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THE POLITICS OF DHARAVI
On the relation between discourse and territorial production

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presented by
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Abstract

This research investigates and assesses the politics, limitations, and failures that have plagued plans to fundamentally restructure the urban fabric of Mumbai’s so-called slums. Politics is understood here as an amalgam of practices connected with structures and strategies that are not only top-down (originating from the state machinery), but also bottom-up (originating from non-governmental organizations and residents). The present study departs from the standardized tactics of trying to “fix” slums and argues in favor of methods for bringing about positive change in slums. The analysis uses one particular case study, Dharavi, seen through a series of everyday events, to demonstrate how media act as a powerful mechanism for spatial transformation.

Dharavi is known as the largest slum in India and one of the most densely populated areas in Asia, with more than 700,000 people living within a space of 1.75 sq.km. Located in the geographical centre of Mumbai, an industrial city of almost 19 million people, it has been in the spotlight of visions for a future slum-free city. Thus plans to change Dharavi’s urban fabric have driven political agendas, especially after 2000. Rethinking Dharavi requires acknowledging its complexity and adopting different lenses for examining the hurdles that any far-reaching plan for change must confront. One of these lenses is focused on the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) as seen through newspapers, which have covered the politics and economics behind the upgrading plans for Dharavi throughout the various stages of the process. The DRP was introduced in 2004 as a collaborative effort uniting public and private entities. The project’s implementation was scheduled for 2013, but as of 2014 not even a single building has been completed. Unpredictable delays in the DRP’s implementation offer an opportunity to explore fundamental questions related to the underlying dynamics of putting such a massive and complex project into place.

Questions about Dharavi’s urban future have not only generated discussions between the government and the local population, but also activated a series of happenings – events on a global scale, taking place between 2004 and 2014. To understand their significance, these happenings in Dharavi come into focus through an analysis of the powerful stereotypes and cultural or commercial images from books, film, and tourism. Such stereotypes have attracted worldwide interest in Dharavi and have also impacted plans for its transformation. What has been termed “eventalization,” or constructing new “knowledges” through the process of investigating events, offers a window onto the powerful role of events and media in major spatial interventions like slum transformation.

The considerable media attention to the DRP and the controversies surrounding it – and also a series of cultural events and representations involving Dharavi – has transformed it into a spectacle with a global audience. This publicity has led to creative and imagined interactions with the settlement that do not easily fit the top-down vs. bottom-up dichotomy. The discourse, representations, and innovative re-imaginings of Dharavi emerging from cultural and academic interventions have already contributed to spatial changes in the settlement; in
fact, this process began even before the announcement of the DRP. Ultimately this study avoids providing yet another “solution” to the “problem” of slums. Instead, it cultivates a specific method of analysis, *eventalized planning*, which is free of the usual top-down planning tools. The concept of eventalized planning accepts that the formation and transformation of space constitute a constructed process that greatly depends upon existing discourses.
Zusammenfassung


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALIS</td>
<td>Affordable Low-Income Shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>APHRC</td>
<td>African Population and Health Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCCI</td>
<td>Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Baharatiya Janata Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>BKC</td>
<td>Bandra Kurla Complex</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMC</td>
<td>Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMR</td>
<td>Bombay Metropolitan Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMRDA</td>
<td>Bombay Metropolitan Region Development Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDP</td>
<td>Bombay Urban Development Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAG</td>
<td>Citizens Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDCO</td>
<td>City and Industrial Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIFF</td>
<td>Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>Committee of Experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Development Control Rules</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>Daily News Analysis</td>
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<td>DPU</td>
<td>Development Planning Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRA</td>
<td>Dharavi Redevelopment Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRP</td>
<td>Dharavi Redevelopment Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>EALS</td>
<td>Environmentally Acceptable Legal Shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGM</td>
<td>Expert Group Meeting</td>
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<td>EoI</td>
<td>Expression of Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSI</td>
<td>Floor Space Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSAPP</td>
<td>Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Government Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoM</td>
<td>Government of Maharashtra</td>
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<td>GUO</td>
<td>Global Urban Observatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>HBS</td>
<td>Harvard Business School</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDFC</td>
<td>Housing Development Finance Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUDCO</td>
<td>Housing and Urban Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Indian Administrative Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Agency of the World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRVIA</td>
<td>Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute for Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIG</td>
<td>Low Income Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>LISP</td>
<td>Land Infrastructure Servicing Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOGFAS</td>
<td>Local Government Finance Administration and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>London School of Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARG</td>
<td>Modern Architectural Research Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>MASHAL</td>
<td>Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCGM</td>
<td>Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MHADA</td>
<td>Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDAS</td>
<td>Maharashtra Infrastructure Development and Support Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDC</td>
<td>Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mahila Milan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMRIDA</td>
<td>Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSRDC</td>
<td>Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTDC</td>
<td>Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTSU</td>
<td>Mumbai Transformation Support Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHSS</td>
<td>Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDF</td>
<td>National Slum Dwellers Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONGC</td>
<td>Oil and Natural Gas Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>Project Affected People</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMGP</td>
<td>Prime Minister Grant Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>Rajiv Awas Yojana</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDI</td>
<td>Slum Dwellers International</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>Slum Improvement Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>Standardized Master Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>Special Planning Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres</td>
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<td>SPPL</td>
<td>Shiv-Sahi Punarvasan Prakalap Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRA</td>
<td>Slum Rehabilitation Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRD</td>
<td>Slum Redevelopment Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>Slum Rehabilitation Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUP</td>
<td>Slum Upgrading Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TATE</td>
<td>Technical Assistance, Training and Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDR</td>
<td>Transferable Development Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>TISS</td>
<td>Tata Institute of Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>University College of London</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMP</td>
<td>Urban Management Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSD</td>
<td>United Nations Statistic Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>YUVA</td>
<td>Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action</td>
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Part A: Introduction
“I like to open up a space of research, try it out, and then if it doesn’t work, try again somewhere else.”

On June 2, 2012, the Australian public television network Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) launched the reality TV Show Bollywood Star and invited Australian citizens to try out for roles in a new Mumbai Bollywood movie. The show unfolded in Australia, and in the last episode the four finalists travelled to Mumbai for the selection of the protagonist by the movie’s director. In an attempt to immerse them in the culture of their future audience, two of the four candidates were sent to experience “everyday Indian life” by living and working for a weekend in the “Dharavi slums of Mumbai.” This cross-cultural adventure was conceived as a way of feeling the real India.

While in June 2012 the Australian public media were painting a picture of Dharavi as a slice of the “real” India, local newspapers were portraying a different Dharavi: a dangerous slum and a menace that would soon be demolished and replaced with high-rise residential and commercial buildings. The government’s Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP), inaugurated in 2004 and still in limbo in 2012, was the subject of an article in the Indian national newspaper The Hindu during the month when the Dharavi episode of Bollywood Star was broadcast in Australia. The article sketches the DRP as an unalloyed failure in which the “State machinery” has failed to “deliver”:

“The state of the flagship project — the Dharavi Redevelopment Project — is no better. Even eight years after sanctioning and spending about Rs.50 crore in planning, not even one of the five sectors earmarked for redevelopment has taken off… The limitations of the State machinery to deliver slum tenements may justify joint ventures with private builders.”

According to this article, the project’s limitations are the lack of transparency in the decision-making process; the lack of specifics concerning project details and policies; and the failure to offer “undiluted monitoring and periodic public consultation.” On a local level, all of these reasons boiled down to politics. Politics is a multivalent term that derives from the Greek word for “city,” polis. In Ancient Greece the polis denoted a city-state, a bordered territory controlled and governed by politicians, who were representatives of democracy. From its inception, politics was conceived as a combination of mechanisms that politicians used to control the city.

In its current usage, politics is generally associated with the actions of government. However, politics in this research includes the polymorphous and creative practices that are concerned not only with government structures, but also with different types of transformation that are globally developed through the use of media. Such practices are recognizable in the way Dharavi is represented in newspapers, film, books, or television shows, such as Bollywood Star.

1 "SBS TV’s Bollywood Star series from June 2,” The Indian Sub Continent Times, May 31, 2012
2 "Mess in the slum capital,” The Hindu, June 11, 2012
3 Ibid.
From Progressive to Popular Politics

To capture the essence of the working idea of politics that will inform this study, it is important to call attention to a specific way the term has been used since the 19th century, particularly by two major intellectuals whose work has influenced this analysis: Michel Foucault, with his concept of progressive politics, and Partha Chatterjee, with his notion of popular politics.

For Foucault, politics is “a domain, a set of objects, a type of organisation of power,” or otherwise a set of mechanisms and conditions through which the citizens can define themselves and their relationship with the space they inhabit. In one of his lectures at the Collège de France, on February 15, 1978, Foucault made the following comment on the “art of politics”:

“The art of politics is like the art of the weaver; it is not concerned with everything overall, as the shepherd is supposed to be concerned with the whole flock. Politics, like the art of the weaver, can only develop on the basis of and with the help of certain auxiliary or preparatory actions. For the weaver to carry out his task, the wool must have been sheared, the yarn must have been twisted, and the carder must have done his work. Similarly, a whole series of auxiliary arts are required to help the politician. Making war, giving good judgement in tribunals, as well as persuading assemblies with the art of rhetoric, are not exactly politics but the conditions of its practice.”

Foucault’s politics is more a gathering of strategies than it is a strategy per se. In his long-term research, Foucault explored the possibilities of these strategies, their conditions of emergence, and the way they function and generate change in practice. By “sketching a theory of scientific discourse” as a gathering of these mechanisms, Foucault investigated the levels that everyday happenings (discourse) accorded to objects of political practice. In questioning the analysis of discourses and politics, Foucault introduces the concept of progressive politics, which he differentiates from other notions of politics. This term, which will be important for this dissertation, presupposes the following five hypotheses:

“1. A progressive politics is one that recognizes the historic conditions and the specific rules of a practice, whereas other politics recognize only ideal necessities, one-way determinations or the free-play of individual initiative.
2. A progressive politics is one which sets out to define a practice’s possibilities of transformation and the play of dependencies between these transformations, whereas other politics put their faith in the uniform abstraction of change or the thaumaturgical presence of genius.
3. A progressive politics does not make man or consciousness or the subject in general into the universal operator of all transformations: it defines the different levels and functions which subjects can occupy in a domain which has its own rules of formation.

