about its major content. It is generally considered that the major focus of village planning is still on physical landuse arrangements. However, it is argued by some planners that more development issues, in particular economic development, should be included in planning. Also, it is impossible for the national government to provide long term extensive subsidies to rural villages in China. Furthermore, some argue that industrial development in rural villages has to be considered in both village plans and plans at the upper level such as the urban-rural integration plan, the urban master plan or even the regional plan to make efficient use of local resources and to avoid the cut-throat competition. In some of their own words:

‘Though planning will finally fall into the arrangement of space, it has to think about the socio-economic development. Most villages making good progress in delivering planning are those with strong economy. There are so many villages. Hence, it is impossible to expect the government to deal with every village. Finally, villages have to find ways to deal with their problem. They have to be self-sufficient.’

(Personal interview with planner, P 4, 2009)

‘……The development of rural industry should be considered in high level planning, better in urban master plans or regional plans. These plans can coordinate industrial development between urban districts, counties, towns and villages to avoid the cut-throat competition.’

(Personal interview with planner, P 10, 2009)
The interviews with officials also had very similar criticism on the loss of rural idyll in village plans and they blame this on the (in)capability of planners (see Chapter Six). Most planners’ attitudes and responses on this are different. They argue that it is not only about the rural characteristics in village planning, though in some ways, it highlights the weakness in the theoretical framework of village planning. However, they argue that the reasons for this are various. They do accept that planners’ incapacity is indeed one of the reasons because most planners are trained as urban planners with little knowledge about rural planning. Also, few of them have had any practical experience in rural planning before, and they do not have many examples to make reference to. Hence, most planners are more likely to follow the planning guidance made by the provincial government on village plans. However, this guidance itself follows the experience of the urban community planning. In addition, many planners did not undertake sufficient fieldwork investigations and research on village planning methods. This was closely related to the wide background and context of village plan-making. Village plans were allocated to planners in different institutes and had to be finished within a short period of time. Moreover, though the provincial government has an allowance for village plans, the budget for each village plan was very limited as there are too many villages. Under such circumstances, planners did not have the time and budget to do any in-depth research for the village plan. Furthermore, they also admit that some planners did not take it seriously as there were few profits. In general, planners argue that the making of village plans is largely pushed by the political driver and the process still has a lot of problems. For the national and provincial governments, they just want to make these plans first and then revise them accordingly when problems emerge in practice. Some of their arguments are quoted:
‘...Planning for rural areas is a new type for China’s planners. Everything we learned is about urban planning. There is no rural planning guide book and no examples to take reference to...I do not have time to do research for rural planning. I can only rely on the planning guidance of provincial government and local authorities opinions. I have tried to do something. I tried to ways to keep some rural elements in my planning but the effect was not so ideal. It is not my problem. It is the weakness of the planning field.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

‘At that time, village plans was allocated to institutes as a task. The budgets for these plans are very tight. We nearly did a free job......The schedule was also very tight. There was little time and budget to carry out investigation and think about the plan. Everyone has several projects on hand. The outcome was the mass production of village plans following the model of the provincial government’s planning guidance, several planning graphics with a copy of instruction......’

(Personal interview with planner, P9, 2009)

In addition to plan-making, most planners have also talked about the implementation of village plans over the last few years. There is no doubt that in general the implementation of village plans has promoted the regeneration of rural settlements. Meanwhile, they have also seen the problems arising from the implementation of village plans. One issue that most planners agree on is that few village plans can be implemented as planned unless it is totally run by the local government. This is
especially true when developing new buildings in rural settlements. Local people do not always follow the guidance and the design. In some of their own words:

‘The implementation of village plans may turn out to be very different with what it was planned to be. For example, though most village plans have made architectural guidance for buildings and some have even provided design for local residents. Rural residents always choose the styles they like. They normally do not like the design with traditional Chinese rural style. They prefer more a modern architectural style, even an European style. Hence, it is hard to control the building landscape of the whole village.’

(Personal interview with planner, P8, 2009)

Another issue concerns the action plans. It is argued that a feasible delivery schedule with detailed tasks and budget for each stage should be made for village plans. Based on this, governments at municipal and upper levels should make corresponding financial plans to support the delivery of village plans.

Public participation and coordination of rural planning

The participation of local residents in the plan-making process and coordination between related sectors and between governments at different levels are seen as important for rural planning by planners. The development of rural areas is considered by them as a complicated project involving several different sectors. Planning should coordinate different sectoral polices to concentrate the resources in rural areas.

Moreover, several planners have argued for more coordination between government at
different levels. They suggest that the government at the urban and upper level should investigate the local conditions and understand local requirements to make more feasible and appropriate policies for rural areas. Some of their arguments are quoted as following:

‘More negotiation and coordination is need between different levels of government. High level government that make rural policy do not actually understand local needs. We have heard village leaders complaining about this and the upper government’s continual changing of the policy.’

(Personal interview with planner, P6, 2009)

It is considered by most planners that the current public participation and coordination in plan-making is much better than before, though still not as good as required. Their experience suggests that getting rural residents into the plan-making process and communicating with them is very difficult. Lots of villages have their own conventional customs and rules on development. It is hard to make villagers understand and accept planning. Though most planners cooperated with leaders of local villages, the effect was not so good. However, some of them argue that it takes time to improve this condition as it needs the improvement of the general educational level of rural residents and the efforts of planners to communicate with them:

‘Most rural residents have not received high levels of education and have little knowledge of planning. It is hard to make them understand and accept planning.'
Also, rural residents tend to only care about their own individual interests and actual benefits that they can foresee.’

(Personal interview with planner, P16, 2009)

‘......the making of rural plans has to negotiate with local residents again and again. We normally ask for the help of the village head and powerful people in the village, but the process was very time-consuming and the outcomes were always not so ideal. This is a big project which needs time and patience.’

(Personal interview with planner, P12, 2009)
7.3 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the interviews with planners has shown their diverse views on the current state of rural planning as well as their uncertainty over its future development. Most of the planners’ views on rural planning come from their own practical experience. They have pointed out numerous flaws of the current planning approach for rural areas as well as their own incapacity in carrying out rural planning. Most of them are not too optimistic about the future development of the existing rural planning framework. Their suggestions on rural development and planning can be summarised into several key points. Firstly, to solve rural problems, it is necessary to build a self-sustainable mechanism for rural areas rather than being over dependent on assistance from cities and national and regional governments. Secondly, the rural economy is the basis of rural regeneration. The revival of rural economy relies on effective urban-rural interaction and the efficient and sustainable consumption of rural resources. The third point is that a holistic urban and rural planning system is needed. The planning of rural areas should be considered from the regional perspective and based on the consideration of urban-rural functional interactions. Fourthly, it is much more important for urban and rural planning to focus on functional areas rather than administrative areas. Finally, the planning of rural areas should conserve rural features and local distinctiveness rather than destroying these potential advantages over their urban counterparts during the modernisation process.

