

Peri-Urban Development and Environmental Sustainability: Examples from China and India

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This study has assembled remote sensing, demographic, environmental and other data over a period of forty years for a systematic comparison of urbanizing regions in China and India. Data on trajectories of urban development in parallel samples of 10 Chinese and 10 Indian cities over 1970–2010 were compared to examine how urban forms have changed and the consequences for environmental change.

The analysis has revealed strikingly different transformations of urban form in Chinese and Indian urban regions. In China, peri-urban expansion has proceeded consistently in coastal regions with strong external investment regardless of city size, but less systematically in some inland regions and little in others. In India, peri-urban expansion has been less dramatic and has varied less between regions with higher and lower external investment. Indian patterns of peri-urban expansion also differ systematically from corresponding Chinese patterns.

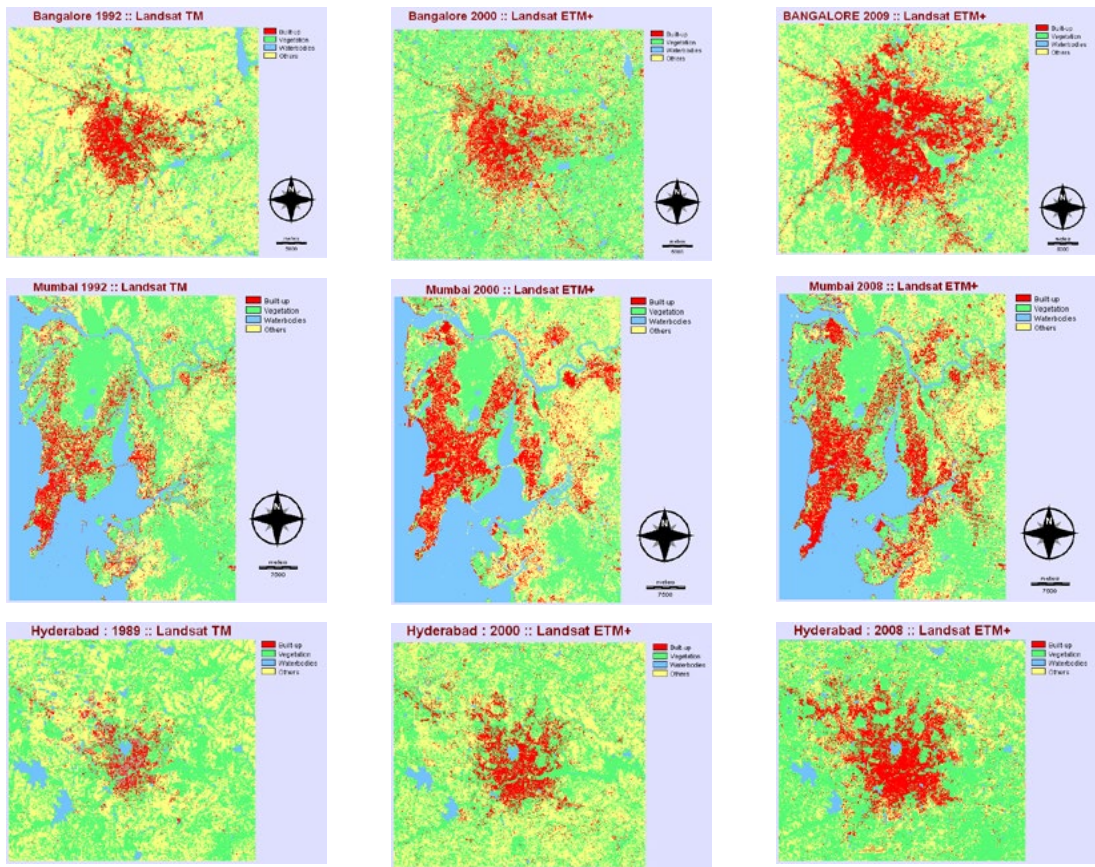
These variations are resulted from different land market institutions, policy-making structures, national policy, infrastructure investment, transnational investment flows and patterns of rural-urban migration. Detailed qualitative and quantitative case studies in several paired urban regions of China and India have examined these dynamics more closely. Meetings with stakeholders in both countries

have provided lessons for policy and aided the analysis. Results have also been presented at the IHDP Conference on Urbanization and Global Environmental Change and other international scientific fora.

CONCLUSION

Both the macro analysis and the micro case studies have converged around similar conclusions. Although China and India have experienced parallel trajectories of land market liberalization and peri-urban expansion, urban development has proceeded under the influence of distinct social, institutional and policy conditions. These influences have reinforced and even magnified divergences in the patterns of urban expansion. The macro-level comparative perspective of this study enabled the first systematic comparative overview of these patterns and an assessment of their wider consequences for peri-urban development.





PUBLICATIONS

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