**Suburbin meeting in Delhi 24th-27th august 2011**

This three-day workshop of the Suburbin micro team was divided into three parts. First each participant presented the progress of her preliminary fieldwork research. Then the discussion focused on the various approaches that the project is building one, and the possibility to use a grid to collect a number of common data in each field.

**1 / Topics covered by the different participants.**

In the first part of the workshop presentations of the progress of work has identified several major themes.

1.1 Weight of migration in the development of small towns

In the proposed criteria for the selection of cities, the lower and upper thresholds of selected populations have been established between 10,000 and 100,000. Yet several studies have shown that the census had difficulty taking into account the floating population that can significantly increase the number of inhabitants and in particular the housing of the city.

**Diya** presented her work on the region of Kullu-Bhuntar in Himachal Pradesh. The town of Kullu has only 41,000 people on the ground officially even though the population seems much higher on the field. The city attracts many tourists who are not taken into account by the census.

**Gopa** raises the same issue in West Bengal where the census also has difficulty to incorporate in its accounts, migrants induced by mining in the study area. The issue of migration in small towns may be interesting to analyse in order to deepen our understanding of the impact it has on the growth dynamics of cities.

1.2 Defining the process of growth of small agglomerations

Is the process of growth of small towns separated from the big cities? This question is asked by **Diya**, the town of Kullu-Bhuntar indeed spread along a highway corridor far beyond the administrative borders of the city. This multi-jurisdiction of the town refers to the metropolisation process although the city size is quite small. Similarly sprawl of the city is weakly dense in the periphery. There is clearly **a form of densification** that raises questions about understanding the multiplicity of flows at different scales and defines the urbanization process: ribbon development? Multilayered urbanization? Diya proposes “metropolitanisation with a core growing along the rest”.

**Solly**, who works in Karnataka in three coastal settlements (two gram panchayats and one town panchayat) characterised by their fishing industry, intense trade, gulf money and more recently high modernization projects, is also interested in **non-metropolitan process of urbanization**. Rigorously distinguish the processes of urbanization, suburbanization and metropolisation should also provide a clearer framework to the specific dynamics of small towns.

1.3 The land issues in the context of small agglomerations

Small agglomerations turn out to be a relevant framework for studying the regulation of access to property. Indeed, as noted by **Solly** in his study, the persistence of local authorities is still strong and articulated with official regulations. The importance of ritual is sustained in logic of land control, involving key players as mediators in conflicts over land. **Eric** is also studying the issues of legal pluralism.

**Mythri** seeks to determine how changes in land tenure can affect the trajectories of economic and social dynamics of small agglomerations, taking for example the area of ​​Munnar in Kerala.

During their fieldwork in Tamil Nadu **Bhuvana, Venkat and Kamala** have made the connection between economic history of small towns in Tamil Nadu and evolution of the land acquisition process in the four fields of study they presented. In small agglomerations between Erode, Salem and Attur, it is the transformation of land tenure that caught their attention, especially in the tribal areas where land ownership is collective. Land development seems to take divergent paths between small and large landlords who have more relations in particular with the authorities in charge of tourism development. In the region of Thiruchengodu two transformation processes were identified. On one side there are a multitude of small private plots that are in a process of being consolidated for the creation of educational institutions. On the other hand, lands are redeemed in the framework of SEZ policy and the construction of mega infrastructures adjacent faces resistance from local populations. Finally around Vellore, land conflicts in the area adjacent to the river Palar reveal the importance of customary institutions and the strong involvement of the Muslim community in their resolutions.

The industry’s impacts are also strong on the cost of access to land and may be more important on the scale of a small town than a metropolis. Thus in her work **Gopa** shows how initially the mining industry could greatly increases the price of land that was later dropped because of pollution from this industry. Here is revealed a characteristic of the small town which is more sensitive to changes in its direct environment and can have an erratic development.