The next chapter will come to the conclusion of the research and the policy recommendations for the future development of rural planning framework in China.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

This research aimed to examine the applicability of the spatial planning approach to the development of a planning framework for rural areas in China. The review on EU experiences shows that the spatial planning discourse has led to more integrated and coordinative approaches in dealing with rural issues and a change of governance mode in rural areas. Meanwhile, the investigation of rural development and planning in Jiangsu province clearly shows the weaknesses of the current planning framework in dealing with rural issues, the dilemmas for planning practice and the tensions between different sectors. This final chapter highlights the key findings and provides recommendations for the future development of a rural planning framework from both the short-term and the long-term perspectives.
8.1 KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to understand rural planning in China, a conceptual framework was developed in Chapter Four to guide the investigation. This framework was derived after a review of the theoretical and practical experience of the application of the spatial planning approach for rural development in the EU. This conceptual framework (see Figure 8-1) provides a way to explore the key issues of rural development, the main actors and their tensions in local policy responses and the process of policy making and implementation in China.

The key findings from the study will be discussed in relation to the key components of the conceptual framework. The relevance of this framework, largely derived from western literature, will be assessed in relation to the Chinese context and empirical findings.

8.1.1 Rural changes

Economic growth

The rural economy in Jiangsu Province has experienced a period of substantial growth and structural transformation. The dependence of the rural economy on agriculture is declining though agriculture is still considered to be fundamentally important. The agricultural productivity has improved in the past years, largely due to the improvement of technology and mechanisation. The situation varies between southern, middle and northern Jiangsu. Most areas in middle and northern Jiangsu still depend on the
traditional mode of agriculture. According to local experiences in Taizhou and Suqian, the household responsibility system of farmland has become a major obstacle to further agricultural modernisation through mass production. The transfer of farmland between farmers and agricultural production companies does happen in some rural areas, though this is not very common. In southern Jiangsu, there has been diversification in agricultural development such as urban agriculture (du shi nong ye), circular agriculture, and rural tourism (nong jia le) and recreation. A few of these agri-diversification activities are also observed in middle and northern Jiangsu. Most tend to be concentrated in urban fringe countryside and rural areas with specific resources or famous agricultural products.

The experience of Jiangsu shows that local government has played a strong role in leading agricultural diversification. However, these new agricultural activities are only a small part of the local economy because the demand for local agricultural products from the urban market is relatively small even in big cities. Another problem is that rural people are losing their interest in agriculture as they cannot make a living out of it. This has gradually become a new challenge for agricultural development especially in southern Jiangsu.

Manufacturing has become the main support of the rural economy. The movement of industries from cities to their hinterland has been mainly concentrated in new industrial park within towns as the manufacturing development is forbidden in Jiangsu’s countryside recently. This places a great challenge for manufacturing as the main driver of the rural economy. The relocation of manufacturing into industry parks has weakened
their links with local rural areas with less dependence on local resource and workforce. It has also strengthened the economic contribution of manufacturing to the central town (city) rather than rural villages. The findings in Jiangsu also show that there has been a limited increase in service sector activities (mainly related to daily living services) in rural townships over the last few years. According to the experience of Nanjing, there are some non-agricultural diversification activities such as real estate development in rural areas with good natural resources. These activities tend to be introduced by local government (mostly at the town level) as development projects.

Rural development in Jiangsu province only shows some sprouting of the more consumption-oriented economic diversification that has been witnessed in the process of economic restructuring in the European countryside. Most of the recent economic changes in China are happening in the urban hinterlands. The economy of most remote rural areas still depends on the primary sector and faces the danger of being marginalised in the future. However, as to the new agri and non-agri diversification activities, local residents do not benefit much from them except for employment and land rent. In comparison, the developers, and sometimes local governments, are the major beneficiaries from exploiting rural resources.

**Social change**

Social changes in rural areas are mainly manifest in the changing demographic structure and welfare system and vary in different areas with different economic levels. In Taizhou and Suqian, the rural areas are still undergoing the process of urbanisation and many rural areas suffer from a loss of human resources as younger generations prefer
urban living and to seek higher income employment in cities. This has resulted in leaving the elders, kids and women in countryside and has caused some social problems in rural areas and has placed strains on the social service system in rural areas. Meanwhile, the large number of unstable peasant workers have also brought much social pressure to cities. Meanwhile, a combination of urbanisation and suburbanisation is observed in the case study area of Nanjing. This process has changed the demographic structure in rural areas surrounding big cities. There has been an increase of middle-class migrants from the central city, mainly because of the lower house price in suburban areas. The newly urbanised population also prefer to stay in suburban areas as a result of the shift of manufacturing from the inner city to suburban areas.

A major improvement in the social welfare system and public service systems is also found in Jiangsu’s rural areas as a result of the central government’s increasing attention on rural residents’ livelihoods. According to the experience of the three case study areas, progress varies according to local economic capacity as it depends on the inputs from local government. The interviews with government officers found that this has already become a great financial pressure on local government even with financial support from national government.

**Environmental and cultural issues**

The findings in the case study areas have identified environmental pollution and the loss of rural character as the major issues in rural areas. Environment pollution tends to be caused by the modernisation of agriculture and local residents’ daily life. The findings in Nanjing highlight the increasing environmental pressure and loss of farm land caused
by the speed of urbanisation and urban sprawl. The built environment has been greatly improved in most of the rural areas in Jiangsu province, due to the great effort put by the provincial government and local government in renovating rural villages. This has led to the loss of rural characteristics and local identity. As found in Nanjing, the fast pace of urbanisation has changed the physical landscape in urban hinterlands. Meanwhile, rural villages are concentrated into urbanised new communities and are losing their traditional features and landscape.

**The Urban-rural relationship**

The findings in the case study areas suggest that there are increasing urban-rural linkages in more developed areas such as Nanjing. However, the development gap between urban and rural areas is still growing in Jiangsu province. Moreover, one big improvement in urban and rural linkages is the integrated development of basic public services, infrastructure and social welfare systems by the provincial government. The extent of the integration is found to be different in Nanjing, Taizhou and Suqian because of their differential economic capacities.