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4. A progressive politics does not hold that discourses are the result of mute-processes or the expression of a silent consciousness; but rather that – whether as science, literature, religious utterance or political discourse – they form a practice which is articulated upon the other practices.

5. A progressive politics does not adopt an attitude towards scientific discourse of ‘perpetual demand’ or of ‘sovereign criticism,’ but seeks to understand the manner in which diverse scientific discourses, in their positivity (that is to say, as practices linked to certain conditions, obedient to certain rules, susceptible to certain transformations) are part of a system of correlations with other practices.  

For the purposes of this research, progressive politics is an approach and a method that has been used for gaining an understanding of the mechanisms underlying the proposals for change in Dharavi.

The sociologist Partha Chatterjee discusses politics and its relationship to democracy within an Indian context, defining such a concept in South Asia as the “underbelly of democracy.”

Building on Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, Chatterjee treats politics as a domain that can bring about transformation in a modern world dominated by what he characterizes as “popular politics.” In a departure from Foucault’s progressive politics, Chatterjee defines popular politics as the collection of functions of a modern government system that has “become part of the expected functions of governments everywhere.” Popular politics builds the basis for a popular democracy with high levels of political participation. Like Foucault, Chatterjee argues for a methodological change in democratic politics in Asia, particularly in India.

The research that follows is an effort to establish a journey that begins with examining popular politics involving Dharavi in order to understand and evaluate the impact of progressive politics on the transformation of its territory. Urban planning and design are approached as key tools in the deployment of popular politics, whereas in the case of progressive politics, they are only considered triggers that help activate change. This journey culminates in a methodology for and new strategies of effectively realizing the politics of planning.

Dharavi

At issue in this dissertation is the politics – both popular and progressive – of one particular urban setting: Mumbai’s Dharavi. Why Dharavi? Dharavi has the reputation for being one of Asia’s largest slums and the largest in India, with more than 700,000 people crammed into an area of 1.75 sq.km. It was officially recognized as a slum in 1976, after migrants from all over India had located there because of its strategic location (in the geographical centre of Mumbai, an industrial city of almost 19 million people).

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6 Ibid., 70
7 Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007), 223
9 Ibid., 3
10 Even though there is no agreed-upon definition of a slum, the term is generally used to refer to an informal area of appalling poverty
Heralding the dawn of a new global era in 2000, the State Government of Maharashtra (GoM) and the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) set as a goal the conversion of Mumbai into a world-class city. Steeped in neo-liberal ideology (which informed its policies worldwide), and inspired by Shanghai and Singapore as examples of world-class cities, Mumbai’s government aimed at reducing the city’s slums from 50–60% in 2003 to 10–20% by 2013.11 The first slum to feel the impact of this vision was Dharavi because of its size and location. In 2004, the government launched a planning programme to transform Dharavi into a “beautiful town” by 2013. The programme, the DRP, was the state’s first effort to involve private developers in the construction of public housing. Its aim was the resettlement of Dharavi’s population into high-rise, mixed-use buildings.

Dharavi’s residents saw the application of this predictable formula – a plan to turn their settlement into an elite enclave of high-rise residential complexes – as a threat, which the journalist Kalpana Sharma described in this way:

“It is entirely possible that by the year 2010, Dharavi as we know it today will be just a memory. Instead of the current medley of disorganized low-rise high-density huts and a few scattered high-rises, the entire area could become another typical concrete conclave of high-rises. Given the rate of change in many parts of Mumbai, such transformation should not take anyone by surprise.”12

Numerous urban researchers have taken the fears of the area’s residents seriously and approached Dharavi through the prism of the battles that have arisen around redevelopment plans. Many have criticized the redevelopment plans for the settlement on the basis of evaluations of official documents and interviews with politicians, residents, and key figures. Some of these studies have proceeded with alternative proposals for transforming Dharavi with the participation of residents or local figures.

Discussions between 2004 and 2014 concerning Dharavi’s position in the future of the city have engaged governmental officials and politicians in interactions with the local population and grass-roots organizations. Others have also joined in. Academics studying the enclave – as well as tourists and individuals worldwide – have taken an interest in Dharavi because of its reputation as India’s largest slum and its appearance in popular media (such as films, television shows, books, and art events). The representations involving Dharavi have made it into a spectacle and a popular tourist destination for those interested in the enclave as a glimpse of the real India or a model for sustainable planning. All the different identities attached to Dharavi through academic studies, cultural representations, stereotypes, and the tourism industry have generated alternative sources of interest in the settlement that compete with the Indian government’s interest in the enclave.

Nevertheless, the state has proceeded with the DRP. Since the project’s inauguration in 2004, the state machinery has drawn up various versions of the redevelopment plans, but although they were scheduled for implementation by 2013, today, in 2014, not a single building has

11 Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class city; A summary of recommendations (New Delhi: Galaxy Offset (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2003), 20–23
12 Kalpana Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum (India: Penguin Books, 2000), 190
been completed. There are several reasons behind this unforeseen delay, and this study considers the politics behind those reasons.

The vision of a new Dharavi, enticingly transformed by the ambitious DRP, has served as a focal point in urban studies over the past decade. It has led to a series of studies on Dharavi’s position and role in Mumbai’s future. Academic institutions worldwide have adopted the story of Dharavi as a model for studying slums, redevelopment, and even poverty. What, then, is the purpose of adding yet another study of Dharavi to the existing scholarship? To answer, this thesis replaces the interest in what Dharavi might become with an interest in how to go about effecting change there: this research is directed at the question of method and calls for a reconsideration of the entire approach to improving Dharavi. While existing research has largely seen the possibility of spatial change in Dharavi as a project for the future, this dissertation argues that this process has already been underway for more than a decade.

Politics and Dharavi

The experience of politics in Dharavi is notably polymorphous and involves four main ideas: change, money, resistance, and representation. These four aspects not only compose the mechanisms of politics surrounding Dharavi but also refer to their political consequences. This dissertation is therefore organized around these notions, identifying, examining, and evaluating them in four main chapters.

The first chapter, “Change,” investigates the state machinery’s response to the growth of slums in post-colonial Mumbai. The analysis of five programmes that aimed at demolishing and transforming slums – the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) in 1971, the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) and the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) in 1985, the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) in 1991, and the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) in 1995 – serves to crystallize the government tactics for addressing the “problem” of urban slums. Specifically, change refers here to the structuring of governmental slum policies, the decision-making behind them, and the establishment of “apparatuses of security” for the affected population, such as surveys. Borrowing Foucault’s concept of “governmentality,” this chapter attempts to identify and understand the establishment of different levels of governmentality in the case of slums, specifically in a country where more than 50% of its population lives in slum conditions. For Foucault, “governmentality” is a concept that involves a series of arguments related to the ways that the state governs. Governmentality is on the one hand a concentration of procedures, strategies, institutions, and reflections used to monitor the exercise of “very specific, albeit very complex, power.” This power’s target is the population of a territory; its “knowledge” is the political economy; and its “essential technical instrument” comprises the “apparatuses of security,” such as statistics and surveys. On the other hand, these power mechanisms not only manage a series of “specific governmental apparatuses (appareils),” they also establish new “knowledges.”

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14 Foucault intentionally uses the plural rather than the singular in the word knowledge to show that his research involves not one kind of knowledge but mostly a series of strategies, tactics, and knowledges
From a methodological perspective, the first chapter examines government management by observing slum policies and looking at them through the lens of existing academic studies. The majority of these studies are in the fields of anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and ethnography; very few of them belong to the field of urban research, and if they do, they primarily borrow terms and methods from sociology. In investigating “the slum problem” through the prism of existing academic discourse, this chapter not only exposes some limitations of the applied research approach, but also uncovers the need for a methodological change in the field of urban studies.

The second chapter, “Money,” explores a specific case study involving the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Particularly, it unravels the conundrum of the project’s delay by identifying, studying, and evaluating the ramifications of its model for redevelopment. In stark contrast to the previous chapter, and in an effort to apply a new methodological strategy, the chapter studies the structures of “governmentality” through the lens of the local media (newspapers). In this case, newspapers become the platform in which the different actors who are involved in the DRP – government officials, architects, residents, and developers – meet and simply put forward their principles. The investigation tracks the different agendas and methods that arise, and it assesses their presence in the daily press while also examining the connections between all of these major players and the project’s development. The key to analysing these ties is looking at the hidden mechanisms linking individuals and institutions to the political underbelly of the project. These politics go beyond local involvement and draw in global participants; for that reason the articles selected for the analysis are from Indian English-language newspapers.

The third chapter, “Resistance,” employs Foucault’s argument on governmentality, but instead of positioning it within the state machinery, it explores its roots in new geographies that arise from “below.” Predominantly, this chapter studies the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their methods of resisting the DRP’s implementation. These “resistance methods” include community activities (such as art events and design workshops) to engage residents with ideas for sustainable redevelopment that would link the transformation of physical space with social and economic needs. Although the role of residents is central to “governmentality from below,” these practices of resistance have originated entirely with local NGOs representing the slum’s inhabitants. The applied participatory methods used by these organizations have yielded positive results for the community, but these actions have not always been independent from the government. Since all of the examined NGOs are located in Mumbai, they act in accordance with the city’s specific laws. This chapter not only assesses local NGOs’ contributions towards Dharavi’s spatial transformation, it also addresses the limitations of their attempts to inspire grass-roots involvement in change.

The last chapter, “Representation,” returns to the question of the methodology of change: instead of approaching spatial change in Dharavi by means of a specific redevelopment project, it explores alternative mechanisms that have already contributed to the enclave’s

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gradual transformation since 2004. These mechanisms recognize Dharavi not as a specific physical territory, but rather as a space constructed through the media independent of specific territorial boundaries. This section looks at Dharavi’s entrapment within the representations and stereotypes that have emerged in media and popular culture, partly as a result of particular global events, and argues that these events have not only contributed to the push for change in Dharavi, but have actually activated spatial configurations and progressively helped to shape the settlement’s future position in the city – independently of state and local plans.

**Methodology**

This dissertation is based on an extensive case study of Dharavi. Against the background of much wider research on Dharavi, which emphasizes the importance of fieldwork and interviews as conventional methods for understanding the process of slum transformation, this study advocates the application of a different methodological synthesis that is tailored to the specific object of investigation. By means of an innovative approach that takes into account the participation of not only local interlocutors but also global actors, this study draws on the following: media analysis and discourse analysis; Michel Foucault’s notion of “eventalization”; and concepts of representation elucidated with narration theories. The notion of discourse applied to the different methodologies used in this dissertation is close to Paul du Gay’s use of the term:

“Discourse is a group of statements, which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. Thus the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representations and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play.”

