initiative &
institution: editorial
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The Taiwan Strait Atlas project sets out to investigate how the area is emerging as a coherent urban region. This emergence is occurring due to the densities of exchange occurring on both sides of the Strait relating to economy, goods, transportation, and population migration.

The Taiwan Strait is one of the most volatile areas in the world today. This is due to the differences between China and Taiwan regarding the status of Taiwan as a sovereign state. And yet this region has cohesion, part historic, part emergent. A body of economic, historical, social, financial, linguistic and cultural connections and flows create an urban fabric across the Strait that links Taiwan strongly with Fujian Province. We are engaged in developing an atlas of this body of connections and flows (Taiwanese business investments in Fujian, religious travel across the Strait, family and language connections etc.), in order to describe the region as an incubator for emergent urban forms and projects. We have focussed on two cities: Xiamen in China, and Taichung in Taiwan. The aim of the project is to form a network of parties in these two cities that can participate in initiating pilot projects that use the knowledge of the cross-strait network to generate more cross-strait collaborations. The main thematic focus we have adopted for the pilot projects is climate change, and the aim is to turn these pilot projects into prototypes for cross-Strait co-operations. Indeed the core part of the argument is that what appears to be separate, (both geographically and politically) actually encourages cultural and economic connectivity. The network we wish to create is an enabling device to encourage collaborations that bypass the overtly political situation.

The context is global warming in general and the ecological fragility of the Taiwan Strait as a site of its effects. The objective of the network is to help focus the Atlas research and formulate potential cross-Strait pilot project collaborations. Nodes of network participants can act as potential stakeholders in a project. For example projects can include: renewable energy sources linked to a residential master-plan; the monitoring of the overall carbon emissions in the Taiwan Strait Area; a local carbon trading market; or linking special skill development with the education of migrant children.