**Understanding rural changes**

In Chapter Two, rural changes are conceptualised as a dynamic process with the intertwined changes in economic, social, environmental, and cultural and urban-rural factors (Goodwin, Cloke, and Milbourne, 1995; Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001). This conceptualisation provides an integrative approach which is useful to understanding the nature of rural changes in China. However, the nature of changes in each factor is
Chapter 8: Conclusions

somewhat different in China, as explained in the previous sections and summarised in Figure 8-1.

The broad characteristics of economic change in China closely correspond to the changing production-consumption relationship and social-culture recomposition (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992) highlighted in the conceptualisation. However, the findings show that the importance of different aspects of economic change, and the extent of interactions between changes, different factors of change are different in China (as summarised in Figure 8-1). Economic changes are found to be the most important and play a fundamental role in driving changes in other key factors. For instance, the decline of agriculture and economic marginalisation has led to unstable migration to cities and demographic structural changes. The increase in economic activities has imposed development pressure and led to the loss of arable land and pollution. Also, economic development has led to the loss of traditional rural landscapes.

Changes in other factors, on the contrary, also have implications in terms of rural economic changes, especially their interaction with social changes. The loss of human resources has aggravated agricultural decline and economic marginalisation in remote rural areas. At the same time, the increasing middle class population and new urbanised workforce have provided a major dynamic drive behind economic improvement in suburban areas. However, the growing environmental and cultural problems have constrained the future improvement in economic structure.

In addition to the interaction with economic changes, changes in the social, environmental and cultural factors are found to be directly or indirectly linked. For
example, the increasing middle class population and the workers in suburban rural areas have broken the traditional rural culture, custom and lifestyle and led to the loss of rural characteristics as witnessed in the west (Gallent et al, 2008). Modernisation of the physical environment and the concentration of development have been an important reason of the loss of rural characters and local distinctiveness.

Rural changes are seen as closely connected to the increasing urban-rural interaction (Bengs and Schmidt-Thome, 2006). In China, rural changes have increased urban-rural interaction, but it is the urban-rural relationship that provides the driver for rural change. More attention has been paid by the state to integrate urban and rural development, which has largely led to the extension of urban infrastructure and services, the development of urban dependent economies and the development of urban style communities in rural areas, especially those in the immediate urban hinterland.

The conceptualisation emphasises the changing role of the state and institutional relations between actors in the power structure in rural areas (Goodwin, Cloke and Milbourne, 1994; Marsden, 1995). This theoretic assertion does not seem to apply to the situation observed in China as the institutional context is found to be very different. China is a country with strong central government and a top-down power structure. The government has strong powers related to rural development in China. Only a few other sectors play a key role in rural development and their activities are under the guidance of local government. Local government is revealed to be the major driver of recent rural changes under a policy framework and financial support from national and provincial governments.
Figure 8-1: Multi-dimensional analysis of China’s rural development. The thickness of the lines represents the strength of these linkages between different factors. The bullet points inside each circle highlight the key aspects of change.
8.1.2 Evaluation of the conceptual framework

The adoption of western theories in developing the conceptual framework to analyse rural development and planning in China is largely appropriate. However, the research also finds that there are some issues that require more attention when examining the situation in China as there are very different institutional structures and patterns and trajectories of development in rural China. These important factors include the indirect global impacts on local rural areas through central government, the top-down control from central and then provincial government, the weakness of planning as a tool to coordinate both public and private sector policy and programmes at the local scale, the economic and physical landuse focus of rural planning, the lack of an effective delivery mechanism, the loss of rural characteristics in rural planning and the urban-centre-led approach of rural development and planning under the influence of the dualistic urban-rural institutional system. Based on these key factors, the initial conceptualisation has been modified in Figure 8-2 to reflect these issues. Further discussion of each of these important factors is also provided below.
Figure 8-2: Reconceptualization of the dynamic rural development process of China
The influence of global factors on rural areas

Based on his own review, Wood (2005) argues that rural development over the past years in western developed countries has been driven by globalisation and modernisation which mainly includes five parts of new production-consumption food system and world food market, new international division of labour, modern knowledge and skills, new information and communication technology, and global climate change and the related international agenda. However, this research found that the influence of globalisation and modernisation on rural changes in China is not as strong as that in western European countries. Of the five factors, the changing global food market, modern knowledge and skill, and information and communication technology have stronger influences than the other two. The response to the influence of global factors is mostly felt at national level. The provincial and local responses to global factors are mediated indirectly through the guidance and policy framework of the national government. One can therefore argue that recent rural changes in China are largely due to the national government’s increasing attention on rural areas. Since the beginning of 2000s, national government has published a series of policy on the three agrarian issues in relation to agriculture, rural areas and farmers (San nong). After the new policies were published, a lot of projects have been carried out in rural areas from different sectors at different scales, with financial support from the government, to shape the current landscape of rural development in China.
Top-down control from central and provincial government

The application of a spatial planning approach emphasises the coordination of national, regional and local government (Haughton and Counsell, 2004; Allmendinger, Morphet, and Tewdwr-Jones, 2005) and the empowering of local government to emphasise ‘self-sufficiency’ of local rural development (Murdoch and Abram 1998; Ward and McNicholas, 1998). The findings in China show that, though local government now takes the responsibility for rural development, their work is subject to strong steer from national and provincial governments.

In addition to the national government, the regional (provincial) government also plays a key role in rural development and planning. It is the provincial government that interprets national policy to design policy frameworks and arrange key tasks for local government for rural development and planning. Furthermore, sectoral projects at the provincial scale are also found to be another important factor that influences local rural development. The delivery of the provincial programme at the local level has to depend on the financial support from the provincial government as the capacity and resources of local government is limited. Hence, except for some developed areas with a strong local economy, few local areas have challenged the decisions of provincial government, though sometimes local government do complain about problems of provincial policy in addressing local problem. Another reason found is that rural areas are not the focus of local government. Sometimes, local government’s activities are found to be benefit driven and economic biased. This is because development in rural areas will not bring much benefit, especially in economic terms to the whole area in the short term. They thus focus on the central city as the main development driver. However, as the national
and provincial governments have put emphasis on rural development and planning, local governments sometimes treat the delivery of the upper level policy as their political achievement. The economic and urban-led character of rural development and planning in China will be discussed later. In a word, rural development and planning at the local scale is largely seen as local government’s completion of political tasks requested from the provincial government rather than a response to the local needs and circumstances of rural areas. From this point of view, it is necessary to think about the division of functions and tensions between provincial government and local government when analysing rural planning frameworks in China.