Dharavi has sparked such a process of representation, knowledge production, and institutionalization of social practices by virtue of the considerable media attention it garnered mainly in the last decade. A critical examination of the perspectives that inform the discourse around Dharavi begins with the exploration of the latest governmental attempt to transform the area, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project.

A close investigation of daily’s newspapers reports associated with the project since 2004 has a fundamental function in communicating Dharavi’s various stories. As Karl Kraus demonstrated in his essay “In these Great Times,” newspapers represent a rich source for analysis and can be construed not as the messenger bearing news of an event but rather as the event itself.” In attempting to reach the “truth” behind the “information” presented in a newspaper, Kraus wrote the following:

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17 Karl Kraus, “In these Great Times,” in *In these Great Times: A Karl Kraus Reader*, ed. by Harry Zohn and trans. by Joseph Fabry, Max Knight, Karl F. Ross and Harry Zohn (UK: 1976; reprint. UK: Carcanet Press Limited, 1984), 75–76
“If one reads a newspaper only for information, one does not learn the truth, not even the truth about the paper. The truth is that the newspaper is not a statement of contents but the contents themselves; and more than that, it is an instigator.”

Newspapers nurture a vibrant and complex public sphere, communicating specific aspects of problems and shaping opinions. They can represent an agent in the evolution of a project by disseminating information and thereby constructing a new way of thinking about an ordinary process; they can be a powerful mechanism for reconceiving the development of different narratives. Within this framework, it is important to recognize the contribution of Teun A. van Dijk and Norman Fairclough, who provided critical approaches to understanding the connections between newspapers and the media on one hand and social change on the other. Van Dijk (1988) applies theories and fundamentals of discourse analysis to newspapers and reveals a socially and ideologically controlled set of constructive strategies. Similarly, Fairclough (1995) explores the evolution of events throughout newspaper coverage and correlates their key function to the construction of the social fabric.

As this dissertation argues, studying newspapers can provide a means of exploring the knowledge structure of Foucault’s concept of “governmentality.” In his essay “The Subject and Power” (1982), Foucault studies the modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects and proposes analysing power from a bottom-up to a top-down process by identifying the emergence of power from various sources, such as media. Generally accepted as voices of the public realm, newspapers belong to the larger family of media, which constitute a practice of technological meaning production and propagation that could define different global relations. This study seeks to demonstrate how newspapers contribute to this exercise of power and potentially influence, while also being influenced by, various power relations within the social system.

Since the press has been a vital source of information both provided and withheld, its role has been essential in shaping opinion in relation to the future of the DRP and Dharavi. The information it provides and fails to provide encompasses forms of power and dominance that inform the discourse determining the project’s development. The analysis in this study involves a closer examination of two main segments that construct the DRP’s story as conveyed in the news reports: headlines and the different voices represented in the newspapers’ pages. Headlines summarize news accounts and otherwise serve as the “instigators” for vital aspects of each report. These summaries indicate the major occasions that dominate news coverage and expose the gradually changing interests within the hegemonic media between the years 2004 and 2013. The shifting emphasis on different voices within the newspaper coverage also unmask the changing levels of involvement by various actors in the project’s evolution.

18 Ibid., 77
20 Michel Foucault, “The Subject and the Power,” Critical Inquiry 8, no. 4 (Summer 1982): 777–795
A central challenge in analysing newspapers is selecting which sources to examine. As the topic of Dharavi’s transformation involves many histories that function outside of India, this research looks exclusively at daily Indian newspapers written in English. In contrast to other media sources such as television and radio, which mainly belong to and are controlled by the government, the Indian English-language newspapers are monitored by private owners. These newspapers also lay bare the hegemony of commercial interests and their connection to the development of a purely governmental project. The project’s exposure to a global audience plays a crucial role in shaping different opinions on local and global scales. The following profiles will serve as an introduction to the newspapers reviewed in this research.

**Business Standard**

*Business Standard* is the leading paper in financial issues and topics on markets, companies, and policies. It has been published since 1975 and covers not only Indian but also international news.

**Daily News Analysis (DNA)**

*DNA* is a daily English-language newspaper, first published in Mumbai in 2005. Its target group is mainly young people under 30 years old, and it is Mumbai’s fastest-growing newspaper in any language. For these reasons it provides useful perspectives on trends and future-focused discussions.

**Financial Times**

Similarly to *The Economic Times*, this newspaper discusses mainly financial, economic, and political news and aims to attract mainly investors and developers.

**Hindustan Times**

*Hindustan Times* was first published in 1924, in Mumbai. According to the Indian Readership Study, in 2012 *Hindustan Times* had a readership of 3.8 million from different ages.

**Mumbai Mirror**

*Mumbai Mirror* is an English-language newspaper in Mumbai with a circulation of almost 600,000 copies daily. Published by the Times Group, it was founded in 2005. Its audience is primarily urban, educated and young Indian people.

**The Economic Times**

*The Economic Times* is a daily Indian English-language newspaper with a readership status of over 800,000 annually. It has been published since 1961 and mostly attracts businesspeople and economists.

**The Indian Express**

*The Indian Express* is a daily Indian English-language newspaper published by Express Publications. It has a major presence in four states in India: Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra

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23 Elisabeth C. Hanson, “Framing the world news: The Times of India in changing times,” *Political Communication* 12, no. 4, (1995): 374

24 Ibid.
Pradesh, Kerala and Orissa. Its audience is predominantly politically conservative and traditional English-educated Indians.25

**The Times of India**

*The Times of India* is the most widely read English-language newspaper in India, with a readership of 7.6 million in 2012.26 Founded in 1838 as *The Bombay Times* and *Journal of Commerce in Mumbai*, it is now published in New Delhi by the Times Group. The online venture of *The Times of India* attracts almost 50,000 visitors daily, of whom more than 70% reside outside of India.27 The print press in India has been described as one of the most influential in the developing world, according to the journalism scholars Chen and Chaudhary (1991) and Merrill and Fischer (1980).28 From the beginning, this newspaper aimed to attract English-educated Indian businesspeople, academics, and governmental representatives.29

The turn of the century has been marked by an enormous migration of newspaper content onto the Internet. Online publishing has opened the potential for publishers to reach global markets more easily. These changes have strengthened emergent forms of newspapers and weakened the print form of news distribution. The decline of print journalism and its gradual replacement by online journalism has been growing since the 1990s. In 1990 there were only six online newspapers, while in 1993 the number increased to 20.30 By 1996, an immense expansion led to 1300 online newspapers, and in 2000 the number of online newspapers reached 5400. In 1999, Asia was the second largest source of online newspapers and was led by India, with 223 online newspapers.31 All the Indian newspapers mentioned in the previous paragraphs have not only the use of the English language but also their online presence in common. According to the scholar Barrie Gunter, whose key topic of research is the emergence of electronic newspapers, there are several differences between the online and print versions of a paper, and they can be summarized as follows:

- Financial requirements on producers and customers
- The amount of content
- The format and the design
- The access and customization
- The immediacy
- The hyperlinking
- The interactivity
- The cost.32

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27 Hsiang Iris Chyi and George Sylvie, "The Medium is Global, the Content is Not: The Role of Geography in Online Newspaper Markets," *Journal of Media Economics* 14, no. 4, (2001): 244
29 Elisabeth C. Hanson, "Framing the world news: *The Times of India* in changing times," *374*
31 Ibid., 30
32 Ibid., 65–66
This analysis will focus on the online versions of the selected newspapers. Arjun Appadurai, in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), argues that “the role of mass media, especially in its electronic forms creates new sorts of disjuncture between spatial and virtual neighborhoods.” Due to its dominance in the mass media for more than a decade, Dharavi was a victim of one of these “virtual neighborhoods,” which are “no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, and elections” but by access to print- and “image-centred capitalism.” Appadurai believes that this disjuncture can be examined and recognized within five dimensions of global cultural flows, which he terms ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. News emerges as parts of historically constituted regimes of knowledge in mediascapes and slowly unmasks the involvement and importance of different actors with each year of the project.

While on one level this dissertation tracks the DRP’s process of realization as reported in newspapers between 2004 and 2013, it also chronicles a parallel series of events and identities revolving around Dharavi that unfolded at the same time. These events were selected on the basis of two criteria: how popular or well-known they were, and whether they occurred within the relevant time frame (2004–2013). All of them have gradually contributed to different modes of representing Dharavi’s territory at a crucial moment for its development and follow not only a logic of connection, but also a logic of order. They are related to each other through several smaller elements, and in some cases the popularity of one of these events has an impact on the development of another. The assessed events occurred in several formats – film, documentary, tourism, an academic case study – and attracted the interest of the public worldwide.

The approach to analysing events in this dissertation relates back to Foucault’s “Questions of Method” and accentuates his methodological concept of “eventalization.” Foucault has used this term to underline the importance of investigating events as a process of constructing new “knowledges” and establishing “different regimes of ‘jurisdiction’ and ‘veridiction.'” For him, exploring the emergence of events can lead to the production of “truth” that is not placed in utterances, but in domains, “in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and pertinent.” For Foucault “eventalization” has a double meaning. Specifically, he writes,

“What do I mean by this term? First of all, a breach of self-evidence. It means making visible a singularity at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness which imposes itself uniformly on all… A breach of self-evidence, of those self-evidences on which our knowledges, acquiescenses and practices rest: this is the first theorectico-political function of ‘eventalization’.

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34 Ibid., 195
35 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 79
38 Ibid., 79
Secondly, eventalization means rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on which at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary. In this sense one is indeed effecting a sort of multiplication or pluralization of causes.\textsuperscript{39}

While Foucault used the term “eventalization” to challenge the standard methodologies of writing and reasearching history, in this study the concept of “eventalization” serves as a basis for challenging the traditional methods of urban research. In keeping with his argument, eventalization here is understood as a tactic of investigating the associations of everyday life and popular events in Dharavi with the prospect of change.

