An aerial photograph of a dense urban settlement, likely a slum, with a modern city skyline in the background. The foreground shows a dense cluster of small, brick buildings with corrugated metal roofs. The background features taller, modern high-rise buildings under a clear sky. A semi-transparent magenta band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing text.

Writings and  
projects for the  
resilient city

Camillo Boano  
William Hunter  
Caroline Newton

# Contested Urbanism *in Dharavi*

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*in Dharavi*

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# Contested Urbanism

*in Dharavi*

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# Sixty Years of Contesting Development

Professor Julio D. Dávila  
Director of the Development  
Planning Unit, UCL

For nearly six decades, the Development Planning Unit (DPU) has been training generations of post-graduate students in London and elsewhere on a range of subjects that are central to the development of countries and the lives of ordinary people. The DPU's roots can be traced to a training programme on tropical architecture in London's Architectural Association in the early 1950s. The initial emphasis on building physics and climatic design gradually gave way to the need to find new approaches to planning and social development in a context of rapid urbanisation. By the early 1970s, under the Direction of Professor Otto Koenigsberger, former Chief Architect to the Indian State of Mysore and Director of Housing of the first independent Government of India, the DPU acquired its current name and moved to University College London (UCL), the oldest and largest college in the University of London. Since then the DPU has continued to change and develop in response to the needs of governments, city administrations, civil society organisations and the international community represented in countries of the Global South.

The DPU currently offers six Master's degree programmes and one MPhil/PhD programme, with a student body that has grown nearly four-fold since the early 1980s when I enrolled in the DPU as an MSc student. The focus on planning in cities of the Global South is still very much at the centre of our teaching but our offer has also grown, encompassing programmes on urban design, the city economy, social development practice, environment and sustainable development, and national and regional development. In terms of its size and diversity, DPU's academic staff has also grown considerably, and now encompasses over thirty full-time and part-time lecturers and researchers who are active in research and consultancy in these areas and more. This impressive book edited by my colleagues Camillo Boano, William Hunter and Caroline

Newton, with contributions from three successive cohorts of Master's students, in many ways embodies DPU's history and core concerns. The book's geographical focus is India, the country where Koenigsberger was to apply the technical knowledge he learned as an architecture and planning student in Berlin, but also where he realised that traditional master planning tools, conceived in a European post-war context where cities were stagnant or losing population, were futile in the face of rapid urbanisation and weak state institutions. The book also builds on Koenigsberger's rejection of conventional views about the urban poor and city migrants as being a 'burden' on society, a 'nuisance', to instead celebrate their crucial contribution to the city's economy, to its diversity, to its present and its future. In what were then pioneering and highly controversial views, Koenigsberger dismissed slum clearance programmes as wasteful destruction of valuable housing stock, a violation of poor households' rights to security to urban land, and disruptive of activities that are central to the city economy.

The collection of essays and illustrations gathered here embody these concerns. They are also an excellent example of DPU's pedagogical philosophy that seeks to marry a sophisticated theoretical understanding of the city, its society and its institutions, with practical applications in a 'real-life' situation. The book is the product of three successive years of fieldwork led by the editors and other colleagues with participation of students from DPU's Master's in Building and Urban Design (BUDD) in the settlement of Dharavi, in the port city of Mumbai. As Caren Levy explains in her introductory notes, it also reflects DPU's philosophy of closely engaging with a range of local actors who not only provide a bridge to local realities, but can also ensure that local populations, in this case the urban poor, make use of the professional tools and insights offered both by students and lecturers.



# Learning through Partnerships

Caren Levy  
Senior Lecturer and Former  
Director of the Development  
Planning Unit, UCL

This collection of essays reflects four years of work in Mumbai in partnership with SPARC and the Indian Alliance, followed by three years of studio work in London as part of the 'practice module' in the MSc Building and Urban Design (BUDD) at the DPU. The international students of the BUDD course, along with those in the DPU's MSc Urban Development Planning (UDP), made their first field trip to Mumbai in 2006. This trip built on years of collaboration in teaching, research and the exchange of ideas relating to the mobilisation of communities around issues of housing and infrastructure, and ultimately in the setting of precedents to influence the formulation and implementation of urban policy and planning to address local needs in an inclusive and participatory manner in the face of dominant local, national and global interests in cities like Mumbai.

The experience of the Indian Alliance in Mumbai in the first decade of the 21st century is instructive not only for its strategic engagement with different city authorities and private sector stakeholders to create an active place for the slum dwellers (comprising over 50% of the city's population) in the city's governance and planning, often in conflict with the exclusive 'world class city' vision held by powerful interests in the city. This experience also offered a unique educational opportunity to explore the tools and methods developed by the Indian Alliance to take on this challenge.

From 2006 to 2008 the field trip focused on the engagement of the Indian Alliance with two large scale urban infrastructure policies in the city,

that is, the Mumbai Urban Transport Project II (MUTP II) and the Mumbai Urban Infrastructure Project (MUIP). The students explored and compared the impact of the collaborative relocation and rehabilitation of railway slum dwellers (Mankurd to Laloobhai Compound), the state-led and community-driven relocation of pavement dwellers (from P.D. Mello and Byculla to Laloobhai Compound and Milan Nagar, respectively) and the forced relocation and rehabilitation of slum and pavement dwellers from different parts of the city to the Oshiwara complex.

In 2009, whilst the UDP students continued working on the latter, the BUDD students shifted their attention to an alternative community-led vision for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP), which by now reflected another critical space of contestation between different fragments of local, national and global interests in the city. In the three years following, BUDD took this experience into a studio setting, refining a new approach to urban design in the context of large scale informality and inequality in cities.

The field trips to Mumbai provided a powerful learning environment for students. The passion and commitment of members of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Association and Mahila Milan not only to improve the lives of Indian slum dwellers, but also to challenge urban policy and planning, and to influence a generation of urban practitioners beyond their city, shone through our partnership over the years. Heartfelt thanks to you all for so generously sharing your time, knowledge and experience.



# Engaging with Processes of Change

Peter Kellett  
Senior Lecturer in  
Architecture, Newcastle  
University

Unlike the majority of low-income settlements in the cities of the global south, Dharavi is well known throughout the world. The crowded colourful buildings, open sewers, recycling workshops and alleyways teeming with smiling industrious people have become iconic images representing poor and dispossessed urban communities everywhere. More significantly Dharavi is often portrayed as the site of a modern day David and Goliath contest – the plucky, penniless residents ranged against the might and power of greedy landowners, real estate developers and politicians who are oblivious to the community values and industrious lifestyles of the residents, and instead see only an opportunity to modernise the city and make wondrous profits. It has also captured the popular imagination through its link to media portrayals such as *Slumdog Millionaire* which offers insights into individual dilemmas– but rarely do these representations engage with the complex reality of everyday life, and even less do they concern themselves with exploring feasible alternatives for the million or more people who call Dharavi their home.

In contrast, this study by Camillo Boano and his team of enthusiastic and committed postgraduate students and staff from all over the world have invested considerable intellectual energy and physical effort to grapple with the theoretical, policy and practice dimensions of this complex situation. During extended field visits between 2006 and 2009 these wonderfully interdisciplinary international teams spent weeks interviewing residents, observing, mapping, recording and documenting in great detail (and impressive cultural sensitivity) a wide range of urban activities and processes. Continuing

with studio-based projects in recent years, they have debated, argued, made plans, models, presentations, projections and fantastically detailed analyses and proposals - and now they have managed to condense their vast volume of material into this handsome volume. Their concern goes beyond understanding a reality – and engages directly with processes of change.

This book does what all good publications should, but which most academic documents fail to achieve – which is to inspire and stimulate as well as inform and educate. The lively graphic format directly echoes the creative energy of this ambitious project. As such it is a valuable document for a range of users beyond the predictable audience of students and academics; it is relevant to others including policy makers, politicians, activist and all those concerned about the grossly uneven direction of much urban development. As external examiner for the BUDD course throughout the period when this work was undertaken, I am proud to be associated with this programme and give my full endorsement to this publishing initiative.

Sceptics might argue that the scale and seriousness of today's urban problems render the role of architects and urban design professionals redundant. However the BUDD programme convincingly demonstrates the opposite. Academic rigour combined with creativity, energy and commitment are proving to be powerfully effective in the critical search for social and spatial justice for the urban majorities of the south. This volume offers important insights and reflections into these processes and I commend the efforts of all those involved in making this experience available to a wider audience.



# So it began in Dharavi

Camillo Boano  
Senior Lecturer and Course  
Director, MSc Building and  
Urban Design in Development

This not-so-small pamphlet draws from first-hand experience, research, and critical practices that have sought to investigate a 175 hectares swatch of land in the middle of Mumbai that is home to over 1 million inhabitants. It is a collection of short and long essays, drawings and diagrams, pictures and photo-montages, video stills and visualisations on what is known as Dharavi. For the last 3 years, this investigation and reflection has been the core of our design-based studio Practice Module: Urban Design in Practice.

If on one side Dharavi was what some would call a 'live' case study, on the other it was more than that. Dharavi was a place where our different epistemic words of what we called urban design started falling apart. It was also a complex microcosm of practices where our methodological and architectural artillery, grounded in a specific aesthetic regime, became somewhat ineffective and sterile. It was a symbol of a multiplicity of urbanisms at play that failed all our philosophical apparatus<sup>1,2</sup>. Dharavi for us was essentially a space in which we started our process of recalibration of Urban Design - an intellectual, pedagogical and political process at the centre of the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development course at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit.

For all of us any Design reflection, strategy and tactic would begin with cities: how they work and change; how they transformed and are transformed by people and what impacts they have in creating enabling vs. destructive impacts for communities. What we conceived as design is something that is critical as it does play a role of voicing the language of urbanity<sup>3</sup>. What we learned from Dharavi

is that Urban Design is of profound significance if it has a poetic quality. By the means of compressing its meanings into a concise formal expression, a poetic urban design project draws the mind to a level of perception concealed behind the conventional presentations of urban form. The most effective symbols are those which, while operating within a given set of conventions, are imprecise, sparse and open-ended in their possible interpretations, tending more to the metaphor than the simile.

We were aware that Dharavi, due to the accelerated growth of India at the turn of the 21st Century and the positioning of Mumbai as the country's financial capital, quickly became an attractive and unavoidable topic. The State in simplistic terms saw Dharavi as an enduring development nightmare, whereas many financial institutions and developers saw a gold mine. Sometime around 2004, Dharavi was declared a special planning area from which sprung the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Viewing Dharavi as a privileged gateway to Mumbai's total transformation and driven by the idea of large profits, investment companies and real estate developers began drawing and plotting proposals in major disregard to the current physical landscape and without involvement or recognizing local constructs, knowledge or interests of the residents. Thus it inevitably becomes an architectural playground where global design firms as well as a counter-activism practice emerges and confronts.

Despite these situational facts alone and a multitude of others, Dharavi becomes the symbol of informal urbanism in how inhabitants of seemingly low resources generate solutions for the demands regarding housing and businesses. The

1/ Rendell, J. (2006) *Art and Architecture. A Place between*, London: Tauris

2/ Rendell, J. (2003) *Between two: theory and practice*, in Jonathan Hill, ed. *Opposites attracts: Research by design*, Special issue of *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol.8(2), pp:221-238

3/ Rendell, J., Hill, J., Fraser, M. & Dorian, M. (2007) *Critical Architecture*, London: Routledge

resilient nature of Dharavi, with its the archipelago of different activist and social institutions acting as a precedent for reconsidering all we previously understood about development, from the notions of home-based enterprise to the scale and reach of informal economies, exudes a reality of how the underprivileged facets of society plan, negotiate, and combat a superimposed exogenous plan. These phenomenological characteristics and the strong neo-liberal interests and aesthetics plans that they push against represent a certain form of urbanity, a sort of actual existing urbanism rooted in alternative social dynamics and challenge the vision, legitimacy and authority of master planning. Understanding this multiplicity of urbanisms reinforces the need to understand the political, economic and social dynamics at play within the urban fabric when acting as a design practitioner.

For our work, conceptualising urbanism as embedded in a web of contested visions where the production of space is an inherently conflictive process of manifesting, producing and reproducing various forms of injustice is fundamental. We use the notion of contested urbanism to depict hegemonic and technocratic discourses behind top-down interventions without meaningful participation and to focus attention on the politics of urban transformation that systematically exclude urban dwellers. Urban design interventions functioning in this context must thus be responsive and locally grounded activities, with an understanding of scale and strategy, moving out of the simplified vision of building and architecture as objects of commodity. With this experience in the field and in the studio we have experimented with the analytics of a

multiplicity of urbanisms that view the present urban materiality as multi-constituted, poly-temporal, and re-combinatory in order to transport the researcher across disciplinary boundaries, diverse empirical and material geographies, and socio-cultural contexts. Central to this methodological apparatus, is the active partnership with realities in motion, being urban activism groups, cultural associations, universities or non-governmental organizations.

It could not have been possible without the institutional support of Development Planning Unit, SPARC, KRVIA in Mumbai. Much appreciation goes to those who shared their thoughts in this collection and to Julio Davila, Caren Levy and Peter Kellet who agreed to write the forewords. A special thanks is to be given to Isis Nunez Ferrera, Andrew Wade, Anna Schulenburg who acted as Course Coordinators during this time, to Caren Levy and Eleni Kyrou who were there during the first visits to Dharavi and of course to the person I shared with most of the hours in the studio and whose competence, passion and determination brought our Dharavi endeavours to the fore: William Hunter.

This publication and its design would not sit before you without the dedication of our new colleague Caroline Newton who joined DPU and the BUDD team in September 2012 and is faithfully engaged in our new pursuits. Of course the biggest complement goes to all the students involved in the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development course since 2008 with whom I have had the privilege to work with in my role of Director and to all the fantastic people we met and worked with in Dharavi.



भूमिपूत्र संघटन

अल्पसंख्यक आदिवासी दलित ओबीसी और  
मुसलमान यह है भूमिपूत्र के पंचपाण  
- भूमिपूत्र संघटन

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Essays



## Contested Urbanisms

Camillo Boano  
Melissa Garcia Lamarca  
William Hunter

An earlier version of this contribution was published in the *Journal of Developing Societies* in 2011

1/ BBC (2006). Life in a slum. BBC online. From [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi\\_slum/html/dharavi\\_slum\\_intro.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi_slum/html/dharavi_slum_intro.stm).

2/ Sharma, K. (2000). *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia's largest slum*. Delhi: Penguin Books India.

3/ BBC (2006). Life in a slum. BBC online. From [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi\\_slum/html/dharavi\\_slum\\_intro.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/06/dharavi_slum/html/dharavi_slum_intro.stm)

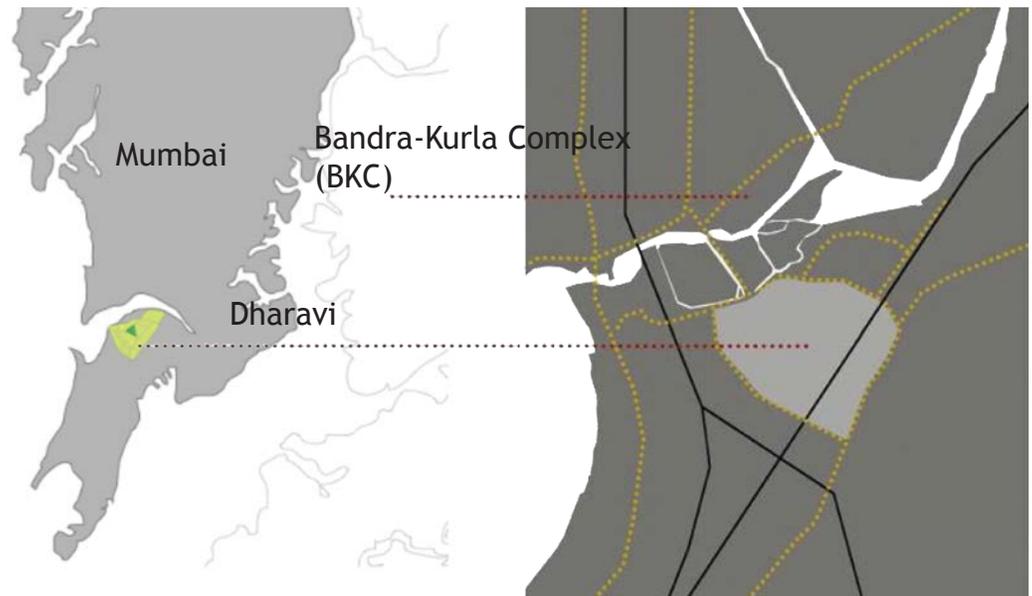
4/ Sharma, K. (2000). *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia's largest slum*. Delhi: Penguin Books India. p.24.

Popularly known as Asia's largest slum, covering almost 239 hectares and with an estimated population between 700,000 and one million people<sup>1/2</sup>, Dharavi is characterized by its strategic location at the center of Mumbai and thus finds itself at the heart of a challenging, highly contested debate over the future of the city. Through the controversial Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP), international developers, bureaucrats, state agencies, civil society and social movements are engaged in multiple confrontations over land, density, typology, and the right to a decent life, while futuristic Dubai or Shanghai-style landscapes are imagined for development on what is now prime real estate.

Historically evolving from a small fishing village, Dharavi became the city's geographical center, as Mumbai's urban development and corresponding squatter settlements were pushed northwards, off valuable land in South Mumbai onto its current swampy, unhygienic location<sup>4</sup>. From this once marginalized, neglected area Dharavi is now strategically located between inner-city districts and

Mumbai's new financial center called the Bandra-Kurla Complex, near the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport. Over decades the site has been dramatically transformed and its development consolidated, layering generations of slum dwellers in what are now 85 nagars (neighborhoods), organized in a complex labyrinthine physical layout, built around multifunctional work-live dwelling forms. Its thriving informal economy generates an annual turnover of business estimated to be more than £350m<sup>3</sup>.

The narrative of Dharavi serves to ground the material and discursive production of spatialities, highlighting land values and built densities at the base of the contested visions of Mumbai's future. These elements accentuate inequalities and drive the struggle over space as significant government and market pressures towards becoming a world-class city – expressed through the neoliberal *Vision Mumbai* – push against the struggle for a bottom-up, inclusive development process promoted by civil society and heterogeneous citizen groups in Dharavi. The former was articulated in a report by Bombay First and



5/ Bombay First and McKinsey & Company Inc. (2003). Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a world-class city. From <http://www.bombayfirst.org/McKinseyReport.pdf>

6/ Bombay First and McKinsey & Company Inc. (2003). Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a world-class city. From <http://www.bombayfirst.org/McKinseyReport.pdf>. pp. 20-21

7/ Allen, A., Boano, C., & Johnson, C. (2010). Adapting cities to climate change [editorial]. DPU News, N. 52, p. 2-4. From [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/k\\_s/publications/52.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/k_s/publications/52.pdf)

McKinsey & Company<sup>5</sup>, where one of the various objectives to becoming a world-class city was defined as reducing the number of people living in slums in Mumbai from over 50 percent to 10–20 percent by 2013 through “*more efficient government procedures and market-based mechanisms*,” and furthermore “*ensuring no new slums form in the city*”<sup>6</sup>. One of the core groups resisting such elitist, top-down and market-driven visions of Mumbai is the Alliance, a coalition of an NGO named the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in addition to two grassroots organizations, Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation. Inclusive, bottom-up development is pressed by the Alliance in their engagement with Dharavi’s housing cooperative societies to construct rehabilitation housing through a community-based process, and through their participation in constructing an alternative to the DRP.

Building upon these spatial tensions between top-down urban strategies and bottom-up tactics of spatial adaptation and urban activism, the conceptual analytical neologism of contested urbanism is elaborated through exploring the material-discursive dynamics regarding the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change<sup>7</sup>. Specifically, we seek to spatially depict the challenges and aims for the survival of shifting identities and structures through the confrontational and oppositional forms of power in Mumbai and Dharavi that shape people’s access to housing and slum redevelopment, as exemplar of a wider struggle over social justice.

As its base, the article uses the research and experience that formed part of the completion of the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development, University College London, during a three-week field course in May 2009. In partnership with the Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute For Architecture





देश ज्वेलर्स

श्री लक्ष्मण किराना शोपी क्लब होटल

राजकमल स्टाॅप होटल  
**Irjan**  
CLOTH STORES

कुमल स्टील प्रमोरीयम

सुरैख्या  
ब्युटी वॉर्नर ऑफिस क्लबसेन्स

**R. G. N**  
ELECTRICAL  
ELECTRIC ALL TYPES WIRING  
CELL. 98228 / 98228

(KRVIA), SPARC, and the Development Planning Unit, a group of 16 students and their tutors were engaged in critical analysis and design processes aimed to reveal visions and interpretations of the possible future developments in Dharavi, confronting the dichotomies of mega-projects and mega-resistances and questioning the relevance of social justice and the right to the city in urban transformations. In this context, the concept of contested urbanism aims to represent multiple forces that shape the politics of Dharavi, offering critical insights and hopefully, a reinvigorated ethical renewal of the disciplines of architecture and urban design.

### The Dharavi Redevelopment Project: A Homogeneous and Modernist Vision

Dharavi and its inhabitants have long played an integral role in the development of Mumbai's urban history. The legacy of the traditional fishing community living there for centuries was ultimately lost to a budding settlement of hutments, slowly constructed by its citizens through an increasing collection of waste and debris, effectively operating as infill on top of the swamp in the district that came to be known as Dharavi, now commonly referred to as "*Asia's largest slum*"<sup>8</sup>. The area's rich story and evolution is a far cry from its perception by the current government-led redevelopment vision as void, as "*the terra incognita or the terra nulla, the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun*"<sup>9</sup> filled by informal uses of "their" space: settlements of clandestine immigrants, squats, illegal agriculture, and unplanned recreational activities.

Today Dharavi is made up of roughly 85 nagars, each of which manifests a distinct and unique character, with diverse ethnic mixtures and religious narratives<sup>10</sup>. Because of its strategic location, the demographic pressures on the

island city and especially the government and private sectors' global transformative goals towards achieving the status of a world-class city, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) was introduced as an integrated special planning area in 2004. Essentially conceived as a state facilitated public-private partnership, formulated by the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) and spatialized by the architect Mukesh Mehta, the DRP is in essence a tabula rasa mega-project redevelopment strategy for the entire territory of Dharavi (Figure 3). Mehta proposes several physical alterations for Dharavi that form the base of the DRP: an artificial and instrumental division of the area into five sectors to be allocated to five private developers; a maximum increase of Floor Space Index<sup>11</sup> which contributes to higher urban densities and the adoption of a spatial transformation from horizontal, low-rise "slums" to a high-rise podium style typology (G+12 and higher). Informal settlements are thus envisaged to be replaced with high-rise developments irrespective of the existing vibrant economy and the diverse needs within, both informal and complex, which have evolved through stratifications, adaptations, and historical modifications.

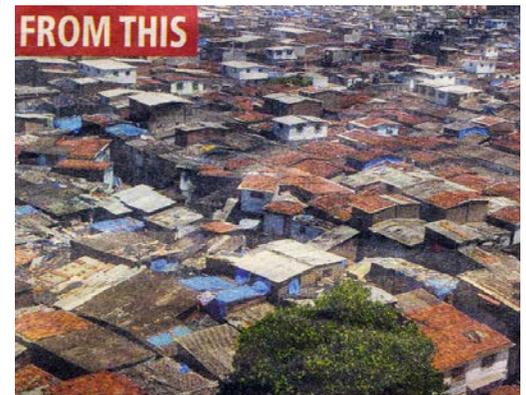
In June 2007, MHADA issued an announcement of the DRP. *The Times of India* reported that the initial site-purchase bidding

8/ Urbanology (2008). Urban typhoon workshop: Koliwada, Dharavi. Mumbai: Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research. p. 12

9/ Bhaba (1994) cited in Doron, G. (2008). "...Those marvelous empty zones on the edge of our cities: Heterotopia and the 'dead zone.'" In L. De Cauter & Dehaene, M. (Eds), *Heterotopia and the city: Public space in a postcivil society* (pp. 203-14). New York: Routledge.

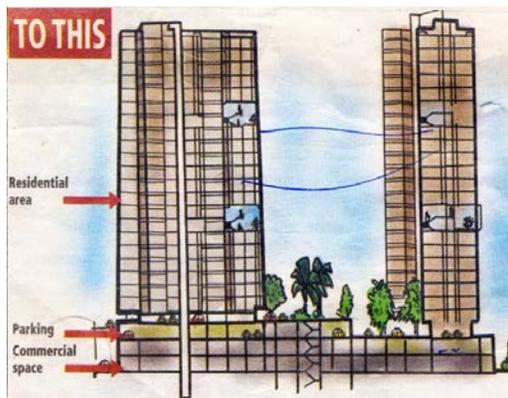
10/ Patel, S., & Arputham, J. (2007). An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict in Dharavi, Mumbai? *Environment and Urbanization*, 19(1), 501-508.

11/ Floor Space Index (FSI) refers to the ratio of total floor area of a bid to the gross area of the specific plot of land on which it is located.



was meant to attract interest from only those national and international developers meeting criteria of the highest calibre, with a possible £500,000,000 in expected profits<sup>12</sup>. Details of the plan itself were highly secretive, given that the initial document submitted by the Government hired architect Mukesh Metha outlining the five-sector, five-developer vision (see image below) was taken on unanimously with no significant call for citizen input<sup>13</sup>.

It was clear from the start, however, that residents currently living in Dharavi, many of whom were unaware of the plan and its implications, would be subject to a “cut-off date” in order to be eligible for rehabilitation under the DRP, originally set at 1995<sup>14</sup>. From a list of bidders, only one would be chosen to develop each of the five sections, denying current residents that form part of cooperative housing societies their legal right through the Slum Redevelopment Act (SRA) to select, based on 70 percent approval, their housing developer. Furthermore, the planning for the project occurred with no detailed survey of Dharavi; when this was finally completed, it was found that at least 80,000 households needed to be resettled<sup>15</sup>. No one has addressed what will happen to the additional 35,000 households not eligible for rehabilitation housing – those that live in lofts and are tenants, migrant workers, or members of the same families



living in other parts of the buildings<sup>17</sup> 16. In response to this massive mega-project, with a homogenizing and modernist vision, grassroots opposition has emerged. The confrontational environment has boosted the development of various bottom-up initiatives and spatial experimentations that challenge the DRP's proposed relocation of residents, the complete lack of an inclusive process, and the possible consequences of a government/market-driven process of redevelopment irrespective of the social and spatial multiplicity of Dharavi.

In recent years, alternative critical responses to the DRP from civil society and academics have emerged through an invited space of negotiation offered by the Government of Maharashtra via a Committee of Experts, appointed in early 2009. This body offers suggestions and options to humanize the DRP, simultaneously maintaining a close and highly strategic relationship with government bodies in order to function as facilitators between various institutional levels.

### Contested Urbanism: The Meta-narrative of Transformative Urban Processes

Dharavi, as in many other urban scenarios, is located in a web of contested visions through the perception of the production of space as an inherently conflictive process. In order to build a clear understanding of how complexity and dynamism form and transform Dharavi, from bottom-up practices in the interplay of citizens, urban movements, and other actors struggling over and contesting the city, this section of the article theoretically unpacks multiple discourses on spatial transformations and spatial narratives through the lens of *contested urbanism*.

Adopted and elaborated as a method of inquiry into relationships between space,

12/ TNN (2007, June 1). Dharavi redevelopment to begin today. The Times of India. Retrieved September 11, 2009, from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Mumbai/Dharavi-redevelopment-to-begin-today/articleshow/2090403.cms>

13/ Patel, S., & Arputham, J. (2007). An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict in Dharavi, Mumbai? *Environment and Urbanization*, 19(1), 501–508.

14/ TNN (2007, June 1). Dharavi redevelopment to begin today. The Times of India. Retrieved September 11, 2009, from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Mumbai/Dharavi-redevelopment-to-begin-today/articleshow/2090403.cms>

15/ Sharma, K. (2009). A reprise for Dharavi. InfoChange India. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from <http://infochangeindia.org/Urban-India/Cityscapes/A-reprise-for-Dharavi.html>

16/ Sharma, K. (2009). A reprise for Dharavi. InfoChange India. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from <http://infochangeindia.org/Urban-India/Cityscapes/A-reprise-for-Dharavi.html>

17/ KRVI (2007). Dharavi summary [Presentation]. Mumbai: Kamla Raheja and Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture.

- 18/ Leach, N. (1997) Introduction. In N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking architecture: A reader in cultural theory* (pp. xiii–xxi). London: Routledge.
- 19/ Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York: Harper. (pp. 19–21)
- 20/ Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- 21/ Bauman, Z. (1993). *Postmodern ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell. (p.195)
- 22/ Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- 23/ Sandercock, L. (2005). *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel cities in the 21st century*. London: Continuum.

society, politics, and culture<sup>18</sup>, this neologism is useful as it helps to:

- depict hegemonic, technocratic, hypermodern discourses that shape state authority material interventions in urban areas, always originating in a top-down fashion without meaningful grassroots participation;
- focus attention on the politics of urban transformation that systematically exclude citizens, and in this case, slum dwellers, in the management, adaptation, and evolution of their living spaces; power is thus positioned in a distant bureaucracy, facilitating functional neoliberal alliances with economically powerful developers, architects, and urban intelligenzia;
- represent the economy of interconnected resistance alliances and materialities of place-based social movements that are able to mobilize alternative and spatial imaginaries;
- navigate at the frontier of universal civilization, deploying a bilateral relationship that responds to local demands, copying and critically engaging with the global demands;
- position the core attribute of architecture and design as responsive, dependent, and locally grounded activity moving out of the simplified vision of building and architecture as commodified objects.

### **Contested Spaces of Transformation: A Foucaultian and Lefebvrian Vision of Dharavi**

In order to understand how the spatialities of contested urbanism are reproduced, a dichotomization of space as physical, static, metric space with social dynamics must first be reinforced. Such a vision is not new but grounded in Heidegger's "*human*

*spatiality*"<sup>19</sup>, Lefebvre's<sup>20</sup> use of "*lived space of the social and political world*", and Bauman's<sup>21</sup> (1993, p. 195) adoption of complex spatial interaction between "*cognitive, moral and aesthetic spaces and products*".

This framework enables a deeper perception of the power relations embedded in urban transformations that systematically exclude Dharavi's slum dwellers in the management, adaptation, and evolution of their living spaces, thus directly challenging notions of homogeneity and uniformity, creating spaces for alternative antidotes against the erasure of "*difference*"<sup>22</sup>. Sandercock<sup>23</sup> states in this context that democratic practice is undermined, as the contradictory ideals of majority groups are depoliticized by those in power having warranted their own rationality of what constitutes a "good city." She also posits that within the contemporary era, increasingly shaped by globally competitive capital, the ideals that shape urban landscapes are likely to become less locally contextual and more influenced by a range of hegemonic "*pre-shaped and unquestioned cultural imperatives*", which aim to provide "societal guidance" to a "*pre-framed dream*" of a sustainable, healthy, attractive, and competitive "good city" – as is witnessed in the elitist, top-down ideals expressed by Vision Mumbai. Despite such great utopian urban dreams, in reality, space has remained representative of real/virtual power and money, and is therefore an object of significant contestation.

Contested territories run rampant and promise to increase as economies become more integrated into the global system. The city and its terraines vague at the central or periphery remain a battleground of property rights and structures often relinquished because of short-term economic and/or political gain and real estate mantras, missing out on the

potential imbalance in the long term. Thus Foucault and Lefebvre's spatial theories serve as appropriate foundational building blocks in the elaboration of Dharavi's transformative narrative.

Foucault suggested that architecture, although an inherently political act, cannot by itself liberate or oppress. In his mind, liberation and oppression are practices, not objects, and neither practice can ever be guaranteed by artefacts functioning in

construction of artificial towns in Northern Europe, on the model of military camps with geometric figures, architectural precision, and rationalistic layouts, were not dissimilar from the technocratic hypermodern Dubai-style landscapes imagined in the essence of the DRP – thus *“a question of structuring [d'architecturer] a space”*.

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the *“order of objects”*. He articulates a central element that supports the concept of contested urbanism: *“space is fundamental in any exercise of power”*, and that it is inconceivable that we *“leave people in the slums, thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there”*. To realize liberation, technicians of space, including architects, must align their *“liberating intentions [...] with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom”*<sup>24</sup>.

In that respect, Foucault<sup>25</sup> offers readings of the geometric plan of towns, and particularly the utopian schemas well represented in the holomorphic visions of the DRP, where the relation between sovereignty and territory is one where the aim is *“to connect the political effectiveness of sovereignty to a spatial distribution.”* For him, the

subject their own reflections to critique and move away from their obsession with the object itself, in the process opening up space for more culturally sensitive approaches to home-making or remaking in urban transformations. Such a vision, which incorporates the notion of casual, rhizomatic, fluid and of course incremental production of spaces, as Brillembourg<sup>26</sup> argues, *“relates to the realm outside what is prescribed meaning, working with what already exists, materially and socially”*, as a *“collective construction”* breaking down the ever shifting<sup>27</sup> dichotomy of the legal–illegal, legitimate–illegitimate; authorized–unauthorized.

Moreover, the Foucaultian notion of heterotopias<sup>28</sup> (1967), which literally means *“other spaces”*, is an appropriate representation of Dharavi's materiality and

24/ Foucault, M. (2003). *The birth of the clinic*. London: Taylor and Francis.

25/ Foucault, M. (2003). *The birth of the clinic*. London: Taylor and Francis.

26/ Brillembourg, C. (2004). The new slum urbanism of Caracas, invasions and settlements, colonialism, democracy, capitalism and devil worship. *Architectural Design*, 74(2), 77–81. (p.79)

27/ Roy, A. (2009b). Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanisation. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 76–87. (p.80)

28/ Foucault, M. (2008 (1967)). Of other spaces. In L. De Caeter & M. Dehaene (Eds.), *Heterotopia and the City. Public space in a postcivil society* (pp. 13–29). London: Routledge.

29/ Allweil, Y., & Kallus, R. (2008). Public-space heterotopias: Heterotopias of masculinity along the Tel Aviv shoreline. In L. De Cauter & M. Dehaene (Eds), *Heterotopia and the city: Public space in a postcivil society* (pp. 191–202). New York: Routledge. (p.191)

30/ Davis, M. (2006). *The planet of slums*. London: Verso.

31/ Brillembourg, C. (2004). The new slum urbanism of Caracas, invasions and settlements, colonialism, democracy, capitalism and devil worship. *Architectural Design*, 74(2), 77–81.

32/ Appadurai, A. (2001). Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Environment and Urbanization*, 13(2), 23–43.

33/ Foucault, M. (1984). Different spaces. In J.D. Faubion (Ed.), *Essential works of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume II: Aesthetic, epistemology, methodology*. New York: New York Press. (p.180)

34/ Till, J. (2009). *Architecture depends*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

narrative. Such aporetic spaces reveal or represent something about the society in which they reside through the contradictions they produce but are unable to resolve, in a continuous flux between contradiction and acceptance, invisibility and recognition. In essence, heterotopias are spaces that accommodate the deviant and house the “other,” segregating them and allowing mechanisms “of control distribution and places in a society”<sup>29</sup>. Thus, conceiving Dharavi not as a homogenous “*global prototype of a population warehouse*”<sup>30</sup> but as a city made of impurity, ambivalence, and in a state of constant metamorphosis, will help us to understand slum urbanism as a response and resistance to state and economic-led utopian and modernistic planning. There “*the informal explains the practices (social, economic, architectural and urban) and the forms (physical and spatial) that a group of stakeholders (dwellers, developers, planners, landowners and the state) undertake not only to obtain access to land and housing but also to satisfy their need to engage in urban life*”<sup>31</sup>, and in essence allows for the emergence of forms of deep democracy<sup>32</sup>. Such a heterotopian vision serves to frame Dharavi and its contested urbanism as “*spaces apart, open but isolated*”<sup>33</sup>, a space of illusions that denounces all that is in place around it and contests the monotony and dominance of the DRP.

The connection with Henry Lefebvre’s work is obvious and unavoidable here, especially because, as Till argues, “*once Lefebvre has said (social) space is a (social) product – one can never again see the world as a place set apart, or reduce architecture to a set of abstract forms.*”<sup>34</sup> On *production*, Lefebvre means that people create the space in which they make their lives; it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots, and other contending forces. Space is not simply inherited from nature, passed on by





the dead hand of the past, nor autonomously determined by “laws” of spatial geometry as per conventional location theory. Space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if unanticipated consequences develop, and even as space constrains and influences those producing it.

*Production* also implies that space be considered analogous to other economic goods. The produced spatial ensemble of the built environment, nature, and landscape can, among other things, be bought and sold. It makes up an important part of economies. Besides producing goods and services, economies produce spaces. Dharavi literally fills such a vision by locating itself, beyond its geographical location, in an economically led transformation of space.