The weakness of planning as a co-ordination tool for public and private sector policies and programmes at the local scale

The local scale is arguably the most appropriate level where planning coordinates sectoral policies and programmes (Gallent et al, 2008). This is partly supported by the empirical findings in China. Coordination of different departmental policies and projects is not carried out by planning departments but by a newly established department for rural issues, the Rural Work Offices. This shows that the development and delivery of rural policy in practice has some influence on the governance structures at the local scale. However, the findings show that local government does not have sufficient power to coordinate programmes of different departments (especially those at the provincial level) through the Rural Work Office. This is partly due to the long term barriers between different departments. The other reason is that local government does not have much power to influence sectoral projects at the provincial level, due to the
traditional top-down power structure between different tiers of governments at different spatial scales, as discussed earlier.

It is also argued that the application of a spatial planning approach has also changed local governance by developing local partnerships to achieve shared objectives across local communities and other key sectors in the west (Tewdwr-Jones, Morphet and Allmendinger, 2006). It is, however, difficult to apply this directly to analyse local governance in China. Cooperation with private sectors has always been a weakness in China’s rural planning. In spite of the fact that there are not so many private sectors involved in rural development (except for the private planning consultants), most of the delivery of services and infrastructure in rural areas are carried by the governmental or semi-governmental sectors. Hence, the main private sector actors in rural areas are local enterprises, most of which are small and few of them are included in the plan-making process of rural development. The private sector tends to have little knowledge and interest in rural planning unless it is about getting permission for land development.

There are also very few non-government organisations in local rural areas. Local communities (villages/settlements) in China do not have very much power. As explained in Chapter Three, rural communities in China are supposed to be the most democratic level as the village committees are selected by local residents. However, local communities are not included in the administrative power structure in China, and their ability to influence decisions of local government (city/county/town) is very weak. Moreover, the public participation of local residents is found to be very difficult as their knowledge in rural development and planning is limited. Therefore, both the private
sector and local communities play a very marginal role in rural governance structures. In contrast, the government still plays a leading role in rural governance.

**The economic and physical landuse focus of rural planning**

The spatial planning approach argues for an emphasis on long-term strategic thinking to develop future visions and spatial strategies and the adoption of spatial planning for rural development also emphasises an integration of economic, social, environmental and cultural development (Haughton, Allendinger and Counsell, 2010). The investigation into rural planning and policy at the national level and in Jiangsu province has revealed a different landscape of rural planning in China. Economic development is the first priority in rural policy while the main job of rural planning is about physical landuse control. The new planning system in 2008, with full coverage on rural areas, provides an opportunity for regional and local governments to develop their own planning framework. The focus of rural planning in Jiangsu is very much about the concentration of town and village development and landuse regulation in villages through town and village distribution planning and village planning. Village planning did try to cover more issues than physical landuse, but this was not found to be effective.

**The lack of effective delivery mechanisms**

The findings also highlight the problems that arise from the lack of an effective delivery mechanism for rural planning. The current rural development and planning delivery mainly depends on the local government’s inputs with support from national and provincial governments. This government dependent delivery approach is found to cause two major problems in local development. The first is that a lot of newly
developed rural settlements are just a mini-image of urbanised areas led by local government. Secondly, it becomes a major financial burden on local government especially in the long term.

**The urban-centre-led approach and the dualistic urban-rural institutional system**

Another significant issue is that the analysis of China’s rural planning has to take the urban and rural institutional system into consideration. Spatial planning in Europe encourages urban-rural integration and the use of city-regions as the new framework for rural development (Gallent et al, 2008). It was found that more attention was paid to the urban-rural integration plan in some developed areas in Jiangsu province in China. This plan embraces some similar principles to spatial planning by stressing the functional interdependence between urban and rural areas and treating the metropolitan area as an appropriate context for rural development. It also breaks out from administrative boundaries to define a new spatial hierarchy of functional areas and sets out development policies for different functional areas. However, in a lot of other areas, especially the less developed ones, rural planning tends to focus on physical land-use regulation in villages and there is a lack of more strategic development planning for wider rural areas. Therefore, the current urban and rural planning framework is still predominantly urban focused.

China’s current administrative structure potentially has advantages in integrating urban and rural development. The current system puts urban and rural areas under the control of urban government, but the advantage of this united urban-rural administration has not
been fully realised. Moreover, the long-time dualistic institutional systems between urban and rural areas were regarded by some interviewees as the obstacle that blocks the normal flow between urban and rural areas. However, the current structure actually increased this urban-rural dualism because the urban government is in charge of both urban and rural areas and rural resources are exploited by the government for urban development. This has caused problems for plan-making and delivery in rural areas, especially in the urban fringe and rural areas in developed areas. For example, under different urban and rural land use systems, town and village distribution planning and village planning are used by local government as a way to exploit rural land for urban development. Moreover, the urban-centred approach to rural planning has led to the erosion of rural characteristics and local distinctiveness as a result of rural planning. This is also partly due to the application of the ‘one-size-fit-all’ planning framework as well as the local government’s push in plan-making and delivery. Hence, other than the local socio-economic context, it is also important to consider the nature of the different urban and rural institutional systems as a key factor shaping rural planning in China.

The previous discussion has highlighted a number of key factors that are particularly important for driving rural planning in China. Following this, the next section sets out some policy recommendations for rural governance and planning in China for both short-term and long-term.
8.2 Policy Recommendations for Rural Governance and Planning in China

The key findings from the case study show a different rural planning landscape in China to those in western European countries. It also identifies the weakness of the current planning framework in guiding rural development. This section provides some short and long term recommendations to improve rural planning in China with reference to the core spirit of spatial planning experiences from western developed countries.

8.2.1 Short-term

The findings (Chapters Six and Seven) show rural planning in China is constrained by the institutional context, in particular the urban-rural dualistic system. It is also considered that this institutional context will not go through fundamental changes in the near future. Hence, the policy suggestions provided for the short term mainly focus on the improvement of planning process and methodologies with only a light touch adjustment to the institutional structure.

Different types of rural area

Due to the different characteristics of rural areas from peri-urban to remote rural, there is a need to improve the definition of rural areas in China. One useful way forward is for the planning department to develop a new urban-rural classification that can capture the diversity of rural areas and the nature of interaction between urban and rural areas. It is important for the classification scheme to show the different economic, social,
environmental and cultural dimensions of rural areas, which can then help policy makers and stakeholders to understand the different needs of different types of rural areas. For pragmatic reasons, it is better for the new classification to be based on the current administrative boundaries to be feasible. From this perspective, the definition can be divided into two levels. The first level is the broad urban and rural classification which highlights the general urban and rural characteristics. For example, it can include types of central city, city fringe, central town, town fringe and countryside. At the second level, the type of ‘countryside’ can be further classified into different categories such as ‘agricultural villages’ and ‘historical and cultural villages’ to show their distinctive characteristics. In addition to demographic factors that are currently used, more variables covering economic, social, environmental, cultural and local traits should also be developed and included to provide a more robust and comprehensive scheme. This is found relevant when considering the differences in the case study area of southern, middle and northern Jiangsu. The appropriate value of each variable should be decided by the provincial planning department with support from local planning departments as they are clearer about the local situation.