In an effort to analyse and evaluate the importance of these events, this research also borrows from the structuralist model (chart 1) that is dominant in narration theories and acknowledges these events as constructions of happenings and individual actions from stories. In this model the narrative is organized around both the story (based upon events) and the discourse surrounding it. Stuart Hall’s theoretical work on the practice primarily known as “stereotyping” (1997) and Seymour Chatman’s contribution to narration theories (1978) will help to clarify how events are produced, and to identify the individual structures that form Dharavi’s different stories.

Applying this approach in combination with methods of discourse analysis, this research aims to construct a holistic understanding of Dharavi’s multiple stories in the last decade, and to identify their intersection with different stages of the DRP. The primary emphasis in evaluating the selected events will be on three different levels of examination: i) the level of production, ii) the level of function, and iii) the level of narration. The level of production concentrates on events’ initial association with Dharavi. Specifically, the study will focus on both internal happenings initiated by local inhabitants and external factors introduced by actors not directly linked to Dharavi. The level of function determines the spatial outcome they have on Dharavi’s urban fabric. And the level of narration focuses on the way they were represented and branded to different audiences worldwide.

“As a way of lightening the weight of causality, ‘eventalization’ thus works by constructing around the singular event analyzed as process a ‘polygon’ or rather

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 79
a ‘polyhedron’ of intelligibility, the number of whose faces is not given in 
advance and can never properly be taken as finite.”

By offering an unusual approach based on a combination of theoretical perspectives and 
approaches from diverse fields to examine a specific case of planning in urban studies, this 
research represents a significant intellectual contribution to the field of urban research. Rather 
than provide yet another “original solution” to the problem of slums, it reflects upon 
knowledge production and its permutations. In the process it maps out possible approaches 
for future research on informal settlements and also produces a set of methodological tools to 
be considered and applied in urban design and planning.

State of the Research

At the beginning of the 21st century, Dharavi’s territory was converted into a ground of 
conflicts and contestations. These new political and economic dynamics became wired into 
the territory itself, and Dharavi as a slum has evoked considerable attention. Within 
academia, Dharavi is frequently studied in the fields of sociology, anthropology, and urban 
planning and is mostly trapped under the label of “Asia’s largest slum.” While the majority of 
scholarly work usually dwells on the protocols by which Dharavi is conceptualized as an 
informal area that can be described under several labels and identities, it seldom addresses the 
underlying practices through which these identities have come to be and the impact they have 
on Dharavi’s territory. This dissertation addresses the gap in academic research, which fails to 
take into account the actual spatial outcomes of the processes that have had an impact on 
Dharavi’s urban fabric.

Thus, the research engages with and contributes to interdisciplinary literatures in the 
following six categories: literature on Dharavi, ideas for reconfigurations of urban informal 
settlements in India, participatory planning and social policy, slum discourse, processes of 
urbanization in housing policies for Mumbai, and media discourse. All categories involve an 
extensive examination of the existing sources and reflect an effort to address the gap in 
academic approaches to Dharavi.

Literature on Dharavi

The theoretical body of this section is based upon a review of the literature and background 
materials on Dharavi that include academic work, fiction and non-fiction sources. Dharavi 
has proved fertile ground for the imagination, and fiction and films are frequently as accurate 
as scholarly work on the subject. Because Dharavi has loomed large in the mass media for 
more than a decade, this study also explores the filmography that is largely concerned with 
Dharavi’s portrayal. In this process of gathering knowledge about the examined case study, 
the journalist Kalpana Sharma, in her work Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest 
Slum (2000), guides her reader through several individual stories from inside Dharavi and 
illustrates the history and the growth of the settlement.41 With her anthropocentric focus on

40 Ibid., 77
Dharavi, she successfully addresses different topics, such as the social connections of Dharavi’s inhabitants with their illegal houses, the morphology of the buildings and the streets, and the topic of redevelopment. While Sharma wrote the book in 2000, she foresees a potential future Dharavi of 2010, in which high-rise buildings and commercial complexes have replaced the slum. Sharma describes and criticizes the upgrading process not only using key figures, but also using the words of Dharavi residents during the 1980s. Similarly, the anthropological study on Dharavi’s different districts by Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky captures the essential productivity and spirit of entrepreneurialism in Dharavi past and present. Through an ethnographic approach that is based on the testimonies of Dharavi’s residents, her research helps to explain how Dharavi emerged not only as a slum, but also as a settlement; moreover, it looks analytically at Dharavi’s migration patterns and social structure.

*Dharavi: The City Within*, published in 2013, is a collection of essays written by local journalists in Mumbai and edited by Joseph Campana. The significance of this publication lies in the fact that, as Campana writes in the introduction, it is “an argument against the Dharavi Redevelopment Project.” This statement finds concrete expression in the individual stories presented in the book through the kaleidoscopic view of different journalists. In stark contrast to Sharma’s “Dharavi,” in which she provides her personal observations on the settlement, Campana’s compilation uses the views and interpretations of different players to structure the vision of Dharavi presented in the volume, and its recent publication date allows it to address views and issues pertaining to the settlement’s future that have arisen only recently. The non-fictional narratives presented in *Poor Little Rich Slum* (2011) have also broadened knowledge about Dharavi’s economic fabric by offering a series of “events” surrounding the settlement’s new industries and companies that have appeared in the area since 2004.

Responding to growing concerns about the top-down nature of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, several scholars have examined the topic within various fields. In the field of sociology, Liza Weinstein’s 2010 dissertation has offered the “sociology of a slum” and used this perspective to scrutinize the case of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Her research uses interviews with key actors and ethnographic observations to assess the changing politics of the slum redevelopment in Dharavi up to the year 2010. Departing from her dissertation, the present study tracks the politics of change in Dharavi from 2004 up until 2013 and looks at the many layers of the DRP as it has unfolded, taking into account the roles of architects, planners, politics, economics, and media discourse in shaping the DRP’s fate. This study also makes the case for understanding Dharavi as a complex site where many layers of meaning, shaped by politics and discourse, converge around social and spatial arrangements as well as conceptions of and plans for Dharavi.

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44 Ibid., 2
46 Liza Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009)
An interest in Dharavi’s future from a spatial and architectural perspective has been on the agenda of several universities throughout the world. For example, the Master of Science in Urban Design programme at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP) at Columbia University challenged students to examine the flaws of the DRP and to suggest alternative design scenarios for redeveloping Dharavi. The outcome of this programme was the publication *Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment* (2009), which presents design proposals for the settlement’s future. This publication is a set of materials and techniques for architectural planning that incorporates informal living and working structures. Even though this programme’s importance for the current study on Dharavi’s politics is without question, its influence is mainly limited to the design aspect and not so much to the overall analysis of Dharavi and visions for its future. Another academic intervention along a vein similar to that of the Columbia programme is the academic publication *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* (2009), edited by Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz. This work concentrates important details for the scale of neighbourhood in Dharavi and is one of the first scholarly works that has investigated how architecture and art could significantly contribute to social and political arrangements. While on one hand it increases the knowledge about Dharavi’s urban fabric and offers a chronicle of the settlement, on the other hand it evaluates the participation of the area’s inhabitants in shaping their urban future. This research bonds together the theoretical and practical issues surrounding Dharavi’s urban permutations, and by including essays from prominent urban activists, such as Arjun Appadurai and Sheela Patel, it also works as a manifesto against the realization of the DRP. Although it focuses on the future of Dharavi and criticizes the DRP, it does not offer a holistic, analytic view of the project: it represents the voices resisting the DRP, but not the “architects” behind its formation.

Other academic work, such as the case study in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program at Harvard Business School (HBS), *Dharavi: Developing Asia’s largest slum* (2009), tracks the stages of the DRP through a different prism. While other studies on Dharavi mainly involve voices of resistance to the project, this case study engages with developers and their perspectives on the future of the settlement. This approach offers productive ground for examining the project within a very different context from what the previous publications offer.

The report *Redhara*vi is probably one of the most important sources for this study as it is a product of people who are directly involved in the opposition to the DRP. Particularly, it presents the outcomes of a survey in a particular area of Dharavi (Dhorvada) conducted by the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) and the Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute for Architecture (KR VIA), which presented to the government of Maharashtra an alternative strategy for redeveloping the DRP in 2010. The report captures the essence of key Dharavi activists’ resistance to the DRP and provides analytical information.

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48 Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz, eds., *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009)
50 REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KR VIA (Mumbai, 2010)
about Dharavi’s unique characteristics. While it highlights the opposition to the project, the report is limited to local discourse concerning Dharavi’s future.

Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky writes in *Dharavi: From Mega-Slum to Urban Paradigm*,

“Dharavi promotes an incredible imaginative world in which the cliché of the underworld competes with the universe of solidarity among the poor, both fiction and movies are often more correct than academic references.”

The exploration of Dharavi has been meaningfully expanded through the following artifacts presented in popular media: the documentaries *The Real Slumdogs*, by the National Geographic Channel (2009), and *Dharavi: Slum for Sale*, directed by Lutz Konermann (2010); the TV special *Slumming it!* by Kevin McCloud (2010); the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, directed by Danny Boyle (2008); the novel Q&A, written by Vikas Swarup (2005); and the *National Geographic* magazine article “Dharavi: Mumbai’s Shadow City,” by Mark Jacobson (2010). Focusing on these artifacts uncovers important aspects of the discourse around Dharavi since the DRP’s 2004 inauguration: all of these cultural objects have contributed to different stereotypes associated with Dharavi in the last decade. The investigation of how specific identities were attached to Dharavi has a central role in this study.

Ideas for Reconfigurations of Urban Informal Settlements in India

This section engages with the literature on planning processes and programmes (mainly governmental ones) to address the topic of top-down change in Mumbai’s slums. In an effort to make sense of slum upgrading strategies, it explores the various approaches that have been applied: clearance, improvement, and ultimately the redevelopment approach. The literature examined here raises important questions about the role of the state and architect in the planning process. While many researchers have attempted to evaluate slum upgrading in Mumbai through different stages of time, Pachampet Sundaram’s work *Bombay: Can it House its Millions?* (1989) has a vital role in offering strong evidence of how the government has responded to the appearance of slums, especially since 1971. Sundaram, who served as a state specialist on urban issues for more than 22 years, enables us to observe issues and problems in urban government and discusses policy directions for the city in depth. Specifically, he addresses the shelter problem in Mumbai and the political discussions that flourished around this issue in the 1970s and the 1980s. His contribution is critical for understanding the strategies for transforming slums in Mumbai before the redevelopment procedure was officially adopted.