For Lefebvre, space is not merely a neutral container or milieu in which life transpires, nor is it the obvious platform upon which all activity must occur. Architecture, human densities, and location relations are forces in structuring what can be done in space itself. Walls and roads obviously privilege certain kinds of activities and inhibit others, support the projects of one type of actor, and deter the goals of others. Beyond such material impediments are the symbols and styles that also influence behaviour: elements of disempowering monumental grandeur, diverse endogenous architecture falsely implying true choice, monotonous cubes, and towers that stultify rewarding forms of sociability. Space is thus an interlinking of geography, built environment, symbolism, and life routines. Ways of being and physical landscapes are a piece, albeit one filled with tensions and competing versions of what a space should be. People fight not only over a piece of turf but about the sort of reality that it constitutes. The struggle over Dharavi is exactly this: a battle for survival of a reality, of an existence.

35/ BUDD (2009). Dharavi: A case of contested urbanism. Field trip final report, MSc Building and Urban Design for Development, Development Planning Unit, London.

36/ Lefebvre, H. (2003). Space and the state. In Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, & George Macleod (Eds), *State/space* (pp. 84–100). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

37/ Lefebvre, H. (2003). Space and the state. In Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, & George Macleod (Eds), *State/space* (pp. 84–100). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

38/ Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. (p.76)

39/ Dikeç, M., & Gilbert, L. (2002). Right to the city: Homage or new societal ethics?. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 13(2), 58–74. (p. 65)

40/ Mayer, M. (2009). The “Right to the City” in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements. *City*, 13(2–3), 362–374. (p.367)

41/ Lefebvre, H. (2003). Space and the state. In Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, & George Macleod (Eds), *State/space* (pp. 84–100). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. (p.337)

In the production of Dharavi, a sort of master distinction is between those who produce a space for domination versus those who produce space as an appropriation to serve human need. In that respect the DRP envisions a spatial transformation from horizontal, low-rise “slums” to a high-rise podium style typology where residential units will be placed on the top floors of the buildings, while the commercial units will be located at the ground and first floors. The parking area will be on the third floor, just below the pedestrian-only podium level. An emergent issue from this is how a monolithic typology attempts to accommodate the daily needs of people and their future aspirations<sup>35</sup>.

In domination, space is put to the service of some abstract purpose – hence, Lefebvre’s phrase “abstract space” to describe the result. This can be to facilitate state power (e.g., the Napoleonic version of Paris and other “phallic” displays) or, more pervasively, the reproduction of capital for the achievement of a neoliberal Vision Mumbai. Space is carved into real estate parcels for exchange in the market in Mumbai, cubes and volumes demarcated and partitioned so as to be interchangeable as commodities. The resultant space represents the “*triumph of homogeneity*”<sup>36</sup> and stands, both in its totality, as well as in its constituent parts as “product.” While acknowledging some benign intentions, Lefebvre condemns the modernist movement in general for using the “*pretext that it was exposing (people) to open air and sunshine*”<sup>37</sup> as a cover for design arrogance in the service of capital.

Lefebvre<sup>38</sup> furthermore infers the risk that ideology contributes to urban spatial planning as a discourse and practice by illustrating how even in a democratic capitalist society the ideas and visions that shape spatial change in cities “*are often only reflective of the homogenic desires of conflicting, but*

*dominant, privileged minorities.*” These minorities possess access not merely to an economic and technical capacity but also the social networks and cultural influence to carry out spatial transformation, induced by their ideological perception of what the common vision should be. This perception is often in conflict with those of other less empowered diverse groups within society who often constitute the urban majority.

What is interesting in such spatioLOGY is that space is not just produced materially, by political, economic, and social forces, but that it is also produced by the ways we represent it. The critical Lefebvrian thinking on Dharavi lies in the recognition that the space of the slum is not an inert catalyst for social action, but participates in the action itself. The heterotopian adoption of such space makes explicit the fragmented, mobile, and conflictive nature of the production of space.

## Contested Spaces of Rights: The Right to the City

At its core, Lefebvre’s right to the city is a claim for the recognition of the urban as the (re)producer of social relations of power, and the right of all citizens to participate in the process of production in the city where they reside<sup>39</sup>. It is less a juridical right and more of an oppositional demand, challenging claims of the rich and powerful<sup>40</sup> and the abstract space that facilitates the reproduction of capital.

Formulated by Lefebvre in the 1960s, the right to the city grew out of discontent with inequity and exclusion driven by capitalism, manifested socially and spatially in cities. It emerged through his critiques of functionalist and technocratic urbanization processes in the 1960s and 1970s France and of the welfare capitalist society as the “*bureaucratic society of organised consumption*” where

needs are created and institutionalized<sup>41</sup>. Lefebvre believed that the use value of the city trumps capitalism's focus on exchange value<sup>42</sup> and sought to rethink the foundations of capitalist social relations such as ownership over and how value is given to urban space, essentially requiring a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond<sup>43</sup>. As Harvey<sup>44</sup> notes, the right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it as our heart's desire, and remake ourselves by creating a qualitatively different kind of urban sociality. Thus, the production of urban space is not only about planning the material space of the city but rather integrating all aspects of urban life, including the right of appropriation, as manifested in claimed spaces of the city – such as Dharavi.

For over half a century, Dharavi's residents have in essence claimed their right to Mumbai in their 239 hectares of urban space, a process that has grown out of struggle, adaptation, and resilience, inventing new and innovative modes of living and of inhabiting. A sort of "third Dharavi" emerged<sup>45</sup> in the yawning gap between traditional urbanity, considered as backward, and the newly planned one, unable to achieve a satisfactory urban reality, reinventing itself over time through *"a new, informal, and transformative building practice that allows them (slum dwellers) to inhabit a city that, officially, does not account for them in its master planning"*<sup>46</sup>. Indeed, no master plan, urban design, zoning ordinance, or construction law can claim any stake in Dharavi's prosperity, because it was built over many decades entirely by successive waves of immigrants fleeing rural poverty, political oppression, and natural disasters<sup>47</sup>.

Since the early 1990s, within the framework of the Government of Maharashtra's slum redevelopment scheme, the Bharat Janata

and Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Societies have worked with the nonprofit developer wing named NIRMAN of the Alliance in the production of their own slum rehabilitation housing. In these precedent-setting activities, the Alliance has sought to enable a bottom-up approach by directly engaging Dharavi's poor in the production of space in Dharavi, claiming their right to housing in the city. These activities demonstrate, through previously unrealized solutions in spaces they control, the urban poor's potential to challenge and change formalized rules and regulations that tend to function in the interests of dominant powers. By producing housing, the Alliance sets a precedent as an NGO developer undertaking this work as Lefebvrian production of space concepts manifest in concrete examples of bottom-up, community-driven urban development processes. The latter is based in capacity building and empowering slum dwellers through training and employment in the building process, and especially through involving and imparting skills to enable them to negotiate with the state. Precedent setting also provides a linguistic device for negotiating between the legalities of urban government and the "illegal" arrangements to which the poor usually must resort, shifting the burden for municipal officials and other experts away from whitewashing illegal activities towards building on "legitimate" models<sup>48</sup>.

In recent years, however, facing "Dubaification" in the top-down, technocratic DRP process, Dharavi's designation as a special planning area in 2004 – a status that enables secretive modification of development regulations – has thrust the reigns of development completely into the hands of the government and private sector. After subsequent years of bottom-up pressure tactics and struggles, including open letters to the government and media and peaceful protests from residents of Dharavi, leaders of prominent grassroots

42/ Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: Social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: Guilford Press. (p.19)

43/ Purcell, M. (2002). *Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant*. *Geojournal*, 58, 99–108. (p.103)

44/ Harvey, D. (2003a). *The right to the city*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939–941. (p.939)

45/ Kezer, Z. (1984). *Contesting urban space in early Republican Ankara*. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 52(1), 11–19.

46/ Heynen, H., & Loeckx, A. (1984). *Scenes of ambivalence: Concluding remarks on architectural patterns of displacement*. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 52(2), 100–108. (p.102)

47/ Echanove, M., & Srivastava, R. (2009, February 21). *Taking the slum out of "Slumdog."* *New York Times*. Retrieved July 16, 2009, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/21/opinion/21srivastava.html?\\_r=4](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/21/opinion/21srivastava.html?_r=4)

48/ Appadurai, A. (2001). *Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics*. *Environment and Urbanization*, 13(2), 23–43. (p.33)





49/ Patel, S., Arputham, J., Burra, S., & Savchuk, K. (2009). 'Getting the information base for Dharavi's redevelopment. *Environment and Urbanization*, 21(1), 241–251. (p.243)

50/ Patel, S., Arputham, J., Burra, S., & Savchuk, K. (2009). 'Getting the information base for Dharavi's redevelopment. *Environment and Urbanization*, 21(1), 241–251. (p.244)

51/ Mendes, B. (2009). Discussion on the Dharavi Redevelopment Project and the role of the Committee of Experts (personal communication, May 21, 2009) and Adarkar, N. (2009). Discussion on the Dharavi Redevelopment Project and the role of the Committee of Experts (personal communication, panel discussion/interview, May 21, 2009).

52/ Committee of Experts (2009, July 7). Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Open letter to the Government. Retrieved September 4, 2009, from [http://www.dharavi.org/Dharavi\\_Advocacy/1\\_Government\\_Documents/DRP\\_Letter\\_by\\_Committee\\_of\\_Experts](http://www.dharavi.org/Dharavi_Advocacy/1_Government_Documents/DRP_Letter_by_Committee_of_Experts)

53/ Mitlin, D., & Patel, S. (2005). Re-interpreting the rights-based approach: A grassroots perspective on rights and development, Working Paper Series, 22, Global Poverty Research Group of the Economic and Social Research Council, Swindon. (p.24)

54/ Mayer, M. (2009). The "Right to the City" in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements. *City*, 13(2–3), 362–374.

55/ McFarlane, C. (2004). Geographical imaginations and spaces of political engagement: Examples from the Indian alliance. *Antipode*, 36(5), 890–916. (p.910)

groups and NGOs and the Concerned Citizens of Dharavi (CCD), a space was made for institutional participation when the CCD was sanctioned as a Committee of Experts (CoE) in 2008. This 11-member panel of activists, professionals, academics, and retired civil servants, including members of the Alliance, chaired by the retired chief secretary of Maharashtra<sup>49</sup>, continues its pressure for the urban poor's representation and meaningful engagement within the DRP.

Alongside deeply conflicting visions among actors and questioning of true rights to the city for Dharavi's residents and how claims to this demand are effectively represented, the top-down government vision is clearly and profoundly embedded in a neoliberal trickle-down approach, where the DRP authority sees the project's objective as *"their [Dharavi residents] mass economic uplift by providing better alternatives of living and business opportunities" in the belief that "upgradation can maybe take them (slum dwellers) into a world class city"*<sup>51</sup>. The simultaneous claim by the DRP Authority that they wish to *"treat Dharavi's residents as partners in the project,"* to *"involve people in decision-making"* has been completely denied in practice. No ordinary resident sits on the CoE, raising questions regarding the degree to which their diverse needs and aspirations are being addressed in the process. Furthermore, even if engagement does occur, it is debatable what will change, given that the government has made clear in the past that while the outputs of studies and conversations would be considered, the project will fundamentally proceed as planned<sup>50</sup>.

Though the bottom-up vision – as manifested by members of the Alliance and the CoE – is critical of the DRP, these actors maintain a close and highly strategic relationship with government bodies in order to function as facilitators between different institutional

levels. While the CoE has successfully lobbied for the adoption of urban design guidelines in the DRP and a socioeconomic baseline survey to be conducted in Dharavi, their vision and desire for an inclusive development process has been relegated to making the DRP more "humane" and guiding developers towards a more sensitive development<sup>51</sup>. Hence, the five-sector, five-developer DRP concept continues, with the CoE merely tweaking the edges, appearing as a body legitimising a "gentler" neoliberal approach to Dharavi's development rather than actively pursuing a radical Lefebvrian right to the city.

In July 2009, however, the CoE released an open letter to the Government of Maharashtra calling the DRP a *"sophisticated land grab,"* stating that *"the correct solution to redeveloping Dharavi would be to give up the notion of making a profit out of it, either for the Government or for the builders, and to focus instead on the interests of the residents of Dharavi"*<sup>52</sup>. This shift in effort implies that the CoE is beginning to directly challenge the DRP's neoliberal top-down approach, although still restraining from a radically deep Lefebvrian rethinking of fundamental premises in capitalist social relations. This reality is due in part to the outright rejection of a rights-based approach by Alliance members on the CoE who believe that it is more effective to establish commonality of interest with the state in the furtherance of the strategic needs of the urban poor<sup>53</sup>.

The CoE has not challenged the state's power but rather it has aligned with the way the right to the city is manifested in practice by grassroots groups across the world, in essence modifying the political content and meaning of the contested term<sup>54</sup>. In this light, the CoE is offering a development alternative rather than a form of alternative development<sup>55</sup>, where the former provides strategies that seek to change and refine development positions

while offering different perspectives within the DRP framework, and the latter seeks to redefine development altogether.

What strategies then, in this complex and highly contested case of urbanism, are most effective to claim true bottom-up rights to the city? As Roy<sup>56</sup> posits, will demanding rights through “rebellious citizenship” ensure the right to the production of space for the urban poor, or will it leave them without access to the infrastructure of populist mediation and its regulated entitlements? It is clear that appropriate tactics are needed to begin resolving the spatial tensions between topdown urban strategies and bottom-up strategies of spatial adaptation and urban activism. One clear element that is fundamental in the move towards greater equity and justice for the urban poor in Dharavi is that of persistent and continuous struggle.

### Contested Spaces of Modernization: A Critical Regionalist Approach

The “triumph of homogeneity” and “space as commodity” concepts, manifesting in the misdirected power of the DRP, are a fundamental threat facing redevelopment schemes across the world. Recalling the parallel utopian ideals of the modernist movement, mention has been made of Lefebvre’s condemnation of such abstraction and domination of space for capital gain rather than appropriation for human needs. Famously, Mumford<sup>57</sup> also questioned the sterile, abstract modernism characterized by the so-called “form follows function” slogan, one popularized though never subscribed to by Sullivan. The rigorists, according to Mumford, “placed the mechanical functions of a building above its human person who was to occupy it – instead of regarding engineering as foundation for form, they treated it as an end”. Similar to Le Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse,

with its über-rigid grid of tower blocks and network of thoroughfares, the “tower block-on plinth” typology of the current DRP signifies the deafening of evolutionary, organic human-driven development. Along these lines, Barthes<sup>59</sup> has pointed to growing awareness in the functionality of symbols within urban space, and the tendency of simulation among planners.

Emerging from a global “*space of flows*”<sup>58</sup>, these schemes are essentially relegating “*spaces of meanings*” to localized micro-territories. People are given no choice but to surrender or react on the basis of the most immediate source of self-recognition and autonomous organization, namely, their locality<sup>60</sup>, as manifested in claims towards the right to the city. In many cases, the failures of progressive social movements to counter economic exploitation, cultural domination, and political oppression have allowed plans like the DRP to manifest and remain through time. Acknowledging the global as a form of top-down, anthropomorphized capital restructuring, Harvey<sup>61</sup> suggests an opposing duality where the local is the site of “place-bound identities and a reactionary politics of aestheticized spatiality.” In terms of the latter, in Mumbai and Dharavi there have been legitimate degrees of opposition represented in general by the Alliance and perhaps most vocally through rallies by the National Slum Dwellers Federation. Yet referencing a prior allusion to Foucault<sup>62</sup>, people in slums are unlikely to have enough capability to exercise liberating power alone and from within the slum. By Ricoeur’s<sup>63</sup> account, this incapacity is the root of the problem confronting areas rising from underdevelopment. The “*apocalyptic thrust of modernisation*” associated with a universal commonality of political rationale and universal modes of living has ushered a rapacity of development that, although progressive, has stifled the creative and mytho-ethical nucleus of older

56/ Roy, A. (2009a). Civic governmentality: The politics of inclusion in Beirut and Mumbai. *Antipode*, 41(1),159–179. (p. 176)

57/ Mumford, L. (1947, October). Sky line. *The New Yorker*, New York.

58/ Castells, M. (1984). *The informational city: Economic restructuring and urban development*. Oxford: Blackwell.

59/ Barthes, R. (1997). *The Eiffel Tower and other mythologies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

60/ Voisey, H., & O’Riordan, T. (2001). Globalization and localization. In T. O’Riordan (Ed.), *Globalization, localism and identity: Fresh perspectives on the transition to sustainability* (pp. 25–42). London: Earthscan. (pp. 72-73)

61/ Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford: Blackwell. (p.305)

62/ Foucault, M. (2003). *The birth of the clinic*. London: Taylor and Francis.

63/ Ricoeur, P. (2007). Universal civilization and national cultures. In V.B. Canizaro (Ed.), *Architectural regionalism: Collected writings on place, identity, modernity, and tradition* (pp. 43–53). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

64/ Ricoeur, P. (2007). Universal civilization and national cultures. In V.B. Canizaro (Ed.), *Architectural regionalism: Collected writings on place, identity, modernity, and tradition* (pp. 43–53). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

and Frampton, K. (1998). *Towards a critical regionalism: Six points for an architecture of resistance*. In H. Foster (Ed.), *The anti-aesthetic: Essays on postmodern culture* (pp. 17–34). New York: The New Press.

65/ Ricoeur, P. (2007). Universal civilization and national cultures. In V.B. Canizaro (Ed.), *Architectural regionalism: Collected writings on place, identity, modernity, and tradition* (pp. 43–53). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

societies<sup>64</sup>. In order to get onto the road toward modernization, is it necessary to jettison the old cultural past? Herein lies the paradox for Dharavi within the broader context of Mumbai and beyond: *“how to become modern and to return to sources: how to revive an old, dormant civilisation and take part in universal civilisation”*<sup>65</sup>.

The symbols of “modern” redevelopment are already randomly mushrooming throughout Dharavi in the form of in situ housing blocks. Two examples of bottom-up processes toward taking Dharavi vertical, alleviating the organic density and squalor of the low-rise hutment dwellings that characterize the area, are the previously mentioned Rajiv Indira and Bharat Janata Cooperative Housing Societies. Formed in 1995 by 54 families, Rajiv Indira would combine with two other housing societies by 1999, eventually representing a combined 209 families earmarked for rehabilitation shelter. Partnering with the Suryodaya Society held greater urban significance because this group had access to a private road that connected the Rajiv Indira site to the “ring roads” of Dharavi and the rest of Mumbai. By 2002, five apartment blocks were built, three of which housed community members in tenements of 225 square feet and two buildings sold back onto the market to recover costs and generate profits for future projects. The Bharat Janata project was initiated in 1991 to rehouse a total of 156 households, although as of May 2009 only three of the proposed five buildings had been constructed. Two of the buildings are completely rehabilitation housing, while a third is composite rehabilitation/market sale.

Called into question within these new developments, apart from the structural integrity, architectural aesthetic, and contextual urban connections, is the impact and ramifications on people’s livelihoods. An innovative feature incorporated in the Rajiv

Indira project was that of a 4.3-metre high loft space which enabled the delineation and privacy of separate space in multimember households as well as space to facilitate home-based business activities. However, as a result of cost-cutting concerns, the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) discontinued the 4.3-metre high loft within its policy.

In-depth analysis of livelihood implications at Bharat Janata and Rajiv Indira revealed issues regarding social networks and the use of communal space in and around the buildings. Original physical layouts of hutment dwellings were seen as more conducive to socializing because street-facing doors and windows were always open, allowing spontaneous, frequent, and dynamic interaction. Although residents in both projects stated that the quality of life in the newly built shelter had improved, relationships between neighbours weakened as lives became more individualistic, people preferred convening only on the ground floor rather than utilizing common corridor spaces throughout the buildings. Beyond this social tendency, further observational analysis and interviews implied that the ground floor space was poorly designed and regulated, if designed at all.

The overarching concern in both Rajiv Indira and Bharat Janata is that the diversity of activities and the multiplicity of uses, whether interior or exterior, in terms of functionality, facility, and design are not recognized by SRA policies. The critical perspective of urban production as a predominantly human experience within a complementary environment, with people and place constituting the primary foci, is thus ignored.

Here, the idea of sustaining livelihoods and social interaction should be added to the challenge of becoming “modern” while retaining cultural strengths. Alongside grassroots efforts of local citizens and



66/ Sorkin, M. (2004). With the grain. In S. Sirefman (Ed.), *Whereabouts: New architecture with local identities* (pp. 19–25). New York: The Monacelli Press.

67/ Lefavre, L. (2003). Critical regionalism: A facet of modern architecture since 1945. In A. Tzonis & L. Lefavre (Eds), *Critical regionalism: Architecture and identity in a globalized world* (pp. 22–53). Munich: Prestel Verlag.

68/ Lefavre, L. (2003). Critical regionalism: A facet of modern architecture since 1945. In A. Tzonis & L. Lefavre (Eds), *Critical regionalism: Architecture and identity in a globalized world* (pp. 22–53). Munich: Prestel Verlag.

69/ Mumford, L. (1947, October). Sky line. *The New Yorker*, New York.

70/ Mumford, as cited in Lefavre, L. (2003). *Critical regionalism: A facet of modern architecture since 1945*. In A. Tzonis & L. Lefavre (Eds), *Critical regionalism: Architecture and identity in a globalized world* (pp. 22–53). Munich: Prestel Verlag. (p.38)

the organizations, including members of the Alliance that have rallied them, the convictions and methods used by authorities and practitioners are also critical in leading to a holistic evolution of the area. Here enters the third component of contested urbanism, a method to negotiate between the top-down neoliberal Mumbai visions, including the DRP, and the just needs and aspirations of locals: the concept of *critical regionalism*. Under this paradigm, a clear path is sought between the homogenization of modernist symbolic tendencies and the illusionary recall of culturally irrelevant fantasies of locality<sup>66</sup>. Coined by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefavre, critical regionalism was adopted from the many musings of Lewis Mumford in his rebuttals against absolute modernism. However, as the vertical nature of in situ redevelopment in Dharavi does not lack an arguable degree of merit for appropriately

dwelling and space, many of the structures are irrevocably poor in structural sustainability, leaving them vulnerable to monsoons, fire, and the occasional demolition by authority. A critical approach that merges “technology,” flexible planning, and use – themes of a critical regionalism – alongside accessible local mechanisms, gives critical clues toward an appropriate development for the specific challenges facing Dharavi and its residents.

Here and elsewhere, architecture (and urban form) is not merely seen as a means to shelter people, nor should it be considered the picturesque notion of life. Rather it is an effort to reflect and enhance the purposes and ideals which characterize a particular historical context and people<sup>68</sup>. According to Mumford<sup>69</sup>, this takes place in meeting the practical demands of an environment modified for human use, but the modifications

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Contested urbanism, therefore, highlights the nuances in the battles between the production of space for domination against the production of space for appropriation to serve human needs and aspirations

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resolving squalor and density issues, modernism in its critical potential, according to Mumford, was not meant to be completely cast aside. In efforts toward progressive growth, buildings should make use of the latest technology, as long as it is functionally optimal and sustainable<sup>67</sup>. In terms of the past, older forms of regionalism leaned more towards historicism and romanticism, conjuring up sentiment for the yesterday through surface ornamentation and naïve detailing. Mumford's notion of the concept rejected the absolutism of history and the mimicking of old buildings when producing new structures. In the case of Dharavi, aside from the evolutionary organic constructs of

should “*testify to the degree of order, of cooperation, of intelligence, of sensitiveness, that characterises community*”<sup>70</sup>. The new in situ housing at Bharat Janata and Rajiv Indira constitutes mainly rapid solutions sans the critical consideration of complex community need. While the buildings themselves are structurally more substantial, the choice of immediate functional upgrading over sustained additive value only delivers false commodity to citizens.

So far these projects are the only bottom-up driven opposition to the mega-block typology of the DRP. In efforts to turn attention away from such top-down plans and to seriously

rejuvenate and uphold and the local architectonic against universally abstract versions, critical methods of modernization alongside local particulars must emerge. However, no new paradigm can emerge without new relationships between designer and user. Despite such limitations, critical regionalism exudes potential as a bridge over which any future “humanistic” architecture should pass.

### **Spatial Tensions in Dharavi: Lessons from a Contested City**

Exploring these strands of contested urbanism in Dharavi has made evident what Watson<sup>71</sup> defines as a “*clash of rationalities*” between techno-managerial and marketized systems of government administration, service provision and planning, and increasingly marginalized urban populations surviving largely under conditions of informality. This has manifested through a complete disconnect between the proposed Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) and the current situation of the stakeholders most affected by the process: the citizens of Dharavi<sup>72</sup>. The complex and multiple nature of their highly productive and largely informal live/work environment, including commercial and home-based activities, is not integrated nor even understood, nor are the diverse urban forms present in Dharavi and their association with different uses and social interactions. The latter, for example, includes multifunctional open spaces, organic clusters, and incremental evolution of the built form, adaptation through time by adding storeys to the ground level to accommodate changing needs at the family and at the community level.

The proposed solution, ignoring and denying any value in this dynamic spatial adaptation through time, is a tabula rasa plan to build a space worthy of a “*world-class*” city, a strategy as termed by Harvey<sup>73</sup> as “*accumulation by*

*dispossession.*” It is thus clear in the case of Dharavi that the Government of Maharashtra itself, pressing this vision and plan, is producing social and spatial exclusion, making Dharavi a heterotopia. The practices resulting from such elements are rooted in top-down control and management towards facilitating the reproduction of capital, denying the inclusion or enablement of the urban poor in the process.

Contested urbanism, therefore, highlights the nuances in the battles between the production of space for domination against the production of space for appropriation to serve human needs and aspirations, the latter expressed through the spatial adaptation of residents of Dharavi and their struggles to develop housing in a bottom-up process with the aid of the Alliance and thus to literally build a possible alternative to the DRP. At the same time, the Committee of Experts is pressing for the inclusion of the marginalized urban poor of Dharavi in the capital-driven top-down DRP process. True rights to the city, however, are not about inclusion in a structurally unequal, exploitative, and insecure system, but rather are fundamentally about democratizing cities and their decision-making processes<sup>73</sup>.

The experience in Dharavi signifies a first step toward a pervasive neo-urbanism in what Smith<sup>74</sup> described as the use of “new urbanism” as a “competitive urban strategy” in association with new globalism. On the other hand, oppositional practices emerging in Dharavi, promoting a “right to the city” deployed toward transformative social ends, run the risk of cooption by neoliberalism<sup>75</sup>.

While Lefebvre's concept of abstract space facilitates the reproduction of capital for the achievement of a neoliberal Vision Mumbai, with Dharavi's space carved into real estate parcels for exchange in the market, there is a grave risk that the resultant space will

71/ Watson, V. (2009). Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe's central urban issues. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), 2259–2275.

72/ BUDD (2009). Dharavi: A case of contested urbanism. Field trip final report, MSc Building and Urban Design for Development, Development Planning Unit, London. From [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/DPU/courses/2009%20Fieldtrip/Dharavi%20Final%20Report%20\(low-resolution%20III\).pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/DPU/courses/2009%20Fieldtrip/Dharavi%20Final%20Report%20(low-resolution%20III).pdf)

73/ Mayer, M. (2009). The “Right to the City” in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements. *City*, 13(2–3), 362–374. (p.337)

74/ Smith, N. (2002). New globalism, new urbanism: Gentrification as global urban strategy. *Antipode*, 34(3), 427–450. (p.99)

75/ Woessner, M. (2009). Rescuing the right to the city. *City*, 13(4), 474–475.

76/ Woessner, M. (2009). Rescuing the right to the city. *City*, 13(4), 474–475.



represent the “triumph of homogeneity”<sup>77</sup> and stand, both in its totality as well as in its constituent parts, as “product” with no trace of the historic, organic adaptations, and struggles through time that have made Dharavi what it is today. If we are to move towards more socially just and sustainable urban spaces, more culturally sensitive approaches to home-making or remaking in urban transformations is a fundamental necessity. This means integrating into urban design and planning the notion of casual, rhizomatic, fluid, and of course incremental production of spaces that respond to people’s needs and aspirations, their enablement and adaptation through time. Indeed, it is the task and power of design to unravel, clarify and negotiate contrasts and contradictions in the urban fabric<sup>78</sup> acknowledging the reality of urban transformation as caught between the tendencies of privatization and commodity and conflictive meanings over spaces. Without overloading with naïve expectations, the fact remains that urban design practitioners and academics seek a specific role in investigating the complexity and the contradictory notion of reality and designing spaces that possibly enable social justice, interactions, belonging and basically promote a good life.

The nature of Dharavi as a conceptual resource echoes the unforgotten notion that it is indeed a living and concrete place, understood through the struggles of conflict and daily survival. Alongside the conceptual complexities and contradictions contained within, it is the poignant reality of Dharavi’s situation that ignites local and universal appeal and attention toward the formulation of solutions that can humanize urban and social conditions in Mumbai and elsewhere throughout the world. In essence, exploring, depicting, and rescuing Dharavi is per se rescuing the very concept of right to the city. By, thus, recognizing the nuances and subtleties of slums in general and Dharavi

in particular, not as an homogenous spaces but as a city in itself constructed of impurity, ambivalence, and in a state of constant metamorphosis, “slum urbanism,” inherently contested in nature, can be understood as a response and resistance to state and economic-led utopian and modernistic planning. It is, thus, a reaction to the hegemonic, technocratic, hypermodern, and top-down discourses that shape state authority material interventions in urban areas, where slum dwellers directly challenge this power and claim their right to the city through building, adapting, and evolving their living spaces.

Dharavi’s redevelopment needs to find an appropriate balance to inform both experience and subsequent proposals that will lead to inclusive transformative outcomes for individuals and the city as a whole grounded around the notions of “accessible places” and “inclusive processes,” of the design, development, and management of spaces. Such proposals must be able to offer a clear picture of the various contested meanings different urban actors have in a time of rapid urbanization and ongoing neoliberal capitalist development.

There is a belief here that a critical regionalist approach to architectural and urban production can serve as a tool to negotiate the diverse desires of the people and the need to formally upgrade infrastructures and living conditions while realizing the rights of citizens to participate in the production of Mumbai. By engaging the currently marginalized residents of Dharavi in the process, equilibrium and critical awareness needs to be sought between providing a development alternative or a form of alternative development<sup>79</sup>, with clear consciousness around strategies around working within the system or seeking to radically restructure social, political, and economic relations in the city and beyond.

77/ Lefebvre, H. (2003). Space and the state. In Neil Brenner, Bob Jessop, Martin Jones, & George Macleod (Eds), *State/space* (pp. 84–100). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. (p.337)

78/ Loeckx, A., & Shannon, K. (2005). Qualifying urban spaces. From [http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/agenda21/documents/urban\\_trialogues/QualifyingUrbanSpace.pdf](http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/agenda21/documents/urban_trialogues/QualifyingUrbanSpace.pdf)

79/ McFarlane, C. (2004). Geographical imaginations and spaces of political engagement: Examples from the Indian alliance. *Antipode*, 36(5), 890–916. (p.910)

80/ Roy, A. (2009b). Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgency and the idiom of urbanisation. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 76–87.

While at present there appears to be a disjunction between grand expectations and acknowledged reality, the conceptual analytical neologism of contested urbanism is fundamental in depicting the material-discursive dynamics in the formation, transformation, and representation of social movement struggles over space. The “redevelopment opportunities” as witnessed through the DRP provide a platform for a productive discourse on informality to emerge – particularly its assets and value to be mapped and appreciated within the canonical theories of architecture and urbanism. This could re-politicize informality to reveal the importance of the futures of Dharavi and other “states of informalities”<sup>80</sup>.

While the by-product of this attention may be increased knowledge of informality, is it in the social struggles of the contested urbanisms that reside an opportunity to create new drivers of knowledge production – new priorities that fuel urban research and professional practice able to rethink the “right to the city.” Indeed, the conceptual apparatus of this study and its adaptation to the case of Dharavi seeks to repopulate and reinvigorate the call for a radical thinking on the powers of architecture and urbanism. For some readers familiar with post-Marxist literature on cities and the current right to the city perspectives, the analytical neologism of contested urbanism could be seen as either an oxymoron or not a true novelty. For the authors of this study, however, the originality of the concept lies in the fact that no matter how urbanism processes are labeled, packaged, and implemented, the themes of production of space and the right to do so must converse with each other explicitly because both are embedded in a potential transformative process of social change. The neologism furthermore attempts to combine an urban studies perspective with an architectural one,





offering a possible combination of scales for an effective investigation in a renewed critical architectural practice.

## Conclusion

Lefebvre proclaimed that space is much more than an object or static form; it is active both as instrument and goal, means and end. The production of space, he argued, involves the most fundamental processes of social life, including the experience and representation of place and the construction of identity. How we plan and articulate Dharavi has much to do with how we construct and articulate ourselves as citizens and as professionals. Beyond the notion of Dharavi herein as a geographical “frontline” of contested urbanism, it is therefore also seen as a representational “frontline” in the debate surrounding the professional identity and role of people responsible for shaping the built environment in cities across the world.

Buildings do not contain any political essence in themselves, rather they become meaningful because of the relation between their physicality and specific social processes<sup>81</sup>. Contested urbanism reinforces the idea that design involves satisfying material needs and resolving competing social requirements through a process of active participation by the occupants and the mediation of “professionals”<sup>82</sup>. The design process is simultaneously the production of physical form, the creation of social, cultural, and symbolic resources, and also, critically, the outcome of a facilitative process, in which enablement becomes a central idea. Such an approach fundamentally repositions the role of the architect. They are not, in Roy’s<sup>83</sup> opinion, the “innocent professionals,” but rather involved in a process requiring reflection upon how and what they produce within a contested vision of urbanism.

81/ Bevan, R. (2006). *The destruction of memory. Architecture at war*. London: Reaktion Books.

82/ Boano, C., (2011). ‘Violent Spaces’: production and reproduction of security and vulnerabilities. *The Journal of Architecture*, 16(1):37-55.

83/ Roy, A. (2006). Praxis in the time of empire. *Planning Theory*, 5(1), 7–29. (p.21)



# Recalibrating Critical Design Practice: Excursions through Studio Pedagogy

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Camillo Boano

Excerpts and expansions of this  
essay have appeared in various other  
journals and online

With little doubt it is clear that we have lost the general plot in an agency for potentially affective and widespread change through architecture. It is precisely this potential and obligatory agency that has been stymied by the annunciation and appeal of grand edifices and spectacular visions of cities throughout the world, a circumstance that until recently has all but removed critical Design from the arenas of the so-called developing world. Emerging from the recent buzz surrounding a “social” turn and preying on the implications and possible mis-appropriation of social rhetoric within education and practice, including claims of participatory methodology and collaboration, this essay attempts to recalibrate the positioning of a critical design practice as seen through the lens of the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) course at the Bartlett’s Development Planning Unit.

The Development Planning Unit has long been a pioneering international center for academic teaching, practical training research and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development with a particular focus on planning for socially just and sustainable development in the Global South. With an eye to how these processes manifest and unfold in a spatial modus, the MSc BUDD course gives impetus to the combining of cultural, social, economic, political and spatial analysis in the effort to present a holistic response to the growing complexities within the design and production of the urban realm. These complexities provide great challenges to architects, engineers, planners, and other professionals and therein exists an urgent need to use our capacities for reconsidering and recalibrating our engagement with design to effectively respond to new demands and situations. In relation to these challenges and the

charge for a renewed sense of practice, our objectives within the course are to equip those students with experience or interest in the development of urban areas with a political economy perspective of space, to further enhance their comprehension of the unique needs, abilities, aspirations, and forms of resistance that characterise urban dwellers in various contexts, but specifically in geographies of the Global South. We want students to be able to critically challenge different morphologies and tensions that shape current complex neoliberal urbanisation at different scales. We want them to be able to respond with a strategically coordinated process and produce design that leverages local capacity in order to meet local needs. Moreover we strive for students to be able to critically engage with the practice of architecture and urban design as emanating from specific modes of production with inherent structures of social relations, cultures, ideologies, histories and struggles that configure the urban domain.

In order to justify the significance of a recalibration of critical urban design practice and how this emerges within studio pedagogy, this essay will identify the primary conceptual preoccupations and operational mechanisms that frame our inner workings. We begin by addressing the issue of Participation through a deconstruction of what such a methodological claim implies for action research and spatial production alongside communities. Harboring a belief that the idea of participation and inclusion should be inherent in any process of design engagement, this section serves as the very foundation for then examining and deconstructing the discourse(s) of urban design which forms the core of our argument. Beyond a theoretical grounding of what such a recalibration may entail, we highlight our efforts at re-interpreting

design through an acknowledged multiplicity, borrowing from Ranciere's idea of dissensus<sup>1</sup>. Here we present a tool-based methodology that serves as a guide for moving through design processes - in the studio and in our extended fieldwork. A glimpse into the challenging notion of praxis and the benefits and limitations of project simulation and fieldwork that serve as a platform to act on and experiment with new methodologies that seek a recalibration of studio pedagogy and practice set up a concluding section on the necessary fostering of more fruitful relationships between education, practice, and the users that are served as a result of our working approach.