**The rural planning framework**

**Improving the planning system**

The investigation of rural planning in Jiangsu shows that the current urban and rural planning system is not enough to guide rural development. It is considered by many interviewees that the current planning system cannot meet the needs of different rural areas. According to the investigation in Nanjing, neither the town and village distribution nor the village plan has caught much attention from local government. The
fast developments, and the slow adjustment of the administrative structure in the urban fringe, have made the previous town and village plan inapplicable in Nanjing. No further arrangements for village plan-making were provided by the municipal government of Nanjing since 2009. Instead, more emphasis has been put on the urban-rural integration plan by local government. Meanwhile, officers of suburban districts complain that there is a lack of an effective development plan for suburban areas. Some local officers in Taizhou also argue that the current rural planning system is not efficient in solving some specific local problems.

One important way forward will be for the provincial government to increase the flexibility of the current planning system. In the short term, the modification of the urban and rural planning system should be built upon the current statutory planning system of master planning and detailed planning. Rural development should be considered together with urban development at different scales. Moreover, it should include a master plan for districts when necessary, especially those suburban districts with large areas of countryside. According to the current structure, districts do not have power to make a master plan. There is, however, one possible way to solve this problem. Local government at the district level should decide whether a master plan is needed. If there is a need, it can then make an application to the municipal government. When approved, the making of the master plan will be carried out with cooperation of the municipal planning department and local government at the district level. In addition to normal urban and rural planning, supplementary plans or policy guidance could be added to the statutory planning system to address some specific problems of urban and rural development. A simple example showing possible modifications of the type and content of the provincial urban and rural planning system is provided in Table 8-1.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

Table 8-1: Modification of urban and rural planning system: an example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning types</th>
<th>Main topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master plan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban and rural master plan (whole</td>
<td>Urban and rural integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municipal city)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of metropolitan areas or central city if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural master plan</td>
<td>Urban and rural integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(district or county if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of the centre of town or district if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and rural master plan (town)</td>
<td>Urban and rural integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central town development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary plan</td>
<td>Special issues (eg. Historical sites protection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(any level from municipal to town</td>
<td>Project plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when in need)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Detailed plan</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development regulation in districts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>/ central areas of counties and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>towns</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Village/settlements development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>regulation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project action plans when in need</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: the author

**An integrative approach**

The current rural planning system focuses on landuse regulation in rural settlements. This rural planning framework plays a limited role in addressing economic, social, and environmental issues to response to rural changes and to achieve a more sustainable form of rural development in the future. Moreover, the role of planning in coordinating different sectoral activities is also limited. The spatial planning approach provides a
framework to coordinate sectoral policies and is considered as a potential way to achieve sustainable development. Hence, reform from traditional physical landuse planning to an integrative spatial planning approach is recommended for developing an appropriate rural planning framework. In order to achieve an integrative approach, planning should aim to ‘enable a vision for the future of regions and places that is based on evidence, local distinctiveness and community derived objectives; translate this vision into a set of policies, priorities, programmes and land allocations together with the public sector resources to deliver them; create a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes economic, environmental and social wellbeing for the area; and coordinate and deliver the public sector components of this vision with other agencies and processes’ (UCL and Deloitte, 2007: 11).

Spatial planning approach also emphasises the idea of ‘multi-functionality’ in rural development (Brandt and Vejre, 2003; Gallent et al, 2008), which is important for rural planning in China. The idea of ‘multi-functionality’ requires an understanding of a wide range of activities and the ability to combine these different economic, social, environmental and cultural activities to shape place-making in the most beneficial way. According to the experience of the case study areas, economic development is likely to continue to be the priority of rural development in the near future. In most areas, the dependence of the rural economy on the primary sector continues to decrease. The strategy of encouraging economic diversification should be promoted and supported to regenerate the rural economy, especially for rural areas in the immediate hinterland of cities. There has also been an increasing emphasis on treating the natural environment and rural amenity as a potential rural development resource. This means that while
economic development is the priority, it is important for planning to play a proactive role in protecting the rural environment.

In summary, a future rural framework in China should build a sustainable vision, achieve multi-functional strategies and develop a policy framework promoting ‘diversification of economic development, decent living condition; sustainable rural environment and countryside amenity; and efficient support systems. For the effective delivery of an integrative approach, it is necessary to strengthen the role of statutory planning in coordinating various sectoral policies. This requires enhancing the power of the planning department.

**Empowering local government**

The findings from the field work show that a strong top-down approach has been adopted in rural development and planning. Though local government (at the municipal level) is considered as the major executor of rural development and planning, their work is under a strong steer and guidance from the national and provincial governments. Moreover, the application of the ‘one-size-fits-all’ rural policy has neglected the actual needs of different local areas and led to the loss of local distinctiveness. To alleviate this problem, the provincial government should reconsider the role and power distribution between it and local government. The role of provincial government could focus on providing guidance and supervising the work of local government. More power should be transferred to local government to facilitate the delivery of rural planning. It is in this way that more distinctive local policy could be developed to better meet the requirements of local areas. Moreover, the provincial government should develop an
effective monitory system and evaluation mechanism to track the outcomes of rural planning delivery. The policy concepts of local distinctiveness and other characteristics, rather than delivery speed, should be used to monitor progress and success.

The application of the ‘multi-functional’ strategy in rural planning requires some common objectives across different sectors in rural development. Public participation and sectoral coordination are found to be the weakest elements in rural planning in the fieldwork. To improve this situation, a collaborative approach is needed for local government. Local government has to identify the key actors, both from the public and private sector, for rural development. It is necessary to build a cooperative mechanism between government sectors and effective partnership between the public and private sectors. The inclusion of other sectors should come with the strengthening of the role of the planning department in the process of development.
8.2.2 Long term

In the long term, the recommendation is for the gradual removal of institutional constraints on rural development. Building upon the outcomes of the short term policy changes suggested in the previous section, some further modification of the rural planning system should then be carried out. It is argued that a spatial planning approach is best to be applied in relevant functional areas within which economic relations, environmental systems and daily life time-space patterns interact and can be better understood (Wong, 2002; Wong et al, 2006). For better arrangements of urban and rural development, urban and rural master plans should define key development areas based on functional linkages, rather than following the traditional administrative hierarchy. If the functional areas cut cross several towns/counties/districts, a collaborative partnership of related local government bodies should be established for the making and delivery of plans under the supervision of the upper level government. This is very important for rural development in the urban fringe as it balances the development and protection of rural areas from a more strategic, city-regional, perspective.

