THE SPATIAL ECONOMY OF DHARAVI

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RESEARCH PAPER FOR URBANISTES DU MONDE
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preamble

The research presented in this paper is inscribed in a project launched by the French organization Urbanistes du Monde for its Forum 2015, which took place in Lyon on August 27th and 28th. The Forum presented the results of a range of field research projects carried out by students and researchers around metropolises of the South. The research topic of this year’s missions was “Quels métiers de l’urbain pour quelles villes dans les pays du Sud?”, and revolved around the tendencies for professionals of the city (planners, developers, private and public actors, etc.) and their roles in shaping the city of the future.

The way we interpreted this question made us want to look at potential for a different way of imagining and making the urban. We imagined a city where the use of space dictates its form, or at least where the use adapts itself perfectly to the form, in a way that economizes space and allows for productive density. Such a place, evidently, is a place that’s crafted on a daily basis by the users, their needs, movements, and activities, more than by planners or developers who imagine it, draw it on a map, and materialize it from top-down.

This is why we turned to informal spaces: ours was an effort to find a hint of such a place, which we thought could give us ideas for the development and management of the urban spaces of the future. Also, we found it would be particularly interesting to see how such economic vibrancy could happen in a place where poor governance results into scarce access to basic urban utilities. We looked at the city of Mumbai as a treasure trove of informal, bottom-up urban initiatives, considering that 52% of its population resides in informal settlements. We chose Dharavi, a “slum” located in the center of the city, for its peculiarities in terms of urban land use, density, and informal economic growth.

research objectives

The main rationale behind our research was to look at ways of using urban space that differ from our Western or European perspective; we wanted to see whether it was possible to learn something about our own cities and their future development by looking at a very different context, like that of a slum of a large metropolis in the South. This comes from an urge, we believe, to contemplate new, different ideas about cities, and to be capable of expanding and enriching the way we think about urban space. Peter Stonham argues that we should accept urban complexity arising from “the ability of people to manage their own solutions” (Stonham, 1984). We were interested in looking at how citizens - more than planners, developers, or governmental agencies - tackle spatial issues in their everyday life, and at how the use of space, rather than the ideas that precede it, can
shape the built environment of our cities and neighborhoods in a way that better serves our basic needs. In order to do so, we chose to look at an informal context, where public intervention, though present, is not all-encompassing, and where self-made spatial tactics are more evident and relevant.

We knew that Dharavi is extremely densely populated and hosts a large spectrum of economic activities, which are booming exceptionally. This makes Dharavi a good place for our enquiry, but at the same time a place that differs greatly from any ordinary slum; therefore our research project never had the claim of describing the reality of a slum in an inductive way. Of course the pertinence of inductive reasoning based on a single case-study could be questioned in any circumstance, but in this particular case we would like to underline the peculiarity of Dharavi: the following report should be seen as a modest account of a very circumscribed research field, which is by no means similar to any other place of our knowledge.

methodology

We devised our methodology before departure, from Paris, based on our preliminary understanding of the place and accordingly with some advice that we received from experienced professors and researchers from our institution. However, it should be said our methodology went through revision once it clashed with the reality of Dharavi, particularly due to the barriers that we encountered during our very first experiences on the field.

Our initial methodological plan implied a purely field-oriented research. The idea was to take two levels of analysis - a spatial and a social one - and to concentrate on a few individual units of observation. Our plan was, on one hand, to choose two or three residents of Dharavi, working in different industries, and follow them through their daily routine for a two or three days; on the other, to select two or three spatial nodes of urban texture, at different locations (crossroads, pharmacy store, square) and observe them for a whole working day, trying to understand the dynamics and interactions that take place there.