### **Critiquing the Mantra of Participation**

The relationship between participation and design has been explored in a variety of ways in theory and practice in the field of development. Especially in the context of urban development, the involvement of users in the process of design of housing or infrastructure interventions has mostly been supported as means to produce more responsive outputs. Building on the views and perspectives of local residents, participatory design methodologies have often addressed issues related to the physical properties of intervention, consulting residents about the appropriate characteristics, qualities and positioning of physical improvements. Participation has also been championed because of perceived social and institutional benefits, as engagement of users in the process of design facilitates a sense of ownership. This nurtures both the users' direct maintenance of facilities as well as their indirect involvement in using social mobilisation to persuade the relevant actors (state and private) to assume responsibility for such tasks.





Participation is justified as an effective and cost-efficient process that enables design interventions to be responsive and well maintained through time. Such instrumental approach to participation has often been criticised by its localised character, addressing only the manifestation of urban problems, while leaving the root causes of inadequate access to services in the cities of the global south unchallenged. The role of design in the context of human settlements in the global south has been interestingly explored historically by d'Auria et al., who positions participation within trends and changes on notions of human settlements from the disciplines of architecture, urbanism and planning<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, Nabeel Hamdi has also been questioning the role of the practitioner in the process of participatory design by focusing on achieving change through the facilitation of community-led initiatives. Henry Sanoff has been expanding on a definition of participatory design as “*an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people*”<sup>3</sup>. Stemming from such varieties of discourses and practices, the MSc BUDD course also makes evident the limitations, gaps and rhetorical shortcuts in such an exploration, especially when dealing with the semantic of ‘participation’. In fact, it is hard to argue against the basis for participation in development, its potentials and its positivity. It makes perfect sense to many practitioners alike that individuals, households and communities should be granted involvement in determining their housing situation, livelihood options and location of residence, among other matters.

However, it seems that, although strong in its convictions and sensible in comprehension, the idea of participation loses steam when moved about so freely from context to context, from one view to another, becoming

what we call ‘participatory neologisms’. The problem here lies with interpreting exactly what ‘participation’ means and to whom, thus becoming “*the most ambiguous of terms and the most powerful of concepts*”<sup>4</sup>. While such flexibility can be appreciated because of its adaptability, in this case the term itself requires a common definition, broadly acceptable and applicable.

Thus, while challenging the simplistic use of participatory mantra, the MSc BUDD believes in the need for a “route to people-driven processes” rather than an unquestioned adoption of any participatory label. Processes where individuals, households and communities are not merely labelled users, consumers, clients, or beneficiaries, nor recipients of exogenous acts of ‘empowerment’ through the commodification of services that were once their basic right. Beyond semantics, the first element of our recalibration offers an elaboration on the debates of participatory neologisms suggesting that they should be integrated in system-transforming processes grounded in an holistic design strategy where a critical attitude for which the diagnosis of the status quo is inseparable for imaginations.

## Recalibrating Urban Design Discourse: Deconstruction through Dissensus

The need for a (re)calibration of urban design discourse in general and particularly for the MSc BUDD emerges as a will to define an interpretative perspective over the contemporary challenges of the subject(s) of the course, as well as to enrich the practice of development practitioners dealing with complex urban challenges, the spatial manifestation of injustices and spatial transformations at the scale of building (architecture) and urban design.

2/ D'Auria, V., De Meulder, B. and Shannon, K. (2010) The Nebulous Notion of Human Settlements, in De Meulder, B. and Shannon, K. (eds.) Human Settlements: Formulations and (re)Calibrations. Amsterdam: SUN Achitecture Publishers.

3/ Sanoff, H. (2006). Multiple views of participatory design. METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, 131–143.

4/ Habraken, J. (1981) Foreword in: N. Hamdi, & B. Greenstreet (eds) Participation in Housing No.1: “Theory and Implementation, Working Paper No.57 (Oxford, Oxford Polytechnic Department of Town Planning), pp. viii-x.

These latter two are not seen as isolated disciplines or professions but embedded and infused within the wider, broader and complex urban development and urbanism arena. Two primary arguments serve to illustrate this infusion.

On one hand there is a need to redirect practice and academic curricula towards a more deliberate critical appraisal of development challenges in the Global South regarding the different morphologies and tensions that shape the current urbanization while acknowledging the extraordinary adaptive capacities and resilience of everyday life<sup>5</sup>. Taking a cue from Bruno Latour, we get closer to the facts in a renewed empiricism and praxis so we are able to deconstruct the real apparatuses of the complex neoliberal conflictive derive that this presupposes at different scales: the contested nature of transformations, the strategies for morphing and re-morphing urban areas conceived as resistant, formal or informal practices, the experiences of individual and communities and the role and agency of design as a creative, non-physically limited dimension of transformation. And then there is a moving

On the other hand, the deconstruction of urban design discourse as conceived thus far requires the offering of a holistic alternative framework rather than simply a method or tool, to position urban design alongside architecture and planning<sup>6</sup>. This would abandon the simplistic notion of city as a big building and guidelines and policy as sufficient elements used to read, intervene and transform cities. Following Cuthbert when saying that “the only way forward is to reconstruct urban design as an independent field of knowledge”, such recalibration for us was to rebrand urban design in one sense as political economy of space which in turn configures the form of the city. In doing so, whether it be the form of a slum, a community centre, a shopping mall or a waterfront development, the production outcomes, the results of sets of forces and not merely the design, are the consequences of complex, interrelated, and often conflictive political economies.

Such configuration of urban design as the production of spaces and places in cities (mega, macro, fragmented, in conflict, in north as in south) is then very much anti mainstream since the resulting design

5/ Satterthwaite, D. (2011) Surviving in the Urban Age, in Burdett, R., Sudjic, D. (eds.), Living in the Endless City. London: Phaidon. p.274

6/ Gunter, M. (2011) Commentary: Is Urban Design Still Urban Planning? An Exploration and Response, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Vol. 31(2) 184–195.

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*The justification of allotting proper fieldwork experience in a developing context serves as the ultimate platform to test grounded theory alongside practical tools and methodologies, thus fulfilling the desire to engage in holistic praxis.*

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away from facts, objects if you prefer, to direct attention to the conditions that made them possible. Central here is the notion of “transformative” and “transformation” more than the development per se, forming a new scenario in which the paradox of the architectural and urban design insists.

process is dependent of a multiplicity of forces rather than the singular conceptual genius at the drawing board or in an air-conditioned meeting room. Refashioning the status quo within BUDD critically serves to re-qualify and re-position space – its physical manifestations and processes

7/ Marcuse, P. (2010) In Defense of Theory in Practice, CITY, 14(1), 4-12.

8/ Ranciere, J., Corcoran, S. (2010) Dissensus on Politics and Aesthetics. London: Continuum.

9/ Miessens, M. (2010). The Nightmare of Participation. Berlin: Sternberg.

10/ Ranciere, J., Corcoran, S. (2010) Dissensus on Politics and Aesthetics. London: Continuum.

11/ Ranciere, J., Corcoran, S. (2010) Dissensus on Politics and Aesthetics. London: Continuum.

of production – towards an agenda of development interventions that combats seemingly forgotten architectural and design values of their process and outcomes (at different scales), resulting in a de-spatialisation in development planning.

At the threshold of these two main points, is architecture and urban design, both as disciplines and practices with all their inherited dilemmas. In terms of design it implies working creatively on some preconceived idea or plan of what should be constructed or how people should live. We challenge this precondition through this recalibration, moving in our pedagogical attempt for example, the design-heavy phases towards the end of our studio modules so to challenge the not-so-transformative nature of imaginative representations devoid of evolutionary process that is formative in the design of city. This cleanses the architectural perception and education of “dealing and imaging objects” to a more holistic dealing with spaces and places that allow agencies, evolutions and conflictive adaptations. What then emerges is a redefinition of the knowledge attached to urban design, centred on how space emanates from specific modes of production with their inherent structure of social relations, cultures, ideologies and histories, as well as the gender, age and diversity struggles that configure various global urbanisms.

Critical spatial practices have an inevitably fundamental significance as they are infused with the potential to challenge institutional power relations in society’s dominant forces. Such criticality is intended to assist the understanding of the structural roots of contemporary urbanism(s), uncover potential strategies to address structural inequalities, guard against a co-optation of strategic responses and politicise struggles

by engaging with issues at a level beyond the merely technical, aesthetic and physical<sup>7</sup>. A recalibrated view of design could therefore be based on the ideal of deepening bonds of solidarity through the recognition of social complexities and diversity. Such an approach aims at revealing dissensus, in a Rancière sense, as a mechanism to generate coalitions present in a certain time and context which are strategic to address the causes of marginality revealed through such process. Therefore *“this connectedness does not signal a homogenous unity or a monolith totality, but rather a contingent, fragile coalition, building in an effort to pursue common radical libertarian and democratic goals”*<sup>8</sup>.

Re-constructing design - urban and architectural - as dissensus in Rancière’s world seems echoing Markus Miessen’s recent book, The Nightmare of Participation<sup>9</sup>, where he elaborates on a notion of deliberation in the process of design that contests consensus and builds on ‘conflictual participation’. Conflict is not understood as a form of protest or provocation, *“but rather, as micro-political practice through which the participant becomes an active agent who insists on being an actor in the force field they are facing”*<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, reconstructing design through dissensus calls for a deeper reorientation between politics and aesthetics through what Rancière called *“redistribution of the sensible”*<sup>11</sup>. For him genuine political or artistic (used here in a generic sense encompassing architecture as well), always involves a form of innovation that tears bodies from their assigned places (both physically as well as metaphorically), and free speech and expression from all form of functionality. In other words design dissensus provokes a disruption in the order of things which is not only a simple reordering of the relation of powers between different groups,



which imply resistances, but new subjects and heterogeneous objects challenging the perception and the representation of cultural identity and hierarchical forms.

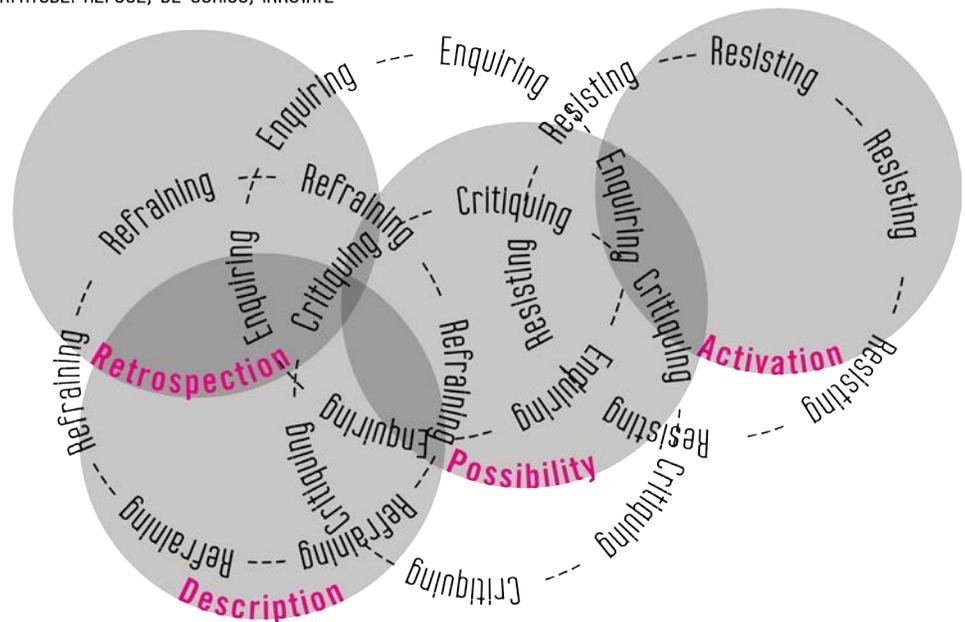
Central in this revised process is a “*poetics of knowledge*”: an operation that shows all discourses to be specifiable, not by forms or self-legitimation, but by their poetic operations with which they establish the visibility of objects and make them available to thoughts through not a mono-directional design process but a more open, flexible and contingent abacus of design. Based on the above, design for BUDD is holistic in its process and transformative in its nature, based on the critical analysis of the morphological and societal forces that shape it and the spatial political economy that governs its production. This approach inherently embeds a social, economic and political nature to the design practices, specifically in the urban intervention studio and the overseas fieldtrip, which constitute real-life platforms of engagement with

the contemporary urban challenges of cities in the global south. As a result, the conceptualisation and practice of design can be conceived as fostering inclusive environments through conscientiously negotiating power and authentically recognising and supporting diversity in urban space; enabling transformative processes both at the policy and at the spatial level and addressing particulars, standard enough to be applicable at different scales and flexible enough to accommodate the dynamic nature of space and social change.

### Defining a Multiplicity of Design: Tools for the Studio

Very recently Jeremy Till and Tatjana Schneider along with Nishat Awan (among others) have reinvigorated the notion of ‘spatial agency’ through a deconstructing of the dialectic interplay between agency and structure, throwing caution to naïve individual pursuit which would amount to

ATTITUDE: REFUSE, BE CURIOUS, INNOVATE



a mere autonomous act of creating form regardless of external conditions<sup>12</sup>. Escaping from a belief that agency and structure (creating space) are forces of opposition, they turn to Giddens' understanding of the two as distinguishable, yet linked-agents are not incapable, but they lack an omnipotence which consigns them to be negotiators for limited reform. The idea of a true spatial agency implies that any structural engagement can only yield success if the agent is attentive to limits of the situation. Giddens explains that "*action depends on the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events,*" further stating that "*agency means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs.*"

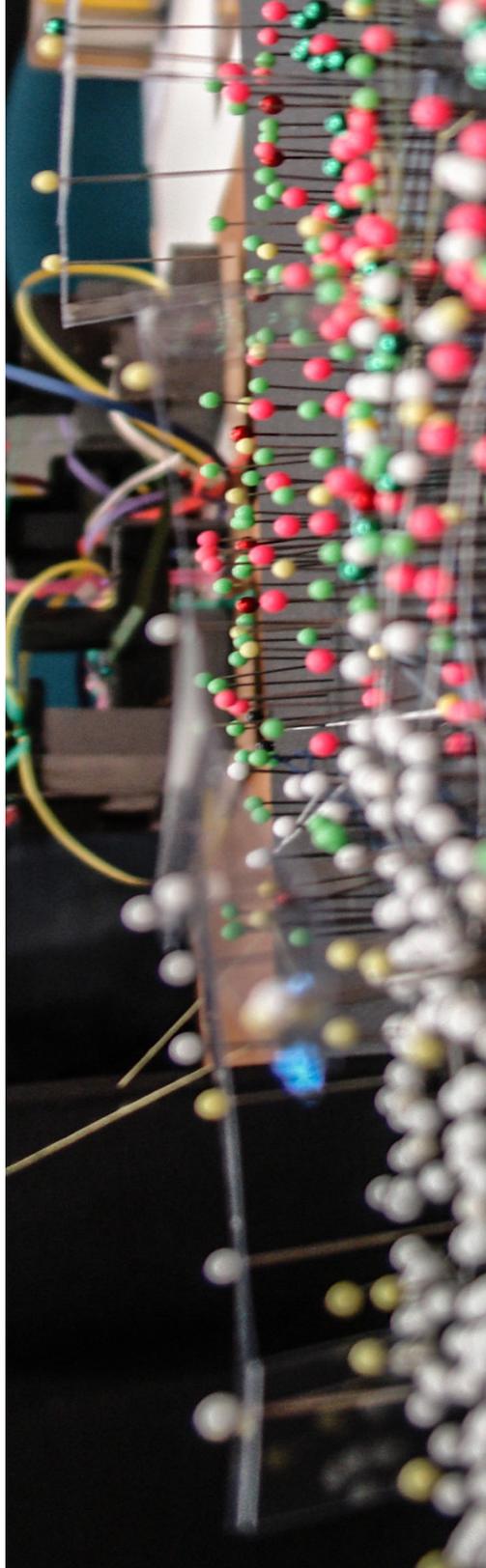
This rather novel concept of 'refrain' is rich with debate amongst the profession, for it suggests in a manner of speaking that a practitioner should consider at some point removing themselves from the equation. There is a thought, at least in the field of development that the goal of the practitioner, when intervening in community-led housing upgrading and capacity building for example, is to render themselves obsolete. If they become unnecessary, then this would suggest that the community processes had become self-sustaining. There may be truth here, though the extreme stance oversimplifies and in some fashion detracts from the role and potential of the agent architect. What is implied though, as Till points out in the spirit of Cedric Price, is that the objectified intervention of physical structure may not actually be the most appropriate solution for so-called spatial problems. Perhaps (and indeed) there are alternative methods for intervening in a spatial manner. In the MSc BUDD course, the considered

multiplicity of design formed a necessary charge for a clearer understanding of how practitioners can become more informed agents of change by taking a more critical stance on how they enter and proceed- a working framework for manoeuvre through processes. This tool-based methodology internally deemed the *DesignMap*, is introduced to the students as a visual essay of sorts, a sequential narrative entailing distinct, yet connected and overlapping approaches, in which the direction is less chronologically imperative, yet inherently directed at laying a framework that provides guidance through various spatial and non-spatial situations. The *DesignMap* is intended as a studio companion, first introduced in the confines of the simulated studio projects and later employed and tested more critically once embarking on extended field research trips.

While acknowledging slight simplifications in what the framework elicits and implies, especially when stressing and highlighting an embedded multiplicity of *Design*, there is an attempt at fashioning an operational outline for understanding related, yet particular modes or entry points that directly address certain challenges in terms of degree or force and timeframe.

The basis of the *DesignMap* lies in a conceptual defining of design (in development) as a **programmatic attempt to creatively strategize in a specific time and space, the transformative potential of an intervention**. Such a definition of design, while provisional and instrumental, carries a twofold obligation related to both process and outcomes. On one hand it is meant to facilitate a comprehensive imagination of transformations and changes. On the other it implies a practice that aligns with public interest- with the collective will and voices of traditionally marginalized individuals.

12/ Awan, N. Shneider, T. & Till, J. (2011) Spatial Agency. Other ways of doing architecture. Routledge, London.



Design is thus not merely viewed as a specialized, isolated, and object-driven aesthetic discipline, but rather an action re-conceived as inclusive, alternative, and divergent. Offering a convicted attempt at identifying what design 'is' or 'can be' serves as a flexible and opportunistic pretext in which to investigate and question architecture in the current milieu of contested development that confronts disciplinary bias and distorted visions of the urban realm.

Due in part to this belief that design is a determined, yet undefined action serving to enhance processes and outcomes, a dialecticism of intervention emerges in the nature of the *physical* and *symbolic*. Physical outcomes at the levels of architecture and urban design can be a means to an end or they can serve as a catalyst for further developments and manifestations. At the same time, it is equally imperative that any intervention should be able to symbolically question spatial character, typology, and scale. These two avenues of manifestation, while distinguishable, are virtually dependent and essential to the quality of an intervention and its ability to sustain itself in the midst of external force and evolutionary impacts.

This dialecticism further serves the move towards a genuinely inclusive spatial agency through a perspective of radical democracy, one that not only encompasses the symbolic gesture behind our actions but more so the real (the physical) act. In this case the process of transformation would emancipate not through grand narratives but by everyday resistance: *"social transformation occurs not merely by rallying mass numbers in favour of a cause, but precisely through the ways in which daily social relations are re-articulated, and new conceptual horizons opened up by anomalous or subversive practices"*<sup>13</sup>.

Combing the supplemental underpinnings of the *DesignMap*, the work of bell hooks on the process of resistance is particularly interesting and useful as she draws a series of reflections on transformation as a process of rupture from dominant ideologies and discrimination which emphasizes scale of the individual emancipation, collective action and structural changes. Similarly to Foucault's triad strategy, hooks' works also examine the process of resistance and transformation based on the three elements of refusal, curiosity, and innovation. Here, **refusal** is approached through a psychological and structural position of marginality, **curiosity** is seen as an act of recognizing differences and building bonds of solidarity, and **innovation** points to tactical coalitions based on dissensus. Such triad strategy, grounded in post-structuralist literature from Foucault and Lefebvre to Derrida and Ranciere, is applied directly to the idea of an inclusive spatial agency in order to encourage transformative practices through processes that enable the design of unbiased products. To further unpack the interpretive multiplicity of Design, the *DesignMap* seeks to distinguish the particular and diverse over-arching characteristics of design that can be deployed at specific and appropriate intervals within a process in order to achieve varying and desirable results that are held together by reflective mechanisms.

For our purpose, we hold that the process of Design can be conceived and organized along four (4) distinct, though not mutually exclusive sequential parts:

- **Retrospective:** where efforts focus on identifying and analyzing discursive and non-discursive elements in order to decipher/depict the implicit nature and production of space (rhetoric, policies, actors);

- **Descriptive:** where efforts focus on representing physical and non-physical elements that are present- ‘mapping’ the visible and latent with the intention of uncovering windows and opportunities for strategic Design capitalization;
- **Possibility:** exploration that hinges on present potentials, social practices, and material/immaterial spaces in a feasible, yet strategically future-adaptive manner;
- **Alternative:** the obligatory action, especially in extreme cases of polarized visions that threaten local contingents, to challenge through a continuous dialogue with the conflictive nature and dynamism of the (re)production of space(s).

Naturally the thresholds between these four parts are not always as straightforward as the distinctions suggest. Without doubt, during a process we continuously backtrack as well as fast-forward, manoeuvres brought on by internal or external cause. Micro processes and resurrection of information are inherent in what we do and these parts are exactly sequential in that they have the capacity to build on one another, though this breakdown in the DesignMap suggests that if we critically ‘slow down’ our action by way of thinking more strategically about where our actions stem from and where they are meant to lead, we might better understand and uncover greater possibilities for identifying our intention of intervention.

More specifically, and digging deeper under the surface of these sequential umbrella parts the DesignMap exerts a speculative position(s) on how a recalibration can be served my different elements of operation.

The operational modes of design begin with:

- **No-Design** recalls Giddens’ notion of

refrain. Stemming from inappropriate design implementation, the idea cautions against assumptions and immediately jumping to object-driven design responses while hoping to avoid being complicit of dominant systems (economic, political, professional). This calls for “abandoning” craftsmanship and imaginative skills, forcing one to consider and prioritize the dynamics and processes of collective claims. This could be seen as the ultra-preliminary aspect of a process or a consistent convicted humility.

- **Research** stresses that without completely abandoning creativity, imagination, and craftsmanship skills, agents (students) can render the invisible, visible by employing a particular way of thinking, communicating, and reflecting that articulates and explores windows of opportunity. These can expose potential catalyst interventions and collectively-derived design proposals within situations of uncertainty, instability, and uniqueness.

- **Critique** calls for the critical deployment of imagination and craftsmanship skills in order to question and understand complexities of contested situations. This highly convicted and reflective positioning offers options of speculating, mobilizing, and demonstrating the potential of informed spatial alternatives that contribute to inclusive transformation.

- **Resistance** directly responds with the intent of reducing unjust domination. Here there exists a condition of possibility in which design becomes a convicted emancipator using craftsmanship and imagination to promote opposition through feasible alternatives. It collectively questions spatial production not as objective provision, but a strategic arena for accommodating the convergence of policy, aspirations, struggles and the future.

As stated prior, the DesignMap is introduced and elaborated on through a series of real case scenarios of contested urbanism in the Global South, first through a simulated project- in recent years grounded in Dharavi/Mumbai- and continuing through short travel workshops to an extended and intense field research trip, elements which will be highlighted in the next section. The tool is intended to provide our students with a sufficient set of guidelines and conceptual apparatus in order to question design methodology, stimulate action and explore the material-discursive dynamics in the formation,

a combination of operational strategies, theoretical vantage points, and an open-ended determination towards the potentials and processes of design. Perhaps more important is how or where these experiments play out. For this it is crucial to incorporate a mix of simulated exercises and real world scenarios at various scales and depths. The contextual apparatus is central to this situation for it offers the platform for all possible manifestations to emanate. In the MSc BUDD, that context often resides in the highly complex and contested geographies of the so called Global South. Here, the multiplicities and challenges of

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Design is therefore based on the ideal of deepening bonds of solidarity through the recognition of social complexities and diversity.

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transformation and representation of social struggles over spaces as exemplary of a wider struggle over social justice from the vantage point of a contextual situation.

### **The Studio as Praxis Ground Zero: Challenges of Project Simulation and the Field**

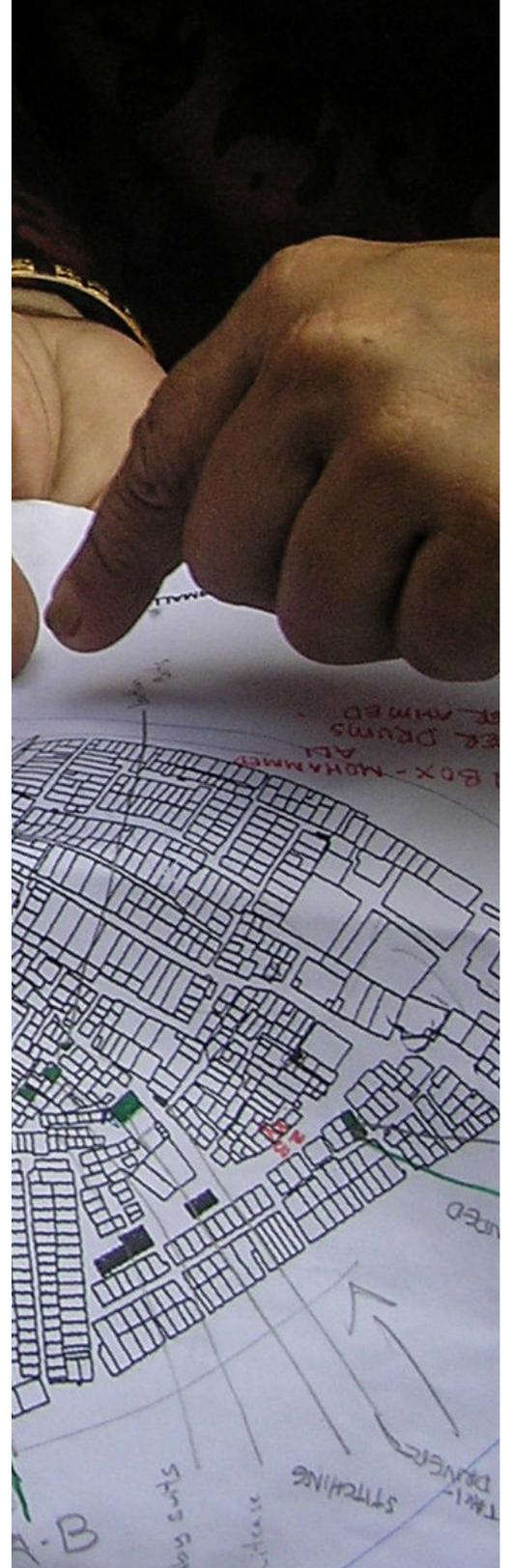
Studio environments, in practice and especially in design education, have always been the grounds for experimentation- but not of the blind or careless type. They have a potential to be a “highly effective venue for exploring agency and fostering stewardship, especially through a pedagogy that invites students to take action in places and with populations underserved or even unaware of the potential benefits design can have on their environment<sup>14</sup>. The charge is to think critically and innovate. Arguably, any innovative pedagogy has to involve

intervening are met with the compounded realities of informality, socio-political and cultural constructs. To adhere to such contextual platform, the studio process must be equally dynamic in response to such complexity, though it should be organized and filtered in such a way that supports a clear and critical understanding of design processes and the recalibrated notion of praxis and the possibilities of what it could mean to be an agent practitioner. This individual sits not in a remote position, but is alert and entangled in the reality of situations, “opposed to social determinism, which implies subjective capacities and objective condition” and with the purpose to “open up creative potential without prefiguring solutions<sup>15</sup>.

Following that thought, in her famous text *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt revived the notion of praxis as the highest and most important level of the

14/ Crisman, P. (2010) *Environmental and social action in the studio in Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures*, F. Kossack, D. Petrescu, T. Schneider, R. Tyszczyk, and S. Walker (eds). Oxon/ New York: Routledge. p.32

15/ Baltazar, A. and S. Kapp (2010) *Against determinism, beyond mediation in Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures*, F. Kossack, D. Petrescu, T. Schneider, R. Tyszczyk, and S. Walker (eds). Oxon/New York: Routledge. p.134



active life, further suggesting that more (philosophers) need to engage in everyday political action<sup>16</sup>. This action would bring a true realisation of human freedom. In questioning this role of agent practitioner, the juxtaposing of theory and practice (for many the very epitome of praxis) will yield a critically valuable reflective mechanism for the students, exuding the necessary embodiment of Arendt's charge.

While not entirely unique to our own course operations, it remains necessary to evoke an argument that the exercising of praxis should not be banished to the studio's physical confines. The studio may very well serve as a Ground Zero incubator for laboratory testing and exchange, though its symbolic mobility obligates itself to the act of externally engaging, applying and ultimately realising the potential of an informed intervention. For BUDD the practical application of ideas ranges from the whirlwind nature of a charrettes to extended localised field-based urban analysis, wherein students are placed on the challenging frontline of society's unfolding narrative. When geographical limitations arise, the simulation is adapted to a degree that still, despite scepticism of being removed physically from the site, elicits a combined state of what could be described as a sort of imaginative analysis and uncontrolled qualitative interpretation.

Central to the acknowledged challenge and treatment of simulation is the careful selection of the case, which we have recently grounded in the informal arena of Dharavi in Mumbai. The particular scenario of Dharavi offers a holistic phenomenology of intrigue unfolding in a highly contested manifestation of a 'site' as further illustrated in our essay *The Frontlines of Contested Urbanism: Mega-projects and Mega-resistances in Dharavi*<sup>17</sup>. In that essay and in the studio processes that have followed, we expand on

a pertinent range of dynamics of the case that are grounded in the very realities facing the individuals and communities that form Dharavi- the looming capital driven Dharavi Redevelopment Plan, the diverse agendas of government agencies versus those of local grassroots organizations, the struggles over rights to land, the bustling resilience of informal economies, and the injustices in the lack of resources and decent quality housing. These elements form the backbone of an investigation that inherently provokes the questioning of humanity, appropriate intervening design methodology, and overall professional role and approach which again is the central charge within the BUDD course.

Our working studio process evolves through the deployment of various tasks that usually begin with a binary mapping (based on researched situational data) of the actor dynamics and the physical urban dimension at different geographical scales, highlighting the quantitative and qualitative attributes of the area. Following the immersing of the mapping phase, the simulation deepens into a socio-spatial analysis hoping to ground the investigation in the perspective of the community and the challenges facing their daily lives (in a way 'replacing' the notion of actually being in place). Methods of role-playing scenarios (based on cultural dynamic, gender, age, livelihood), serve to elicit a human response from the students through creative and loose interactions or what Nabeel Hamdi refers to as 'serious games'<sup>18</sup>.

Only once the students have immersed themselves into the site phenomenon and relationships between actors and gathered a clearly understanding and representation of the community at the heart of the situation do they begin to consider the implication of proposals. To lay a framework that can lead to informed proposals, students

16/ Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

17/ Boano, C., Lamarca, M. & Hunter, W. (2011) *The Frontlines of Contested Urbanism Mega-projects and Mega-resistances in Dharavi*. *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol. 27, no. 3-4 pp 295-326

18/ Hamdi, N. (2010) *The placemaker's guide to building community*. London: Earthscan

establish a set of “design principles” in order to locate and govern strategies for intervention. Inherent in this framework is the formulating of a reflective and epistemological interpretation and intention of transformation, which places emphasis again on the theoretical adoption and the notion of agency. In this instance, the DesignMap tool can assist the students in locating various entry points linked to the situational challenge. If this phase is explored and controlled in a critical manner, the determining of possible appropriate strategic interventions will become much clearer. Grounded in the phenomenon of the site and their “findings” to this point, the students are then left to pursue proposals that align with their own interests and interpretations of the case. With specific foci on space, tangible outcomes may yield variations on housing typologies, community buildings, and mixed-use spaces, as well as programs, campaigns, or interactions whose design and manifestation directly addresses challenges and improves both the physical and temporal character of primarily informal settlements.

urban design interventions that empower communities and society at a significant level of scale, there is no replacement for being on the ground, confronting various and often overwhelming challenges such as the onslaught of institutional bureaucratic politics, resource deprivation and social exclusion. The justification of allotting proper fieldwork experience in a developing context serves as the ultimate platform to test grounded theory alongside practical tools and methodologies, thus fulfilling the desire to engage in holistic praxis.

In the recent past we have conducted significant field research trips in such diverse locales as Mumbai, Istanbul, and Bangkok<sup>19</sup>. While these working trips are an evolved extension of the studio protocol and offer the opportunity to confront real challenges in the flesh using the methodology and critical pedagogy introduced throughout the simulated project phases inside the studio, the tasks of the field and the demeanour of the student cum agent practitioner are significantly expanded. Beyond the testing of methodologies, the

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*As a non-conventional studio experience, the BUDD course “provides a compliment to (mainstream) architectural education in that it helps dispel the belief that design is only a self-serving exercise through the consideration of complex scenarios in need of critical design rather than the sheer commodification of creative vision.”*

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These simulated exercises no doubt have value in painting versions of a situation and are able to convince, in some form of alternate reality, the basic genetics of a given situation. However, when intellectually roaming such contested environments with the hopes of offering

questions of ethics immediately arise through the act of cultural nuance and interaction (i.e. interviews), exacerbating the charge for students to critically assess their reading and response to a situation. As a result, much of the pre-field work done remotely in London gets turned upside down once the current reality hits, a truth that at



20/ Zimmerman, M. (2009) Globalism, multiculturalism, and architectural ethics. in *Architecture, Ethics, and Globalization*, G. Owen (editor). New York/Oxon: Routledge. p.166

times can be quite overwhelming in terms of the physical conditions of settlements and the bureaucracy and politics that are now seen more clearly. The tasks given to students, albeit consciously similar to the phases of the simulated studio project, can seem daunting when confronted with these challenges in the field. However, due to a strategic curating of the studio genetics prior and through the adoption of tools such as the DesignMap, students are well equipped with the necessary resources to question their position and value as they pursue different entry points and investigate various proposals for design interventions that are *“capable of distinguishing between progressive and regressive social change.”*<sup>20</sup>

### **Mitigating a Fruitful Relationship: Between education, practice, and users**

In keeping up with what appears to be the status quo, we have long pressed upon students a certain viewpoint and presented them challenges that can only be addressed through that viewpoint. The consequence here is that while the student experiences a degree of achievement and success in this singular arena, they are less prepared to reason with the multiplicities of the real world context.

Likewise, what the professions often fail to register and capitalize on is the potential manoeuvre within and relationships to other facets of society outside of their own bureaucratic polemics. Perhaps we have focused too long on the objectivity of design rather than the catalytic opportunity of process and scale. While educators have a responsibility to constantly critique and overhaul their own instruction methods, the professions need to reassess how they conduct business and what kind of example they are setting for future practitioners.

It is fair enough and even appealing to see such a wide interest in socially infused action from the part of architects and urban designers and those institutions which breed them. The question is how are we going to ensure that architectural and urban practitioners receive the correct and beneficial tools in order to pursue a legitimately social and critical practice where the output is justifiable of the process interred?

Generally speaking, much of the precedents and methodology we lay before students have still been more concerned with objectified design rather than a critical appraisal of the processes and multiple issues that precede final and formal outputs. By attempting to redefine a lexicon, we suggest renewed empiricisms and praxis used to deconstruct the real apparatuses of a complex neoliberal and conflictive derive that such a redefinition presupposes at different scales: the contested nature of transformations, the strategies of morphing and re-morphing urban areas conceived as resistant, formalized or informal practices and experiences of individuals and communities and the role and agency of design as a creative but not merely physical act. This entails integrating into design (urban and architectural) the notion of casual, fluid and of course the incremental production of spaces that respond to the needs and aspirations of people, enabling sustained adaptation that fosters dissensus.

Reconstructing design through dissensus calls for a deeper reorientation between politics and aesthetics, provoking a disruption to the natural order. This is not simply a reordering of the power relations between groups, which implies resistance, but new subjects and heterogeneous objects challenging the perception and the representation of cultural identity and hierarchical forms. As we have argued,

such process of design dissensus can take different forms, from a conscious act of not intervening physically in the built environment to the production of spaces that explicitly challenges dominant ideological perspectives, thus hopefully, expanding the notion of architecture by engaging with issues at a level beyond the merely technical, aesthetical and physical.