There is also a need to simplify the administrative hierarchy to a ‘province-led county’ mode as observed in Jiangsu province. Though only trial changes have been carried out in the fiscal system, this reform might set the trend of development in the long term. This reform suggested is for the provincial government to directly control planning in counties (or even towns) and reduce the planning power control of municipal government on counties or even towns. This would put urban and rural areas on a more equal footing. This will not only contribute to urban-rural integration at the regional level, but will also reduce the administrative obstacles of fragmenting rural areas in the
functional regions. Under the current structure, rural areas are under the control of urban government. Given that the government’s main focus is usually urban development, there is a concern that the urban government may take advantage of rural areas to exploit their resources and this is led to the loss of rural characteristics and urban sprawl. To separate rural power from the urban government will reduce the possibility of these problems and won’t result in so much planned urbanisation in rural areas.

This research provides some recommendations for a more sustainable planning approach in the short term and the long term. In order to put them into practice efficiently, they must be further elaborated and enriched in detail to be integrated into the policy package of the government.
8.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research identifies the progress and dilemmas of recent rural planning development in China. The implications of the research must take into account the special institutional context of China. The investigation of rural planning was carried out in Jiangsu Province which is one of the most developed areas in China. The conclusions of this research can be generalised to other eastern provinces with similar development level. However, the generalisation should pay attention to the characteristics of the case study areas. For example, rural land in Jiangsu province belongs to rural settlements while in some other provinces they belong to rural villages. Moreover, the current rural conditions in southern Jiangsu are largely shaped by the previous success of the Town and Village Enterprises known as ‘southern Jiangsu mode’, which is very different from the situation of rural areas in other developed provinces. Hence, for further research on this topic, it is important to select a wider range of case study areas in developed provinces to contrast and compare their experience in the making and delivery of rural planning. This will also help to test the robustness of the theoretical framework presented here.

This research mainly focuses on the planning department’s activities in respect of rural areas over the past few years. However, a broad range of development activities in both the public and private sectors are influencing the nature of rural development. It would therefore be valuable to extend the scope of the analysis beyond studying just the impacts of rural planning. The tensions between different sectors also have an important
influence on the process of plan making and delivery. Future lines of research enquiry could focus on the relationships and interactions of different sectors in rural development, for example, from an institutional perspective. This will provide a clearer understanding of the institutional context of rural planning as well as contributing to develop more appropriate arrangements of the function and power structure of different sectors in rural development.

At the time the fieldwork for this research was carried out, Jiangsu provincial government has just started developing rural planning activities. As it was eager to quickly achieve full planning coverage of its rural areas, many planning policies and decisions at the provincial and local level were implemented in a rush and the system was immature. Over the past two years, provincial and local government have been working on improving rural planning by solving the problems that emerged in practice.

With regard to data collection, face-to-face interviews were employed as the main method in this research. This method helps to elicit the in-depth insights and different perspectives of different sectoral actors and also the relationships and intentions between them. However, a large proportion in the interviewees were drawn from the governmental sectors and semi-governmental sectors as few private sector actors are, as yet, involved in rural planning in China. With the increasing interest in rural development, the role of the private sector in rural areas is growing and it will be increasingly valuable to include a wider range of actors in the future research.
One final issue is related to language. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese and translated by the researcher into English, as was the case with the policies from key documents and plans. However, there are some words that cannot be easily expressed in English, but the translation tries to stick as closely as possible to the original meaning.

Despite with limitations of time and budget, this research has provided a comprehensive picture of rural planning in the eastern developed areas of China. Unlike the longstanding and copious amount of academic research in a western context, to date there have been few research studies of an in-depth nature that have investigated the rural planning framework in China. This research therefore contributes to the field by offering an empirical understanding of rural planning in a different institutional context of China.
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OECD (2008) OECD rural policy review: Netherlands, http://www.oecd.org/document/19/0,3746,en_2649_33735_40671251_1_1_1_1,00.html


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## APPENDIX I: THE OFFICIAL DEFINITIONS OF RURAL AREAS IN CHINA IN DIFFERENT TIMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Definition of rural areas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td><strong>Areas outside of cites and towns</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cities/towns: (1) districts where the people’s committee of the city (or any other districts that higher than designated town) is in; (2) settlements with a permanent population ≥ 2000 people and the proportion of non-agricultural population ≥ 50 percent; (3) special regions (including mineral towns, rail station, industrial and commercial centre, transportation hub, colleges and universities, and research institutions) with a permanent population &gt; 1000 people and a proportion of non-agricultural population &gt; 75 percent; (4) convalescent district with a proportion of convalescent people &gt; 75 percent of the local residents.</td>
<td>State Council (1955), ‘Regulation of the criteria to divide urban and rural areas’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td><strong>Area outside of urban areas including market towns, counties and villages</strong>&lt;br&gt;Urban areas of cities with districts: (1) cities with population density ≥ 1500 people per square kilometres, urban areas include all the districts of the city. If the build-up area has extended to the periphery towns (counties), the urban areas should include the administrative areas of these towns (counties); (2) cities with population density &lt; 1500 people per square kilometres, urban areas include the district where the government is in and all the administrative areas of sub-district offices. If the build-up area has extended to the periphery villages, the urban areas should include the administrative areas of these villages.&lt;br&gt;Urban areas of cities without districts: the place where the</td>
<td>NBSC (1999), ‘The criterion to divide urban and rural areas in statistic field’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
city’s government is in and administrative areas of all the streets (sub-district offices); If the build-up area has extended to the periphery towns (counties), the urban areas should include the administrative areas of these towns (counties).

Urban areas of towns: district where the government is in and all the administrative areas of residents’ committee. If the build-up area of the districts where government is in has extended to peripheral villages, urban areas should include the administrative areas of these villages;

Other urban areas: special regions (including mineral towns, rail station, industrial and commercial centre, transportation hub, colleges and universities, research institutions, tourism districts and development zones) with a permanent population $\geq 3000$ people.