However, we came across a few realizations during the first days in Mumbai, that made us reconsider our initial ideas and restructure the research methodology. First of all, we realized that the language barrier, which we had underestimated during the preparation to the fieldwork, was going to be a difficult one to deal with. Making fruitful encounters in Dharavi was very difficult due to our lack of knowledge of Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Tamil, Kannada. More importantly, we realized that looking at the big picture of the slum was a fundamental first step that we could not possibly skip: identifying and pinpointing the different neighborhoods, communities, and industries that compose its complex puzzle, and understanding the way they interact with each other and with the rest of the city was a task that would take up a large amount of time, but that could not be disregarded. During our one-month-long research, we had to concentrate on understanding this complex scenario first, its cryptic political canvas, thus we realized an ethnographic approach was too ambitious for our time frame.
We therefore organized our work in a way that would allow us to get acquainted to the place and find the preliminary contacts for our interviews (first week), understand the spatial and socio-economic fragmentation and integration of Dharavi (second week), look more specifically at some economic sectors - pottery, recycling, garment industries - (third week), and explore external visions of Dharavi and interactions with the larger Mumbai context (fourth week). Throughout our month of permanence in Mumbai, we also tried to understand the larger metropolitan context as much as possible: we interviewed actors involved in architectural, urban planning, or participatory governance issues, whose action was not necessarily circumscribed to Dharavi, but also addressed more generally to the urban space of Mumbai.

2/ context

Bombay / Mumbai

The Portuguese called it Bom Bahia, meaning ‘good bay’, until they lost their territories in 1661, by giving them away as dowry to King Charles II of England. However, King Charles II could not take charge of administrating the port city and entrusted it to the East India Company for just ten pounds of gold a year. The anglicization of the word ‘bombaim’ soon gave way to ‘Bombay’, the name used for centuries to refer to one of the largest metropolis in the Indian subcontinent.

In 1995, the right-wing Hindu nationalist party Shiv Sena announced that the port city was no longer called Bombay, but Mumbai. After winning the state election, the party renamed the port city after the Hindu goddess Mumbadevi, the city’s patron deity. It was their responsibility to shred away the corrupted English version of ‘Mumbai’, and do away with the legacy of the British colonial rule. Mumbadevi represents the local incarnation of the Great Mother and was patron to the indigenous population of the island: the kolis, the fisherfolk. Nevertheless, some of the last kolis in Mumbai live in Dharavi, although the political agenda seeks to construct myths on their identity, they are left unserved, living in inhumane conditions.

The city of Mumbai is the capital of the Indian state of Maharashtra, and its population amounts to about 12.5 million people according to the 2011 census data. Its metropolitan region, however, according to the same census, amounts to over 18 million people, making it one of the most populous in the world, and the most populous metro region in India. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) (Fig. 1) is composed of 4 districts: Mumbai, Suburban Mumbai (and these two together are part of Greater Mumbai), Thane, and Raigad. Within these four, there are eight municipalities – Mumbai (Greater Mumbai), Thane, Kalyan-Dombivali, Navi Mumbai, Mira Bhayandar, Ulhas Nagar, Ambernath, and Badalapur – each governed by its own Municipal Corporation, and nine Municipal Councils.
Since 1975, the Government of Maharashtra has created a special body for the development of the agglomeration – the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) – chaired by the Maharashtra Ministry of Urban Development.

The Greater Mumbai Municipality is governed by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), commonly referred to as BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation). Established in 1888, the BMC is the richest municipal corporation in India, with a yearly budget amounting to about 30,000 INR crores¹ (corresponding in euros to a little above 4 billions). The CEO of the BMC – the Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai – is appointed by the Maharashtra State Government, and holds most of the executive power in the city of Mumbai, while the Mayor (officially the Head of the BMC) is vested with a mainly ceremonial role. The BMC holds political elections every 5 years for the 227 corporators sitting in the Council; since the 2012 elections, the right-wing nationalist party Shiv Sena occupies a majority of seats (75), followed by the Indian National Congress party (INC), with 52 seats.

The BMC is responsible for the infrastructure and service provision of the Greater Mumbai area. It is present with local offices on the whole Greater Mumbai territory: the latter is administratively divided into 27 Wards (Fig. 2), each presided by a MP (Member of Parliament). Each Ward Office has departments for the various sectors of infrastructure provision (schools, parks and recreation, water, roads, etc.). Under each MP there is one MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) and a varying number of Councillors, each representing one or multiple areas (neighborhoods) of the Ward.