1.4 Administrative classification and local governance

Based on Indiapolis data, the selected settlements may have an urban government as well as a rural government. How does it affect the trajectory of agglomeration?

In 2011 the West Bengal census identifies 522 new census town and six municipalities, **Gopa** shows that this development follows an administrative transformation of the urban landscape without making any changes in governance. Census town indeed keep a rural government even if they become "urban" as classified by the census.

The expansion of the administrative boundaries of the town, that allows it to improve its tax collection, does not follow the urban sprawl, especially because of the surrounding local bodies which refuse to be imposed on planning rules coupled with their inclusion in the city, as presented by **Marie-Hélène** from her preliminary work in Haryana. In addition, the responsibilities of local governments are limited because of their weak financial and human capacities, which explain the importance of district level. Corruption could be a good analyser to understand the relationships between different interest groups in small towns. How local elites, especially town councillors have adapted with governance changes and what are their relationships to the district level and with industry owners. Private governance is gaining importance particularly in the planning of industrial zones. Explaining the articulation between private and public governance could highlight the relationships between actors contributing to the town life.

In Tamil Nadu, similarly, **Kamala** (**with Bhuvana and Venkat**) explains that there is resistance in relation to access to city status, but for different reasons. This is for smaller communities to continue to enjoy the benefits paid to villages such as NREGA, which do not exist for cities. Consequently, they propose to study networks of small towns to observe the closeness and the links of the town with its environment, within the settlement itself or with the neighbouring villages. The land use policies are the result of consensus among official authorities, local governments and interest groups such as associations of caste and religious associations (Jamaat). For example in the case of the Palar Valley their field seeks to explain the expansion process of the administrative boundaries of Vellore and how the corporation manages the integration of common peripherals. These jurisdictional conflicts highlight the role of the municipality in policy planning.

Similarly **Julien** hypothesized a link between the form taken by the decentralization and morphological growth form of the city. This hypothesis was considered strong, but not necessarily right. To prove it, the study of the bottom of the urban hierarchy in Tamil Nadu looks for whether the proliferation of Town Panchayat has an impact on the dynamics of growth of small towns. To search a link between urban governance and the growth process, a comparison of a Gram Panchayat, a Town Panchayat and a municipality would highlight what are the main differences in terms of planning and management of urban space.

1.5 Employment and Labour Market

**Anna** proposes to base her study in Haryana around the spatial practices related to labour which may be attached to different types of industries. How does employment participate in the production of space? Do the economic transformations from agriculture to industry bring farmers in globalization by changing their relationship to space?

Based on changes in the labour market in Tamil Nadu **Venkat** tries to see how rural areas are transformed including investment income urban agriculture.

**2 Discussion on the choice of cities, states studied, methodology, hypothesis**

2.1 The categories of cities defined

Small towns were classified into categories according to the non-exclusive engines of growth:

- Isolated agglomerations  
- Market town  
- Industrial cluster  
- Large population (growing villages)   
- Administrative towns  
- Declining towns  
- Tourism/pilgrimage

Each city can be found in one or more categories, ideally all types of settlements should be covered by the project. The category of city named “endogenous growth” has been proposed previously has been deleted because the concept of endogenous growth has appeared too blurred and he could be included in other categories as in the industrial clusters. The idea of ​​the grid appeared generally positive to provide a common framework that will facilitate comparisons between the agglomerations studied.

2.2 The gaps

*Gaps about the States*

If the project does not study all the States of the Union it is important that it covers the main types of states that can be identified. For this purpose the states were classified according to two criteria: first level of wealth, the other according to their level of urbanization based on Indiapolis and census data. Some cases were left out because they cannot be realized such as a poor state with a high rate of urbanization based on the census. Most study areas are concentrated in the rich states, poor states should be added in a panel such Madhya Pradesh or Bihar. The interesting case of Punjab was also mentioned. Proposed solutions could be to rely on a student of **Sri**, **Anna**, **Julien, Rémy** or an external person.