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006.03</td>
<td><strong>Areas outside of urban areas</strong>&lt;br&gt;Urban areas of cities: (1) the administrative areas of all the resident’s committees under the sub-district offices; (2) administrative areas of other resident’s committees and villages that covered by the urban public services and infrastructures.&lt;br&gt;Urban areas of towns: (1) the administrative areas of all the resident’s committees of the town; (2) villages that covered by the town’s public services and infrastructures.&lt;br&gt;Other urban areas: special regions (including mineral towns, rail station, industrial and commercial centre, transportation hub, colleges and universities, research institutions, farms, tourism districts and development zones) with a permanent population $\geq 3000$ people.</td>
<td>NBSC (2006), ‘The temporary criterion to divide urban and rural areas in statistic field’ and the ‘Notice of NBSC on the regulation of urban-rural division’</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006.04</td>
<td><strong>Areas outside of urban areas and urban-rural combination areas (urban fringe areas)</strong></td>
<td>NBSC (2006), ‘the notice of’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Urban areas of cities:** (1) the administrative areas of all the resident’s committees under the sub-district offices; (2) villages that totally covered by the urban public services and infrastructures.

**Urban areas of towns:** (1) the administrative areas of all the resident’s committees of the town; (2) villages that totally covered by the town’s public services and infrastructures.

**Urban-rural combination areas (urban fringe areas):** villages that partly covered by the public services and infrastructures of cities or towns.

**Other urban areas:** special regions (including mineral towns, rail station, industrial and commercial centre, transportation hub, colleges and universities, research institutions, farms, tourism districts and development zones) with a permanent population ≥ 3000 people.

NBSC to start the work of divide urban-rural areas’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural development</th>
<th>State Council, (1982), The Summary of National Rural Conference;</th>
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<td></td>
<td>State Council, (1984), The Notice about Rural Work in 1984;</td>
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<td>State Council, (1985), Ten Policies About Activate Rural Economy;</td>
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<td>State Council, (1998), The Central Government’s Decision on Some Key Issues on Agriculture And Rural Work;</td>
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<td>State Council, (2006), Some Ideas on Carrying Out the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme;</td>
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<td>State Council, (2007), State Council’s Ideas on Actively Developing Modern Agriculture and Carrying Out the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme;</td>
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<td>Appendix II: Key National Documents on Rural Development and Planning</td>
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<td><strong>State Council</strong> (2008), State Council’s Ideas on Enhancing Agricultural Infrastructure System Construction to Facilitate Agricultural Development and the Increase of Farmers’ Incomes;</td>
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<td><strong>State Council</strong> (2008), State Council’s Decisions on Impelling Rural Reform and Development;</td>
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<td><strong>State Council</strong> (2009), State Council’s Ideas on Facilitating the Stable Development of Agriculture and The Continuous Increase of Farmers’ Incomes;</td>
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<td><strong>State Council</strong> (2010), State Council’s Ideas on Increasing The Effort on Integrating Urban-rural Development and Enhancing the Development Foundation of Agriculture and Rural Areas.</td>
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<td><strong>Rural planning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MOHURD</strong> (2000), The Making Methods of Town and Village Plan;</td>
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<td><strong>MOHURD</strong> (2005), The Ideas on Guiding Village Renovation;</td>
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<td><strong>MOHURD</strong> (2005), The Making Methods of Urban Plan;</td>
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<td><strong>MOHURD</strong> (2008), The Ideas on Implementation of ‘Urban and Rural Planning Act.'</td>
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## APPENDIX III: KEY PROVINCIAL DOCUMENTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

| Rural development | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2005), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Urban and Rural Construction;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2005), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Policies to Improve Agricultural Productivity and Increase the Incomes of Farmers;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2005), The Outline of the Eleventh Five Year Plan of Jiangsu Province;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2006), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving the Mechanisation of Agricultural Development;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2007), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Deepening Reform in Rural areas;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2007), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Developing Modern Agriculture and Carrying Out the New Socialist Rural Construction Programme;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2008), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Improving Agricultural Infrastructure and Improving Farmers’ Incomes;  
|                   | Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2008), Provincial Government’s Ideas on Supporting the Employment and Self-employment of Farmer;  

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<td><strong>Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2009), Provincial Government’s</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ideas on Reforming Agricultural Development Pattern and</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Improving the Development of Modern Agriculture;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2009), Provincial Government’s</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ideas on Facilitating the Stable Development of Agriculture and</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>the Continuous Increase of Farmers’ Incomes;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Jiangsu Provincial Government, (2010), Provincial Government’s</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ideas on Increasing the Effort on Integrating Urban-rural</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Development and Enhancing The Development Foundation of</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Agriculture and Rural Areas.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rural planning</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Development of Jiangsu, (2005), Guidance on Making Town and</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Village Distribution Plans in Jiangsu Province;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Development of Jiangsu, (2006), Key Works in Town and Village</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Planning and Construction in 2006;</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Development of Jiangsu, (2007), Key Points in Making the</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Village Layout Plans in Jiangsu Province;</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Development of Jiangsu, (2008), Guidance on Village Planning in</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Jiangsu Province.</strong></td>
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### APPENDIX IV: KEY LOCAL DOCUMENTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

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<td>Nanjing Government, (2003), The Government’s idea on Improving the Modernisation of Agriculture;</td>
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<td>Nanjing Government, (2007), The Government’s idea on Improving the Development of Leading Agricultural Enterprises;</td>
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<td><strong>Social welfare system</strong></td>
<td>Nanjing Government, (2004), The Government’s idea on Improving the Implementation of New Rural Cooperative Medical System;</td>
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<td>Nanjing Government, (2006), The Development Plan of Medical and Health Care System in Rural areas of Nanjing;</td>
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<td>Nanjing Government, (2007), The Subsistence Supporting System for Aged Farmers Who Lost Land in Development;</td>
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<td>Nanjing Government, (2008), The Way to Carry Out the New Social Pension Insurance in Rural areas;</td>
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<td>Nanjing Government, (2008), The Regulation to Carry Out the Minimum Subsistence Allowance In Urban and Rural Area;</td>
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<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
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### Appendix IV: Key Local Documents on Rural Development and Planning

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<th>Environment</th>
<th>Implementation of Concentrating Rural Residents to Urban Areas and Rural Residential Sites.</th>
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| Taizhou     |                                                                                  |
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### Appendix IV: Key Local Documents on Rural Development and Planning

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<th>Social welfare system</th>
<th>Taizhou Government, (2006), The Trial Ways to Carry Out the Basic Social Pension Insurance in Rural areas;</th>
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<td>Taizhou Government, (2009), The Ideas on Improving the Development of New Cooperative Medical System in Rural Areas;</td>
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**Suqian**