Dharavi

At the beginning of 2009, the movie Slumdog Millionaire had come out and won numerous Golden Globes, BAFTA awards, and was favorite in the lists to win an academy award. In Mumbai, the film provoked a media earthquake that involved debates around the issue of ‘poverty porn’. In fact, Boyle’s film put Dharavi at the center of international attention, making it visible to the eyes of many. Today, one can see groups of tourists with their guides touring the neighborhood of Dharavi. And so Dharavi has become a myth, a narrative that is constructed through BBC documentaries, media articles and the successes stories of some of its inhabitants.

introducing Dharavi

Dharavi (Fig. 3) began to take form around a fishing village inhabited by the Kolis, or fisherfolk, in the late 19th century. In fact, Queen Elizabeth formally bestowed land tenure to the Kolis of Dharavi, together with the gift of three pistols to three local leaders (Urban Lab, 2008). This village was founded nearby the Mahim Creek, in what is today the northern part

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¹ In the Indian numeral system, 1 crore corresponds to 10 million. Thus 30,000 crores equal 300 billions.
of the island of Mumbai. It is believed the name Dharavi comes from the marathi ‘Dharevarca bhag’, which means the creek’s shore.

Today, Dharavi occupies a territory of about 2 square kilometers located in the geographic heart of Greater Mumbai (Figg. 4-5), right South of the newly established Bandra-Kurla business complex, and east of Mahim Bay. For this reason, and due to the increasingly high land prices in Mumbai, Dharavi is attracting attention on part of governments and private developers, and facing strong pressure from the city as a whole.

The population estimates for Dharavi vary between 600,000 and 1 million people: its high density of 314,887 persons per square kilometer (6 times more dense than the island of Manhattan during work hours) represents one of its main peculiarities, together with its impressive economic output, whose estimates range between 650 million and 1 billion USD per year.

socio-spatial context

Dharavi has as of today approximately 700,000 structures that have sprung up in different waves of migration and displacement, and especially since the 1960s. The majority of the two-story houses that compose its landscape were constructed by local builders, and negotiated through fees with the police. Its central location ensures its connectivity with the rest of the city with two train stations tracing its borders.

However, Dharavi remains a city within a city, with an urban complexity that makes it a highly cryptic space to research. It is a social puzzle fragmented in over 80 communities, marked by caste, profession, religion or origin, and geographically distinct by imagined borders. Most residents are migrants who have come from their villages to the city looking for job opportunities and a higher quality of life. Often migrants arrive following the path of a family member, who has previously settled in Dharavi and is able to welcome him or her. Thus, it is common that rooms of 20 square meters offer shelter to 10 family members.

Indeed, the high density of Dharavi asks for an intensive use of spaces, where multiple functionalities coexist in the same physical space, and where borders between interiors and exteriors are blurred. Households are open to the street, and as a result become part of the highly salient social texture of the community. The housing of the poor almost always combines living and working activities, in contrast to zoned conventional housing (Barquin et al., 1986, Correa 1985). The habitat of Dharavi is intense both in the level of social interactions and in the multiplicity of land use. Every community is a complex environment, where every individual node is dependent on all the others, reflecting a compact web of social networks. These social networks play out spatially in the centrality of the street as a space of interaction, production, exchange, and thus survival.

slum conditions

Dharavi’s residents encounter a city that does not serve their needs. The right to the city – intended as the right to receive urban services – is largely denied to the population of Dharavi, which struggles daily to access basic amenities like water and sanitation.
Women have to wake up as early as 4am to ensure their family has enough water to go through the day. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) only serves water for a couple of hours every day. In some areas, the water pumps are active for 30 minutes every day, and families have to queue up in order to stock up for the rest of the day. Water pumps are shared between different family groups, who have to send an application to the BMC, provided that their documents attest their residence in Dharavi since prior to 1995, and pay a monthly tax for the service.

In terms of sanitation, the situation looks even more grim (Fig. 14). This is in part due to the lack of empty space, which doesn’t allow for the construction of additional independent toilet facilities, and partly to slum regulation, which doesn’t allow for the inclusion of private toilets within the homes. In some extreme cases, 10,000 residents have access to only one toilet. The high density of housing units, together with the lack of urban infrastructure, makes Dharavi a space of struggle, of inhumane living conditions.

Dharavi Redevelopment Plan (DRP)

The location of Dharavi at the geographic core of the metropolis of Mumbai has made its land extremely attractive for developers. In fact, newspaper articles have talked about Dharavi as a treasure trove for real estate, due to the high value of its land. In recent years, urban projects such as the Bandra-Kurla Complex have developed the surroundings of Dharavi in a modernizing effort. Hence, the government started working on a scheme for the development of the neighborhood in 2004. In June 2007, global tenders were invited to apply for expressions of interest, however two years later, five companies abandoned the project arguing for lack of clarity and implementation. Similarly, while an expert committee debunked the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan calling it a ‘sophisticated land grab’ (The Hindu, 2010), the BMC submitted a preliminary survey stating that 63% of Dharavi residents were not eligible to access a house or an apartment. Since the end of 2010, only a divisional sector of the neighborhood has begun to be redeveloped.