A new distribution of the sensible is not only a matter of excluded voices making themselves heard and starting to speak. And it is not just a matter of the overcoming social barriers which are preventing the excluded from speaking and creating new genres, and subjects. Before that, and as a condition for its possibility, people must have the capacity to speak. And for their voices to be heard, an audience must exist with the capacity to read and hear them. These are matters of capability and expertise; they imply skills which come into being only with education and culture. To transform the distribution of the sensible, these things too must be transformed. The liberation of the senses does not occur simply with the lifting of social barriers and exclusions, the senses must be educated if they are to be extended.

Although BUDD is a course rooted in the scholarship of architecture and urban design as spatial interventions, it is inherently and thoroughly concerned with addressing first and foremost the essential need for an active stance on the social issues facing the polemical concept and reality of 'development'. Harboring the mantra of participatory measures woven throughout design processes is a key ingredient that, while sometimes thrown around like a rag doll in academic and professional realms, requires constant recitation, revision and attention. But as alluded to in the previous section, we must not lose sight of

terminology even after it becomes second hand news. For only with a truly effective exercise of participation can 'right to the city' claims come to fruition in a way that will give way to truly transformative social processes and outcomes.

A key to recognising the type of participation and transformation we speak of here must begin with a re-education of the practitioner. It is our attempt to make BUDD such a platform that instigates a re-interpretation of practice, one that welcomes interdisciplinary backgrounds and diverse cultural viewpoints. As a non-conventional studio experience, the BUDD course "provides a compliment to (mainstream) architectural education in that it helps dispel the belief that design is only a self-serving exercise through the consideration of complex scenarios in need of critical design rather than the sheer commodification of creative vision."

Critically considering our involvement in the most contested of foreign environments is essential if we wish to appropriately assess and become engaged in a situation. The notion of being able to look within and reflect on not only one's role but also on the strands of theory and methodology attached to that role and to the actions he or she might attempt to perform is the sum result of an ethical stance. The BUDD student undergoes, in the very least, a reassessment of the qualities one may possess to engage appropriately within a given context, one that is acknowledged to change across geographical lines. Deliberately challenging the notion of the status quo in urban development practice and built environment education, the BUDD course facilitates the vital questioning of space as not merely an objective provision, but an arena carefully designed to accommodate the convergence of political constructs and social need.



## Why Dharavi?

William Hunter  
Camillo Boano

Dharavi, at the heart of Mumbai, has in recent years become the iconic symbol of slum urbanism through its in-trinsic permanence, multiplicity, dynamism, density and scale. Partially brought on by its strategic location, Dharavi has emerged as the last frontier of oppositional practices confronting neoliberal mega-projects imagined upon the everyday life of its dwellers and inhabitants and thus a useful environment to explore the spatial agonistic and antagonistic tactics of neoliberal-driven urban transformation investigated within material-discursive dynamics.

Since we had the privilege of being exposed to its realities, stories and the wealth of marvelous individuals, activists, intellectuals and inhabitants in our three-week studio in May 2009, we've been investigating and exploring such a paradigmatic case in our personal research as well as in the Urban Intervention Studio with different groups of students at the DPU.

Acknowledging that Mumbai and Dharavi have rested under a speculative gaze and microscope of analysis since the early 1990s, when a multitude of institutions, organisations and professionals producing alternative visions emerged, it can easily be said that Dharavi is in itself becoming a concept resource model, representing contested urbanism and the subject of slum upgrading and redevelopment. Just as Los Angeles and Las Vegas have become urban ideologies, through Mike Davis's *City of Quartz*<sup>1</sup> and Venturi's *Learning from Las Vegas*<sup>2</sup>, so too has Mumbai (Dharavi) become an international breeding ground for debate and research with potential risk of subjectivisation. **So, why Dharavi?**

Despite Dharavi's fertility in containing the complexities and contradictions that appeal conceptually to professionals and

academics alike, it is an extraordinary conundrum emblematic of a magnificent and paradoxical post-modern urban present. The complexly layered narratives and plethora of contested spaces has resulted in an urban paradigm that is simultaneously fascinating and frightening, clear in its vision yet obscure in its pattern, rich and wretched, beautiful and revolting.

The predominant current practice in education is to take generic architectural, urban design and development caused by the process of neoliberalism as a given resulting in a nauseating recording of programmes and exercises promoting this successful recipe in an extroverted super-aesthetic manner. The alternative focuses on contested spaces such as Dharavi where conflict, contradictions and vibrating activism are a potential reflective antidote to this current trend. Claiming centre stage are people and spaces, which positions identity, recognition and alternatives in disjunction with the mainstreamed strategies of urban development.

Navigating, exploring, researching and re-imagining Dharavi can also be understood as a possible alternative to architecture and design's near-fatal attitude towards the city, the urban realm as simple extension and materialisation of more or less well-intentioned, predatory or benevolent planning and redevelopment. Adopting a research-design perspective into this also serves the purpose of creating awareness, rendering visible the experimental and making tangible the contradictions and the complexities of Dharavi rather than immediately pretending to be "resolved" without incurring to be subjectivists or even tendentiously neo-situationist. It is a serious attempt to break down the rules to orchestrate the relevance of design, architectural and urban, for the kinetic, informal city as

1/ Davis, M. (2006). *Planet of Slums* (p. 228). New York - London: Verso.

2/ Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D., & Steven, I. (2001). *Learning from Las Vegas: The forgotten symbolism of architectural form*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

well as the extreme, though omnipresent and localised conflictive urbanism. Dharavi investigations both in the field and in the studio were fertile ground - a background but also a laboratory for critical investigation. Dharavi is a kinetic, not static locus of dormant/latent city, illegal and unplanned, often condoned through a process of institutional forgiveness, continuously challenged by reclamations, voices and experimentations. A critical venture into 'towards the not yet of an

loop between observations, description and investigation of the relationship between space and social practices. It is in these kaleidoscopic alterations between constricted, monochromatic, imposed and narrowly profit-oriented views and broad, multicolored, resistance-oriented and contingent configurations of powers, cultures, languages and polity, the truths practices are open to contestations. Although the Urban Intervention Studio draws a clear distinction between production of space

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Dharavi in its extraordinary conundrum and kaleidoscopic alterations offers a multiplicity of investigative trajectories that combine and separate, creating never-stable but always-interrelated patterns.

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alternative future' carries a reflective projection, always individual, disciplinary and political, with practical aims in sight - a critique of the apparatuses and logics that have congealed Dharavi in its present topologies - but also an attempt to map an alternative redevelopment. Alternatives have been produced in a dense tableau of different design interventions, architectural languages and catalytic approaches, some more utopian than others but all evocative of the right to envision, imagine and build a new topos for Dharavi where inhabitants may build their humanity in accordance with their freedoms, aspirations and dreams, and not as mere object of an ineluctable logic of commodified urbanisation and product-oriented architecture.

and production of knowledge, of course the two dimensions are mutually connected and cannot be independent from each other at all. Indeed, the vitality and the multiplicity of what we appreciate as architecture, its artifact and vehicle of communications, discourses and polemics, its mode of production, representation and narratives work in parallel on those two dimensions: the design process is simultaneously the production of physical form and the creation of social, cultural and symbolic resources. It contributes to an urban transformation that must be seen as an observable planned and unplanned re-making of space, place, people, relations, structures and institutions within the city.

Within this interpretative logic, Dharavi in its extraordinary conundrum and kaleidoscopic alterations offers a multiplicity of investigative trajectories that combine and separate creating never-stable but always-interrelated patterns in a continuous

*"It started to go wrong quite early, my relationship with architecture"* says Till<sup>3</sup>, in opening *Architecture Depends*. This well represents the ethos and the challenge of the Urban Intervention Studio of our course in promoting inquiring spaces - its manifestations and production.

3/ Till, J. (2009). *Architecture Depends*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Architecture should be viewed as post-disciplinary field of knowledge in a way - a practice concerned with how spatial realities 'become' and present us with a prerequisite of not only its physical and aesthetic nature of transformation but its broader reach of political realities.

The work we do and seen later in this book represents a perpetual experimentation rather than a fixed rhetoric, though a certain magnitude of critical alternative vision of design and architecture hopefully resonates in a place of transition. Thus transition in architecture as it stands now could be defined by the fact that it renders itself rather visible as to what Appadurai called the "*illusion of permanence*"<sup>4</sup>.

This phrase is interesting because it captures a kind of desire of the Imperial system, but simultaneously the anguish and the ambivalence involved in these things: the arrogant conceit of certain grand projects, but also the humble thing that ordinary people seek constantly to create in the everyday. What intrigues us most in that vision is (not only) the continuous tensions (struggles) between grand schemes and the everyday, but the strategies, the inventions and the narratives that produce stability, imagination of tomorrow and potential alternative options. Such ambivalence is surely the central answer to the 'Why Dharavi?' question.

Specifically transition/ambivalence, which simply has this condition of "betweenness" from an architecture perspective, resides in an indeterminacy of purposes and meanings, imaginations and aspirations of the form/spatial connotations and their inhabitants. Thus if assuming that Architecture and urban design "frames" space, both literally as everyday life occurs within and inside built forms and discursively as they transmit meanings<sup>5</sup>, memories and imaginations the ambivalence of transition would be manifested in the discursive production and reproduction of powers and spatial agencies.

What interests us specifically in transition(s) is the space of it: neither a medium nor a list of ingredients, but an interlinking of geography, built environment, symbolism, and life praxis subject to change. An investigation that would require a critical attitude for which the diagnosis of the status quo is inseparable for the means to alter this condition through "*refusal, curiosity and innovation*". This conceptual triad - strategically the long lasting debate of understanding architecture as a practice with potential to truly transform reality - would mean redefining architecture "as architecture"<sup>6</sup>, its knowledge and practice not only capable of imaging and inventing but capable of "transitions".

4/ Appadurai, A. (2003). Illusion of Permanence: Interview with Arjun Appadurai by Perspecta 34. Perspecta, 34(2003), 44-52.

5/ Dovey, K. (1999). Framing Places. Mediating power in built form. London: Routledge.

6/ Ceferin, P. (2012). What is Architecture the Name of Today? Log, 19.





Urban Design  
Recalibrated:  
BUDD Studio  
Works

*The following pages illustrate student work completed within the BUDD studio under the Dharavi: Contested Urbanism project which ran concurrent from 2009-12. Divided here into the phases that constituted the remote studio process, the work displayed is but a mere snapshot into the rigorous and critical investigations undertaken by BUDD students in London.*

*Phase briefs attempt to explain the bases of the work and echo the briefs given to the students. These phases emulate what could be described as a practical research methodology - a sequence for uncovering holistic aspects of a situation and the challenges it breeds. Much of the process involved group work, a dynamic central to the BUDD course, though a diversity of individual effort and projects surface as a reflective complement.*

*Rather than spend time and space going into the major details and explanations of various visuals, we hope that the representation is indicative of a praxis-based experimentation and questioning that defines the BUDD course. This serves as a pedagogical foundation for recalibrating the practice of urban design in particularly contested arenas.*



# Mapping the territory

## OPERATION

Uncovering and deciphering the relationships between all key 'stakeholders' involved in a situation is the first act in understanding the internal and external forces enacting on a development process. Through initial "actor diagramming", actors are analysed on the basis of a number of criteria, such as their level of operation (local, national, regional, international), the mandate of an actor (interests, concerns, agendas, visions) or particular areas of expertise that various actors have, and the links that exist amongst actors pertaining to these qualities.

In order to translate and locate these relationships within a spatial dimension, it likewise necessary to decode and repackage the physical, cognitive, qualitative, and quantitative attributes of a particular site and territory through "urban mapping" methods.

Spaces and places have many layers. Combining the concrete materiality of the territory and the conceptual meta-narrative elements of actor dynamics, documentation and visualization of the layers of the Mumbai through various representations occurs, highlighting the tensions interlaced in the processes of Dharavi's redevelopment. Overlaying these dense layers of information further necessitates a clear reading of the situation.

These mappings facilitate how actors perceive a particular space. They can render objects on the surface, but also embody a matrix of discursive, non-spatial aspects – considering three levels of research: a) enumeration and localization, b) description and explanation, c) comprehension and interpretation. It is therefore suggested that complex spaces can only be properly conceived and designed when the narrative is incorporated alongside the data.

## METHODOLOGY and OUTCOMES

Consider such questions as What are you intentionally trying to represent with the visual?, Does the representation reveal something new beyond what is already there?, and Are the dialectic relations between actors and physical site clear? allow for the appropriation and diverse interpretation of 'diagramming' and 'mapping'. It is suspected that certain key elements or phenomena will emerge and be highlighted and addressed. Though mapping interpretations and outcomes may vary, the sense of tangible visual character which seeks to clearly informative and standing alone is a clue to further action.

## REASONING

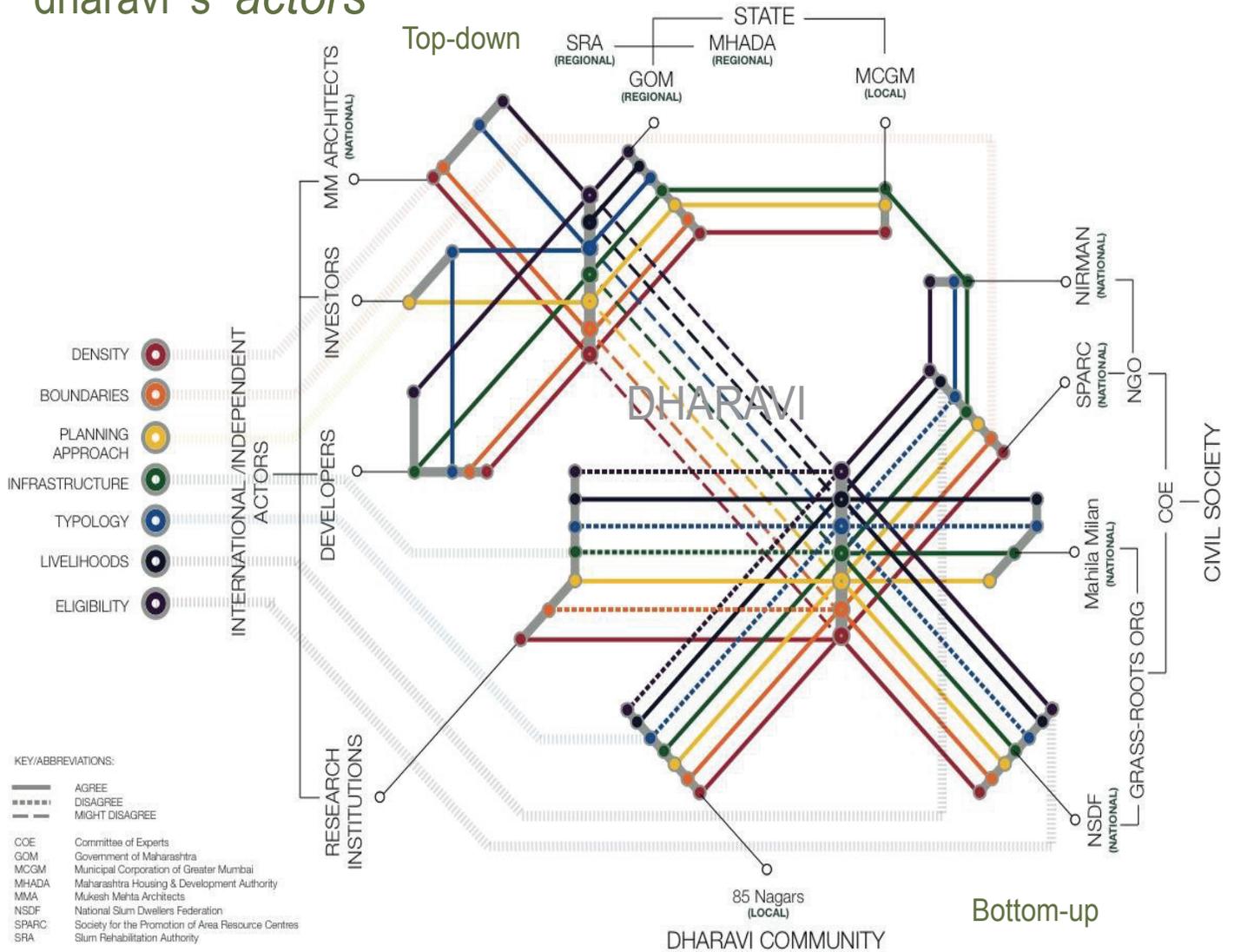
- To stress the benefit of establishing a clear platform and conscience of the actors involved in a situation from the outset and to understand the dynamics of mapping transitional actor relationships.
- To use the 'actor diagram' as a constant source of referral to ensure clear responsibility and reveal the overlaps (or gaps) in actor relationships illustrating where potential alliances and negotiations can occur.
- To understand the dialectics of working on and mapping space- 1) space as a concrete object to be experienced, perceived, and appropriated; 2) space as conceptual idea of the city, as representation through symbol and conflict- the relationship between the physical and the 'non-physical'.
- To make visible through mapping what and who is traditionally made invisible.



An aerial photograph of a city, showing a dense urban layout with a river winding through it. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the lower portion of the image, containing a quote in pink text. The city features a mix of residential areas, industrial zones, and green spaces, with a prominent river and several large open areas that could be parks or sports fields.

*"Maps are pictures, maps are self-portraits, maps are manifestations of perceptions, maps are portraits of the world in the manner in which those preparing them would like the world to be understood, maps are subjective, mapping is...an act of power" (Jai Sen)*

# dharavi's actors







Private Sector

**tax**

NGOs



Government

People of Mumbai



Government



NGOs

Slum Dwellers



Dharavi



International Orgs

NGOs

Slum Dwellers



Government



**tax**

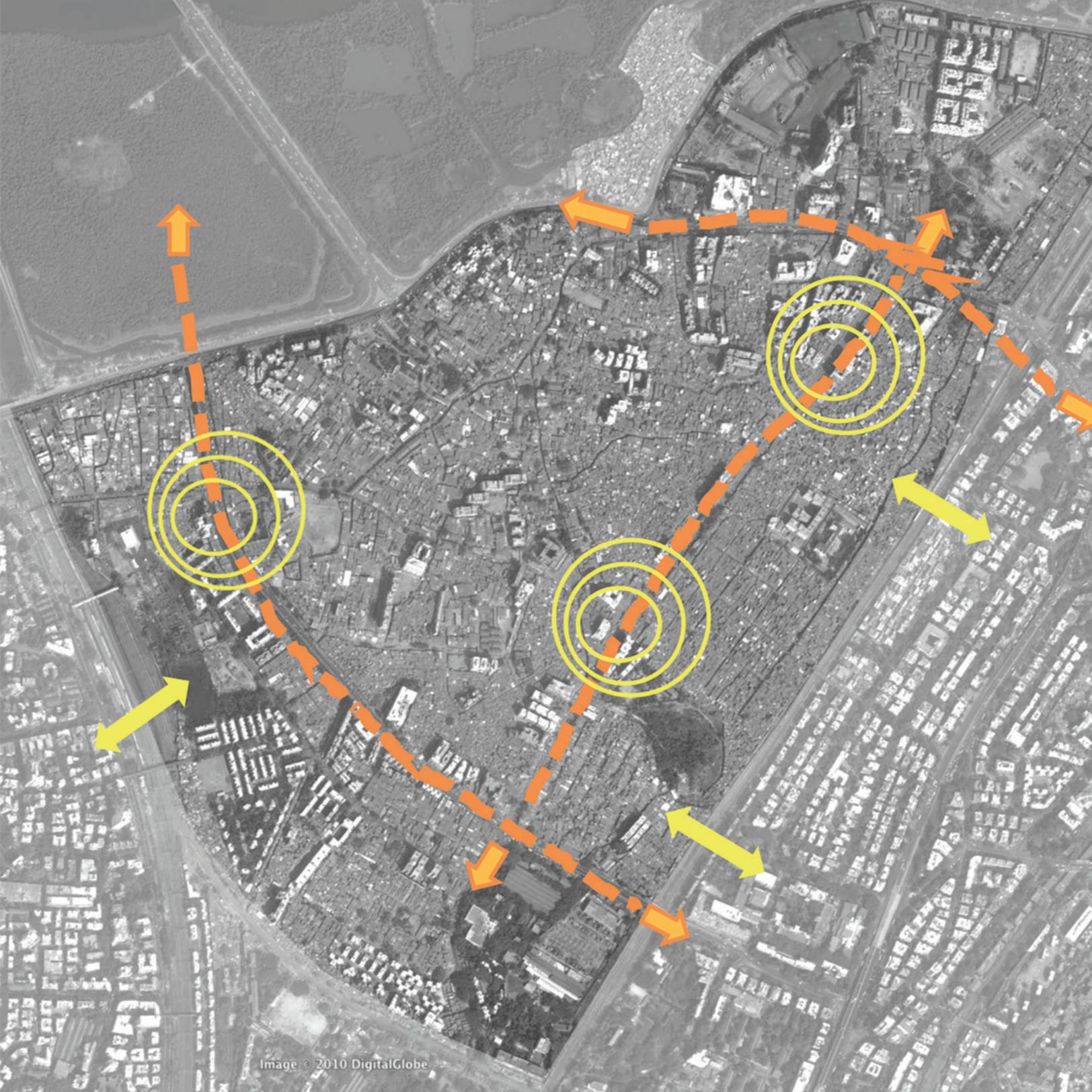
Slum Dwellers

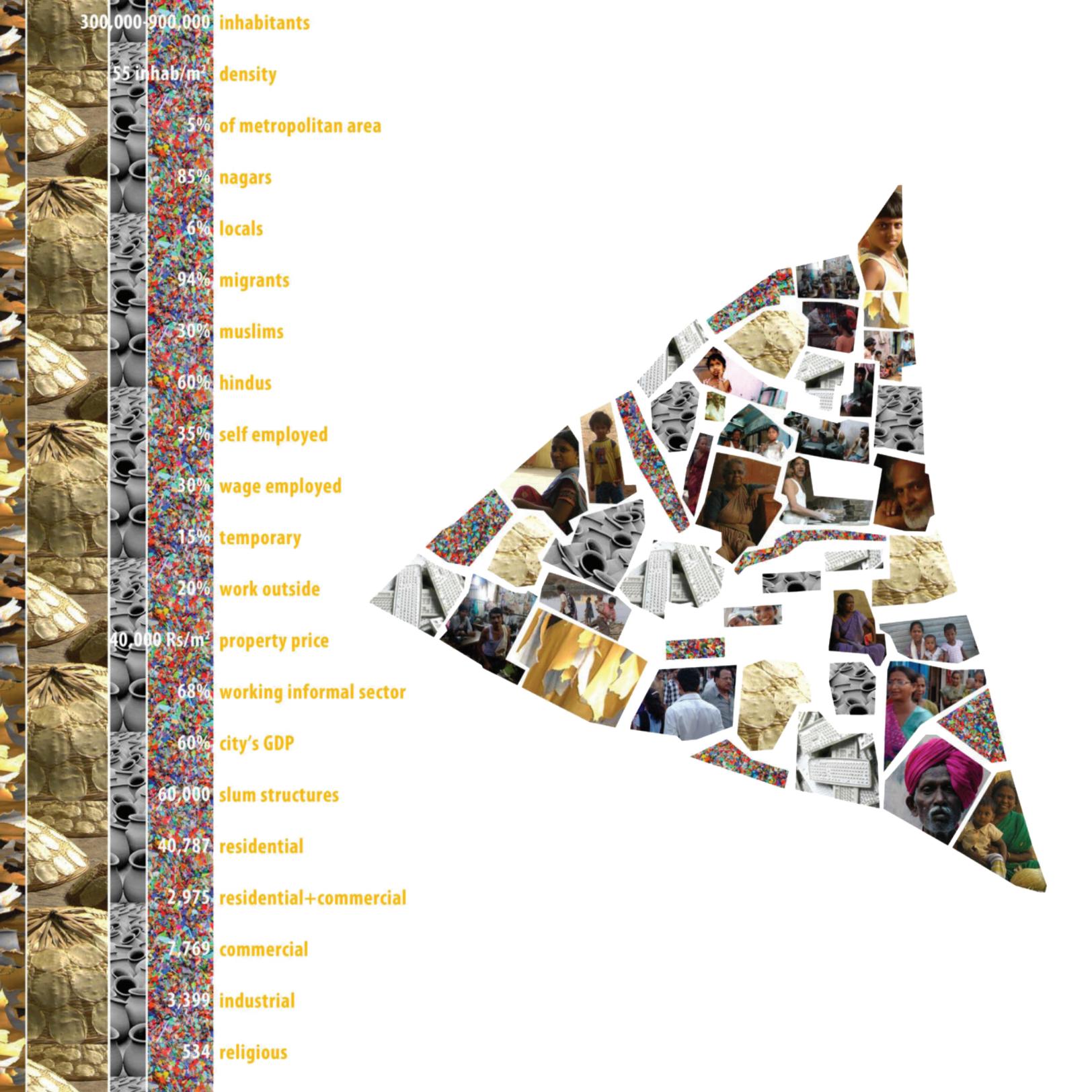


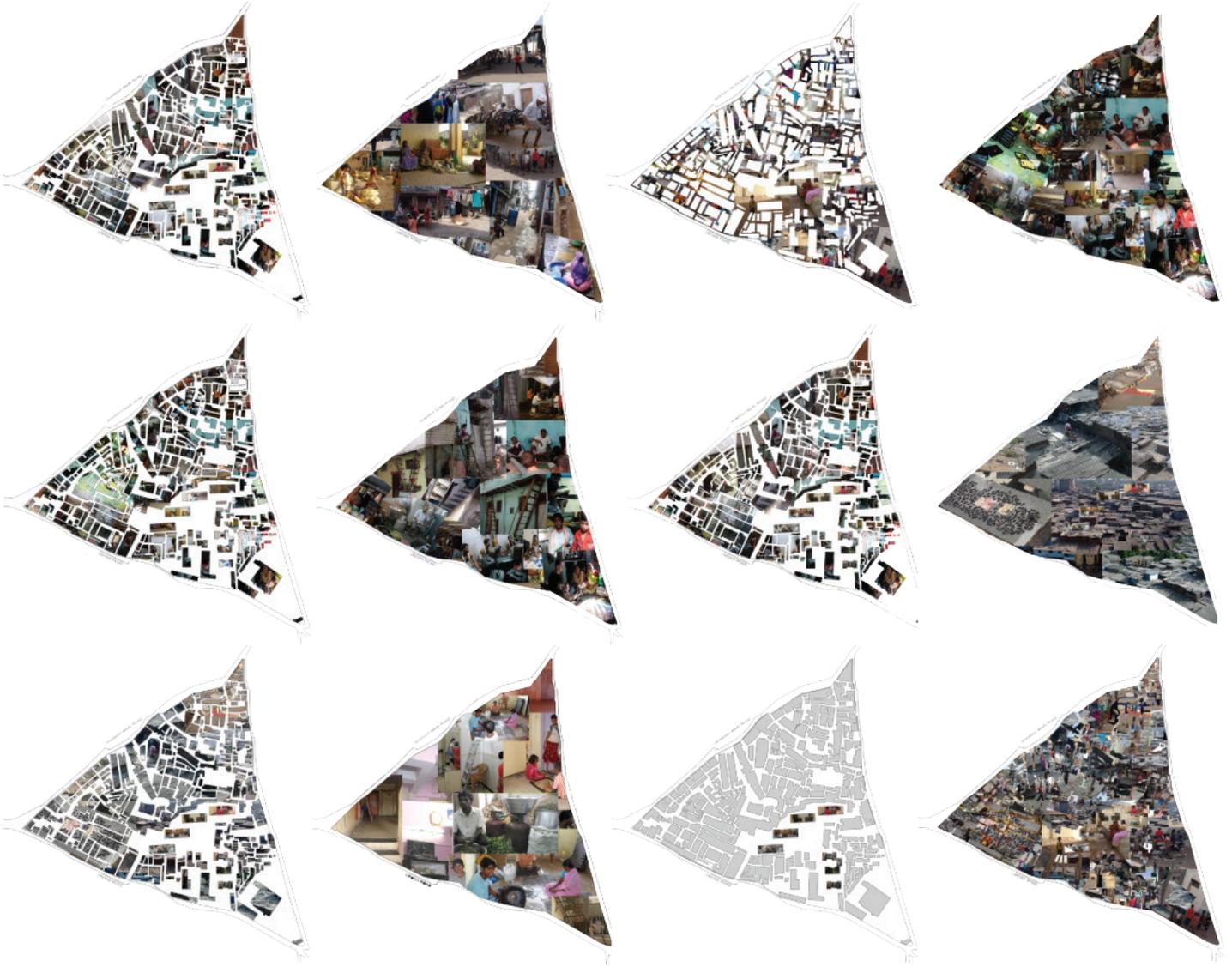
People of Mumbai

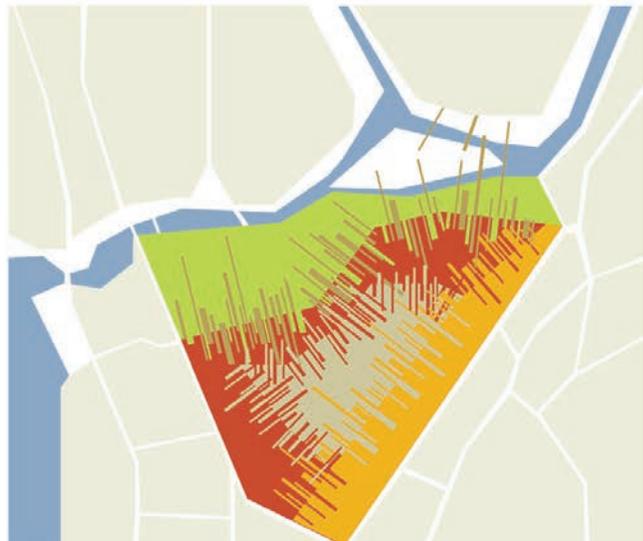
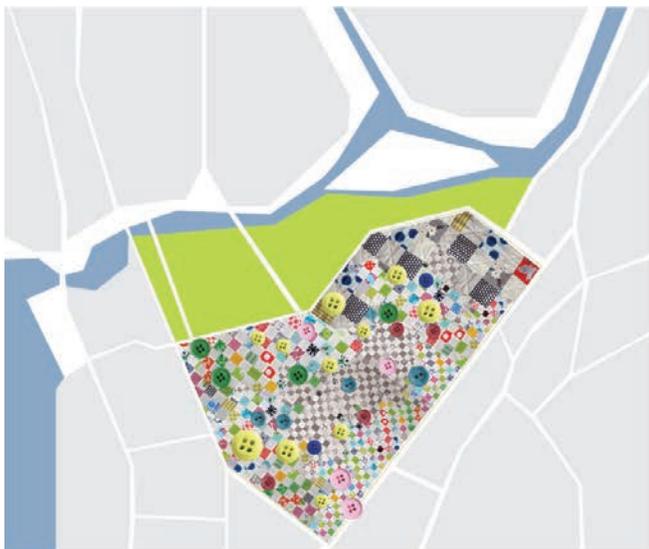
**tax**

Government











“The Greeks, who used the word polis for the city, used the very same word for a dice-and-board game that, rather like backgammon, depends on an interplay of chance and rule. The players’ skill is shown by the way they improvise on the rule after every throw of the dice. If the analogy works, it would follow that we are agents as well as patients in the matter of our cities. Cities and towns are not entirely imposed on us by political or economic direction from above; nor are they quite determined from below by the working of obscure forces we cannot quite identify, never mind control.”

(Joseph Rykwert, *The Seduction of Place*)

The people of Dharavi, they are not against the development but what they want to live anywhere else. My  
; the government came to  
velopment? But not at the c  
Can't rehabilitate people through a movement or migration from one building to another.



the people here  
are saying – it should be fair of us. You know – do the development but do something for us...

earn their living in the house itself. They don't understand the kind of spaces we need

school is nearby, I like that. People help each other...

to us. We're very happy where we are.

most of our bread and butter!

her, you've got  
to understand their culture

It would be impossible for us to continue our work.



# Profiling Livelihoods, Needs And Aspirations

## OPERATION

Successful projects and interventions contain a healthy component of people-driven determination. To enhance a deeper understanding of a situation that is first served through actor and urban mapping, it is imperative to come to terms with individuals and communities who occupy a territory. In an ideal instance this could best be achieved on the ground through direct interaction with people, though there are ways to first establish the root values of these actions even in a remote simulated experience.

To facilitate this deepening of societal and cultural nuance, an initial act of “socio spatial profiling” will encourage navigation and reflection through narratives and components of everyday life such as different social constructs, built typologies, and livelihood strategies. This will help further uncover the underlying cross-notions of space as well as the aspirations and obstacles that communities and individuals face and the opportunities to address them.

By exploring these components from both a material and qualitative nature, including the interwoven relationships between those natures (i.e. conflictive and complementary) and the processes/situations that influence them, a clearer social dimension will be achieved. These reflections could be considered and depicted through the portrayal of collective group realities and spatial connotations, addressing questions such as Who you are, what you need, what you aspire to, what you confront.

As instrumental as it is to achieve a heightened understanding of community,

what is of sequential importance is to speculate on how practitioners will respond to the challenges and relationships between society and space. By observing, listening, interacting and processing information in order to transform a spatial profile and narrative into critically interpretive response will spatial manifestations.

## METHODOLOGY and OUTCOMES

In forging a socio-spatial profiling it is of benefit to assign particular thematic areas of containment. In the case of Mumbai and Dharavi, this includes **transient living, religious edifices, the public realm, housing and high-rise typologies, live/work dwellings, and generational constructs.** Secondary considerations that can assist in building a complete narrative could entail characterisation of gender, association, capacity, and occupation - always paying close attention to specific perceptions on space at both household and community level. Beyond analytical foundations, it is crucial to critically consider how to communicate and portray particular scenarios and profiles which can consequently produce a dynamic and appropriately revealing story.

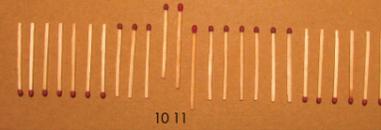
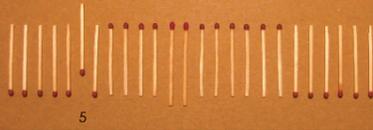
In making a transition between thinking as a community member as in the profiling action and exercising expertise as a practitioner when enacting a response, it is important that the complexities in socio-spatial relations are respected and harnessed in such a manner that can yield tangible, yet diverse outcomes. This diversity will acknowledge the different thematic entry points as well as nuanced interpretation of a situation.

We are six family members living in this flat in the highrise.



I am the first to get up to make breakfast.

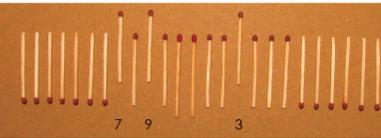
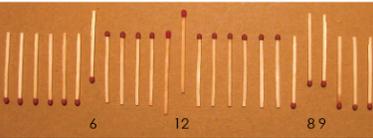
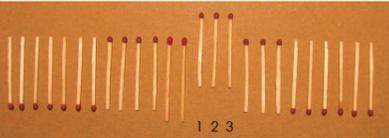
I do the housework for the family before I rearrange to work.



After lunch we work together in inside the flat to use the daylight.

We rearrange the flat to eat together.

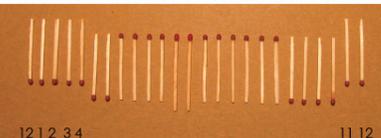
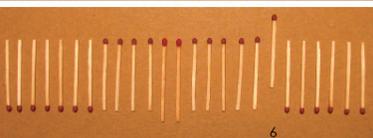
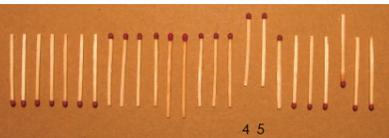
Sometimes I meet my neighbours when I go for errands or work outside.