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### Appendix IV: Key Local Documents on Rural Development and Planning

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## APPENDIX V: LIST OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL OFFICERS

<table>
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<th>Code</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development</td>
<td>November, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</td>
<td>December, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of Jiangsu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td>Provincial Government Office of Jiangsu</td>
<td>December, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
<td>Provincial Government Office of Jiangsu</td>
<td>December, 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural</td>
<td>December, 2009</td>
</tr>
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<td>Development of Jiangsu</td>
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<tr>
<td>J5</td>
<td>Provincial Government Office of Jiangsu (Rural Work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office)</td>
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# APPENDIX VI: LIST OF LOCAL OFFICERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

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<td>Nanjing Rural work office</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJ3</td>
<td>Nanjing Planning Bureau</td>
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<td>NJ4</td>
<td>Nanjing Construction Bureau (Qixia District)</td>
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<td>Nanjing Planning Bureau (Jiangning District)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJ6</td>
<td>Nanjing Government Office</td>
<td>November, 2009</td>
<td>Nanjing</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJ7</td>
<td>Local developer (agricultural tourism)</td>
<td>November, 2009</td>
<td>Nanjing</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJ8</td>
<td>Local resident</td>
<td>November, 2009</td>
<td>Nanjing</td>
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<td>Local resident</td>
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<td>Taizhou Rural Work Office</td>
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# Appendix VII: List of Planners

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APPENDIX VIII: LIST OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions for officers in the government departments

About rural development

- What are the government’s recent focus and objectives for rural development?
- What are your opinions on the major changes and trends (including economic, social, environmental and cultural) in recent rural development and the main drivers of these changes?
- What do you think are the major challenges and opportunities faced by rural areas for future sustainable development?

About rural governance

- What activities have been taken by the province/local areas for development in response to the changes?
- Are these activities led by government, other agencies or even local people? How does the government coordinate with these agencies?

About rural planning

- What do you think is the best way to define rural areas?
- What is your understanding of rural characteristics?
- What do you think should be the object and spatial scale of rural planning?
- What is the purpose of rural planning and its role in rural development?
Appendix VIII: List of Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Who do you think is the main focus of plan-making? What are the other governmental departments and agencies that are involved in the planning process?

- How about the coordination between provincial and local government on rural planning?

- What are the problems in coordinating the conflicts between the policies of different departments and the needs of different agencies?

- What is your understanding of urban-rural integration? How do you think it might be achieved through planning?

- What is the main mechanism to deliver the planning policy and what are the problems faced in planning delivery?

- What do you think about the making and implementation of the town and village distribution planning and the two rounds of village planning in 2006 and 2008?

- Do you have any other suggestions for the development of a better planning framework for rural development in China?

**Interview questions for planning academics**

**About rural development**

- What do you think is the biggest policy change for rural development since the socio-economic reform?

- What do you think are the most important changes (including economic, social, environmental and cultural) and the drivers for these changes?

- What are the opportunities and challenges for rural areas with this new context?
Appendix VIII: List of Semi-structured Interview Questions

- What do you think are the main issues for rural areas in terms of future sustainable development?

About rural governance

- What do you think about the local development activities in rural areas in response to the contextual changes?

About rural planning

- How do you define rural areas/ what do you think should be the object and spatial scale of rural planning?

- What are your comments on the current planning framework for rural areas?

- What is the purpose of rural planning and its role in rural development?

- What should be the main strategies and policy focuses for sustainable rural development in the future?

- What are your opinions on the role of government at different levels on rural development?

- How do you think planning could contribute to coordinating conflicts between different government departments and different agencies?

- What is your understanding of rural characteristics?

- What is your understanding of urban-rural integration? How do you think it might be achieved through planning?

- How do you think about the making and implementation of the town and village distribution planning and the two rounds of village planning in 2006 and 2008?
Appendix VIII: List of Semi-structured Interview Questions

- Do you have any other suggestions for the development of a better planning framework for rural development in China?

Interview questions for professional planners

About rural development

- What do you think are the most important changes (including economic, social, environmental and cultural) in rural areas and the major drivers for these changes?
- What are the opportunities and challenges for rural areas in new background?
- What do you think are the main issues for rural areas in terms of future sustainable development?

About rural governance

- What activities do you know a being taken by local areas for development in response to this changing context?
- Are these activities led by government, other agencies or even local people?
- What are the institutional relationships between the government and agencies involved in rural development?

About rural planning

- How do you define rural areas/ what is the object and spatial scale of rural planning?
- What is your understanding of rural characteristics?
- What is your understanding of urban-rural integration? How do you think it might be achieved through planning?
• What is the purpose of rural planning and its role in rural development?

• What are the visions, strategies and policy focuses for rural development?

• What are the main players that are involved in the planning process? What are the institutional relationships between them?

• How does planning try to coordinate the conflicts between different players?

• What are the major problems faced by the planning process?

• What do you think about the current planning framework for rural areas, the town and village distribution planning and the two rounds of village planning in 2006 and 2008? Do you think it can solve rural problems and help to achieve a sustainable future for rural areas?

• Do you have any other suggestions for the development of a better planning framework for rural development in China?

**Interview questions for local agencies**

• What do you think are the most important policies for rural development in recent years?

• What do you think are the major challenges and opportunities for rural development?

• What difficulties or restrictions have you faced in rural policy in your business?

• Have you participated in the rural planning process? How do you think about the success and deficiencies of new socialism rural construction planning?
• What do you think should be the focuses of planning policy for sustainable rural development?

• Do you have negotiations with government during your business? If do, what are the difficulties in this process?

• Do you have any other suggestions or expectations for the improvement of rural planning?

**Interview questions for local farmers**

• What is your main income source?

• What do you think are the most important policies that have influenced you in recent years?

• How do you think about the new socialism rural construction programme? What do you think are the most important changes of development in your area under this programme? Are you satisfied with these changes? What changes do you expect?

• What problems do you think are faced by the area? Are there any areas (economic development, social welfare, environmental protection) you think the government should pay more attention to?

• Have you participate in the rural planning process? How do you think about the success and deficiencies of new socialism rural construction planning?

• What do you think should be the main focus of planning?

• What do you think are the main rural characteristics? Do you hope these characteristics will be kept in the future?
Appendix VIII: List of Semi-structured Interview Questions

- How do you think about these new or renovated villages? Do they help to improve your life?

- Do you have any other suggestions or expectations for the improvement of rural planning?