The sociologist S.S. Jha, in her work *Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums* (1986), examines the slum improvement strategy and strongly criticizes the planning process.

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51 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, *Dharavi: From Mega-Slum to Urban Paradigm*, 25
in Mumbai during the 1970s.\(^4\) Jha’s research reviews the city’s clearance programmes in terms of planning and execution and assesses the role and participation of slum dwellers in these programmes. Her approach is crucial for understanding the various actors and institutions involved in this practice of upgrading. Her study was an early one but provides some important, specific guidelines that are still relevant to today’s planning for the city’s future.

Other work in urban studies is important to mention here: The collection *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, edited by Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (1995), includes essays from prominent scholars on Bombay’s evolution, such as the piece by social geographer Swapna Banerjee-Guha, who examines the urban development practice in Mumbai. Banerjee-Guha places her emphasis on the city’s Development Plan of 1964 and the concept of “The Twin City,” an alternative plan produced by the leading Indian architects Charles Correa, Pravina Mehta, and Shirish Patel.\(^5\) The urban scholar Pratima Panwalkar, in her essay “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme,” assesses the slum upgrading strategy in the city during the 1980s and addresses the World Bank’s initial involvement in this process in India.\(^6\) Here it is important to highlight that the “Implementation Completion Report” by the World Bank in 1997 outlines the major factors behind the difficulties in their project’s implementation.\(^7\) It is also important to identify the contribution of the architect P.K. Das and his “Manifesto of a Housing Activist,” with his harsh critique of the NGOs and activists who played a role in slum upgrading in Mumbai and whose actions and intentions he questioned.\(^8\)

As this study is motivated by a desire to scrutinize how the redevelopment strategy in Mumbai emerged, Vinit Mukhija’s *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai* (2003) provides an insightful understanding of the urban and spatial impact related to this issue.\(^9\) Mukhija concentrates on a single redevelopment project in Dharavi, the Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society, and through his extensive field research analyses not only the threats of a top-down redevelopment project, but also the risks of a bottom-up alternative proposal and private involvement in it. Thus, his key argument is that “enabling slum redevelopment through market mechanisms requires a different type of State involvement, not necessarily less State involvement.”\(^10\) His study provides crucial input because it sheds light on the role of the state in Dharavi’s redevelopment prior to 2004.

More recent research on slum redevelopment in Mumbai includes Shahana Chattaraj’s 2012 Princeton dissertation, “Shanghai Dreams: Urban Restructuring in Globalizing Mumbai.” Chattaraj uses Shanghai as a model for looking at governmental projections for transforming Mumbai into a global city by 2013.\(^11\) Her comparative research between these two megacities

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\(^{35}\) *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, eds. Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1996); an analytical presentation of Correa’s concept, including the architect’s input, can be found in *Bombay to Mumbai: Changing Perspectives* ed. Pauline Rohatgi, Pheroza Godrej and Rahul Mehrotra (Mumbai: [J.J. Bhabha for MARG Publications, 1997)]  
\(^{37}\) The World Bank, *Implementation Completion Report, India, Bombay Urban Development Project (Credit 1544-IN)*, June 10, 1977, India  
\(^{40}\) *Ibid.*, 13  
Attempts to put forward starting points for examining the dominant unplanned processes of redevelopment after 2000 in Asia. In a similar vein, Darshini Mahadevia and Harini Narayanan in their essay “Slumbay to Shanghai: Envisioning Renewal or Take Over?” discuss the current government proposal to transform Mumbai into a “world-class city” in relation to previous master plans and the failures that were attached to them.\(^{62}\)

While the main attention of this part of the dissertation is focused on governmental processes and policies for transforming slums in Mumbai, Gita Dewan Verma’s work *Slumming India* (2002) chronicles the unfolding story of urban events that take place daily in one slum in India over one year. Following the news and daily events of the year 2000–2001, Verma shows “how utterly unequal, undemocratic and unconstitutional ‘rights’ actually characterize contemporary urban development” in an Indian slum.\(^{63}\) The primary goal of her study is to collect detailed evidence to provide an objective and balanced assessment of how projections for slum transformation occur inside the slum. In stark contrast to previous studies that mainly use academic sources to develop their arguments, Verma only applies empirical sources, developed through her fieldwork of 2000–2001.

Solomon Benjamin, in his essay “Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy beyond Policy and Programs” (2008), introduces the concept of *developmentalism* in connection with urban informality.\(^{64}\) According to him, the politics of *developmentalism* contains policies, projects, and planning programmes that in the case of India mainly involve the participation of developers, the Indian metro elite, retailers of branded products, and India’s offices of international donors. All these actors work together to make cities more competitive. His concept of *developmentalism* is deployed here through a series of events related to the growth of the DRP, and thus his academic contribution to this thesis has also been significant.

**Participatory Planning and Social Policy**

Participatory planning has been a vital practice in urban planning procedures throughout India. As Vandana Desai argues, “participation assumes an activity in which the community takes part, with the involvement of at least one other party, usually a government agency or a NGO.”\(^ {65}\) In order to be efficient, the process of engaging stakeholders requires the active contribution and involvement of people (participants) in the decision-making process at several levels of society. A review of existing literature and other evidence on participatory planning involves the role of non-governmental organizations, the relations between state and citizens, and forms of political participation and resistance to the state.

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Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, in *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life* (2007), elaborate upon Dharavi’s engagement with NGOs that grapple with the problem of shelter. In their ethnographic work Chatterji and Mehta show how after 1992 the role of particular NGOs in Dharavi changed dramatically from that of government critic to government partner. Moreover, in a reference to Foucault’s work, they address practices of governmentality instituted by the state and social actors, such as ration cards and surveys, and they discuss specific everyday events that frame the work of rehabilitation in Dharavi. As they write, they attempt to show “how everyday life is fashioned in the face of rehabilitation and violence.”

In his exploration of various levels of participation in low-income settlements, John Turner’s work *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments* (1976) advocates that people’s activities should be seen as the solution to rather than the problem of urbanization. Turner’s housing principles place the inhabitant at the centre of the improvement process; the settlement residents themselves, he argues, should be the sole participants in housing development. On a similar track, James Midgley investigates different forms of participation and the ways the state can respond to them: first, through an *anti-participatory* posture, in which the government ignores any possibility of collaboration with the residents of the settlement; second, through a *participatory approach*, in which the government encourages any kind of association with NGOs and local communities; and finally, through a *manipulative tactic*, in which the state has underlying motives for working with neighbourhoods and may manipulate such collaboration for its own ends.

Within the context of India, the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai discusses his concept of *Deep Democracy*, in which he celebrates the potential of grass-roots movements and local NGOs to participate in planning agendas. For Appadurai, NGOs have an important role to play, but their relations with the state and local residents are complex. The framework of their agendas can sometimes complicate and even threaten the politics of partnership. His work “Grassroots Globalization” sets its focus on a Mumbai Alliance, a partnership of three NGOs with different histories: the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), the Mahila Milan (MM), and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF). The Mumbai Alliance has played a key role in resisting the DRP. The activists Jockim Arputham (from NSDF) and Sundar Burra and Sheela Patel (from SPARC) have written a series of journal papers that were published in the urban journal *Environment and Urbanization* and are significant contributions to the applied literature used in the current study. In all their

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68 James Midgley, “Community participation, the state and social policy,” in *Community Participation, Social Development and the State*, 147
essays, these urban activists frame the discussions surrounding the DRP and gradually crystallize the dilemmas and anxieties related to the redevelopment strategy in Dharavi. These papers shape what the geographer Paul Routledge terms “terrains of resistance,” in which conflicts and contestations among various objectives and agendas remain sheltered under the weight of non-governmental activities. As a concept, the “terrain of resistance” contains a critical component that is closely related to the political economy of territorial encounters as applied within the academic framework of this dissertation. The interest in SPARC’s relation with the state and the NGOs’ behaviour concerning internal strategies is at the centre of Ramya Ramanath’s dissertation, “From Conflict to collaboration: NGOs and their negotiations for local control of slum and squatter housing in Mumbai, India” (2005). Ramanath explores the evolution of three NGOs in Mumbai – the Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti (NHSS), the Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), and the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) – and investigates their interaction mainly with the government for slum upgrading projects.

Through their collaborative platform URBZ, urban activists Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava have introduced and further explored the concept of the tool-house that dominates Dharavi’s urban fabric. Both Echanove and Srivastava have contributed to the practice of resistance in Dharavi’s politics by inaugurating creative activities that are an indispensable part of this study. Furthermore, the human geographer Vandana Desai in her work Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay (1995) investigates the levels of participation in slum upgrading strategies, focusing on two particular projects in the 1980s: the Slum Upgrading Scheme and the Prime Minister Grant Project. Both were inaugurated in 1985 and project a potential future for Dharavi.

Urbanizing Citizenship: Contested Spaces in Indian Cities (2012) is a collection of essays by prominent academics working on India. This work focuses on conflicts of several Indian cities: Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, and Varanasi. While it concentrates on citizen participation within several settings, this publication is important for identifying the different academic approaches to the role of NGOs compared with NGO interventions in other Indian cities.

Slum Discourse

While academia predominantly regards Dharavi as a slum, this dissertation proceeds by examining the discourse surrounding this particular term in an Indian context. A.R. Desai and S. Devadas’s work Slums and Urbanization: The Indian Slum (1991) provides insights into the definition and characteristics of slums in Mumbai. This collection of writings is fundamental for addressing the problems and perspectives that slum dwellers encountered.

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72 Paul Routledge, Terrains of Resistance: Nonviolent Social Movements and the Contestation of Place in India (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 35–38
73 Ibid., xvii
74 Ramya Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India” (PhD diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2005)
75 Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay
after Indian Independence in 1947. *Slums and Urbanization* also offers important information on different types of slums in Mumbai and explores the roots of their existence, their emergence and their major characteristics.

Ananya Roy studies the structures of Indian slums and in particular slum entrepreneurialism, or as she calls it, “bottom billion capitalism.” In her work *Poverty Capital* (2010), Roy analytically investigates the actors that manage the poverty agenda and seeks to understand who produces knowledge about poverty and slums today. Her essay “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism” is mainly concerned with the formation of concepts such as “the slum.” Within a post-colonial theory, Roy purposefully uses the word “itinerary” to describe the slums of the global south. As she writes,

“I do not use the term “itinerary” casually. Today, the Third World slum is an itinerary, a “touristic transit.””