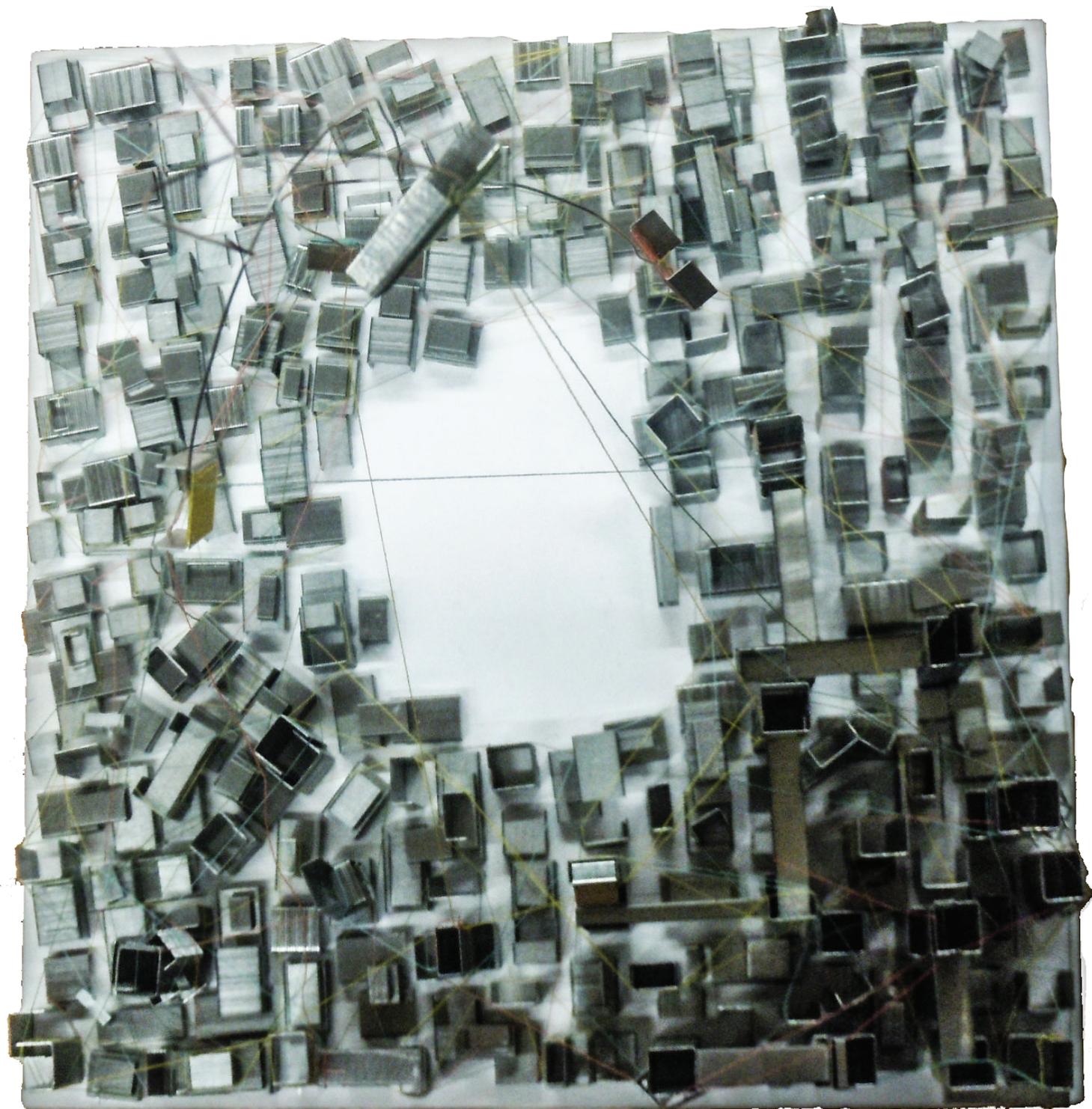
I continue inside when I work alone, it's safer.

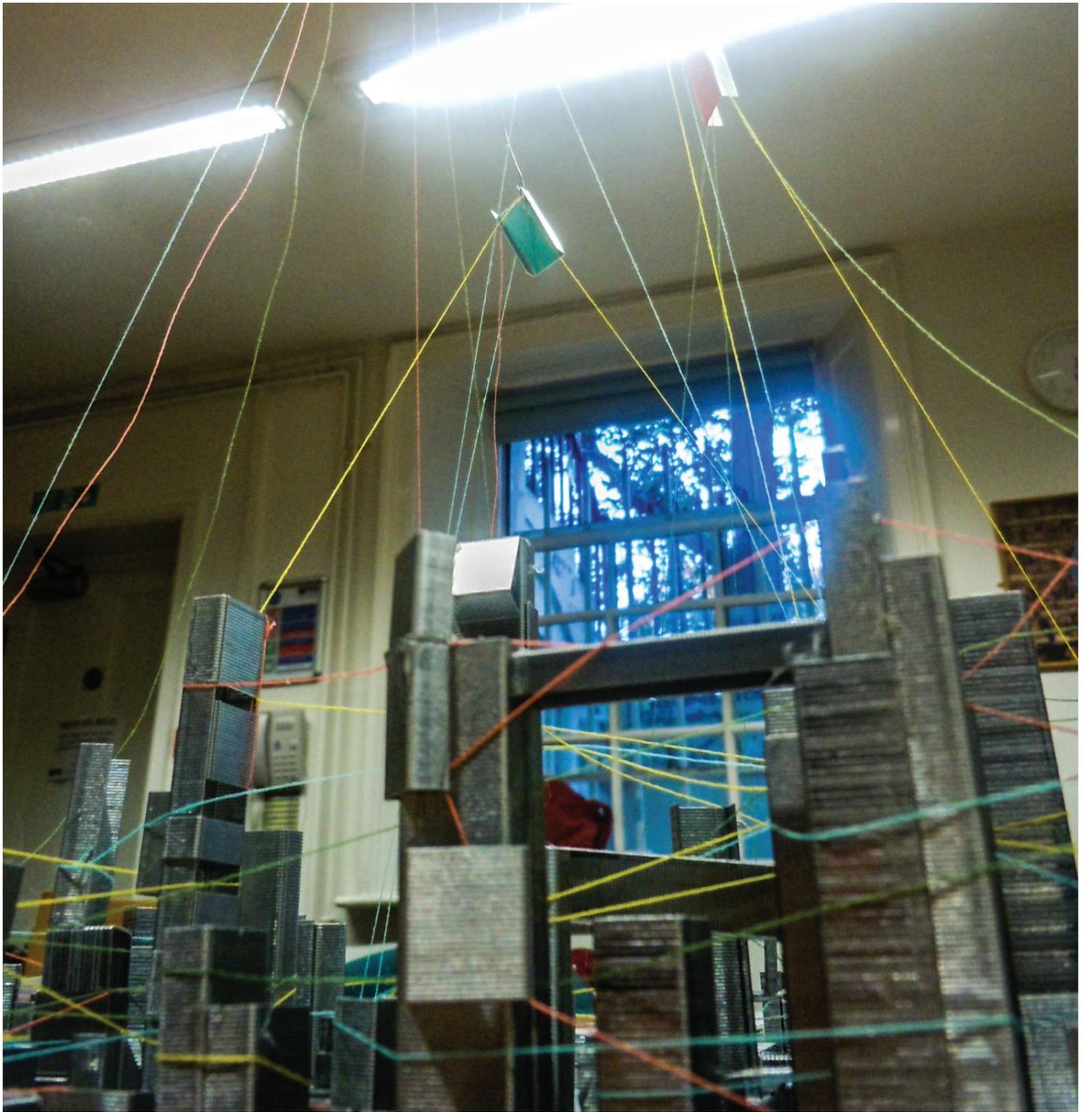
Early evening I meet some women in the Groundfloor outside the highrise.

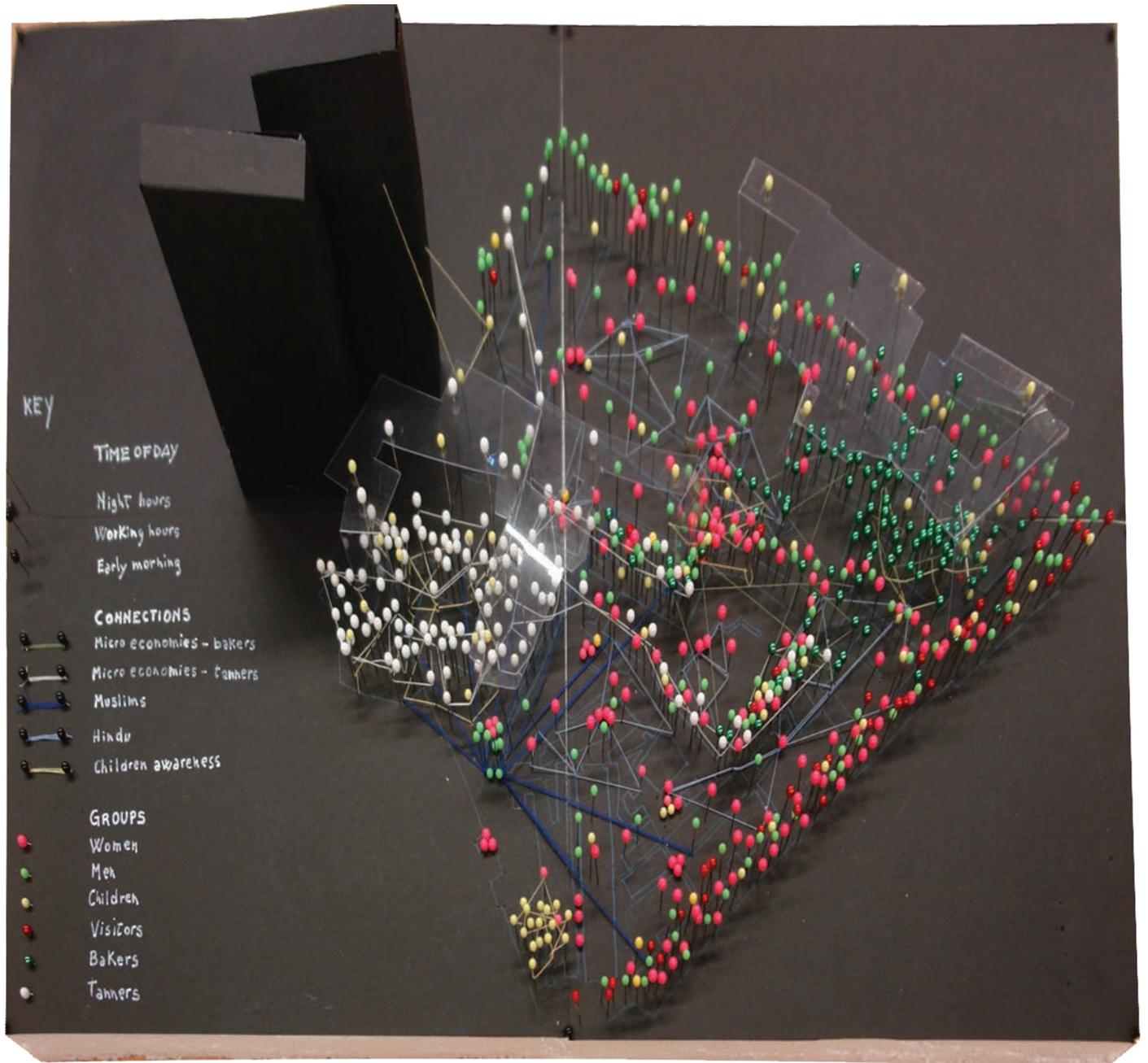
To sleep we move things in the kitchen and cover the floor with beds.



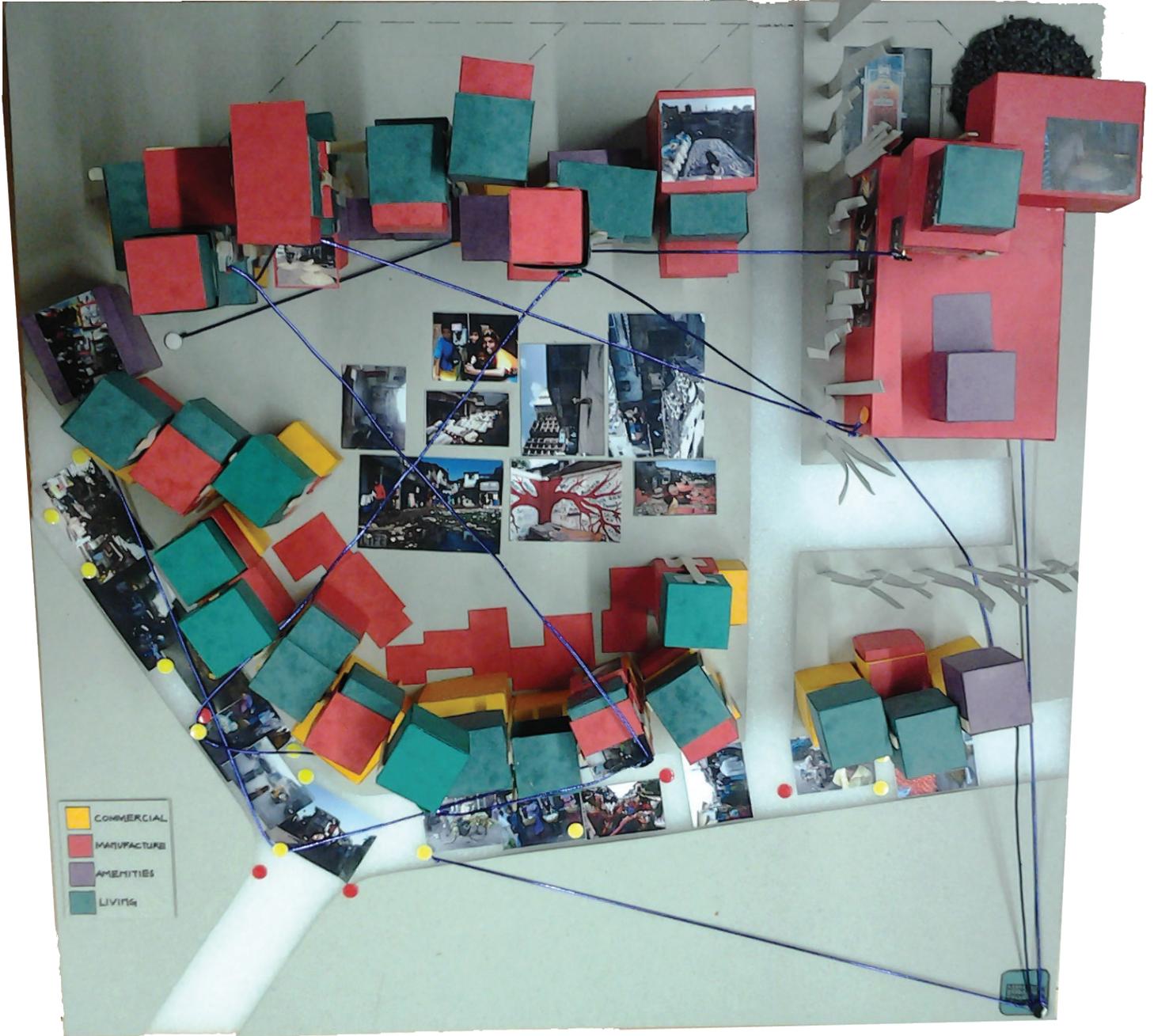
















# Design Guidelines and Principles

## OPERATION

In a project's life, rather in a conceptual simulation or in the real world, it is important to take notice of steps in a process. Before jumping to assumptions and immediate design reactions and interventions, a clear foundation of design-laden principles and guidelines should be established in some form in order to better serve the move towards design proposals. This will arguably ensure a more convicted proposal and at the very least, a gauge in which to employ refinement.

With the case of Mumbai and Dharavi, the solidifying of design principles seek to ground the guidelines in a manner that addresses the position and moral code of the practitioner while highlighting inherent values that are necessary to align with the collective will and voices of people as well as large-scale top-down development plans. These people-centred principles will thus yield measures to guide practitioners through a process of systematic thinking as they deliberate and negotiate design interventions.

## METHODOLOGY and OUTCOMES

Design Principles and Guidelines encompass various scales. They can include larger provisions such as zone boundaries, street layouts, and public safety, but also specific elements such as building typologies, building use, and the allocation/distinction of public vs. private space. In the case of Mumbai and Dharavi they can assist, for example, in the formation of alternative housing typologies, programmes to address renters

and transient persons and the expansion of livelihoods and informal economies. Where socio-spatial profiling provided insight into the voice of the people and the practitioner role sought, through conceptual interpretation, to address the capacity of professionals to assist in the enabling of individual and community transformation, the Design Principles and Guidelines should provide a logical plan to ease implementation and provide a cohesive platform for diverse groups to progress. This 'value system' should address broad concerns and provisions, but can also represent minor design intervention and foundations for incremental growth.

They should include in some fashion, a clear division of intentions, scale, possible timeframes, and involvement of certain actor stakeholders where applicable. The suggestions are meant to be a legible framework for further exploration and development of design responses. In general, it is conceived that textual data can be illustrated and accompanied by the use of visual imagery such as diagrams and mappings that might have evolved from earlier actor and urban analysis.

Important to consider:

- *Do the guidelines clearly represent the diverse voices of the community now and for future development?*
- *Do the guidelines yield a clear framework and criteria(s) for the creation of critical design responses?*
- *Do the guidelines address opportunities and possible adoption of new policies for re-development?*

# Define Dharavi

**Concept: Periphery as a Center for Transformation**

Instead of generating fear, the edge conditions of cities possess enormous potential as spaces of experimentation to blur boundaries, generate uncommon forms of productivity and simulate the emergence of urban hybrids.

**Existing Site:**

The North Western Edge of the saltwater marsh of the Mahim Creek that divides the city center of Mumbai from Dharavi.

**Proposal:**

Our design explores the relationship between ecology and informality. It aims to reclaim the ecosystems of the Mahim Creek through the re-introduction of local salt-water marshland grasses and flora and fauna. Allow the site to resume to its existing conditions and "let nature work." Establish connectivity within the site through pedestrian walks and public gathering spaces. Paths frame the site, shifting in scale and allowing the user to travel over the salt-water marsh and along the river edge. A bike path creates direct route for commuting between Dharavi and the city center of Mumbai. Blurring boundaries between formal and informal socially and spatially.

**Programme:**

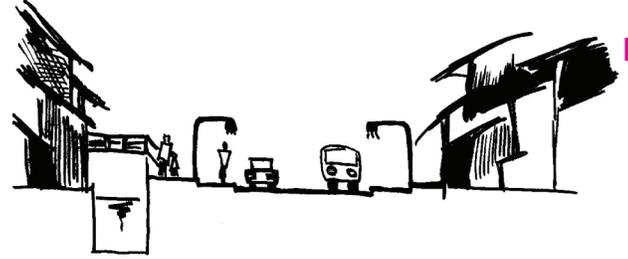
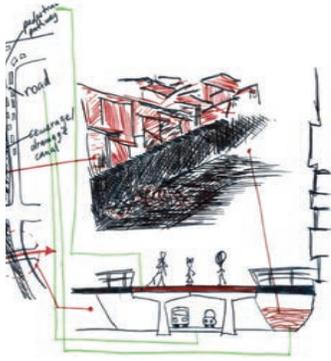
Network of bike paths circulate the site creating connectivity for commuters. Direct access of waterfront provides places for informal commercialism and public gathering. Intertidal area provided for fishing.



# RE:



# Define Dharavi



- FOOTBALL CUSTOM**
  - maintain vibrant street activity
- SINGLE RESIDENTS**
  - allow for
- TOURISTS**
  - safe and welcoming environment
  - public toilets / facilities
- MUMBAI CITY**
  - improved image
  - improved transport links
- WOMEN**
  - more public space
  - toilet facilities
- CLEANERS**
  - Regular employment
  - Steady income



Sewage disposal in an environmentally friendly manner



Provision of potable water



Streets need to be properly demarcated and widened

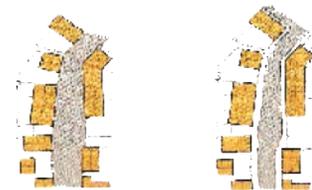


Electric connections for each household and business



# TABLE OF PRINCIPLES

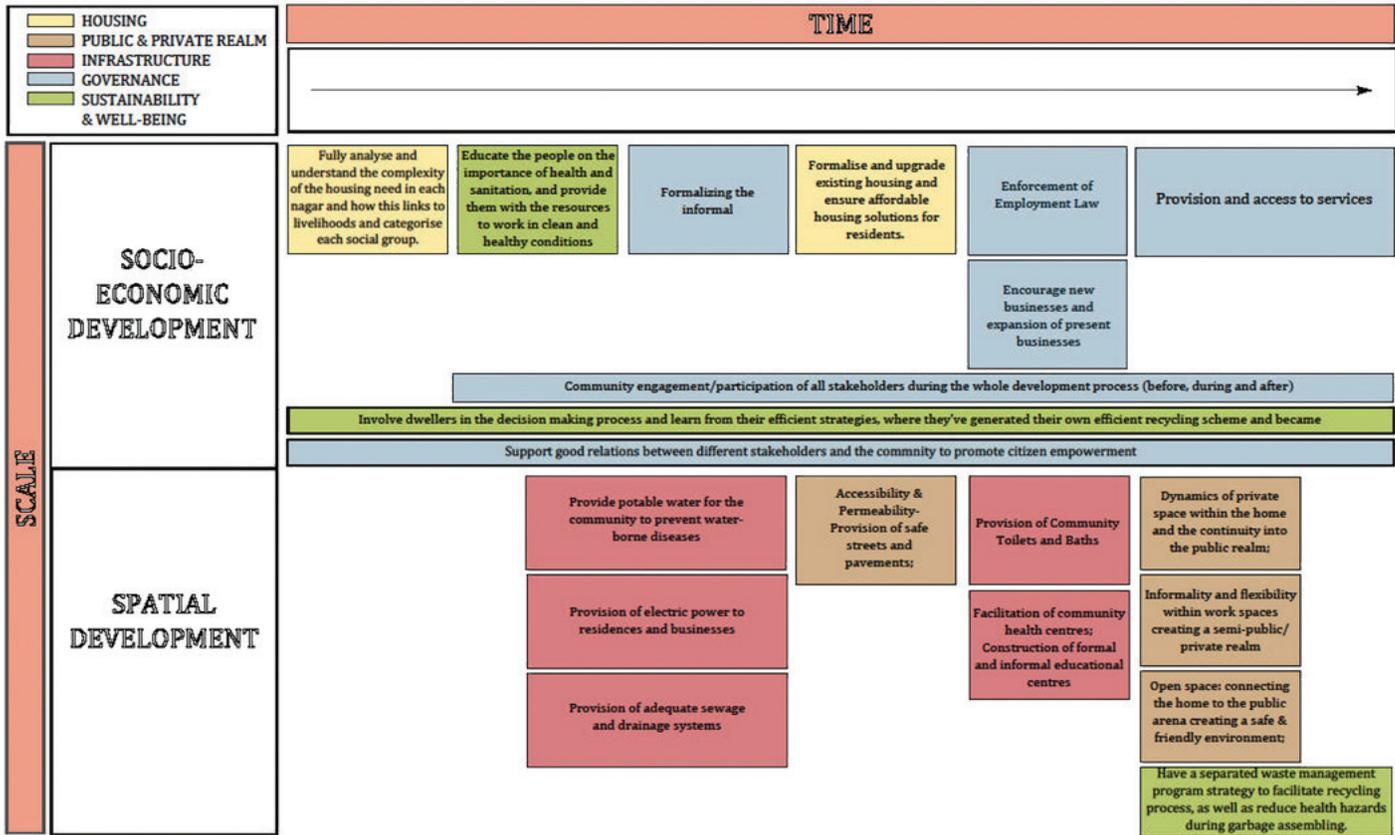
<p>HOUSING</p> <p>PUBLIC &amp; PRIVATE REALM</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY &amp; WELL-BEING</p>	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENT	LEGAL & POLITICAL
LIVE	Fully analyse and understand the complexity of the housing need in each nagar and how this links to livelihoods and categorise each social group.	Formalise and upgrade existing housing and ensure affordable housing solutions for residents.	Dynamics of private space within the home and the continuity into the public realm; Informality and flexibility within work spaces creating a semi-public/private realm; Open space: connecting the home to the public arena creating a safe & friendly environment; Accessibility & Permeability- Provision of safe streets and pavements;	Formalizing the informal
WORK	Educate the people on the importance of health and sanitation, and provide them with the resources to work in clean and healthy conditions	Encourage new businesses and expansion of present businesses		Enforcement of Employment Law
SERVICES	Facilitation of community health centres; Construction of formal and informal educational centres	Involve dwellers in the decision making process and learn from their efficient strategies, where they've generated their own efficient recycling scheme and became models for a sustainable community	Provide potable water for the community to prevent water-borne diseases; Provision of electric power to residences and businesses; Provision of adequate sewage and drainage systems; Provision of Community Toilets and Baths;	Provision and access to services
WELFARE	Support good relations between different stakeholders and the community to promote citizen empowerment		Have a separated waste management program strategy to facilitate recycling process, as well as reduce health hazards during garbage assembling.	Community engagement/ participation of all stakeholders during the whole development process (before, during and after)



system of tracking. Using buildings to ensure traffic calming



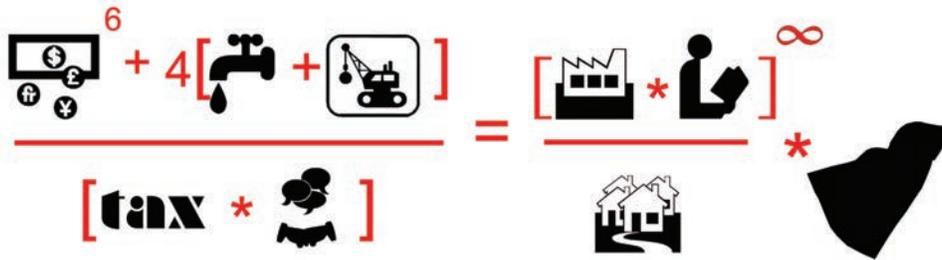
# PHASING: TIME AND SCALE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPLES



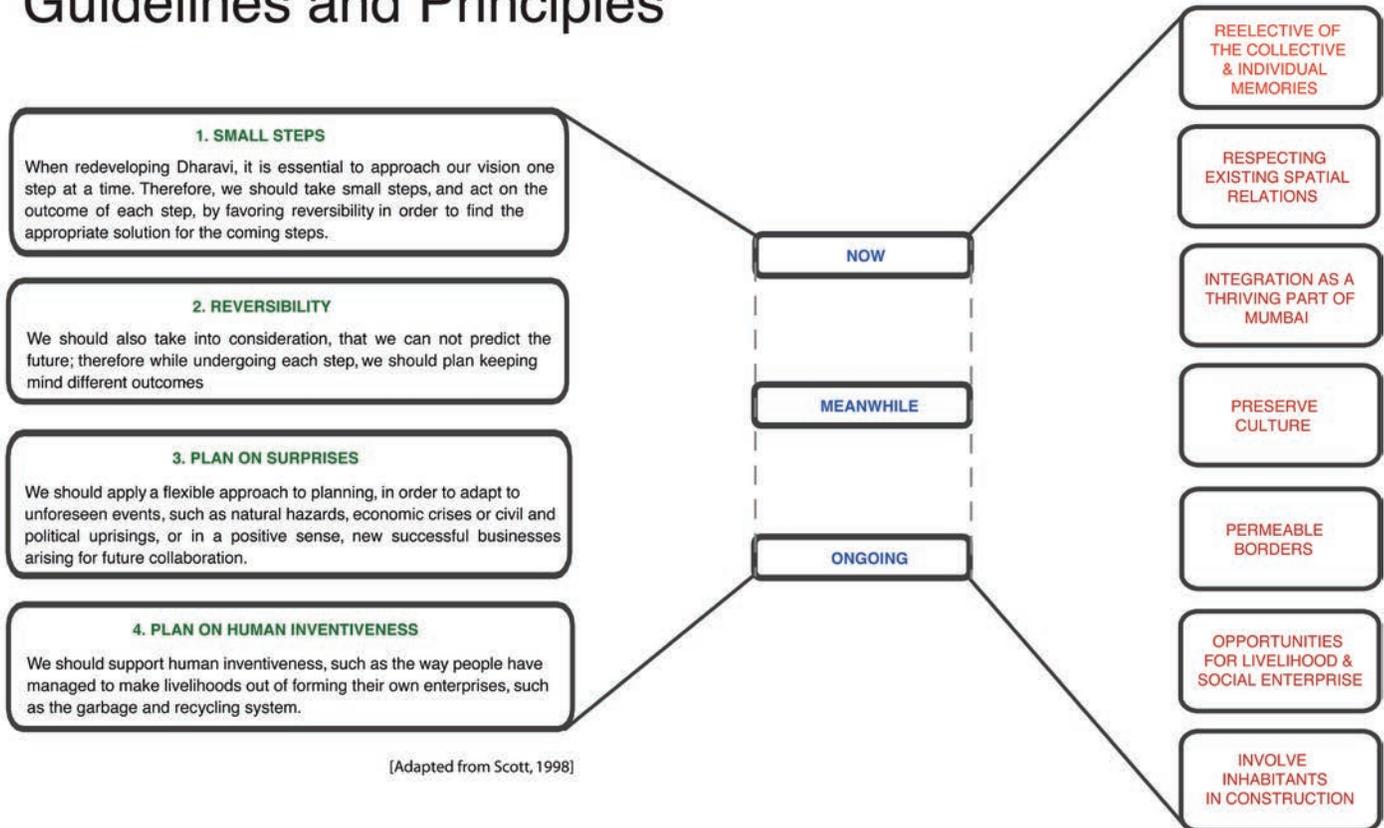
widening the narrow alleys allows for more sunlight and ventilation



# Dharavi



## The New Dharavi Guidelines and Principles



[Adapted from Scott, 1998]





# Individual Design Response

## OPERATION

In establishing clear principles and informative guidelines, the point of implementing a design response emerges. As in the prior phases of a project, topical entry points should be defined to align with the social profiles (including desires and needs) and the guidelines that stemmed from that. These interventions should consider the macro, mesa, and micro scales underlining the geographical and meta-physical situation. The interventions should be process-driven rather than a mere product and consider the input and impact of the communities. They will likely include a combination of architectural, urban, political, and social constructs, but at the very least should deliberately seek to manifest themselves in more detail towards an inherently spatial manner. This will ensure more tangible transformations.

## METHODOLOGY AND OUTCOMES

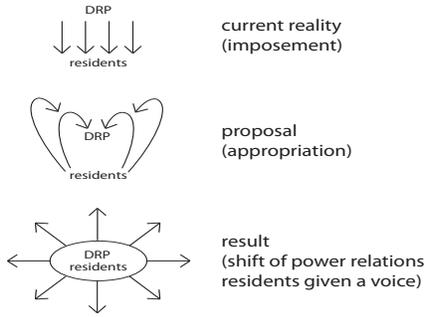
The results of these proposals should be highly communicative in the visual sense often leading to direct opportunities for implementation, hopefully in manner that is people inclusive. The representation and character of these interventions will likely vary based on the diverse topical entry points stemming from prior analysis and due to diverse approaches and typology/scale of intervention.

The opportunity for experimentation is heightened, though any design response should contain feasible parameters and consider:

- *Do the interventions offer critique and inclusive alternatives to conventional planning?*
- *Do the interventions enable individuals to transform their situation (physical, environmental, livelihoods)?*
- *Are concepts of negotiation and collaboration clearly defined and sustainable within the design strategies?*



contestations



interventions

**DRP line**



contestations driving line width



residents re-drawing boundary line



proposed DRP boundary line is drawn on the ground and structures of Dharavi. the line width is variable to reflect the level of contestation

the residents of Dharavi, in conjunction with CBOs, academic organisations and members of the alliance, re-draw the boundary lines to align with their physical and social reality on the ground

the act of drawing new boundary lines, based on the communities' needs and livelihoods, shifts the balance of power to give the residents of Dharavi a voice in the process of the development of their part of the city



# INTRODUCING & CONSOLIDATING NETWORKS: FROM SCHOOLS TO HOUSING UPGRADING

DHARAVI, MUMBAI, INDIA

## ABSTRACT

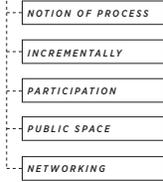
To achieve a sustainable upgrading of Dharavi it is necessary to recognize that each actor involved in it has a set of assets that can put into the process.

Social Capital as a network is one of those assets. This project seeks to capitalise these current networks and introduce new ones. The way to introduce these new networks is through the construction and improvement of schools, as gateways of sanitary, social and technological networks to the neighbourhoods.

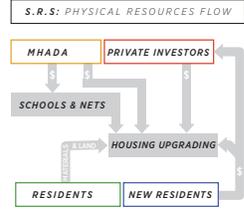
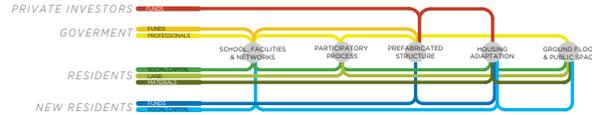
From the schools as core of the upgrading, the project proposes a model of housing upgrading that uses the introduced networks and conserves the existing ones. This housing upgrading model is based in the notion of multi-level process:

- A participatory process in small scale that allows the families to have suitable responses.
- A construction process that allows to the residents of Dharavi to conserve their assets and networks during the works.
- A housing able to change recognizing the assets (materials) of the dwellers and using it to grow.
- A post-construction process that includes the integration of new neighbours and the recognition and consolidation of different levels of public spaces.

## CHALLENGING THE DRP



## ACTORS & ASSETS



## THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

ANALYZING THE PUBLIC SPACE OF DHARAVI, WE CONCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: IT IS A NETWORK OF SPACES PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC. IT HAS A HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIMENSION. THE USES ARE VARIED, AND THEY OVERLAP. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE RECOGNISE THE CHILDREN AS ACTORS THAT USE THE PUBLIC SPACE IN A MORE CONTINUES WAY. ON THIS SCENARIO, SCHOOLS CAN BE NODES AND PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE RELATED WITH CONSOLIDATE NETWORKS AND INTRODUCE NEW ONES, BOTH RELATED WITH SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.



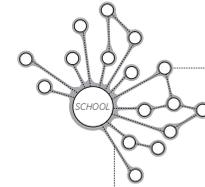
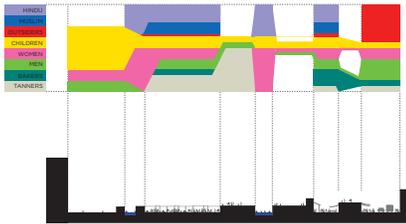
SCHOOLS ARE MORE THAN SCHOOLS. THEY ARE INFRA-STRUCTURE THAT CAN BE USED IN DIFFERENT WAYS. A SCHOOL CAN BE A COMMUNITY CENTRE, A PLACE FOR SPORTS, FOR A DISCUSSION. IT CAN BE A SPACE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION, AS WELL AS A PLACE OF GAMES AND ACTIVITIES.



AS NODES, SCHOOLS ARE ALSO A GATEWAY OF NETWORKS: SANITATION, WATER, ELECTRICITY AND INTERNET.



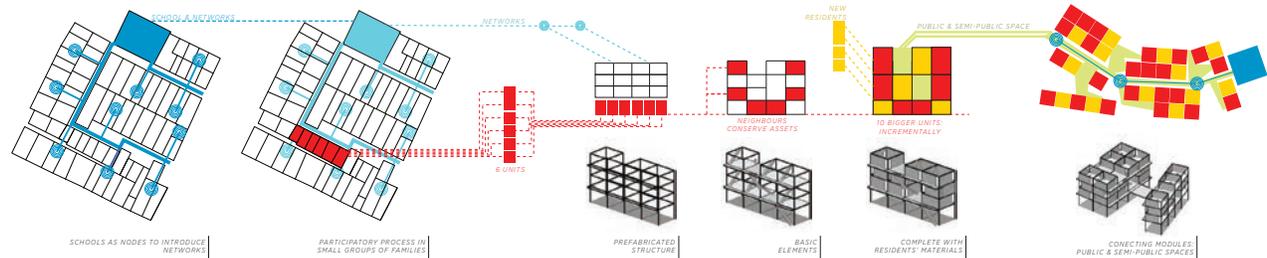
## SECTION AND USE OF PUBLIC SPACE: CHILDREN CONTINUITY



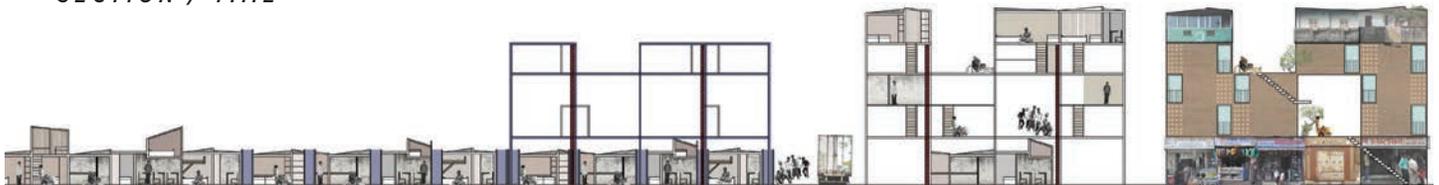
HOUSING UPGRADING: SMALL SCALE PRODUCTS CONNECTED TO NETWORKS BUILT FROM THE SCHOOLS

NETWORKS FROM SCHOOLS: AS WATER, SEWERAGE, ELECTRICITY, INTERNET, PUBLIC SPACE.

## FROM SCHOOLS TO HOUSING



## SECTION / TIME



# RECLAIMING SPACE

BU3/BUDD/DPU

## OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

### THE PROCESS



### THE CONCEPT

Contesting the DRP by reclaiming the open spaces in Dharavi is the main aim of the intervention. The DRP is not taken into account in the future development, essential to the people of Dharavi as an extension of their every day life. This challenge to the DRP takes place at three scales, corresponding to the different scales of the existing open space.