The DRP (Fig. 6) is a highly controversial project: while some residents – who would be eligible for new, serviced housing facilities – support it and see in it the opportunity for the realization of the urban living they have been dreaming of, all business- and shop-owners, whose economic activity heavily depends on the multifunctional use they are able to make of their homes and workshops, see in the DRP the end of their incomes, and strongly oppose it. Additionally, some believe that the redevelopment of a place like Dharavi will drive even those who will be relocated in the new apartment buildings outside of the neighborhood, pushed by economic factors, such as the extremely high value of their new homes and the high demand of middle-class residents to buy apartments in the new Dharavi.
3/ the economy of space

As previously mentioned, we thought about Dharavi as a container of ideas and tactics that can help us reimagine the urban as a space in which form and processes cohabit harmoniously, serving the citizens’ needs and dictated by the latter. An underlying idea to this urban imagery is that of density: high-density is the most basic and fundamental element that distinguishes the urban from the rural, and though we’ve witnessed sprawling tendencies in many cities of the world in the second half of the 20th century, low-density sprawl has been recognized as costly and not sustainable in the long term.

Dharavi represents an example of a very densely populated space (Fig. 7) whose use is at the same time multifunctional. In this sense, it differs greatly from the common definition of slum as a labor reservoir: its spaces are not only densely populated, but also productive ones, and it’s in this aspect that, we believe, Dharavi represents an interesting case to look at as an example for future developments of the urban. Dharavi hosts a large range of productive, retail, and logistic activities, in a place where space is scarce and highly demanded. This is possible thanks to the inventiveness of its residents: in Dharavi, a home is not only a home, but also a workshop, a shop, and a crossroads.

We saw in high density and mixed-use spaces the solution to many of our problems of sustainability, transportation and long distances, and lack of space. For cities that need to cope with increasing urbanization, rural migration, and ecological challenges, economizing space has become fundamental, and looking at a place like Dharavi can give us ideas about ways to envision future urban development.

In this section, we will present an economic analysis of Dharavi and its built environment: first, by looking in a more macro optic at its spaces of production, in terms of density, proximity, fragmented industries, and agglomeration effects; secondly, by looking more closely at the multifunctional use of single architectural units, such as the home, in a way that minimizes costs and maximizes production.

density and agglomeration effects

Dharavi inserts itself well in the context of our postfordist world economy, and thus it is possible for us to draw lessons from it that can apply to our Western cities. In Dharavi, the industry structure is often vertically disintegrated, as is the case for the recycling industry: the different units are highly specialized, and the chain of production broken up into pieces (Figg. 8-9). The short distances between the different units contribute to the productivity of the place, as transport costs that are needed for the production chain are minimized.

Even in cases where the production happens within one single unit from raw material to finished product, as is the case for the potteries, there is still a high concentration of similar manufacturing units in certain spaces. While mapping out the economy of Dharavi
and its communities, we realized that the same economic activity was concentrated in a certain neighborhood, while another would be located elsewhere. The potters, the tanners, the waste managers, are each located in a different area, and their units all next to each other. This allows for a minimization of fixed costs, such as logistics: for instance, the garment industry, which has contracts with large international brands, exports a large amount of its goods, and the different units share the transportation costs with each other.

This types of networked industrial organizations, which are – in the case of Dharavi – heavily helped by the strong social ties – make us think of highly specialized hubs such as Silicon Valley or the fabbrica diffusa of Central-Northern Italy: the geographic concentration of economic activities allows for a minimization of costs, which can be shared, and a maximization of positive externalities, such as the sharing of expertise, innovation, and machinery (Fig. 10). Since we believe that the main economic advantage of urban agglomeration lies in the positive effects of proximity, and that this is true for all urban spaces around the world, Dharavi can be seen as a paradigm of urban economic organization, and can teach us a lot about the management of density, even though in its case density also results into scarce basic services and low standards of living.