By applying the concept of “subaltern urbanism,” Roy challenges the current formation of the term “slum” and questions its future within the context of a neo-liberal India. She uses the term “Neoliberal Populism” in reference to strategies that celebrate the redevelopment model for the future of slums, and through the prism of “Neoliberal Populism” she depicts flows and strategies that people in the urbanized world apply to “do cities.” Similarly, Gavin Shatkin’s essay “Planning Privatopolis” (2011) is concerned with the vision of urban places and strategies that people in the urbanized world apply to “do cities.” Davis’s numbers concerning the proliferation of slums are also verified in a series of documents, generated and released by international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank at the beginning of the 21st century. Three key documents – *The Cities Alliance for Cities Without Slums: Action Plan for moving Slums* (1999); *The Slums of the World* (2003), a UN working paper; and *The Challenge of Slums* (2003), the UN-HABITAT’s

84 Ibid.
first report to introduce global estimations of slums – are important sources for addressing the growth and the rise of slums worldwide and understanding how the term “slum” is applied within today’s context.\textsuperscript{88} Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also elaborates on the projected vision of cities without slums and offers a view on the international organizations’ future plans.\textsuperscript{89}

Robert Neuwirth’s \textit{Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World} (2006), portrays a western personal perspective on four cities that have in common the existence of slums: Mumbai, Istanbul, Rio de Janeiro, and Nairobi.\textsuperscript{90} Through his personal experience, but also through the prism of a reporter’s point of view, Neuwirth creates a dictionary of slum terminology that has informed some of the distinctions in this dissertation.

\textbf{Processes of Urbanization in Housing Policies for Mumbai}

Gathering knowledge associated with Dharavi’s spatial transformations should occur parallel to a process of examining the city’s urbanization strategies, and here urban geography proves useful. Urban geography is the field of human geography that examines the origins of patterns and practices that occur among and within urban places. According to R.J. Johnston,

\begin{quote}
“The roles of Urban Geography are descriptive, in the sense that they seek to depict accurately the spatial expressions of urban conditions, explanatory, in that they need to investigate cause and effect relationships, and evaluative in that they need both to recognize the inequities arising from the spatial allocation of scarce resources and to identify those alternative states which might more closely satisfy the criteria of efficiency and/or social justice.”\textsuperscript{91}
\end{quote}

Urban geography developed mainly after the 1960s, when its practitioners placed a new emphasis on the organization of cities as socio-economic and political systems, where various forms of power are exercised. Berry and Horton’s \textit{Geographic Perspectives on Urban Systems} and Carter’s \textit{The Study of Urban Geography} were important contributions to the field’s development in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{92} These studies shifted the interest in their field from a pure description of urban observations to a more critical analysis of these observations. The conceptual basis of urban geography is structured around two different approaches: spatial and subjective. The subjective approach reflects the influence of philosophical trends such as structuralism and emphasizes the subjective meaning of space and place. For the purposes of this research, the subjective approach is more useful in that it provides ways of offering critiques while framing the problem of urbanization (whereas the spatial approach focuses more on following a precise methodology).

Gyan Prakash’s kaleidoscopic survey of Mumbai in \textit{Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City} (2010) chronicles the history of the city in its different stages through the lens of

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\textsuperscript{91} R.J. Johnston, \textit{City and Society: An Outline for Urban Geography} (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), 13
\end{flushleft}
architects, planners, journalists, artists, and political activists.93 Prakash’s research focuses on the city and its culture as represented through the media, and it depicts the relationship between the city and its citizens with an emphasis on socio-economic inequalities. Similarly, Suketu Mehta in Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found (2004) explores the city of Mumbai through his “personal geography.”94 Mehta left Mumbai in 1977 and returned to the city in 1998. In his non-fictional narrative, Mehta presents his observations and contrasts the city of the 1970s with the city of the 1990s. His personal views on Mumbai are clearly triggered by a socio-political analysis of Mumbai’s history and its residents. The individual stories he heard and his discussions with local people lend the city an essence that differs from the descriptions usually found in history books. Thus, Mehta’s work is a significant source for understanding how Mumbai’s gradual spatial transformation has influenced its inhabitants.

Gillian Tindall’s City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay (1992) portrays a picture of Mumbai in the past and discusses the emergence of the city within a pre- and post-colonial context.95 Tindall’s images are so vivid that readers can almost smell and feel the city. Even though her work has been essential in establishing a connection between the past and present of the city, it does not touch on issues of informality. The edited work Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition (2003), by Sujata Patel and Jim Masselos, assembles a series of essays by prominent scholars and urban activists in Mumbai.96 It concentrates on the city’s spatial reconfigurations and explores the forces that led to these transformations. This publication is vital as it presents the transition of the city through the lens of chief architects and planners in Mumbai and leads to a better understanding of how slums proliferated in the city after 1947.

This study of Dharavi and its future possibilities would be incomplete without attention to the government housing policies and reports that tackled some of Dharavi’s most pressing problems, particularly its spatial dilemmas. Thus, the first report of the Chief Minister’s Task Force, Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City by 2013, gives recommendations for transforming and organizing the city under specific regulations and proposals.97 In particular, it proposes the eradication of slums by 2013, including Dharavi. The official report is based on Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City; A Summary of Recommendations, a report produced by the elite NGO Bombay First and the private consulting firm McKinsey.98 Vision Mumbai encapsulates the global trend towards the slum-free city and investigates the possibility of realizing the vision it outlines for Mumbai.

Since Dharavi’s redevelopment is an indispensable part of this study, the literature consulted involves an exhaustive review of the proposals for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project based upon government reports. Thus, Bid Documents and the Draft Planning Proposals for Dharavi Notified Area under the DRP, produced by the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and the state agency Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA), must be

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97 Government of Maharashtra, Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City, First Report of the Chief Minister’s Task Force (Mumbai, 2004)
taken into account in any evaluation of the DRP. Access to these documents for the purposes of this research resulted from a series of meetings with key policy makers during fieldwork in Mumbai in September 2013.

**Media Discourse**

The theoretical underpinnings for studying the different stages of the DRP primarily focus on newspaper discourse. Additionally, examining Dharavi’s different representations through specific events requires consideration of the media’s power in shaping society. Constructing what Dharavi might become is an important feature of the media’s productive work, and analysing daily newspapers and their coverage of Dharavi is only one aspect of that process of construction. Another important aspect is the way a variety of media posits certain identities for Dharavi.

More recent studies on the discourse of media expose the impact of the press in structuring the public sphere and the systems of a society. Therefore, it is crucial to study the work of the media scholars Teun A. van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gaye Tuchman, and Ross Allan Eaman, who have principally focused on the role of newspapers in shaping opinions. Van Dijk looks at newspaper discussions as a type of discourse that uncovers the complex relationships between texts and context. The type of news that is mainly evaluated in the present dissertation is the news item or report in the paper, in which information is given about one specific event. As Van Dijk mentioned in his work *News as Discourse* (1988), “newspaper information also has a crucial role in societies where TV is still a rare commodity, and few discourse studies have been conducted explicitly of newspaper news.” For Tuchman, news constructs the social sphere by shaping perceptions about specific events. Fairclough and Eaman have been critical of how media discourse alters aspects of our society. Fairclough’s work on press discourse that represents various mechanisms of how newspapers contribute in influencing social relations is essential. More specifically, in his work *Media Discourse* (1995) he states,

> “I see mass media as operating within a social system which makes it important not to isolate particular aspects such as these two tendencies from the way the media are shaped by, and in turn contribute to shaping, the system overall.”

Eaman critiques the media’s hegemonic power and writes, “news is consciously created to serve the interest of the ruling class.” His argument strongly resonates with the press’s coverage of the DRP between 2004 and 2013: in their articles on the DRP newspapers have shaped opinions in ways that have clearly served certain political agendas and helped to shape the process and progress of change.

Furthermore, Beatriz Colomina in her work *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (1996) discusses the role of the archive and characterizes it as a space that is very

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much affected by the publicity of the private.\textsuperscript{103} She argues that the archive is an essential part of history, but she also identifies its importance for uncovering new ways of looking at traces of the past. Additionally, she identifies where architecture evolves as a space of “moving images” and of “media and publicity.” Her contribution is significant not only for questioning the importance of the newspaper archive as a collection of elements that help us construct the narrative of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project’s delay (and not just the history of the place), but also for accepting that modernization in architecture has engaged with practices of representation from mass media culture.

Stuart Hall delves into the roles of representation and the production of meaning in the process of interpretation in his 	extit{Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices} (1997).\textsuperscript{104} In his essay “The Work of Representation,” Hall defines representation as the production of meaning through languages of different kinds.\textsuperscript{105} Moreover, Christine Gledhill’s “Genre and Gender: The Case of Soap Opera,” in 	extit{Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices}, points to the important role of fiction in the production of cultural representations.\textsuperscript{106} Ulka Anjaria and Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, in their essay “\textit{Slumdog Millionaire} and Epistemologies of the City,” have applied these ideas in investigating how the fictional film \textit{Slumdog Millionaire} has shaped opinions by representing Dharavi as a space of extreme poverty in a globalized Mumbai.\textsuperscript{107} Sharmila Mukherjee, in “\textit{Slumdog and the Emerging Centrality of India},” explores some of the levels of power in the film and argues that the movie has contributed to India’s “discursive formation” and helped pave India’s road to becoming “a subject rather than…an object of history.”\textsuperscript{108}

Edward Said’s \textit{Orientalism} (1979) and his research on how knowledge of the Orient was generated in Europe – not through real events, but rather from constructed stereotypical archetypes that Western societies used to represent parts of Eastern culture – guides this study of representation as it shapes the social fabric and changing urban perspectives.\textsuperscript{109} Jean Baudrillard’s concept of “simulacra” adds an important theoretical dimension to any consideration of representation in a postmodern context: the blurry borders that separate the \textit{real} and the \textit{unreal}. Baudrillard’s argument that we live in an era governed by simulacra plays a vital role in understanding the power of representations in everyday life.\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{103}Beatriz Colomina, \textit{Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media} (USA: MIT Press, 1993), 9
\item \textsuperscript{110}Jean Baudrillard, \textit{Selected Writings}, 2nd ed. Mark Poster (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988)
\end{itemize}
Introducing Dharavi

“Dharavi is an elephant of an issue with blind men scrambling all over it. Each sees a small part of the picture and considers it to be the ‘whole’.”