#### MICRO-LEVEL

The first challenge takes place at this level, and aims to pinch in the neglected places, the in-between. Reclaiming the potential opportunities that these lost spaces offer is the main focus of this project and the catalyst for the upgrading to the other scales. The intervention focuses on the creation of a user-generated urban design, driven by the community. The actual transformations of the sites and the posterior collective management of these is the final stage at this scale, and serves as a platform for the next level.

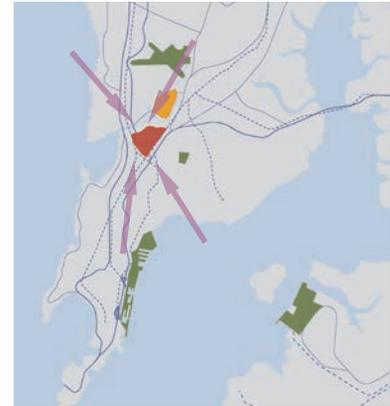
#### MESO-LEVEL

This upgrading can be the trigger to other interventions in a meso level corresponding to open spaces in the nagars. Reclaiming open spaces that dress the needs at this layer reinforcing the contestation to the DRP.

#### MACRO-LEVEL

Furthermore, an intervention in the existing public spaces that engages the rest of the city to Dharavi will be the real challenge to the DRP. The provocation at this level is maximum, as the formal city is integrated in the informal.

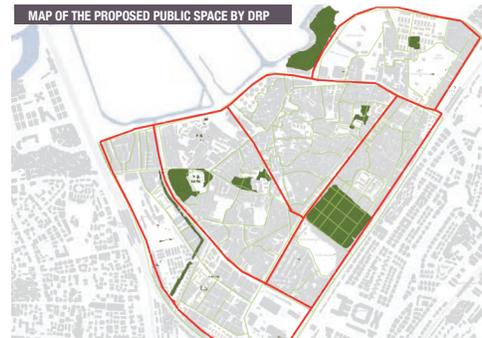
### LOCATION MAP - PRESSURES



MAP OF THE EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE



MAP OF THE PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE BY DRP



MAP OF THE OPEN SPACE



### THE THREE SCALES OF THE OPEN SPACE

#### private\_micro level



open space around private owners

#### semi-public\_meso level



open space around cluster/ neighbours

#### public\_macro level



open space for the area

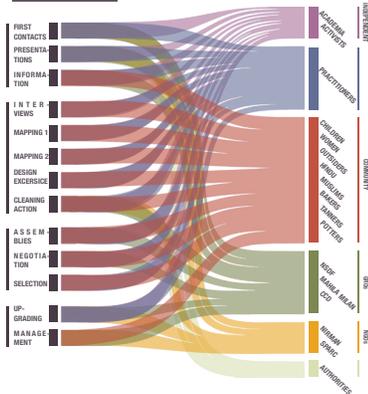


# RECLAIMING SPACE

## OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

BU3/BUDD/DPU

### ACTOR TIMELINE



### THE WORKSHOPS

#### FIND YOUR SPACE

##### STRATEGIES

FORM DIFFERENT GROUPS BETWEEN THE SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

PRACTITIONERS GO ALONG WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO MAP AND QUALIFY THE SPACES THEY ARE CURRENTLY USING.

- IDENTIFYING
- CONSULTING
- CONSIDERING



##### WHO IS INVOLVED



##### OBJECTIVES

MAKE THE COMMUNITY AWARE OF THEIR OWN SPACES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE SPACES IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE.

MAKE THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFY WITH THE SPACES THEY USE AND RECOGNISE THEM AS PART OF THEIR LIFE.

#### FIND OTHER PLACES

##### STRATEGIES

FORM DIFFERENT GROUPS BETWEEN THE SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

PRACTITIONERS GO ALONG WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO MAP AND QUALIFY THE SPACES THEY ARE CURRENTLY USING AND IDENTIFYING OTHER SPACES.

- IDENTIFYING
- CONSULTING
- CONSIDERING



##### WHO IS INVOLVED



##### OBJECTIVES

TOGETHER WITH THE COMMUNITY FIND THOSE SPACES THEY WANT.

MAKE THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFY THE SPACES THEY WANT TO USE AND RECOGNISE THEM AS PART OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE.

#### DREAM SPACES

##### STRATEGIES

FORM DIFFERENT GROUPS BETWEEN THE SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

ASK THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY HOW THEY WOULD LIKE THEIR OWN SPACES TO BE, ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPACE.

- IDENTIFYING
- CONSULTING
- CONSIDERING



##### WHO IS INVOLVED



##### OBJECTIVES

REALISE THE REAL ASPIRATION FOR A CHANGE FOR BETTER OF THE DIFFERENT GROUPS OF THE COMMUNITY, SPECIALLY CHILDREN.

UNDERSTAND THE ACTUAL NEEDS AND VOICES OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

#### CLEANING A SITE

##### STRATEGIES

FORM A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, PRACTITIONERS AND POLICYMAKERS.

GO TO CLEAN A SITE, PREVIOUSLY SELECTED BY CONSULTING WITH OTHER ACTORS.

INVOLVE OTHER ACTORS: MANUAL LABORERS TO HELP WITH MANUAL RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT OF WASTE.

FINAL SELECTION FOR EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY.



##### WHO IS INVOLVED

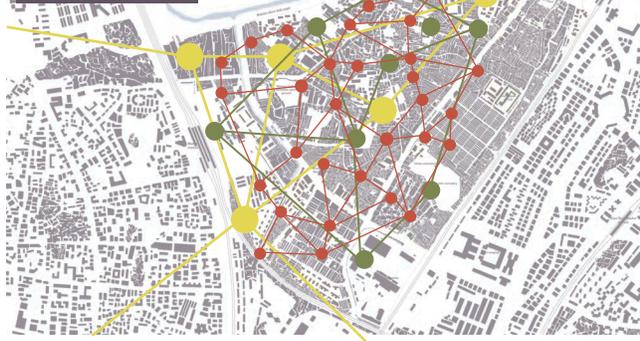


##### OBJECTIVES

IMMEDIATE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SITE TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THEIR OWN CAPABILITIES TO CHANGE THEIR REALITY.

LINKS THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY JOINING THEIR FORCES TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL.

### OPEN SPACES-NETWORKS



The process goes beyond the micro interventions.

The public spaces are identified and reclaimed by the people as part of Dharavi and therefore of their lives, reclaiming them as a contestation to the DRP.

This can boost the empowerment of the community and bring other upgrades in a wider scale that can really provoke and contest the DRP.

#### MICRO-SCALE REALISTIC



community driven micro interventions at the cluster/ neighbourhood level.

network of complemented public spaces managed by the community

#### MESA-SCALE POSSIBLE



mesa interventions at the local level.

network of complemented public spaces with public facilities needed in Dharavi

#### MACRO-SCALE IDEALISTIC



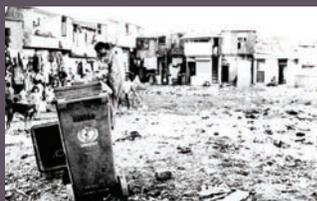
macro interventions at the city level.

public spaces and facilities that connect with the city

#### MICRO-SCALE INTERVENTION- STREET MARKET

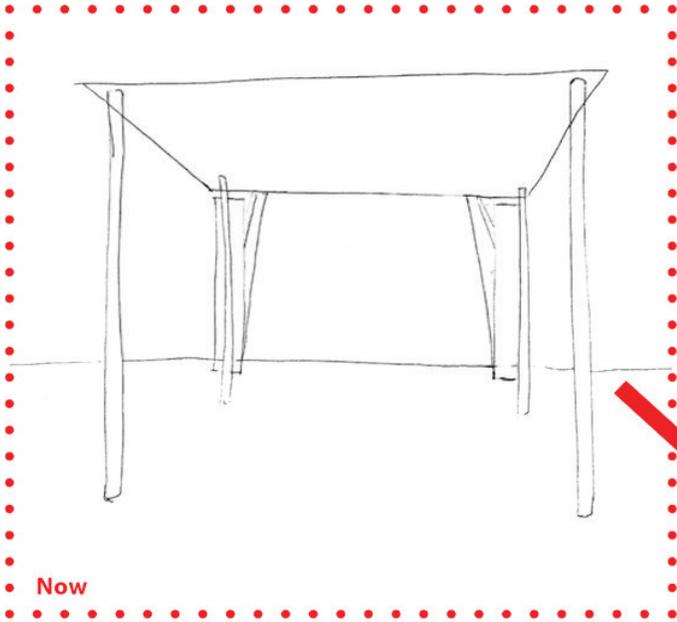


#### MESO-SCALE INTERVENTION- POTTERY SCHOOL



#### MACRO-SCALE INTERVENTION - THE MUSEUM OF URBAN INFORMALITY





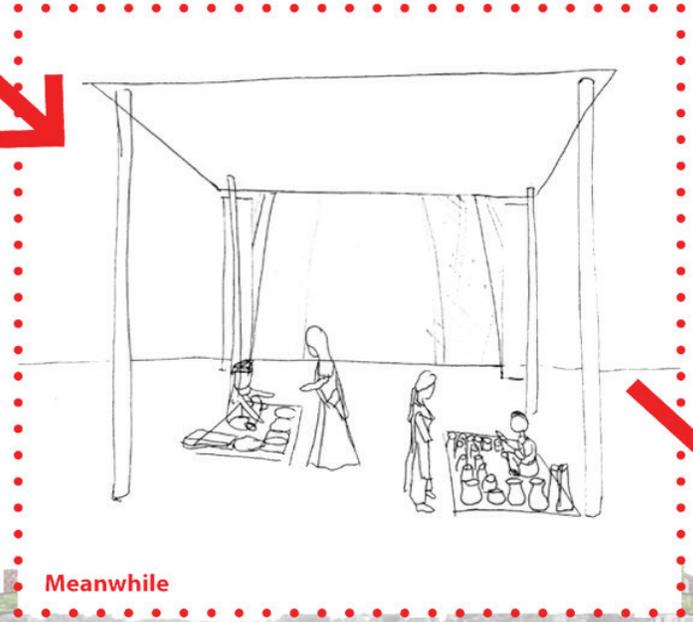
Now

SPATIAL OCCUPATION

INTERACTION

LIVELIHOODS

HUMAN INVENTIVENESS

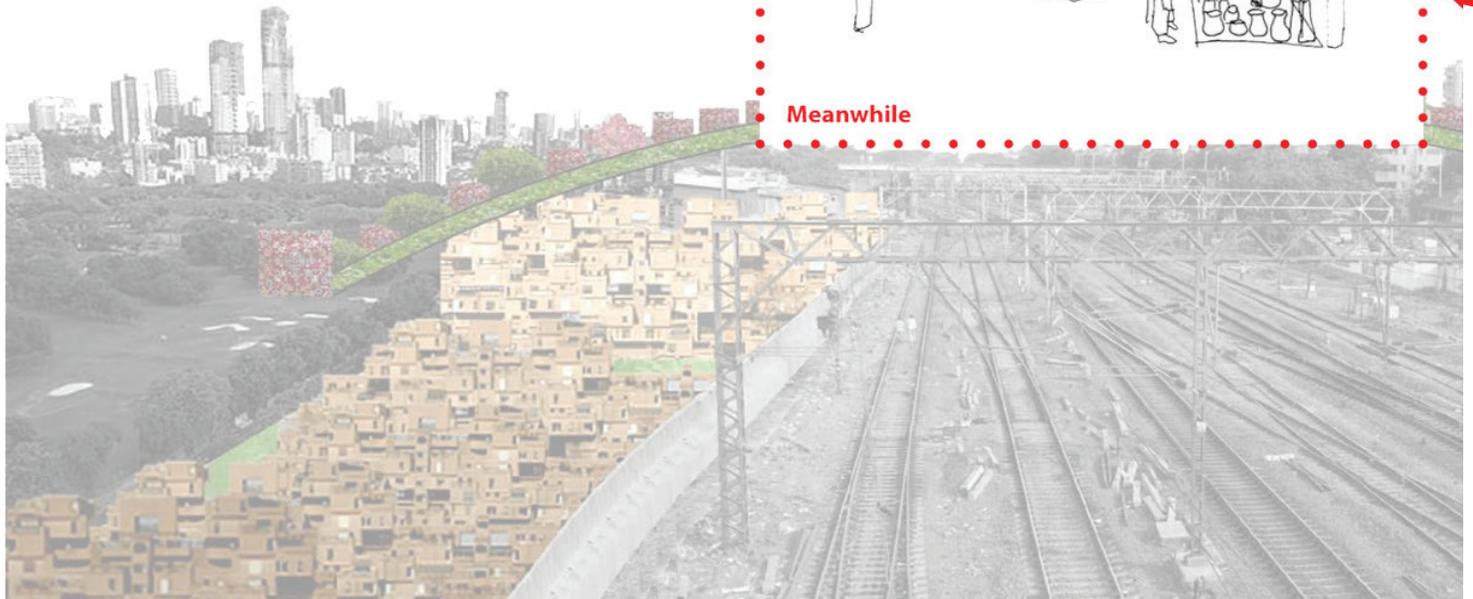


Meanwhile

SOCIAL

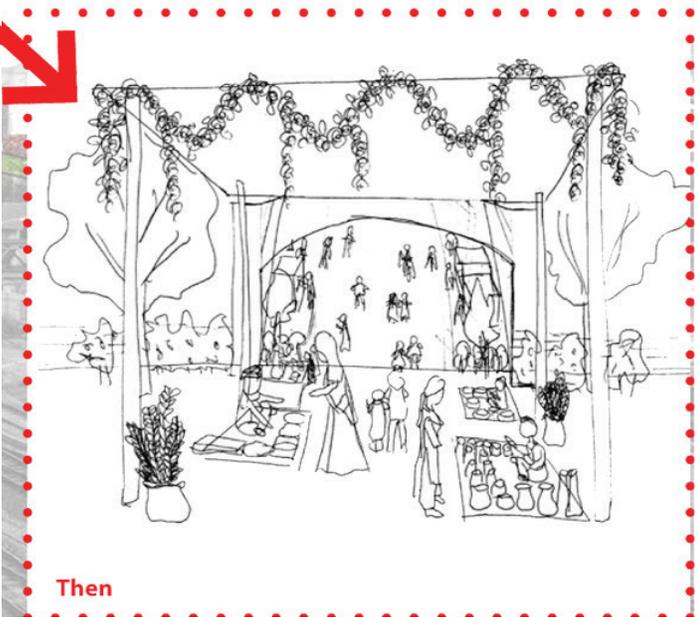
PARK

LEISURE

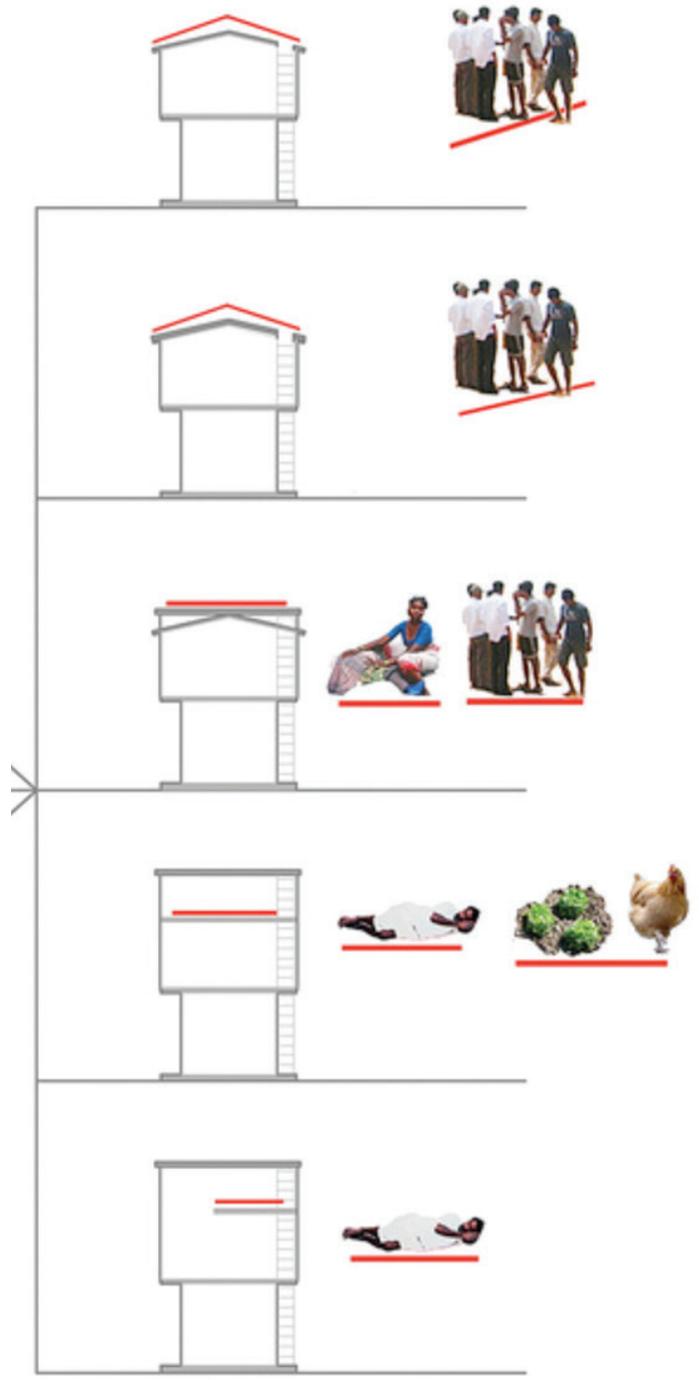


**Incremental** development of **community nodes** at both ends of the bridge to create a sense of **celebration** of the **linkages**

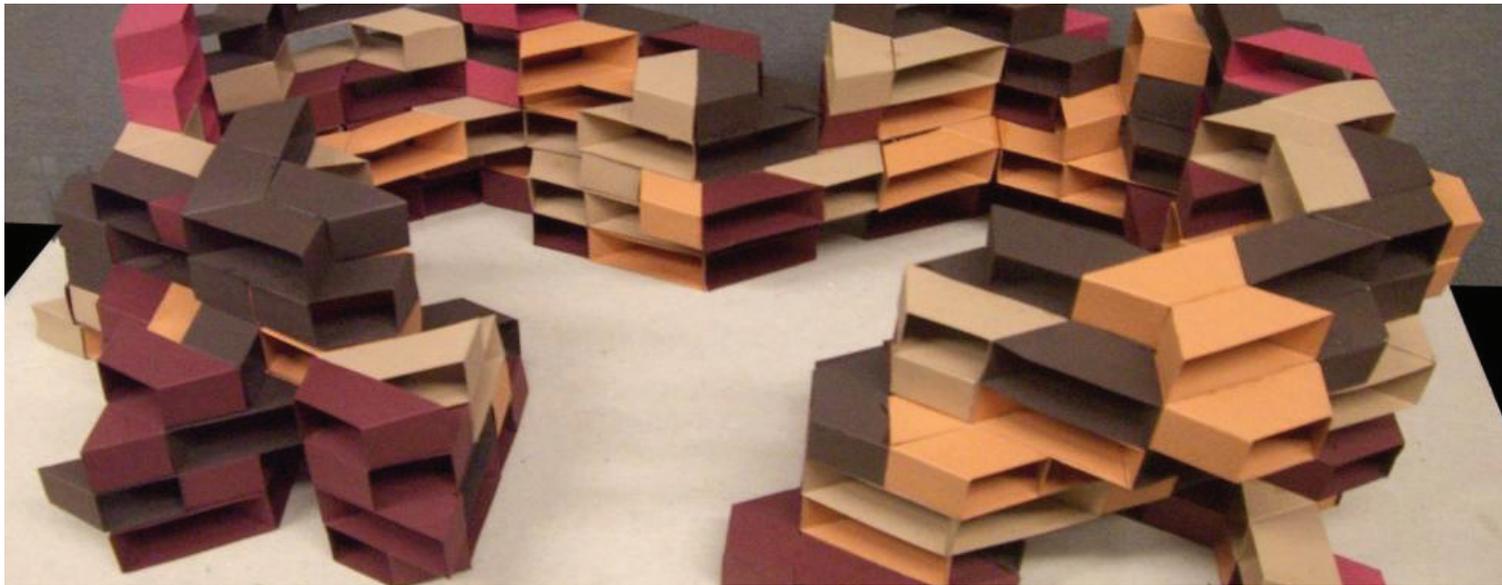
CULTIVATION  
SERVICES  
MARKET  
AGRICULTURE  
LANDSCAPED  
CREATIVITY



Then

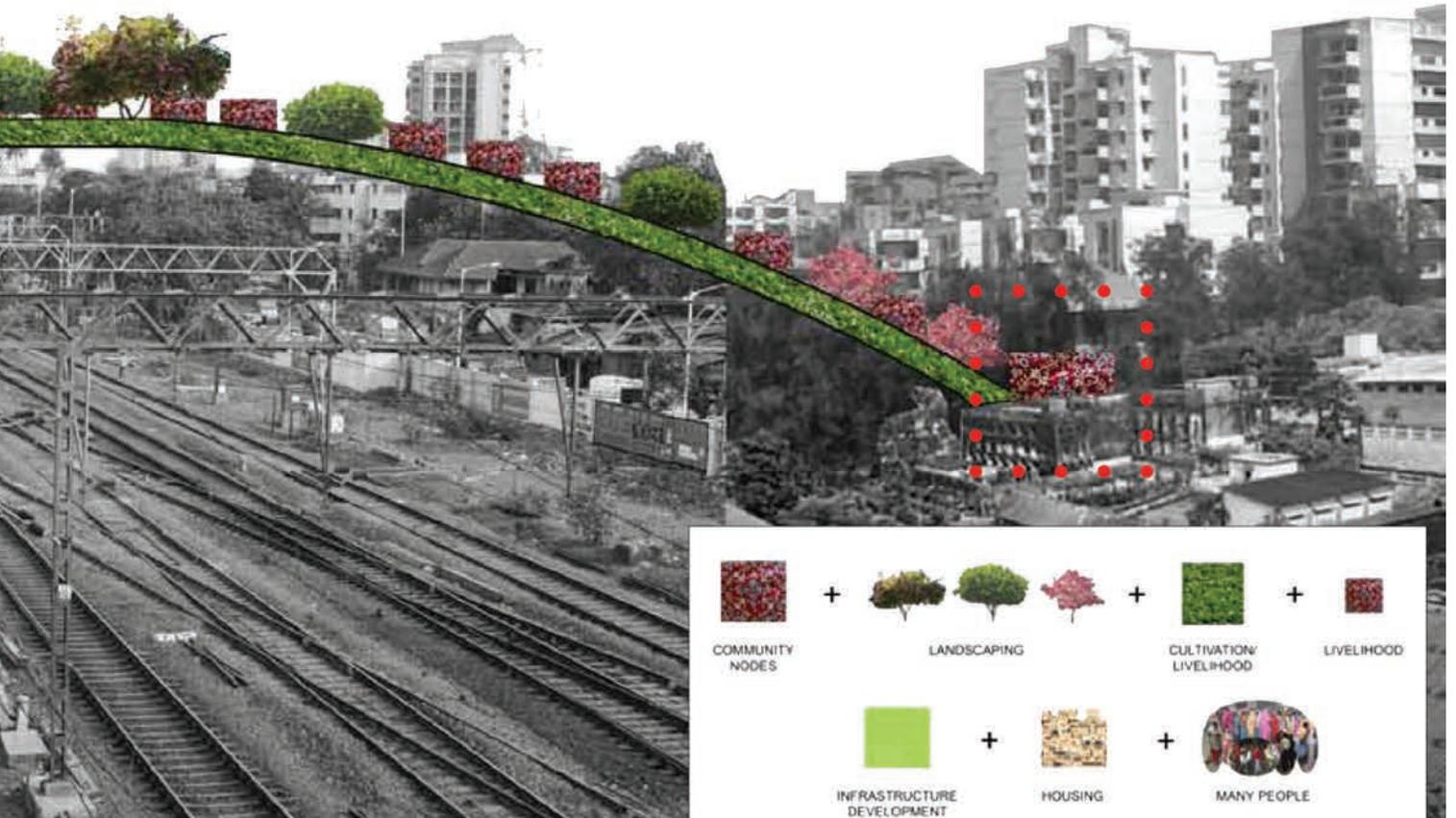


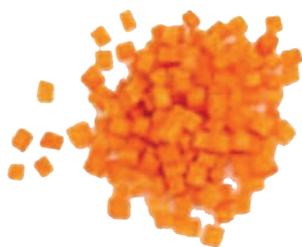
THE DWELLERS BUILD THEIR OWN PLATFORMS



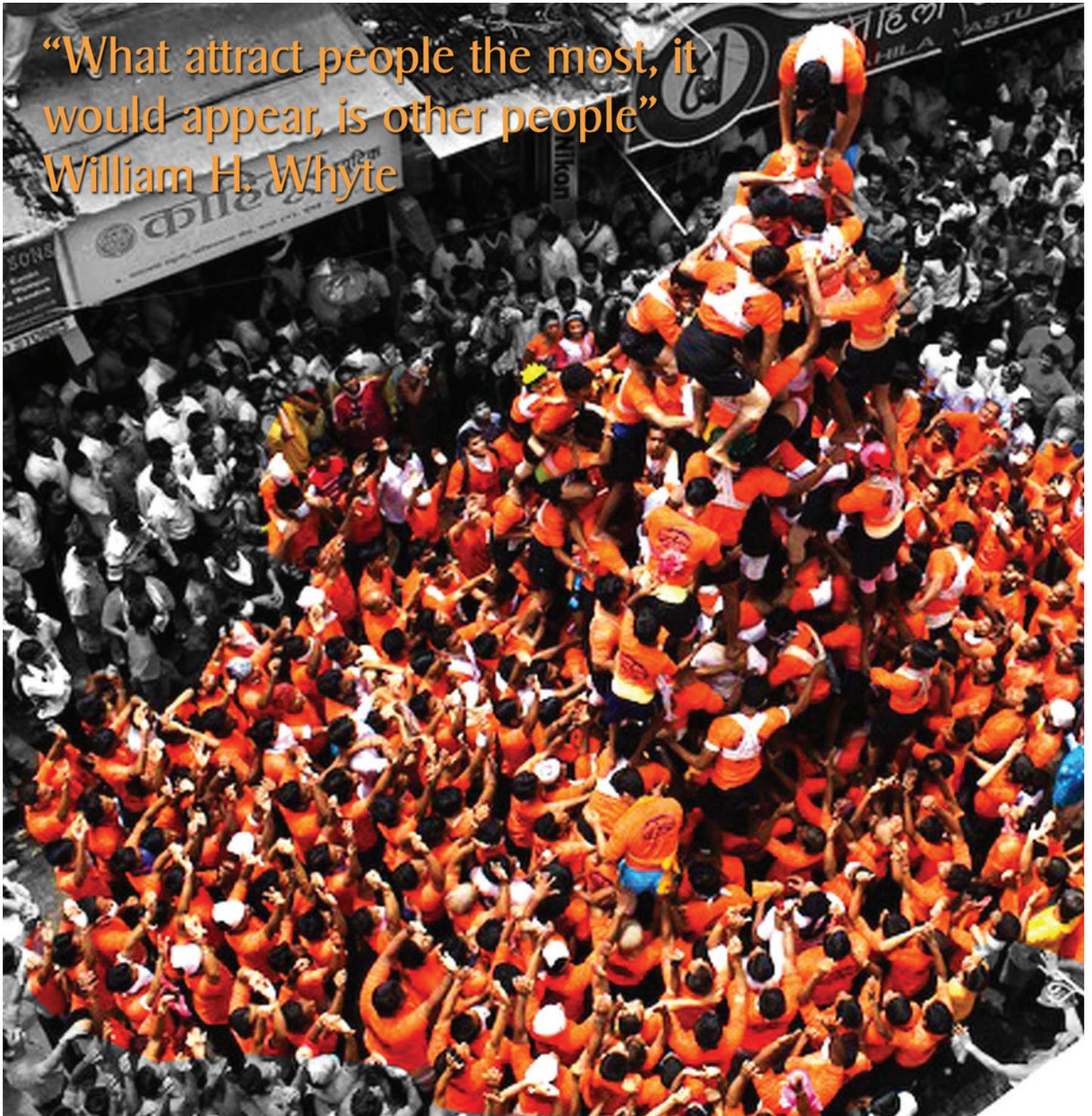


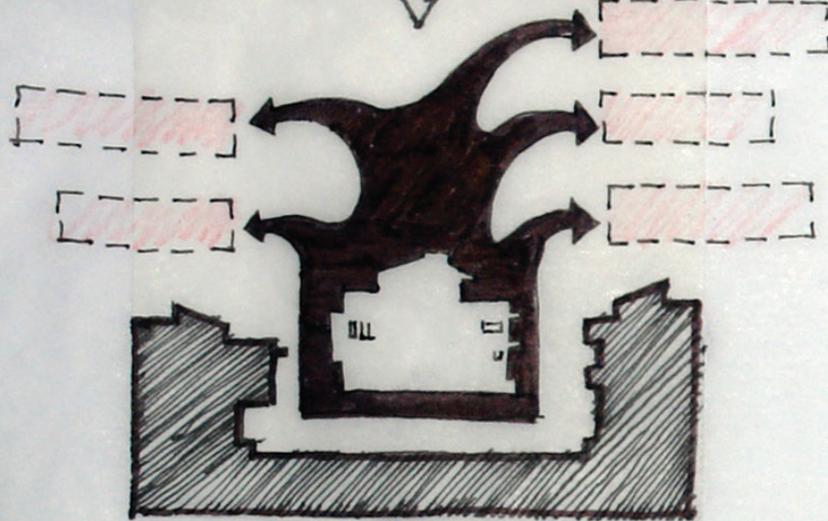
community node 02



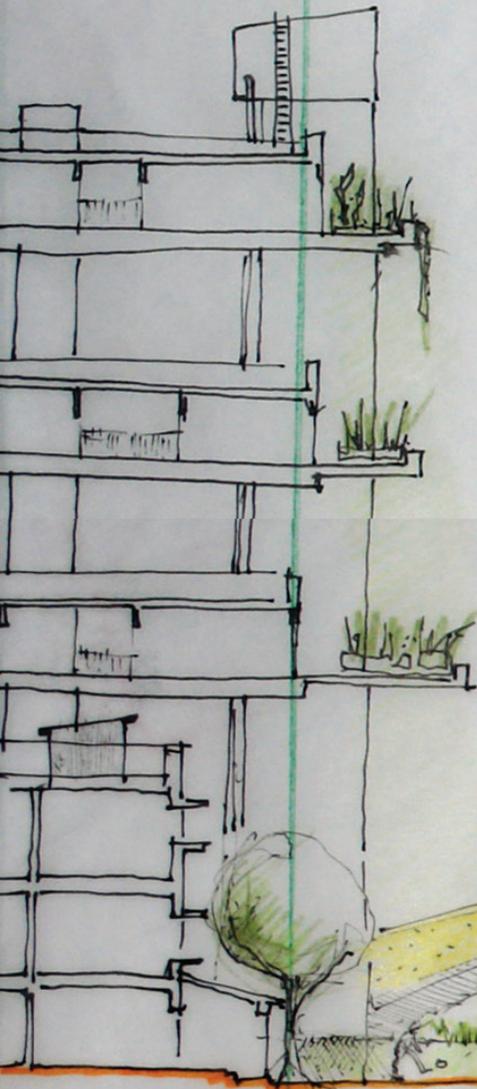


“What attract people the most, it would appear, is other people”  
William H. Whyte

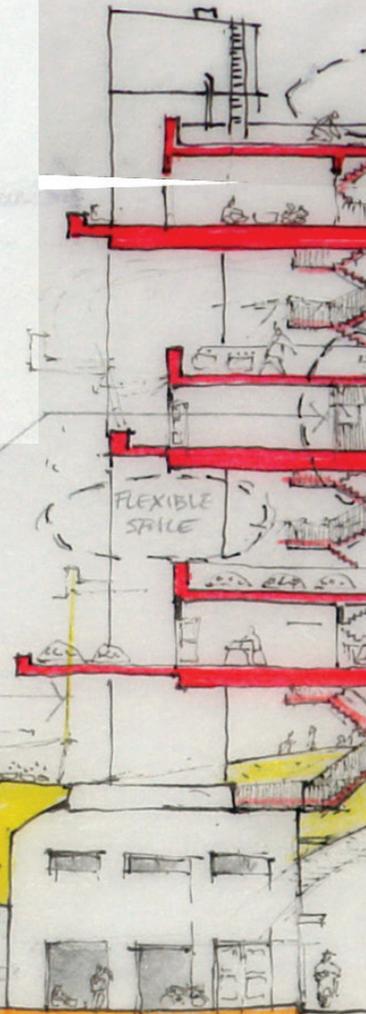




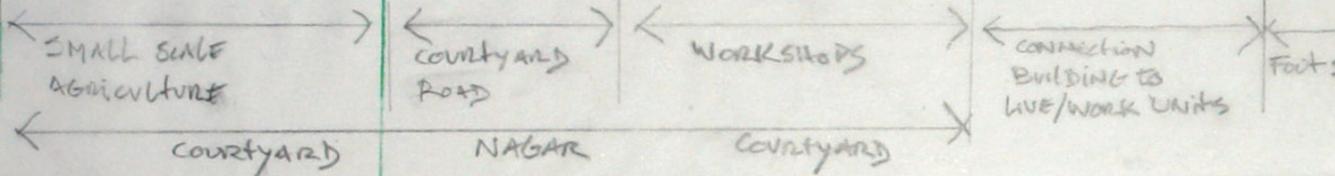
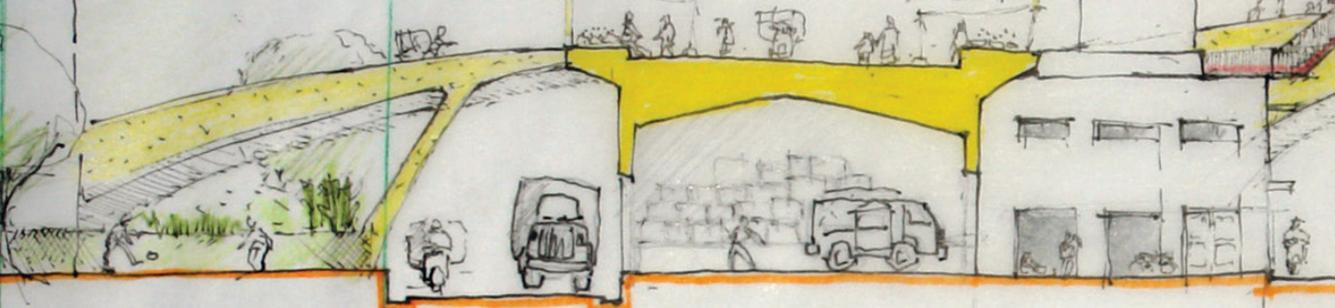
Possibility of living  
DIFFERENT ROOMS  
SEPARATE ROOMS



SHIFT HORIZONTAL BUILT SPACE  
TO VERTICAL BUILT/NON BUILT  
SPACE ↔ CREATE COURTYARDS  
AND FLEXIBLE SPACE BETWEEN UNITS  
(CAN BE INCREMENTAL / SELF BUILT)

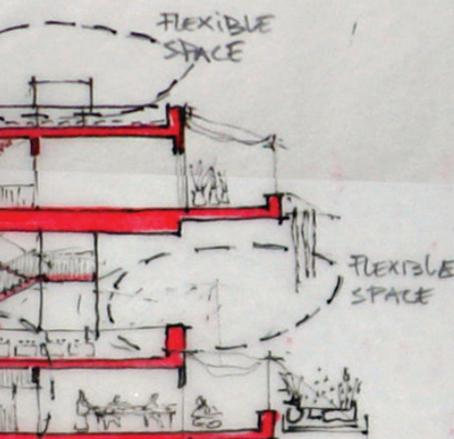


MARKETS  
INSIDE NAGARS



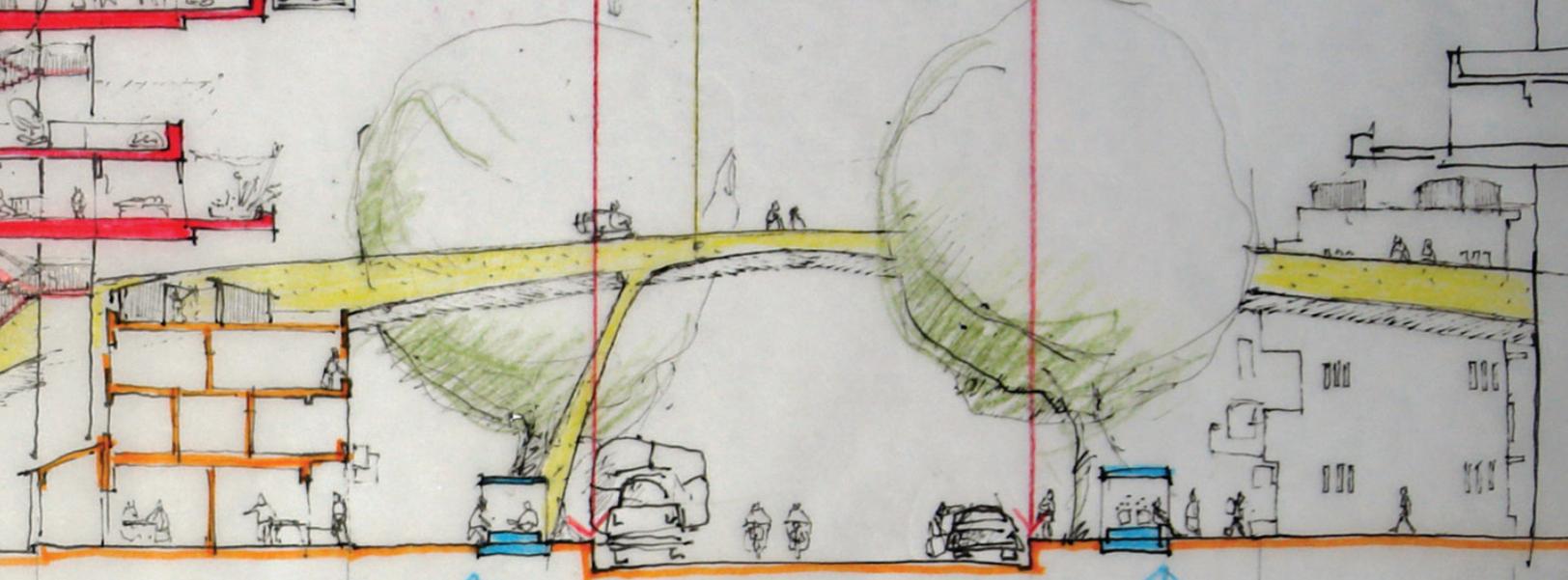
E AND WORK IN  
15/two rooms to start!