**multifunctional spaces**

The second very interesting aspect of Dharavi’s spatial economy, from which we can draw lessons for the development of our urban spaces of the future, is the mixed use of its landscape. The scarcity of economic means and of space pushes people to devise strategies for an intelligent use of the available resources.

The micro spaces of Dharavi, like the home and the street, are all serving multiple purposes throughout the working day. The home is, at the same time, the place where Dharavi residents sleep, eat, and often produce and sell. Many tailors and potters have their workshops at the ground floor of their homes, and only use the top floor for domestic functions. The workshop is in most cases also their retail center (Fig. 11): the opening on the street represents the contact with the public, and it’s common to see shops with a counter on the street level, and sowing machines or lathes in the back. Often, people’s windows are used as shop counters, and they use the contact with the street as an asset for business.

Additionally, many women who do not work in a particular industry or do not participate to the family business, have found other ways of creating economic output, and they do so within the space of their homes. Many serve as food producers for the community, and prepare bread, snacks, or other food products at home. Others have started individual garment businesses: once invested in a sowing machine, they receive clients from the community and manufacture clothes, blankets, sarees and other garments from their apartments (Fig. 12).

This multifunctionality of spaces is fundamental in the management and productivity of density. Contrarily to zoned areas, that do not allow for productive, commercial, and residential activities to coexist in the same space, the mixed use of surfaces reduces
barriers to entry, while at the same time saving up costs and reducing waste. In fact, even in European cities, where zoning and single-use is not as common and rigid as it is in many American ones, the space of the home is rarely exploited in all its potential, and offices, ateliers, and shops exist as separate entities. This conception of the home as a private, domestic space, which is more recent than we may think, and draws back to the 18th – early 19th century, results into a waste of surfaces within the city, which remain empty during many hours, and causes for greater sprawl and larger distances in our urban agglomerations. The home is usually empty during at least 8 hours every day, and the office or the store are unused for about 16 hours out of 24. The fusion of productive and residential spaces results into a much higher profitability of surfaces, and thus opens the possibility for greater density and lower transportation costs: this organization of space could represent a solution for a more sustainable urban living, saving individuals’ time and money, and minimizing pollution and sprawl effects.

The Mumbai-based research organization URBZ – User Generated Cities, has created a specific concept to refer to this multifunctional use of domestic spaces, the tool-house concept, that it promotes as a possible solution for a more sustainable and user-centered development of the urban.

4/ conclusion

It should be noted that the richness of Dharavi in terms of tactics for the use of urban spaces does not make it a heavenly place, an urban utopia that we should look at and try to learn from on a 360° spectrum. Dharavi is filled with problems, and not only in terms of access to services, as previously mentioned, but also in terms of injustices, inhumane working conditions, labour exploitation, etc.. In Dharavi, like anywhere else in the contemporary world, the means of production are not always owned by the workers that make them profitable. We’ve talked about women who bought sewing machines and started businesses from their homes, but these are not the rule. In most cases, managers and businessmen employ skilled local workers for very cheap, and have contracts with larger firms (often international, as in the case of the textile industry), to whom they sell for much higher prices.

The waste management industry for instance, that we explored extensively, is mostly made up of medium to large units whose owners do not live in Dharavi, and whose workers are not unionized, not recognized by the governments, and heavily underpaid. In the plastic sorting sector, a very skilled employee sorts an average of 400 kilograms of plastic per day, and is paid 250 to 300 INR (which corresponds to about 3,5€). Most of the sorters sleep on the floor of the shack (Fig. 13), and the waste management labor force is mainly composed of migrants. Rag-pickers, who are the ones collecting the trash that is later processed by the various units in Dharavi, are paid an average of 8 INR per kilogram of trash brought; their average age is 12, and they carry from all around the city of Mumbai an average of 30-40 kilos of trash to Dharavi every day.
These questions were not treated throughout the paper, even though they are extremely relevant and any account of Dharavi that does not include them cannot be considered complete. Our research objective, however, was more circumscribed to the tactics of urban use of this thriving informal space, than on the larger political economic questions that still make it a place of injustice, corruption, and squalor.

Many of the actors we interviewed are actively involved in places like Dharavi to push for greater social inclusion and, above all, formal labor recognition. Informality as we’ve seen it can produce extremely interesting spaces, but it often comes with underpaid labor, with unjust working conditions, and in general with a lack of unionization and of a safety net that would otherwise make workers feel safer complaining about their situation.