What is Dharavi? Even though Kalpana Sharma has dedicated a whole chapter in her book Rediscovering Dharavi to addressing this question, there is no agreed-upon answer. The question goes to the heart of this dissertation, which reflects the connection between Dharavi’s several identities and their representations to various audiences. While some of its residents portray Dharavi as “the golden bird of Mumbai,” and as “a palace,” for government representatives such as Nirmal Deshmukh, the CEO and Officer on Special Duty for the DRP/SRA, Dharavi is nothing more than a slum. The architect Neera Adarkar and the urban activist Keya Kunte from SPARC agree with Deshmukh’s assessment, but both find that Dharavi is atypical. Specifically, Kunte has called it “a self efficient slum,” while Adarkar has noted that Dharavi’s size and location make it unique. While many have puzzled over an apt definition for Dharavi, this thesis borrows the words of the urban activist Matias Echanove, who called it an “urban enigma of the 21st century.” In this spirit, this study stops short of attempting to define Dharavi and aims primarily at describing and understanding its emergence and existence.

Dharavi looms large as a locus for investigating the future of urban informality in India and has been imagined several times as a prominent site into which developers can pour their ideas and aspirations. It is conveniently situated in between three major railway stations, Matunga and Mahim on the Western Railway line, and Sion on the Central Railway line (figure 1). Moreover, it is located at the intersection of Sion and Mahim Link Roads, which serve the east-west and north-south connections in the city, and its distance to Mumbai’s international airport is approximately 20 minutes. Two main arteries cut through the area: the 60 Feet Road and the 90 Feet Road. One of Dharavi’s closest neighbours is the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai’s latest financial and commercial district, which was established in the 1970s to serve as a magnet for business activities in Central Mumbai. BKC attracts high-income Mumbai residents on a daily basis and is considered a model for future developments in the city (figure 3).

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111 Bansal and Gandhi, Poor Little Rich Slum, 6
112 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slam, 1–32
113 Laxmi Kamble, interview by author, Mumbai, September 18, 2013
114 Guddu (Laxmi Kamble’s son), interview by author, Mumbai, September 18, 2013
115 Nirmal Deshmukh, interview by author, Mumbai, September 19, 2013
116 Neera Adarkar, interview by author, Mumbai, September 21, 2013; Keya Kunte, interview by author, Mumbai, September 18, 2013
117 Matias Echanove, interview by author, Mumbai, September 20, 2013
118 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slam, xxvi
Figure 1: Dharavi’s strategic location in between the Mahim, Sion, and Matunga Railway stations. Source: Pierre-Louis Gerlier, Martha Kolokotroni, Nita Yuvaboon, and Tahaer Zoyab, “Equity through Infrastructure,” in Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment, eds. Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, and Kate Orff (New York: GSAPP Studio 2009, Columbia University, 2009), 46
Figure 2: Map of Mumbai in 2013, with its major infrastructure and four representative fabrics/densities that address the richness of the city’s urban textiles
Dharavi has developed without following any planning, and as the architect and urban designer Rahul Mehrotra has described it as the enclave’s spatial structures epitomize the “kinetic city,” the city in motion and “in constant flux,” constructed using short-term materials. Dharavi’s residents perceive the area as divided into six major regions, which include 85 distinct communities, known as nagars. Separating the different nagars are nallahs, which are small roads or walls. The six areas that form Dharavi’s urban fabric – Kala Killa, Dhorvada, Kumbharwada, Transit Camp, Matunga Labour Camp, and Koliwada (figure 4) – host not only residential and commercial activities, but also institutional buildings such as schools and police offices.

Figure 3: Top: Representation of Dharavi’s density; Bottom: Bandra Kurla Complex density diagram

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120 *Nagar* is a term borrowed from the Sanskrit language that literally means “city.” It is used widely in the case of Dharavi to describe the geographical site where inhabitants feel they belong and is a metonym for “neighbourhood.” In her ethnographic work *Dharavi: From Mega-Slam to Urban Paradigm*, the social anthropologist Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky writes that the profession or the nationality of the first occupants and leaders originally defined the name of each nagar in the settlement. Sources: Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky, *Dharavi: From Mega-Slam to Urban Paradigm* (India and UK: Routledge, 2013), 74; Geeta Mehta and Richard Plunz, “Dharavi: A New Urban Paradigm,” in *Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment*, ed. Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, and Kate Orff (New York: GSAPP Studio 2009, Columbia University, 2009), 7.

121 Sharma, *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slam*, xx

122 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, *Dharavi: From Mega-Slam to Urban Paradigm*, 77
Kala Killa, the Rehwa Fort, was built in 1737 by the English feudal governor Gerald Aungier at the edge of Dharavi on the shore of the Mithi River as part of the Bombay Castle (figure 5). In the 1940s Kala Killa was established for the first time as a community by migrants, who arrived in Mumbai from the Maharashtra State, and since then it has been developed as a commercial zone characterized by primarily leather and tanning activities (figure 6). Although a large portion of its population works in tanneries, the label of the “tanner’s district” usually pertains to Dhorvada, which is located at the centre of Dharavi. Dhorvada is one of the oldest and busiest areas in Dharavi and the location of its leather trade before India’s Independence in 1947.

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123 REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KRVIA (Mumbai, 2010), 28
The third district that shapes Dharavi is Kumbharwada, which is mainly inhabited by potters. In 1877 a draught in Saurashtra (in the western part of India) activated a large migration flow.
of the pottery community, which resettled in Mumbai.\textsuperscript{124} The potters, known as \textit{Kumbhars}, had to relocate twice within the city’s borders before they set up their workshops in Dharavi. Initially, the first Kumbhars used to work eight months in Dharavi and then spend the four months of the summer visiting their families in their villages in Saurashtra.\textsuperscript{125} At the beginning of the 1930s, in Dharavi, they established their community, Kumbharwada, at the intersection of Dharavi’s two major roads – 90 Feet Road and 60 Feet Road, which occupied almost 12.5 acres of land. The first Kumbhars were trained to produce 50 ceramic pots per day for storing drinking water.\textsuperscript{126} In 1932 a fire destroyed Kumbharwada, but the settlement was rebuilt over the same year. As the journalist Aditya Kundalkar writes in her essay “Potters, Sailors and Financiers,” following the fire, the British Government, which ruled Mumbai at that time, constructed almost 385 new \textit{pakka} (permanent) houses for the potters. Additional groups of migrants from Uttar Pradesh and other areas of Maharashtra also relocated to Kumbharwada.\textsuperscript{127} Today, Kumbharwada houses 1500 families who are mainly connected to pottery-making (figure 7).\textsuperscript{128}

Today, every house in Kumbharwada is narrow and long and has a two-fold purpose: it operates as both house and workshop. Additionally, it has two entrances, one leading to the production space and the other to the market space, where pots are displayed and sold (figure 8).\textsuperscript{129} All houses in the pottery colony are permanent structures (\textit{pakka houses}), usually covered by cement.

\textsuperscript{124} Sharma, xxi
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 63
\textsuperscript{127} Sharma, 112
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 61–62
\textsuperscript{129} REDHARAVI, 22
Koliwada is the oldest district that constitutes Dharavi’s mosaic and is also one of the oldest settlements in Mumbai. It is usually branded as the fishing area, and its inhabitants have a connection to fishing and the seafood industry. Accommodation in Koliwada is not only small bungalows and brick houses (figures 9–10), but also old fishing boats. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the Kolis (Koliwada inhabitants) known as Seths developed a liquor business in the area that flourished in Mumbai during the Prohibition era. The journalist Saumya Roy in her essay “Home by the Sea” writes that the Seths during the 1970s were able

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130 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 77
to brew “as many as 150 casks of liquor a night.” In the 1990s, the liquor business disappeared after police entered the area and blocked the alcohol trade. Roy notes that ever since then it has been hard to find alcohol in Dharavi. 

![Figure 9: Residential area in Koliwada, 2009](image)

![Figure 10: A house in Koliwada, 2009](image)

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132 Ibid., 58
The Matunga Labour Camp and the Transit Camp were both founded as government projects. Matunga Labour Camp was established in the 1940s to serve as an accommodation space for construction workers and municipal employees. Its roads are made out of cement and lined with permanent houses, and today Matunga Labour Camp is the most well-preserved area in Dharavi. The Transit Camp was built to accommodate temporarily dwellers affected by the first redevelopment projects in Dharavi after India’s Independence in 1947.

All 85 nagars that compose Dharavi’s six major areas are divided into several building categories: co-operative housing societies, Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) buildings, private lands, and chawls, which are smaller communities organized on the basis of different languages and ethnic groups (figure 11). Chawls emerged as a phenomenon in Mumbai in 1873, when the city became a major colonial mercantile city and the cotton textile mills drove the economy. The word chawl is Marathi for a “room or house fronted by a corridor.” In Mumbai, the chawl was a rental tenement constructed for male migrants who had left their families behind and come to the city to work in the mill factories. A typical chawl was a structure of two or three floors composed of several rooms with a common corridor, the “balcony.” Each room had a small space for storing water, the mori, and housed close to ten people within a space of no more than six sq.mt. All rooms shared a common toilet on the ground floor. The building’s façade was usually constituted of brick and sometimes of concrete, and the doors were made out of wood. Within a very short period after the mill workers began moving into the chawls, they began bringing their families from the village and living with them under the same roof. As a result the chawls of Mumbai became overcrowded. In Dharavi, the chawl typology is very common even today. Each chawl has its own organizational rules and its own leader and secretaries. The latter are elected through democratic procedures and represent the inhabitants to public institutions and NGOs. These representatives also serve as agents who discuss community issues directly with Municipal bodies (the Nagar Sevak) and who act as “servants of the district.”

With all 85 nagars that build the urban fabric of Dharavi today, the area has developed into what Kalpana Sharma calls “an amazing mosaic of villages and townships from all over India,” located at the centre of the city. Its prime location has placed Dharavi in the centre of plans for the future of Mumbai; however, although Dharavi is one of Mumbai’s oldest settlements, it has not always been central to the city. In order to gain a better understanding of Dharavi’s unique role in Mumbai, it is critical to explore its emergence and its parallel relationship to the city’s historical context before and after India’s Independence in 1947. Following the city’s transformations, Dharavi has proved to be fluid and adaptive to these urban changes.