⇒ CREATE SPACE  
IN BETWEEN



EXAMPLE FOR 30 FEET ROAD

Foot BRIDGES:  
Circulation INSIDE  
COURTYARDS +  
BETWEEN NAGARS



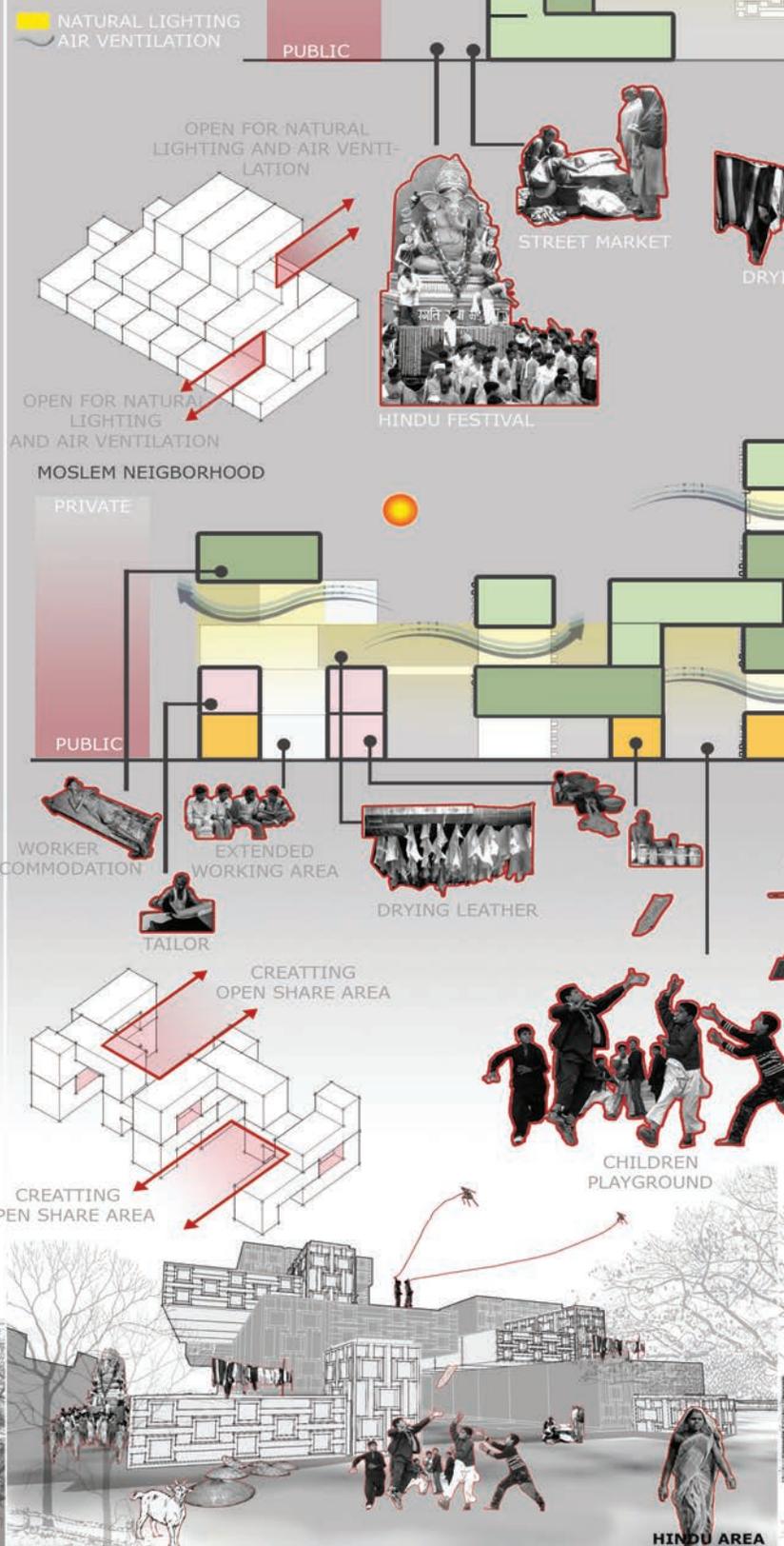
street      MAINTAIN EXISTING COMMERCIAL FRONT      SIDEWALK      MAIN ROAD LOWERED TO CONTROL AUTO TRAFFIC      STALL/SHELTER + GREEN CORRIDORS      MAINTAIN EXISTING COMMERCIAL FRONT

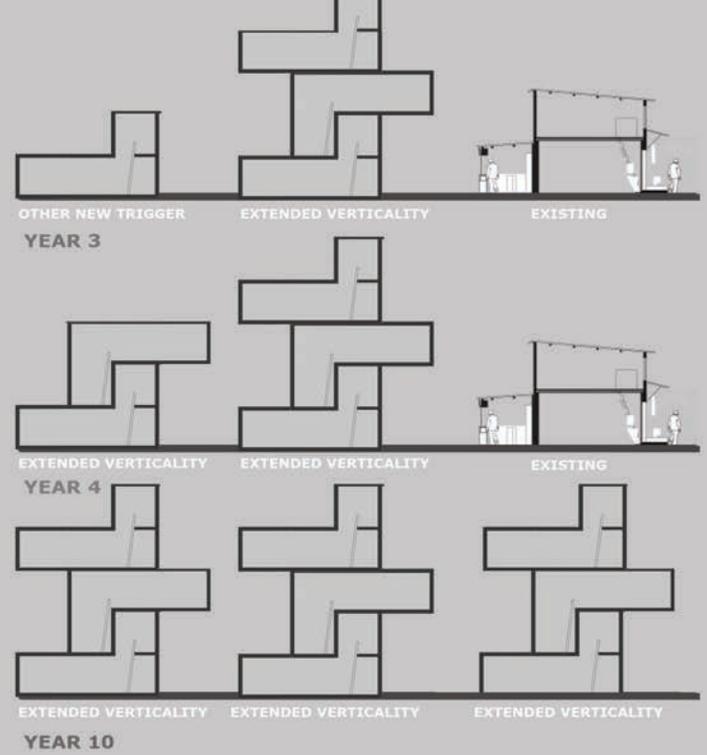
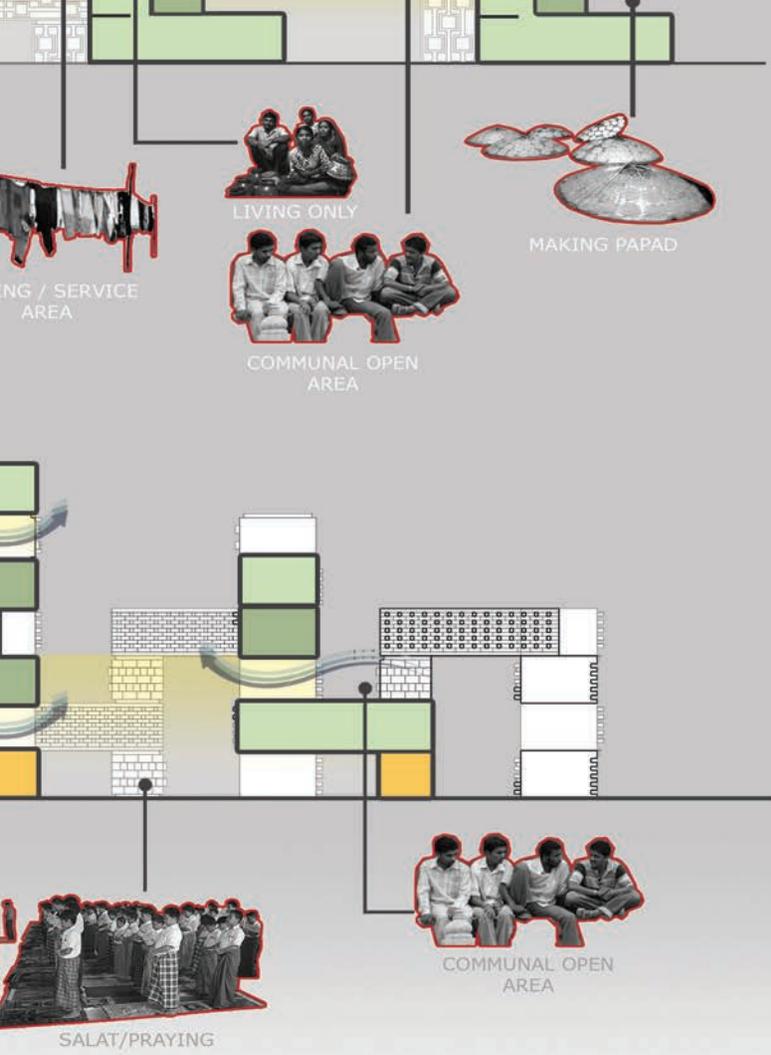
SPONDING COMMUNITY, ACTIVITIES AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND. THUS, THE CREATION OF OPEN SPACE BY MODULAR HOUSING TYPE DEPEND ON THE CERTAIN LOCATION AND THE DEGREE OF THE PRIVATE - PUBLIC USAGE.

### HINDU NEIGHBORHOOD

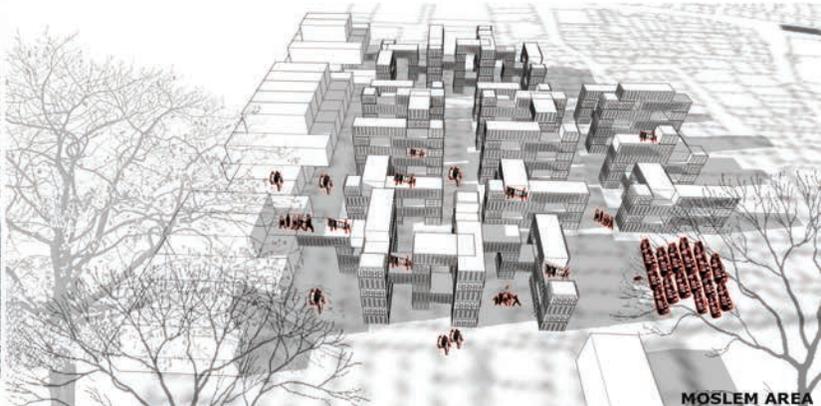
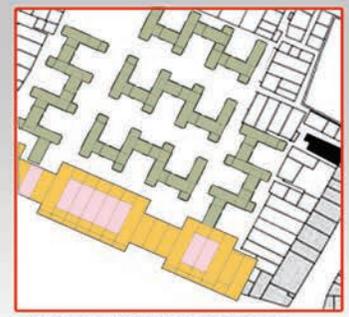


### MOSLEM NEIGHBORHOOD



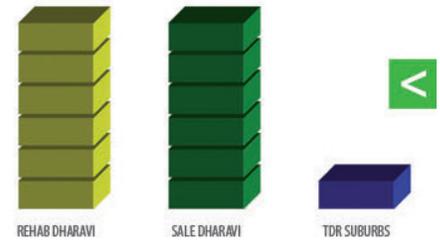


SITE PLAN (WHOLE DEVELOPMENT)



# playing (and contesting) the rules

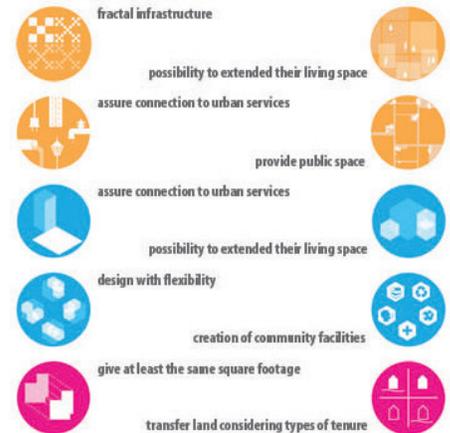
In this particular case, housing also represents an opportunity in terms of financial resources. The local government and the private sector have designed a strategy of self-financing projects in which sale commercial and residential units subsidize rehabilitation ones through a series of regulatory incentives.



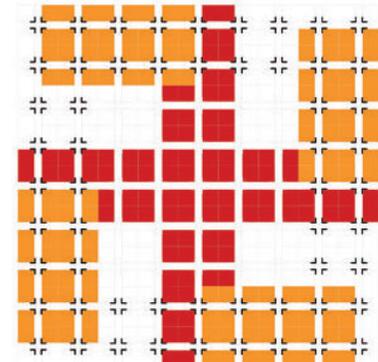
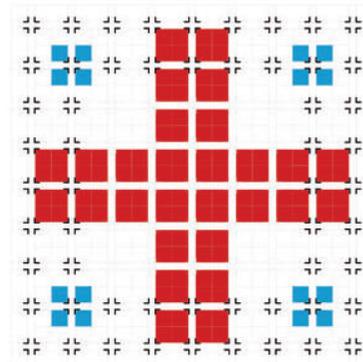
DENSITY > 500 inhab/hect  
FSI = 2.5 - 4.0  
UNIT < 27 sqm  
LIFT > G+5 storeys

## proposal

The proposed housing projects are physically and socially integrated buildings which combine sale commercial units, flexible residential rehabilitation units and collective sanitation and facilities in the lower storeys; extendable core residential rehabilitation units in the middle storeys and finished sale units in the upper storeys. Vertical nodes constitute the supra and infra structure of the units and at the same time the buildings constitute nodes of supra and infra structure for the surrounding slum by themselves.



## vertical integration schemes

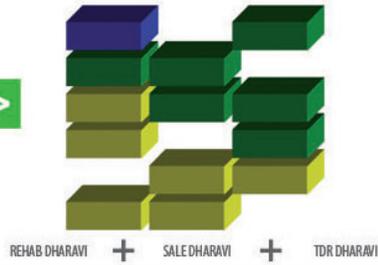


infra/supra structure vertical nodes

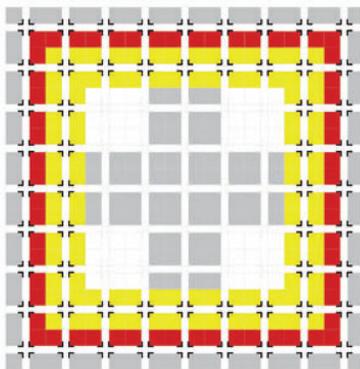
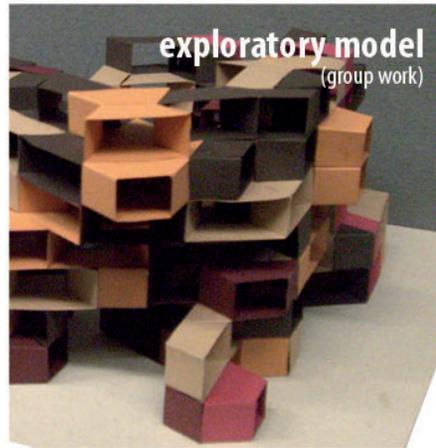
open space + commercial activities + sanitation

commercial activities + community facilities

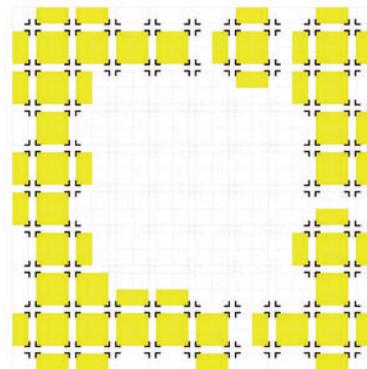
integration >



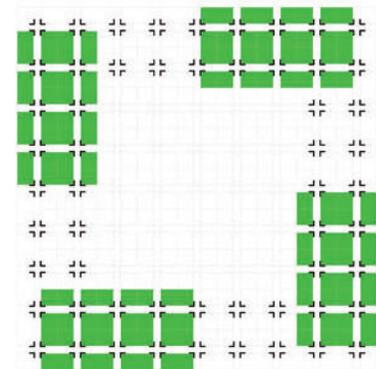
DENSITY < 500 inhab/hec  
FSI = incremental  
UNIT = core (extendable)  
LIFT > G+5 storeys



open space (elevated) + rehab units + commercial activities



core extendable rehab units (no lift)



finished sale units (lift)



# Collated Strategies

## OPERATION

While the results of individual interventions are apt clues for catalyst movement in community transformation, there is a need for collated strategies that can match the scale of grand planning schemes which simultaneously offer a capacity to represent real and symbolic change.

These critically assembled strategies should, at their core, contain guidelines and principles for an overall upgrading plan to combat the intentions and implications in this case of the current Dharavi re-development plans. The strategies will move beyond conceptual offerings and begin to illustrate a more profound understanding of what can feasibly be achieved, how it can be achieved and who it can be achieved with. Of major consideration is the effect of interventions at the junction between the micro, mesa, and macro scales. By revisiting and questioning what aspects of individual interventions are sensible for Dharavi's future and/or what adaptations and expansions can be made based on internal critique, complementary elements of a strategy can take shape.

## METHODOLGY and OUTCOMES

Collated strategies that align as an alternative to grand schemes should contain clear language and at the same time be visually dynamic. Again depending on the recognition and possibility of diverse entry points and approaches, types and scale of included intervention, the focus of the strategies can represent an array of aspects within broader development thinking. The results should however acknowledge and exploit its focus and reveal in a clear way, the connections to different critical elements and forces of a situation that it seeks to confront.

Think:

- *As in the guidelines, do the strategies enable individuals to transform their livelihoods and foster community?*
- *Do the strategies offer clear critique and alternative to top-down redevelopment schemes and grand ideas?*
- *Are concepts of negotiation and collaboration clearly defined and sustainable within the design strategies?*

# RECOGNITION

# PRINCIPLE

116 |

socio-economic diversity of the community in Dharavi. Right to be recognized as productive and contributive citizens within themselves and with Mumbai. Right to livelihoods through secure economic + residential tenure.

## the reality with the dharavi

dharavi-mumbai productivity interaction

1.5% OF MUMBAI GDP  
(MUMBAI GDP IS 5% OF INDIA)

30% RECYCLING OF MUMBAI  
(\$13 BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY)

250,000 RECYCLING WORKERS  
400,000 LEATHER WORKERS

400,000 LEATHER WORKERS  
\$30 MILLION INDUSTRY

COMPLEX LIVE/WORK TYPOLOGY

66% AREA OF PRODUCTIVITY

## the reality with the drp

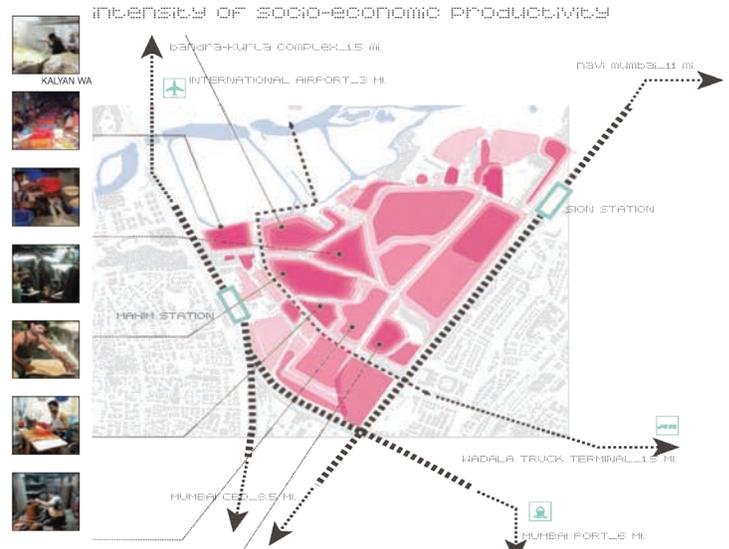
drp proposal

76% HIGH-END RESIDENTIAL

17% HIGH-END COMMERCIAL

2% INDUSTRY/PRODUCTIVITY

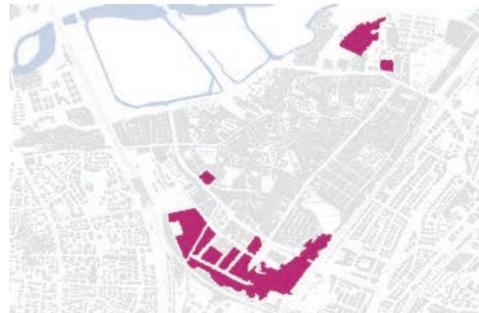
SEZ = OFFICE COMPLEXES



commercial and industrial activities



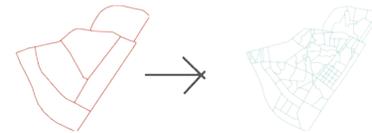
drp proposal for commercial and industrial areas



# CONTESTATION

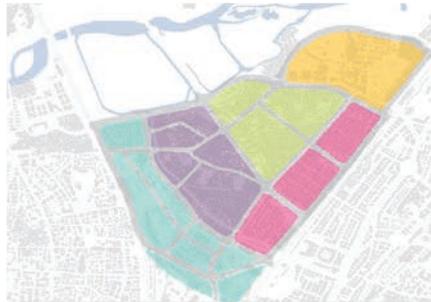
redevelopment that affirms dharavi's role in Mumbai  
 prioritize dharavi's citizens  
 development that empowers the community

# OBJECTIVES



## the reality in drp

drp five sectors



Responds to a general process of globalisation (Mumbai as world class city) through homogenization and stereotypes, not recognizing the cultural traditions, the long term existing urban form or the socio-economic networks.

### strategies of the drp

1. Dharavi divided in 5 sectors, each sector developed by private investor
2. Recognize people who are registered from 1995
3. 29 sqm is provided for social housing
4. Maintains only those industries that are not hazardous

### analysis of the strategies

1. 5 sector creates displacement- takes away power & control from communities
2. Post 1995 registration is exclusionary- must recognize wider community
3. DRP housing model is socio-spatially insensitive and inflexible
4. Hazardous waste can be minimized through environmentally friendly alternatives to safe-guard productivity.

## our vision for dharavi

our intervention contests the existing Dharavi Redevelopment Plan (DRP) by minimizing displacement and maximizing socio-spatial recognition.

it's a strategy aimed at boosting the economic productivity and viability of Dharavi, integrating it with the greater Mumbai area through a fusion of social and market forces.

In order for the strategic improvements to begin, we propose the creation of an enabling organization referred to as ICCD. ICCD will take a central role in the successful implementation of this strategy by conducting its work on three scales. These scales of intervention are: Micro, Meso, and Macro.

## GUIDELINES

- UP-GRADING
- INSIDE-OUT
- PROGRESSIVE
- FLEXIBLE
- ADAPTABLE



need for an institutional re-arrangement

## creation of the ICCD

institution for coordinated community development

negotiate LAND TENURE with the STATE (owner of the 70% of Dharavi's land).

The COMMUNITY has to be KEY actor to negotiate how private investors are involved in the process of development.

### NEGOTIATION

#### THE GOVERNMENT'S GAIN FROM DRP

The DRP has stated that the government benefits in two ways from the redevelopment in Dharavi. While it requires no investment from the government, the government will have potential tangible gains of Rs. 5000 crores (1.1 Bn) in cash or built infrastructure.

#### THE GOVERNMENT'S GAIN FROM PROPOSED PLAN

1. Stage for negotiations on land provision for the private sector developments  
 The financial return for the government may not be as high in the short-term, but we believe our proposal has the potential to dynamically boost the economy in the long term. As our main concern is to balance between commercial viability and public benefit, to acknowledge the slum dwellers as the main decision makers and to provide and facilitate a stage for negotiations on land provision and tenure for the private sector developments.
2. Socio-political values: Institutionalization of social equality  
 Therefore for the State, by acknowledging our proposed plan, other than receiving a high share of the private sectors money, in the proposed areas for its development, will gain indirect benefits in socio-political values, a promote in its national and international reputation and more important than all, the trust that will be formed between the government and its people, as they will see the government as their benevolent rather than a power/money pursuer. The operation of our plan institutionalizes social equality, as well as it opens way for investments, monitored by the people. These are all means of a stabilized civil community.

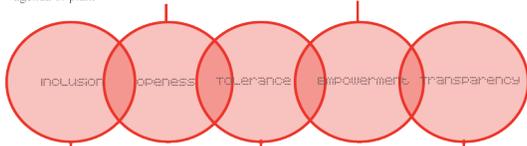
seeks a decentralized organisation and adapts to the existing context, recognizing the connection between highly specialized, intensive, flexible economic productivity of dhavai and is sensitive to its urban form. Locally rooted development strategies to achieve the recognition of dhavai's people as self governed citizens of Mumbai

Actors Involved Within ICCD



MAIN PRINCIPLE OF OUR AGENCY

Dialogue should be open so that all community members have a chance to voice their opinions. The agency should not have a predetermined agenda or plan.



If important stakeholders are left out of decision-making, the benefits should be considered limited. Dialogue should include important groups and individuals affected by the issues.

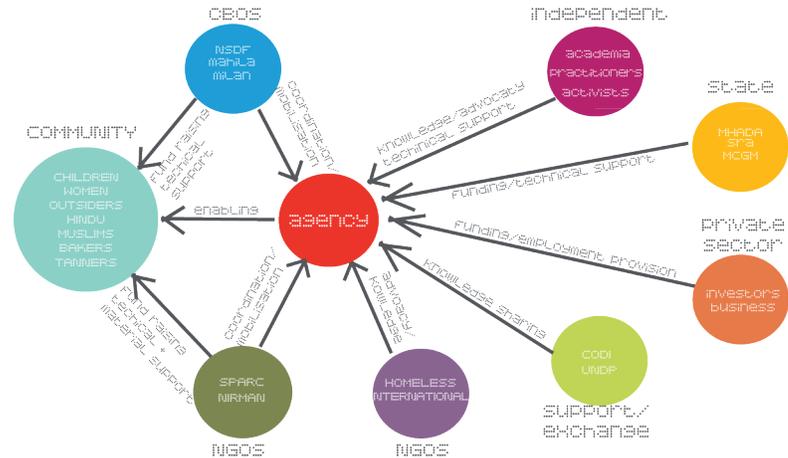
One opinion should not take precedence over others, no arguments should be considered more legitimate. Stakeholders and organizations must be open-minded.

The information gathered through nagars and the census should be provided to all the community members so they can engage in making decisions and implementing outcomes. The aims, outcomes, guidelines and timeline of the plans and required developments in the agency should be regularly published publicly. This will evade the previous scepticism that was around the feasibility of the DRP.

Actors Involved

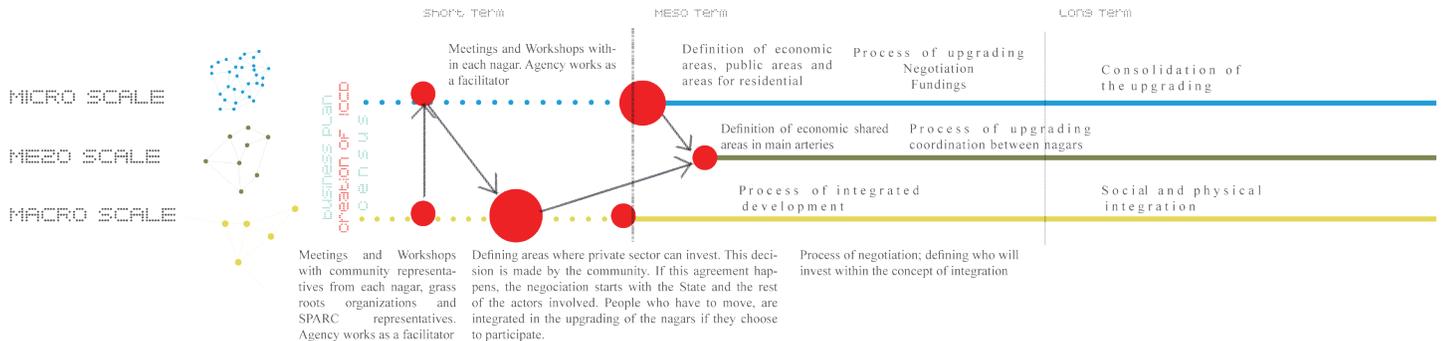
How the actors interact?

- Management of funds
- Collaborative strategy
- Monthly/annual meetings
- Progressive synergy
- Self regularisation
- Infrastructural support



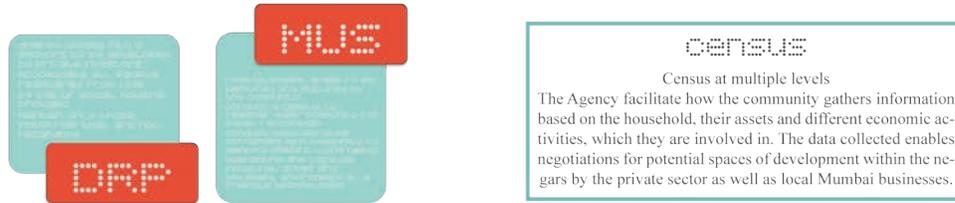
Time Frame

How the three scales interact in time



MULTISCALAR UPGRADING STRATEGY

ICCD used cross scale interactions to refer to linking institutions both horizontally (across space) and vertically (across levels of organization). Considering our strategy, our cross scale institutional linkages mean something more than management at the three scales, isolated from one another. There is a need of coupling and interactions between the three scales, for enabling negotiations



MICRO SCALE

Nagar upgrading

On site rehabilitation and new construction of residential/productivity within each nagar

SOCIAL STRATEGIES:

Community organization  
Agency sponsored localized workshops:  
Raising Awareness of upgrading potential  
Discussing self governance  
Identification of Economic needs and Opportunities

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

Engaged with existing savings groups  
Access to micro credits, flexible loans  
Provide incentives for local economy



Incremental upgrading



MEZO SCALE

Coordination between Nagars

Infrastructure, public amenities and economic productivity within Dharavi

SOCIAL STRATEGIES

Social Network Integration and Coordinated implementation between Nagars  
Incorporation of public amenities

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

Incentives of the introduction of small private entrepreneurs from greater city into Dharavi in main arteries.  
Main arteries became shared areas with local business from Nagars.



Public/Private business+ amenities



MICRO SCALE

City Scale

Integration of private investment areas, industrial areas, public amenities and infrastructure. Connection within Mumbai

SOCIAL STRATEGIES

Statistical Recognition of Dharavi residents on Municipal databases  
Incorporation of city scale amenities for public use.  
Integration of productive activities to the new areas developed.  
Job opportunities inside and outside Dharavi due to boost in economic productivity

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

Provision of areas for private investors. These areas are designed within the agency with the approval of all the actors.  
The profits goes to the State and part of it goes to the AGENCY where is organized and distributed in the different scale interventions.  
Definition of Industrial Areas on Dharavi Periphery

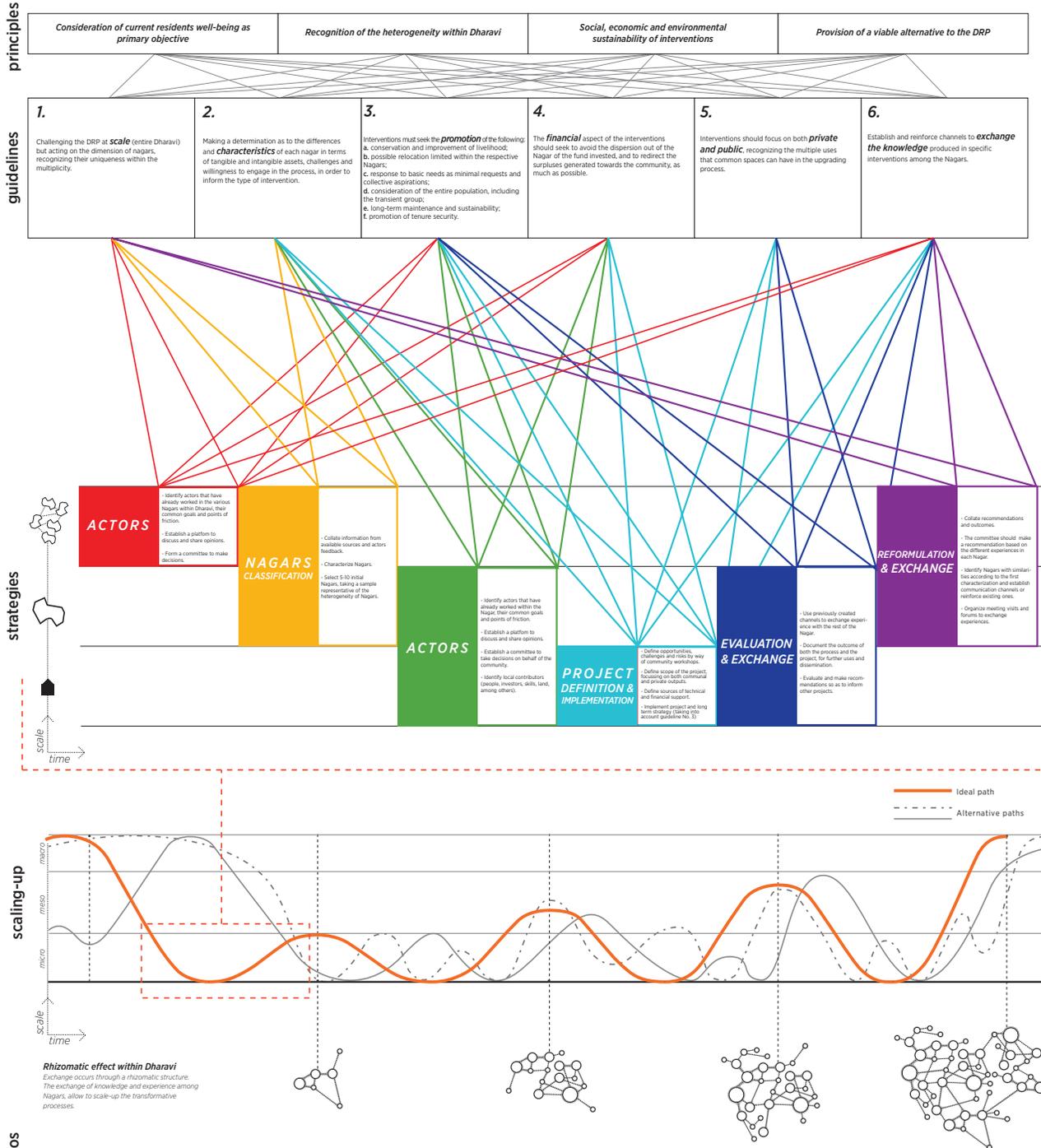


Public/Private city scale amenities



# REDEFINING THE NOTION OF SCALING-UP IN DHARAVI: RECOGNIZING UNIQUENESS WITHIN THE MULTIPLICITY

120 |



DESCRIPTION

LOCALIZATION

INITIAL SITUATION

STRATEGY

INTERVENTION

IMAGE

1 Kumbharwada

Kumbharwada is the centre of the pottery activity. The potters form a very compact community, established in the area since the XVIII century, and their income is relatively high. Between 1000-1200 families reside in Kumbharwada.