A more in depth research that would tackle such questions would be extremely interesting, but our one-month-long permanence in Mumbai could not allow it.

Nevertheless, through our research and – though partial – understanding of the spatial economy and functioning of Dharavi, we have accomplished the main objective that we had in mind before departure: finding in this place ideas for a better management of urban space in conditions of very high density. We have found in Dharavi suggestions for a smarter use of our surfaces and architectural forms through tactics of coordination within proximity. We have seen in Dharavi a very intelligent urban space, that gives in our imaginary a new meaning to the idea of “smart city”: not a city that makes itself intelligent through the use of advanced technologies in its management and use, but one that – more simply – uses spaces intelligently, regardless of the level of technological and digital advancement.
5/ annexes

maps / figures / pictures

Fig. 1: Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Source: archidev.org
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list of interviews

1/ SNEHA

Society for Nutrition, Education, and Health Action. Mumbai-based NGO that works in particular with women and children against violence and domestic abuse, for children’s nutrition, and for the empowerment of gender minorities and children and teenagers. They are active in Dharavi.

2/ Samyak Chakrabarty

Social entrepreneur from Mumbai who does social work in Dharavi. Cofounder of the start-up Social Quotient, he’s also the founder of Nimaya Foundation, a non-profit working on women empowerment in Dharavi through manufacturing textile work with hemp. He arranged for us to visit the place and meet the women who work there, as well as put us in contact with an English-speaking Dharavi resident, who was crucial to our understanding of the different manufacturing and food industries of the village.

3/ Prakash Apte

Professor, researcher, and professional on issues of architecture and urban planning. He helped us understand the larger Indian and Mumbai context and its problems of land ownership, governance, and regulation; he also introduced us to some of the architectural and urbanism concepts that he’s been working on for decades, enriching our vision and framing of Dharavi as a very spatially and economically interesting example of urban living.

4/ Vinod Shetty

Labor lawyer and activist based in Mumbai, also documentary and music producer. Has started a lot of community-centers, including centers for children’s education, training centers for workers, a center for women empowerment, and an evening school in Dharavi. He works mainly on rag-pickers unionization and empowerment through the organization called ACORN. He knew a lot about Dharavi and talked to us about the mechanisms that can explain the incredible economic growth of the place. He organized for us a tour of the recycling industry in Dharavi with an English-speaking expert that works in the sector.

5/ Anne Piveteau & Richa Mishra

They work in an architectural firm based downtown, and were currently working on a project for the opening of an art district near Colaba, and on one for the mapping and redevelopment of green public spaces in Bandra. The interview was extremely useful in
understanding land ownership, as well as the functioning of the BMC and of its different wards, departments, and budgetary issues.

6/ URBZ

Urbz is a collective created in 2008 that works on experimental urban research and action. Their work is both conceptual and practical. Mathias, co-founder of the organization, introduced us to some of the concepts that they coined to frame the understanding of informal spaces. Instead of the term informal, they use homegrown, putting the accent on the internal forces that shape the space. He also introduced us to their tool house concept, which comes from a study of Tokyo, and which refers to the housing space seen as a tool for production.

7/ Sandeep Katke

Politician in the Bahujan Samaj Party, office located in Kala Killa (Dharavi). Founder of the financial NGO Credit Society, a loaning business for micro-credits in Dharavi. This interview was fundamental in understanding the political landscape of Dharavi and the role of political parties as mediators between the government and civil society, as well as the mechanisms and actors behind service-delivery in the different neighborhoods of the slum.

8/ P. K. Das

Planner, architect, activist, unionizer, and film-producer. We talked about labor exploitation in Dharavi, discussing the “dark side” of this place and the way in which questions of ownership of land and of the means of production are sometimes hidden behind an appearance of small individual businesses and enterprises and self-made housing. We also talked about the governmental responsibility for the living and working conditions in Dharavi, and he defended the importance of activism and civil society unions.

9/ UDRI

Urban Design Research Institute. Based in downtown Mumbai. They do advocacy work for policy-making in the form of research studies and projects. They cover a mediation role between NGOs and governmental agencies. Their work is focused on heritage preservation and on small urban design projects. They are currently engaged in a digital inclusion project in Mumbai slums.