*Gaps about the processes*

It seems we do not have cases of declining towns or isolated agglomerations

*Gaps about data*

Based upon the work done by the first student of Sri, there is a list of interesting indicators that ought to be collected for all the cases studies. Suggestion was made to have one Research Assistant that could collect data or at least collate data gathered during field work to provide a background of all the localities studied.

2.3 The review of the literature

To advance the literature review, lecture notes will be posted from the end of September so that everyone can see papers that have already been read. **Bhuvana**, **Kamala** and **Gopa** are working on case studies of small towns, Marie-**Hélène** on the general literature on small towns. **Mainak** interested in articles relating to NEG. **Julien** will focus on the distribution of development programs and their implementation. **Mythri** looks for the contributions of critical geography on the growth process of small towns. **Eric** and **Solly** and contribute to the analysis of land issues. **Venkat** focuses on a range of case studies on small towns in Tamil Nadu.

**Partha** has proposed to set up a system to update all the papers when they are reading. The other option considered was to go through the Endnote software.

2.4 Following planning

With regard to the forthcoming schedules of the project, a paper of 10-20 pages should be performed by each participant at the beginning of 2012. The next meeting was planned for the month of April, so that everyone has the time to advance their fieldworks and can present the first results. Macro team should meet in September to review the first indicators, linking urban and industrialization, migration, education ... The scale of the data will be at the district level by crossing the census data and those from the National Sample Survey in order to make some district profiles which can give a framework to the micro study.

**3 / Fieldwork in Manesar industrial area**

The third day was devoted to a visit of the new industrial area of ​​Manesar in Haryana about fifteen kilometres from Gurgaon. This is an industrial area with one of the highest growth in India, it benefits from its proximity to Delhi airport and the NH8. In 2001, Manesar’s population was only 15,400 inhabitants according to the census. The name of the area is Manesar Integrated Township (IMT), it has a special administrative status, and the area is directly under the administration of the HSIDC, Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation, which is invested of all local government charges. The township does not fall under the administration of other local governments, or HSIDC members are not elected so this raises questions about governance in these new areas of industrial development. A meeting with a member of the HSIDC helped clarify a number of issues such as land management.

The interest in the creation of this township is to provide a good level of infrastructure and services to encourage businesses to locate outside of Delhi. Also to avoid switching from Delhi, houses are built on site at the same time. A school, shops, services, all the facilities and amenities are available. The set is divided into areas allocated to different uses: residential, government, retail, corporate ... The HSIDC is in charge of the master plan of the controlled area. This area is growing and progressively includes parcels of land. That could be a big issue because of the important number of landlords for each small parcels, land purchase often takes several years, three on average. Tensions have been held with the acquisition of land because it is a fertile agricultural area and farmers have joined together. Once included in the protected area land use cannot be changed, any construction can be made without the consent of the HSIDC. Within the area, several Gram Panchayats are isolated but they have their own local governments and are not dependent of HSIDC.

A site visit has enabled us to see that many parcels are vacant and also that a large number of buildings were apparently not used: industrial as well as housing building. The villages inside appear very isolated even if they seem to benefit from housing demand with the construction of additional floors for leasing to local employees.

Then during the visit of the Amul milk factory we saw the whole process of milk production since arriving by tanker truck, pasteurization and its transformation into ice, ghee ... The reasons why the company decided to settle in Manesar is market proximity to Delhi and good road connection. Part of the daily contract employees are coming from the surrounding villages, the company has set up buses to enable them to reach the plant (the HSIDC is not in charge of public transport). Permanent employees come from Gurgaon or from the outskirts of Delhi. The few respondents seemed not to take advantage of services set up on Manesar.

This site is a strong example of fast-growing town. It illustrates how land issues could be sources of tension, governance issues and the transformation process corresponding to that defined by the NEG: an industrial development on the outskirts of cities and correlated with good connectivity.