Level	1	2	3	4	5
5	Cohesion				
4	Connectivity				
3	Community participation				
2	Density				
4	Income				
2	Infrastructures & amenities				
5	Productivity				



Following discussions with the Alliance, members of the local community decide to combine their resources to build a new mid-rise structure. The ground floor hosts a market area and pottery workshops with the necessary electrical infrastructure. The other floors are occupied by flats, of which some host local families, and others are rented out. The revenue thus generated is reinvested in the maintenance of the structure and in the upgrading of the working sites of the potters.

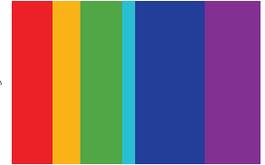


2 Shatabdi Nagar

Shatabdi Nagar is a recent settlement, established in the 90s on a dump ground in a peripheral area of Dharavi. Hygienic conditions are extremely poor. Most of the population is dalit and there is a large population of transient workers. Locals are marginalized within Dharavi and a sense of community is lacking.



1	Cohesion
1	Connectivity
1	Community participation
5	Density
2	Income
2	Infrastructures & amenities
3	Productivity



The project is carried out by the Alliance and financed by a CLIFF grant. It consists of a shelter for temporary residents who pay at low rates - to allow the maintenance of the structure. It comprises hygienic facilities that are used by Shatabdi residents, and a space for community-related activities.



3 Shahu Nagar

The neighbourhood is peripheral to Dharavi, but close to Mahim train station and well connected to the rest of the city. There aren't strong social ties.



2	Cohesion
5	Connectivity
1	Community participation
2	Density
3	Income
3	Infrastructures & amenities
2	Productivity



A private investor builds a mid-rise residential block for sale. Shahu Nagar has been chosen due to its convenient location. The families displaced for the new block are relocated to new flats built by the same developer, which also takes charge for improvements in the public spaces of the nagar. The project is carried out with support by the Municipality that funds the upgrading of the sewage system.

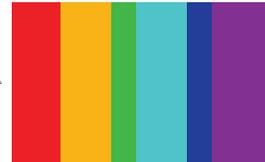


4 Chamda Bazaar

Chamda Bazaar is located in the very centre and is home to the biggest market of Dharavi. The population density is very high and visitors flow into the area everyday to do business.



3	Cohesion
4	Connectivity
3	Community participation
5	Density
4	Income
2	Infrastructures & amenities
5	Productivity



Given the centrality of Chamda Bazaar, the Alliance deemed it the best location for an Informatory/Exhibition centre about the development of Dharavi. An external developer is dragged into the project by the community to realize retail spaces and flats with low profit margin.

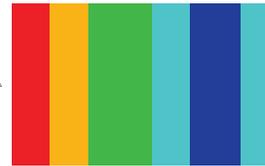


5 Social Nagar

Social Nagar is densely populated, which brings problem of overcrowding and infrastructures decay. Its community is cohesive and willing to engage actively in a project to change the current situation.



5	Cohesion
3	Connectivity
5	Community participation
4	Density
2	Income
2	Infrastructures & amenities
3	Productivity



The project focuses on the upgrading of a local school and is financed with a loan, secured by the local community. The upgrading consists of an addition to the present building, which provides new spaces for teaching and toilets for children, as well as water taps accessible by the public. Once the project is completed, the community faces problems in paying back the loan. In order to wipe out the debt, outside of school hours the toilets are made accessible to the general public for a fee and some spaces are rented out for events.



DRP

CURRENT SITUATION

TABULA RASA

REDEVELOPMENT: HOMOGENEITY AND FORMALIZATION



PROPOSAL

FIRST NAGARS: PUNCTUAL INTERVENTIONS

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES: RHIZOMATIC EFFECT

SCALING-UP: NAGARS MULTIPLICITY



Reflections  
on the  
Dharavi  
Experience

## Classicising Dharavi

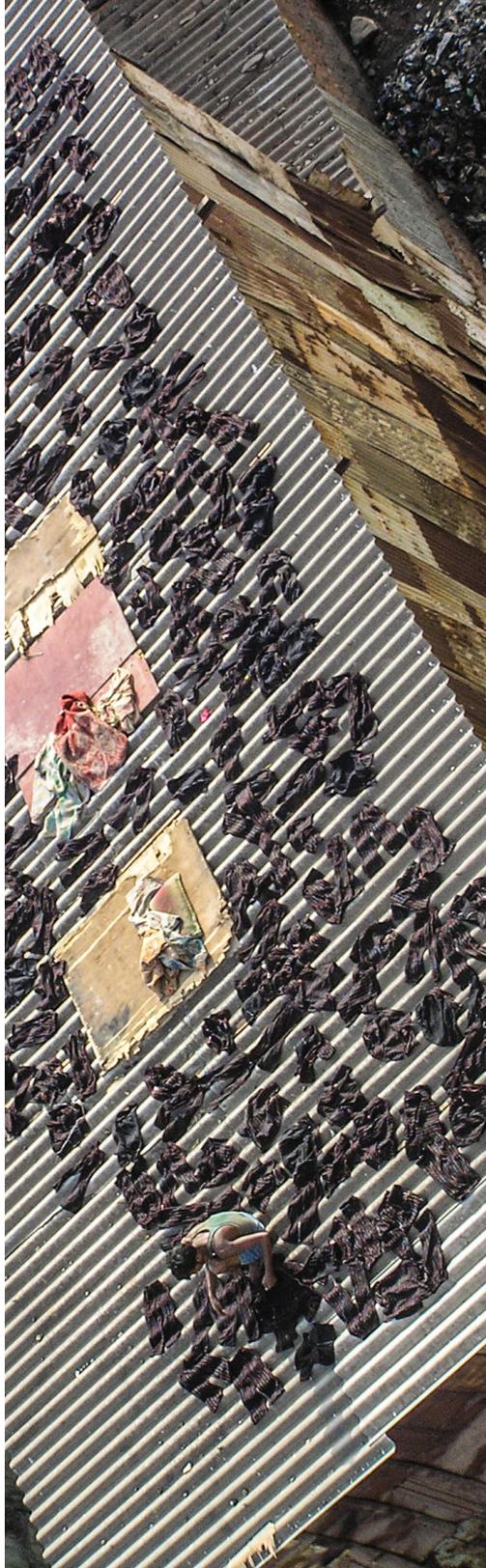
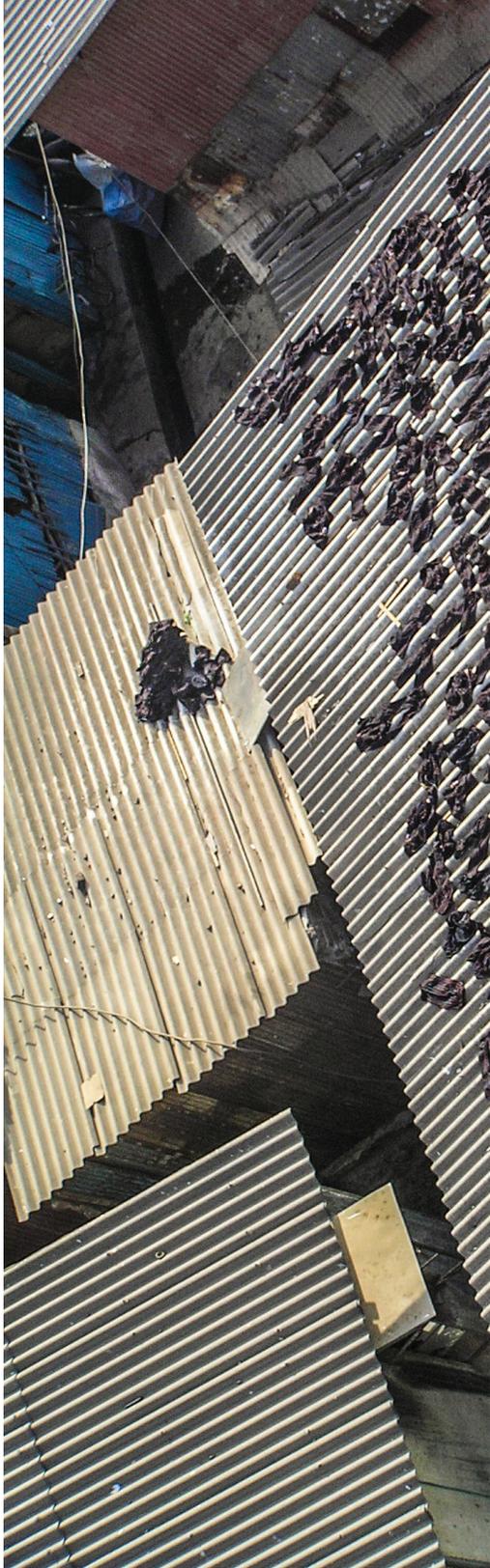
Giorgio Talocci

When OMA in 1987 designed the masterplan for Melun Senart, it decided to define just a clear system of voids, public spaces which allowed to keep a control on the ultimate form of the urban whole. Facing these empty axes, there was a multitude of building blocks where the designers deliberately surrendered to the unpredictability of the future development: the model made for the competition reflects this condition, showing a confused agglomeration of building, an accumulation of people, along with their lives and livelihoods, whose destiny was going to be uncertain. OMA's operation was not different at all from a (neo-)classical city plan where a few open spaces (fora and main squares) and recognisable elements (monuments and civic buildings) defined the image of a city that would have lasted for ages, indifferent to the inevitable transformation of the surrounding areas.

In informal contexts such as Dharavi, and more specifically in Chamba Bazaar, similar operations are possible and somehow needed: while accepting and valuing the complexity of the urban environment, there is the need to define and make clear some directions, to fix some points on a plan that otherwise would keep being barely readable. Therefore, preserving (or liberating) a few key open spaces is necessary to make them work as catalysts of the future development – to attract new identities and capitalise the present ones, to foster the encounter of flows of people, capitals and knowledge from the external areas and highlight even more the nature of receptacle of otherness which Dharavi itself already is.

While these spaces can become the new fora of this potentially contemporary ideal city, what is around them will change its shape and content continuously, including the monuments which delineate the boundaries of such catalytic spatialities. Indeed, they will not be the over-imposed iconic objects of the classic or neoclassic age. But they will not be, either, the chaotic and uncontrollable fragments of OMA's projects. Rather, they will look as monuments embodying the result of long (and still open) processes of negotiation between the several stakeholders, and representing at the same time their disagreements and struggles. New monuments as outcome of layering operations, reflecting both the aspirations of the place and the power relations between the many actors of the urban transformation, both the desires of being represented and the frustrations of whom will not be successful in this quest.

Obviously the form, the function and the ultimate meaning of these monuments and their piazzas could change in the future according to different economic and political contexts, making their built environment definitely the receptacle of the social change. And also, more importantly, the stage of citizens' empowerment, the background for the creation of a shared knowledge, the arena of the struggles for the right-claiming. The space where new forms of citizenship arise, hopefully looking back at the classic ideal of *Cives Romani*, the ones who fully enjoyed and held that right of citizenship itself, not entrapped in a condition of otherness but rather building on such otherness itself to claim a voice in the whole process of urban development.



## Slum for sale

Andrew Wade

Director Lutz Konermann has created a documentary on the ongoing contested redevelopment proposal for Dharavi, Mumbai, an informal settlement that is unique in its paced evolution and current dynamic capacities of adaptation and production. Its foremost quality attracting attention, however, is its prime positioning in the heart of Mumbai, causing land value and the potential for the generation of capital to overwhelm the complexities of livelihood and industry. The film gains incredibly valuable access to key players in the case, and through skilled editing and composition, brings forth the impression that Mumbai is a city tearing at the seams, with extremes of a wealthy 'global city' continually at odds with the majority of the population living in informal settlements and aspiring to better services, upgraded housing and secure businesses.

The extreme disconnect between US-trained developer Mukesh Mehta's Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) and the reality on the ground in Dharavi is carefully illustrated and placed in front of the viewer without falling into an overly simplistic binary of top-down v. bottom-up ideologies. The film perhaps shines brightest in its depiction of the shades of grey and unexpected critiques of the DRP, especially from the nuanced views of businessman and CEO Cyrus Guzde, who speculates on the possibility that Dharavi be addressed as an "unauthorised, unlicensed industrial estate" rather than a homogenous residential slum. While different levels of resistance, including of course bottom-up opposition led by Jockin Arputham, founder of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) are paramount to providing checks and balances on the DRP, critiques from socially engaged businessmen such as Mr. Guzde often have a unique capacity to sway the Government in its final actions and agenda.





While the pointed debates of various key players add an essential information base to the film, the emotional narrative and human significance is delivered mainly by tracing the life of tailor Rais Khan and his two children through their lives in Dharavi. It is only at this personal scale that the essential details and ramifications of redevelopment become tangible. As a renter of a one-room apartment, he and his family are not eligible for inclusion in the proposed redevelopment plans. The rising rents in Dharavi due to the impending proposals have priced the apartment that he rents above his means, and the film follows him through eviction and the struggle to house his two children in his small shop, while he is forced to sleep on a cart in the street.

Though Dharavi is introduced early on as a “playground for ambitious urban planners”, it systematically diagnoses the contested nature of this urban space while reeling in the notion of redevelopment from rhetoric about new roads, hospitals and houses to the everyday struggles, triumphs and inherent knowledge of the citizens of Dharavi, most of whom have meticulously built extremely productive and vibrant lives for themselves over the course of several generations. As a fifth generation resident of the potters community (Kumbharwada) states, “If you ask who made Dharavi, I would say: my forefathers did”. Hopefully giving such a poignant platform of expression to the residents of Dharavi will result in urban planners abandoning the view of Dharavi as a “playground” for their professional aspirations and instead embracing the responsibility and challenge of imagining a socially just and anthropocentric process of development that questions the traditional outcomes of a capital-driven planning agenda.

## Modernism out of Context

Ben Leclair-Paquet

Closing in on Mumbai we could see Dharavi through the porthole of the aircraft. From up in the sky, people were too small to catch the eye and the streets too narrow to be seen amidst the clouds of rooftops suspended above an impenetrable space, like floating carpets atop a city so unusual, as if it could only exist in our minds. The readings, lectures and documentary videos we had watched in London had prepared us well for the task ahead. Like the torching heat and humidity of Mumbai in the month of May, Dharavi was not a place we could fully understand until experiencing it; walking, seeing, touching and smelling its streets, people and buildings. Some of us had worked and visited India in the past, others were even from there, yet Dharavi seemed a surprise to everyone for all we had read, seen and heard about only depicted a handful of colors of this space so diverse: a motley crew of class, culture and condition.

Our partner and host organization in Mumbai had worked out as much of the logistics as one could. Their reputation as a well organized local NGO transpired from the beginning, yet our capacity to adapt and readjust ourselves in the face of unforeseen changes very quickly became our most precious asset. Nabeel Hamdi, who was running the BUDD studio that year, had often outlined the importance to think well and quickly on our feet when in the field, to expect uncertainties, to be prepared to work and meet people with a double agenda. I only remember some of the stories Nabeel had told us to prove his point. His narratives were always rich, personal and beautifully presented, but meant little to most of us until we reached Dharavi.

We knew that aspects of the project would be difficult to digest from the pro-poor perspective we had adapted, aiming to promote equity and allow for propitious situations for vulnerable groups through spatial interventions. But we



could have never expected what we saw: a one size-fit-all super project (for over 600,000 inhabitants) where current residents would live under high-rises erected for middle and upper middle class citizens; a city on top of another one, keeping the less wealthy down below.

We never expected such a radical proposal. The interviews we had already conducted remained an invaluable source of information; the project however, had become obsolete, as our window of potential opportunity had been completely displaced.

There exists a constant danger to humanize brutality by working within its framework. Identifying ways to better a savage structure weakens the (sensible) argument against its inherent composition. It simultaneously allows for a practical solution, sometimes essential to the people most affected by rolling circumstances bearers of hardships and increased complexities. We edged our risk by developing two alternative development proposals: a speculative scenario that worked within the legal framework and development policy which informed Mukesh Mehta's plan for Dharavi, and a second proposal designed to expose a possible alternative that prioritizes local needs instead, also acknowledging territorial needs and objectives.

The scale of the site and limited time available to us made it impossible to go beyond the conceptual stage of design. Notwithstanding, the critical replacement projects we put forward served their purpose well.

As spatial practitioners, we believed it was more important to challenge the conflictive redevelopment plan than to develop short-term design strategies in Dharavi. Our agenda shifted away from short-term and small scale practical interventions and into a more provocative direction, advocating for just spatial strategies, extending our discourse

outside of Mumbai and to London using our design skills to clearly paint the current picture of Dharavi. Grounding our argument in architectural, urban design and social science discourses, we aimed to address social and political issues through spatial terms. While few if any of the design proposals we developed held much practical potential, they, in the least, allowed us to unpack a contentious urban design proposal, laying bare its abnormal character and inefficacy to address current matters in Dharavi.



## Paradox of Integration

Amar Sood

The studio helped us recognize that the squalid realities of Dharavi have multi-layered and interlaced complexities that are defined by the people in all their heterogenities. Dharavi is home to multiple occupations, religions, ethnicities and cultures that are intertwined within spaces for living, working, worship, leisure and socializing. These spaces overlap with each other in a day-to-day cycle of existence. Assigning a physical dimension to such a space is to misrepresent the reality of Dharavi. These realities can be understood as flows that intersect with each other within spaces. Intervening with one space can potentially disturb and harm multiple flows, which is exhibited by the multi-storey housing created by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) within Chamba Bazaar. The vertical layering of dwellings has broken social relationships that were earlier aided by a continuous space that one passed through each day, marked by open doors and chance meetings. This top down approach of transformation perceived space and the people as homogeneous entities and did not consider flows.

The reality of Dharavi within the city of Mumbai casts an overbearing shadow beyond the daily realities of its people. Each day, thousands come out and mingle with the rest of the city and go back into a space that is generally ignored, walled-off in the minds of the more affluent, and yet this space is at the center of planning debates that only recognize its potential as a means of alleviating shortage of space in rest of the city. It ignores people, livelihoods and their relationships associated with the place. The city has defined its space of intervention within this landscape of conflicting realities as that of a real estate-guided solution. The image of the city is defined by the language of globalization. In its physical dimension, the space will alleviate pressure on rest of the city and sky-rocketing prices of real estate in the island city where land is an extremely scarce

commodity. This manifests as a homogeneous vision of tower blocks that can commoditize space and its management. From its current form, it delays uses, simplifies and promotes comprehension, that can aid legitimization, hoping to integrate the people and the space itself with the rest of the city.

The premise of integrating Dharavi with the rest of the city can take multiple avatars. There is a conflict created by top-down pressure from the city and its stakeholders on one hand, and bottom-up pressure created by the inhabitants of Dharavi, the NGOs and civil society on the other. A search for spaces of negotiation between the two pressures can potentially catalyze integration and amalgamation. Central to that negotiation is the recognition of space as part of multiple flows, and not a physical entity to be created and distributed. The public realm within and on the periphery of Chamba Bazaar offers opportunities of negotiation between the city and Dharavi. This negotiation can be extended to the typologies surrounding the public realm layering various activities and redefining the live-work relationship. With commercial activities at the ground level, workshops and residential uses occupy upper floors. Re-densification of inner areas with such typologies can 'free-up' the periphery that can derive maximum real estate benefit.

Channeling these benefits inward towards areas like Chamba Bazaar requires an initiative from civil society and inhabitants, organizing Nagar, Cluster and Dharavi-wide representations to take ownership of the process that is legitimized under relevant law. With people as the agency of transformation, this negotiated space involves all stakeholders spatializing flows by layering and mixing uses. This space of intervention does not have a definite beginning or end, but rather encompasses a dynamic continuum cutting across physical and non-physical realms.



## Remote analysis and the challenge to practice

Ricardo Martén

When I started the BUDD program in October 2009, it took me a while to blend the ideas we were getting from the different courses; at times it seemed as though the modules had their own independent lexicon. It was at about mid term, as the BU3 studio module evolved, when I felt that the concepts not only made composite sense, but also that they related and talked about space, albeit with a confrontational perspective.

The Dharavi Studio materializes a fair deal of ideas, thoughts and processes about what means to be in a specific locale, shying away from the comfort of understanding space as a geographically bound area determined by measurable qualities. The greatest challenge it poses to students lies at its core, and it serves as both an obstacle and an asset: the Dharavi we studied and designed was never more than a collision of perceptions and preconceptions, an abstract space defined by information and no physical interaction. Architecture pleases itself by making of physical presence its fundamental pillar; however, more and more distance and remote analysis are a reality of practice. The potential of knowledge-sharing and information platforms makes this possible, and yet one can easily get lost amidst the coarseness of raw data.

The structure of the studio enables a sort of navigational route, a consecutive combination of parts that aim at constructing an image of that space we call Dharavi. Whether this image is an accurate interpretation or not is beside the point. In here, the space is formed in large part by misconceptions, mistakes and assumptions, and then, once all these become evident and are reconsidered, re-built in the form of applicable tools. Through this mechanism, the Studio has





enough flexibility to be molded by the students together with the tutors, in almost equal measure. The production of space results out of dialogue, critical analysis, observation and external association. Once the Studio evolves, you understand that it is equally valuable for what it brings on its own as well as from the other modules, extruding the BUDD program from a planar theory into theoretical intervention, where the city finally comes alive in practice.

I won't go over the phases of the Studio, as they will surely be better explained elsewhere. Instead, I would like to mention that as a whole, what these parts or steps provided were an urban design template devoid of a fixed script, instead adaptable and organic. Maps, livelihood analysis, guidelines, individual responses, all these became our own personal story of Dharavi through our eyes, stories that are not static but active sources for future endeavours. The lasting power of this intervention was our understanding of the relativity of the space in question, as well as the value of the mechanisms that constituted the vision and impact of our actions and thoughts.

Once the Studio reaches its final stages there is an understandable sense of anxiety, particularly at the thought of it all remaining unresolved. But it also makes sense because spatial analysis is not a finite, linear route. For that reason the end project feels more of a circumstance and a parting exercise; the strength of the studio is its ongoing process, the constant looking-back at the already covered ground. By its conclusion space has been distorted, reconfigured, and experimented with, Dharavi no longer a place in central Mumbai, but a living, undulating timeline with countless voices that shape what still remains to be fully understood.

# Meeting the challenge of scale

Nick Wolff

*“The problematic of geographical scale – its territorial organization, its social production, its political contestation and its historical reconfiguration – has been inserted into the very heart of the urban question in the current era”<sup>1</sup>*

Dharavi exists at scale. It contains, is shaped by and is constantly re-shaping sets of relational, complex and conflictive processes operating at multiple, interrelated geographical levels<sup>2</sup>. Urban governance in Mumbai that seemingly determines Dharavi’s future deeply intertwines with regional and national politics and nagar-centred organisations connected to national and international slum-dweller movements. India’s rapid economic growth, contributing to new global and national movements of capital and people and driving massive change in Mumbai, traces back into Dharavi in the thriving factories and service industries it harbours. Webs of identities and associated ‘otherness’, inclusion and exclusion that are deeply interwoven into the cultural and political fabric of Dharavi are created, defended and apportioned at street, nagar, city and national levels, shifting forms from one level to another.

Perceived at scale, these *“links, connections, communications, networks and circuits”<sup>3</sup>* reveal a set of spatial relations that loosen the divisions between internal and external when approaching a process of urban design: What could be seen as abstract external globalising economic forces come into sharper concrete reality when Dharavi’s international businesses are acknowledged as active producers (however small) of those same forces. A migrant worker can reveal under the multi-scalar microscope a manifestation of abstract strands and flows of identity, power, knowledge and resources criss-crossing and interweaving across spatial levels.

If these social processes contained in, shaping and being shaped by Dharavi are produced and reproduced at scale then their effects are similarly manifest at multiple, interwoven levels. The political, economic and social structures they produce from the global to the urban level delimit opportunity, enable or construct barriers to transformative change and open out or narrow down future trajectories. Their outcomes in the urban form are actualities that reflect individuals’ daily reality: how much they earn, how they live, the daily rhythms, pains and pleasures of life.

This challenge of scale is found time and again at the core of the Dharavi studio. Urban design practice is revealed indeed as ‘multivalent in that its power does not originate from a single source’<sup>4</sup> and neither, we find, does its subject. We question at which levels interventions can be made, within which processes and to which objectives. Is it sufficient to make small changes at levels that improve daily experience and, if not, can urban design practice significantly contribute to reconfiguring structural inequities to support a more transformative urban development? We are faced with questions of how to marshal this multivalency to engage with the complexity of processes shaping Dharavi and their outcomes at scales from individuals to the international. As Massey<sup>5</sup> writes, *“this is a space of loose ends and missing links, for the future to be open, space must be open too”*. A tentative approach to exploring ways in which the ‘loose ends and missing links’ running through Dharavi might be configured in new ways at and across multiple scales towards alternative futures, is a central element of the critical and reflexive approach to practice explored in the studio.

1/ Brenner, N. (2001). “The limits to scale? Methodological reflections on scalar structuration” in *Progress in Human Geography*, December 2001 25: 591-614. London: Sage.

2/ Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London: Sage

3/ Lefebvre, H. (1978). *De l’État-4: Les Contradictions de l’État Moderne*. Paris: Union Générale d’Éditions.

4/ Cuthbert, A. (2006). *The Form of Cities: Political Economy and Urban Design*. Oxford: Blackwell.

5/ Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London: Sage





Afterword



# Into the Urban Beyond

Caroline Newton  
Lecturer, Development  
Planning Unit

In coexistence with “world class” and “creative” cities, where growth and big capital are key words, more than 80% of the world’s inhabitants have created their own living environments from below, from their everyday lived experience. They have realised their livelihoods through parallel circuits, often referred to as the “informal economy”, as if these circuits are disconnected from the global economic reality. Nothing is less true.

For a long time the way cities in the south have been conceptualised has proved to be very problematic. Robinson<sup>1</sup> illustrates the dichotomy in the discourse between global cities as being important and model nodes that are interconnected in a global (capitalist) network and the mega cities in the South that seem to be in a constant crisis. As a consequence too much focus has been on the need to formalise the informal, believing that with formalisation prosperity will follow and inequality will diminish. Those types of discourses that associate informality with illegitimacy and exclusion from ‘normality’ might be problematic and may strengthen the hegemony of the capitalist system and without recognising “*the right to the city.*”<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that in coming to terms with forms of informality and the role of these informal forms in the global arena is ongoing. This “call of the informal” has been attracting an increasing number of professionals, academics and ... designers.

I strongly argue that when urban designers and architects get interested in informal urbanism it should be for more than the mere “aesthetics” (eg. MoMA’s Small Scale, Big Change or ...). A deeper understanding is needed about

how the planning apparatus produces the unplanned and the un-plannable. The practice of the urban designer needs to be deconstructed and recalibrated in order to gain a better understanding of how to deal with the urban project and more specifically in order to try and deal with the not-designed and the un-designable.

As urban designers and architects within the BUDD programme, we do this not to re-order the informal but to look for a counter hegemonic planning (maybe what Miraftab<sup>3</sup> would call “*insurgent planning*”) whereby the questions shift from “where do things belong” (classical modern and functional planning) to “to whom do things belong”, thus bringing Lefebvre’s right to the city back to centre stage. Here it is important to stress that following de Souza, we do not simply understand this right as “the right to a better, more “human” life in the context of the capitalist city, the capitalist society and on the basis of a (“reformed” and “improved”) representative “democracy.”<sup>4</sup> So we go back to Lefebvre’s understanding that “the ‘right to the city’ becomes the right to centrality, the right to not be excluded from urban form, if only with respect to the decisions and actions of power.”

In this renewed context the role of the designer is put under scrutiny. The protagonist in the whole (urban) design practice is no longer the ‘expert’ planner, but rather the informal community-based, grassroots process and the accompanying strategies and activism that have the ability to transform the city<sup>3</sup>.

The engagement of the MSc BUDD participants with the city is explicit. During the process participants develop

1/ Robinson, J. (2002), Global and world cities: a view from off the map. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26: 531–554.

2/ Lefebvre, H. (2003). *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

3/ Miraftab, F. (2009). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 32–50.

4/ Souza, M. L. De. (2010). Which right to which city? In defence of political-strategic clarity. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements* 2(1), 315–333. p. 317.

5/ Friedmann, J. (1987) Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: pp.391

a socio-spatial cognition; a knowledge and understanding of the socio-spatial intertwinement, not only through learning, but also through exploration, experience and critical thinking. This understanding is then translated into strategies and actions that allow people to take ownership of their right to the city.

Central to this reasoning is the idea of critical design as a “*mediation of theory and practice in social transformation*”<sup>5</sup>. In this recalibrated role we, as the practitioner/architect critically immerse ourselves with the broader community in which we engage in. This means we are curious about the urban reality we encounter, we allow ourselves to be amazed. And in trying to meet the challenges posed, we refuse to be seduced by straightforward looking answers and conventional thought.

This way of working calls for an innovative attitude in which design is reconfigured. Urban design practice becomes something more - it becomes an activator for change. Designers and practitioners educated and trained within the MSc BUDD work from this perspective of critical planning. The studio pedagogy, as explored in this book and exemplified by the work of the students offers the opportunity to address design challenges from within the perspective of a community without loosing the call to enable the re-appropriation of spaces of collective action, as I briefly sketched above.

The risk of books like this is that they might be considered as an end-state, the showing of work well done. I believe this “not-so-small pamphlet”, as Camillo Boano calls it in the introduction is not about that. This collection of thoughts,

reflections and design work, gives us some glimpses into the shape that a recalibrated profession could take. It reveals the start of a long and deliberately trajectory. And yet is already taken further in the current studio investigation Metanarratives of Philippine Urbanism. There, we are speculating on critical tactics and strategies that address a multitude of urban scales and challenges facing the communities and organisations in Manila, Iloilo and Davao. If this book before us is any indicator, the current pursuits of the MSc BUDD course will undoubtedly uncover a fascinating conundrum of ideas, research and proposals for a whole new urban terrain...





Customer Service  
formlight  
Obscure  
Indira Bank  
Special

BUDD  
Studio  
Participants  
2009-2012

## 2008/2009

Chakraborty	Debesehi	India
Chan	Wai Hou	China
Colloridi	Laura	Italy
Dovarch	Barbara	Italy
García Lamarca	Melissa	Canada/Spain
Hunter	William	USA
Leclair-Paquet	Benjamin	Canada
Li	Xiaolu	China
Lim	Phirany	USA
Millán Franco	Gynna F.	Colombia
Naidoo	Kelvinesan	South Africa
Park	Hye Joo	South Korea
Su En	Jung	South Korea
Syrrothanasi	Panagiota	Greece
Varma	Pooja	USA
Wade	Andrew	USA

## 2009/2010

Angelis	Nicole	Canada
Canellakis	Krista	USA
Cirne	Jeniffer	UK
García González	Marisol	Chile
Gori	Federico	Italy
Haq	Hana	Pakistan
Hassan	Iman Abdel Meguid	Egypt
Liang	Weiwei	China
Malgrati	Igor	Italy
Martén Cáceres	Ricardo	Costa Rica
Michener	Laura	USA
Monteiro Ramos	Ana Margarida	UK
Noeding	Marcel	Germany
Ramamurthy	Swethini	India
Sood	Amar	India
Talocci	Giorgio	Italy
Wolff	Nicholas J.	UK
Yu	Hong	China

## 2010/2011

Al Ghafari	Noor	Canada
Ali	Afraa	UK
Anantamongkolchai	Dhrin	Thailand
Andrade	Maira Mendonca	Mozambique
Assanowicz	Magdalena	Poland
Chi Cervera	Silvia Elisa	Mexico
Cirne	Jennifer	Canada/UK
Di Girolamo	José Lorenzo	Chile
Durousseau	Desiree	USA
Farag	Farida	USA/Egypt
Fatemi	Mahya	Iran
Hajisoltani	Sepideh	Iran
Jabbar	Sadiqa	UK
Jarvis	Serena	USA
Koonar	Amrita	UK
Leaman	Amy	Canada/UK
Letier Pinto	Tatiana	Brazil/UK
Macbruce	Eric Prince	Ghana/UK
Muzzonigro	Azzurra	Italy
Nady	Ivana	Slovenia
Nair	Parvathi Sanjeev	India
O'Neill	Mckenzie	USA
Razouk	Tareq Ali	Syrian
Robles Caraballo	Josué	USA
Starc	Katja	Slovenia
Tan	Su-Ann	Malaysia
Von Der Schulenburg	Anna	Germany

## 2011/2012

Ahmad	Sarah	Pakistan
Akagwu	Ojama Sarah	Nigeria/UK
Alen	Elsbet	Belguim
Ardakanian	Atiyeh	Iran
Briccheto	Elisabetta	Italy
Bukhari	Budoor	UAE
Cardoso Martins	Diogo	Portugal

Cociña Varas	Camila	Chile
Fuentes Groetaers	Paola María	Chile
González Arango	Lina	Colombia
Hanking	Lisa Marie	UK
Han	Zhu	China
Mascia	Stefano	Italy
Montgomery	Christopher Carlton	Jamaica
Navarro Eslava	Luz	Spain
Pasta	Francesco Maria	Italy
Pinzón Cardona	Laura	Colombia
Price	Elizabeth Clementine	UK
Rachel	Rachel	Indonesia
Ritter	Bethany Ann	USA
Shepherd	Ariel Glenesk	Canada

### Course Coordinators

Núñez Ferrera	Isis	Honduras
Wade	Andrew	Usa
Von Der Schulenburg	Anna	Germany

Located in The Bartlett's Development Planning Unit (DPU), a world-leading international centre of research and study founded by Otto Koenigsberger specializing in planning in the Global South, the MSc Building an Urban Design in Development (BUDD) offers a unique synthesis of cutting edge critical methodology and design-based research, linking the practice of 'design' with the complementary 'developmental' processes of planning. It equips students with the tools to deal with complex urban challenges, spatial transformations and the manifestation of injustices, especially in the contested urbanisms of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This intense 12-month graduate course invites participants to play a leading role in the development and understanding of a recalibrated Urban Design approach, at once people-centred and strategic in nature.

The MSc is constructed around four themes corresponding to the core course modules:

- Urban Design theories for understanding informal urbanism
- Participatory design methodologies and citizenship
- Design research, thinking, and practice
- Innovative methodological approaches to design

Key points of the course:

- An innovative 12-month programme including seminar classes, workshops and an intensive live fieldwork in the global south
- Supports a balance between research, writing and practice-based design
- A competitive interdisciplinary and multicultural environment.

**<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-building-urban-design-in-development>**

The Development Planning Unit, University College London (UCL), is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning, management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning, management and design, especially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition.

The central purpose of the DPU is to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deal with the wide range of development issues that are emerging at local, national and global levels. In London, the DPU runs postgraduate programmes of study, including a research degree (MPhil/PhD) programme, six one-year Masters Degree courses and specialist short courses in a range of fields addressing urban and rural development policy, planning, management and design.

Overseas, the DPU Training and Advisory Service (TAS) provides training and advisory services to government departments, aid agencies, NGOs and academic institutions. These activities range from short missions to substantial programmes of staff development and institutional capacity building.

The academic staff of the DPU are a multi-disciplinary and multinational group with extensive and on-going research and professional experience in various fields of urban and international development throughout the world. DPU Associates are a body of professionals who work closely with the Unit both in London and overseas. Every year the student body embraces more than 45 different nationalities.

To find out more about us and the courses we run, please visit our website: [www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu](http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu)

This publication draws from first-hand experience, research, and critical practices that have sought to investigate a 175 hectare swatch of land in the middle of Mumbai that is home to over 1 million inhabitants. It is a collection of short and long essays, drawings and diagrams, pictures and photo-montages, video stills and visualisations on what is known as Dharavi.

If on one side Dharavi was what some would call a 'live' case study, on the other it was more than that. Dharavi was a place where our different epistemic words of what we called urban design started falling apart. It was also a complex microcosm of practices where our methodological and architectural artillery became somewhat ineffective and sterile. It was a symbol of a multiplicity of urbanisms at play that failed all our philosophical apparatus. Dharavi for us was essentially a space in which we started our process of recalibration of Urban Design – an intellectual, pedagogical and political process at the centre of the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development course at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit.

**Dr. Camillo Boano** is an architect, urbanist and educator. He currently Senior Lecturer at Development Planning Unit, UCL, where he directs the MSc in Building and Urban Design in Development. He is also the Director of Communication in the Unit and Coordinator of the DPU summerLab initiative. Since 2012 he became one of the Co-Directors of the UCL Urban Lab.

**William Hunter** is a Teaching Fellow at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit where he leads studios in Design in Development and Critical Urbanism. He is also Co-Coordinator of the DPU summerLab series and DPU News editor.

**Dr. Caroline Newton** is an architect, urban planner and political scientist. She completed her PhD in social geography at the K.U. Leuven (Belgium). Caroline teaches in the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development and is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Housing and the Built Environment

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