133 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 76–77
134 REDHARAVI, 65
135 Prakash, Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City, 64
136 Ibid.
137 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 241
138 Sharma, xxii
Before Independence

“Urban change is indisputable, but the narratives of change from Bombay to Mumbai and the rise and fall of the city are deeply flawed. They conceive change as the transformation of one historical stage to another, from the bounded unity of the city of industrial capitalism to the “generic city” of globalization, from modernity to postmodernity, from cosmopolitanism to communalism. However flawed, you cannot miss the widespread presence of this narrative.”

Dharavi’s name arises from Dharevarca Bhag, which literally means “creek shore” and is strongly associated with Mumbai’s historical emergence. Previous studies and maps by S.M. Edwardes, who served as one of Mumbai’s first police commissioners, indicate Dharavi’s rise as a fishing village in the archipelago of seven islands that constituted the first visualization of the city. In C.E. 150 Mumbai was known as Heptanesia, a name initially given by Ptolemy to describe this archipelago of the islands: Mumbadevi, Colaba, Old Woman’s Island, Mahim, Parell, Worli, and Mazgaon (figure 12). Patel and Masselos in their work about Mumbai have indicated that the oldest names for the city at that moment were Kakamuchee and

139 Prakash, 22–23
140 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 52
141 S.M. Edwardes wrote a series of ethnographic sketches that were originally printed in The Times of India under the name “Etoness” and later were published as a collection of essays in a book Heptanesia in Greek is translated as “seven islands.” Suketu Mehta, Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 14; Kelly Shannon and Janina Gosseye, eds., Reclaiming (The Urbanism of) Mumbai (Amsterdam: Sun Academia, 2009), 9
Galajunkja. Gyan Prakash, in *Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City*, echoed the words of Garcia da Orta in describing the earliest tribes, which were strongly connected with fishing and farming and formed the population of the islands. Specifically, he writes that the first inhabitants were the Kunbis and the Malis, who worked in agriculture; the Prabhus, who were merchants; the Bhandaris, who were labourers; the Banias; the Parsis; the Deres (or Fazares); the Naitias; and the Kolis, who were living by fishing in different Koliwadas. Gillian Tindall, in her work *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*, states that “If Bombay can be said to have any aboriginal or indigenous population, it is the Kolis.” At the edge of the seven islands, and in particular at the edge of Parell island, was located one of Mumbai’s six greatest Koliwadas, known as Dharavee.

**Figure 12:** Heptanesia 1509: The seven islands of Mumbai

The history of Mumbai sets as its starting point the year 1509, when the Portuguese landed and acquired the archipelago of seven islands. Their newly acquired possession was given the name of “*a ilha da boa vida,*” or otherwise “the island of a good life.” As Tindall notes, at the time the Portuguese arrived in Mumbai, the islands were under the property of the Moslem ruler Sultan Muhamed Shah Begada, who was persuaded to give Mumbai to Francisco de Almeida, the first Portuguese viceroy, and to the King of Portugal in 1534. The Portuguese

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144 Prakash, 33
146 The Parell island was divided in four sections: Matunga, Parell, Dharavi and Sion and it was described by different historians under all four names
147 Prakash, 31; Suketu Mehta specified in *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* that several other names were also given through the years to the city, before it acquired the current name of “Mumbai.” Previous names were Manbai, Mambai, Mambe, Mumbadevi, and Bambai. Source: Mehta, *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*, 14
148 Tindall, *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*, 30
dominance in Mumbai did not last for long and ended at the beginning of the 16th century, when the British formed the East India Company for the purpose of pursuing trade with India. The company was promoted as “The Company of Merchant Adventurers to the East Indies.”

With the arranged marriage of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza to the English Charles II in 1661, all seven islands, which had a population of 10,000 people, were transferred under the British authority. However, the areas of Dharavi, Sion, Worli, Parell, Salsette, Wadala, Bassein, and Mazgaon remained under Portuguese control until 1666. After the Portuguese departed, the feudal governor Gerald Aungier of the East India Company offered religious freedom to the islands’ inhabitants, and within a decade their population increased to 60,000 people. This resulted in a shortage of space to accommodate the new inhabitants, and in 1760 the East India Company began using land “stolen from the sea” for consolidating landmasses. William Hornby, the British Governor of the city from 1771 to 1784, oversaw the first large-scale reclamations and the city’s expansions, which began at the middle of the 18th century. In this spirit a building committee was established in 1787 for managing the reclamation activities and for organizing and controlling the city’s construction works. In 1803 a fire at the Fort Area, south of Mumbai, was the trigger for the first urban and infrastructure developments in the southern part of the city. As a result, the Fort Area upgraded into an important harbour, and in 1813 the East India Company flourished in trading activities, notably in the opium trade.

In 1826, the city’s population shot up to 162,000 and the need for extra space for the new residents led to the consolidation of the seven islands into one large mass, the Island City. Even though the Portuguese had previously introduced the idea of reclaiming land to connect the islands into one land-mass, the process began only in 1836, when the British founded the Ephistone Land Company, the city’s first reclamation company. Anna Erlandson, in her essay “A History of Dharavi” (in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities), describes the procedure: “The hilltops of the islands were blown with dynamite and used as basic filling along with waste from industries and households.” Moreover, Kalpana Sharma in the introduction of her work Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum (2000), portrays the reclamation as follows:

“From the beginning of the eighteenth century, by accident and design, some of the swamps and the salt pan lands separating the islands that formed Bombay were

149 Ibid., 33
151 S.M. Edwardes, The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island 1 (Bombay: Time Press, 1909)
152 Mehta, Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found, 15; Erlandson, “A History of Dharavi,” 45
153 Prakash, 27
154 Reclaiming (The Urbanism of Mumbai), 9
156 Gyan Prakash writes about Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the “king of opium”: “Few remember that the man whose name graces the famous art school Sir J.J. School of Art and the popular Sir J.J. Hospital earned his exalted place through drug trafficking.” Source: Prakash, 37
157 Ibid., 39
158 Ibid., 44; Mehrotra, “Making an Urban Landscape,” 258
159 Erlandson, “A History of Dharavi,” 45
reclaimed. A dam at Sion, which was adjacent to Dharavi, also hastened the process of joining separate islands into one long, tapered land mass. Thus began the transformation of the island city of Bombay. In the process, the creek dried up, Dharavi’s fisherfolk were deprived of their traditional source of sustenance, and the newly emerged land from the marshes provided space for the new communities to move in.  

In 1838, the islands were joined into one large area and a new harbour, the “Hornby Vellard,” was established in the southern part of the city, in Colaba. Once again, in 1845 a new upsurge in the population from 162,000 people to 566,000 resulted in higher land prices in the city, and Colaba became a prosperous centre for trading activities. In the 1850s Mumbai expanded and developed as a major colonial industrial city with a new railway and road system, in which the cotton textile mills had created the basis for an economic boom. Kelly Shannon, in her essay “Reclaiming Mumbai,” wrote that at the middle of the 19th century Mumbai was baptized as the “Manchester of the East.” It was then when the Parsi Kavasji Nanabhai Davar established the first spinning mill in Mumbai in 1854, and the city gradually became the main textile supplier from America to Europe. In 1875 the number of mills grew to 28. They employed more than 13,000 workers, and by the end of the century Mumbai had 70 mills that employed 76,000 workers. In 1861 an unexpected influx of migrants into Mumbai, combined with the end of the American Civil War, triggered increased demand for additional land not only for housing, but also for economic activities. In 1864 the city’s population reached 817,000, and the first mass-scale rental housing, known as wadis, appeared in Mumbai.

In 1869 the opening of the Suez Canal allowed for water transportation between Asia and Europe, and Mumbai slowly transformed from an agrarian economy into a trading and industrial port city. As Suketu Mehta wrote, “Bombay became the gateway to India.” In 1872 further reclamations added more than 3 million sq.km. to the city, and the 1870s witnessed new urban developments, such as seaside promenades and railway lines. In 1873, when the city’s economy was driven by the expansion of the cotton trade, a new housing type, the chawl, emerged to accommodate migrant workers. The first chawls were built in Worli and were two-to-three-story buildings with separate rooms.

Because of its available land and remoteness from the island city’s centre, Dharavi offered opportunities for Parsi merchants to set up their leather-making operations, which produced a considerable amount of pollution. Thus, in 1887, the first leather-tannery was established in Dharavi and attracted migrants from Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The tannery was mostly managed by Europeans and employed 1000 people. The main commodities produced for export to Europe and Africa were saddles, shoes, boots, belts, and bags. At the end of the

160 Sharma, xxi  
161 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, 20; Reclaiming (The Urbanism of) Mumbai, 9,15  
162 Reclaiming (The Urbanism of) Mumbai, 15  
163 Prakash, 40  
164 Ibid., 41  
165 Sundaram, 20  
166 Mehta, Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found, 15  
167 Prakash, 44; Edwards, The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island 1; Reclaiming (The Urbanism of) Mumbai, 15  
168 Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, Bombay: The Cities Within (Bombay: India Book House Pvt Ltd, 1995), 153  
169 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 53
19th century a slaughterhouse was also built in Bandra. The location was chosen for sanitary reasons: at that time it existed beyond the city’s borders. The process of tanning contaminated the Mithi River, and the Kolis, the fishing community that inhabited Dharavi, were not able to continue their fishing activities in the area. However, with the arrival of workers from Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, embroidery and food-production businesses developed and took the place of commercial fishing in Dharavi.

A new migrant influx arrived in Mumbai, not only from Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, but also from Maharashtra and Gujarat. The majority of these migrants had settled in southern parts of the city, but as the city grew, many of them had to relocate to Sion and Dharavi. With another population rise in the last decade of the 19th century, a new era of systematic urban planning was inaugurated. In 1898, the Bombay Improvement Trust was established to improve services and accommodation features in the city. Between 1899 and 1900, the Bombay Improvement Trust had worked on the urban development and improvement of Bombay’s northern parts – Dadar, Matunga, Sion, and Wadala – and constructed neighbourhoods to fulfill the daily needs of middle-class citizens. At the beginning of the 20th century the island city had grown tremendously and the textile industry employed more than 73,000 people. Commerce and trade turned Mumbai into what Gyan Prakash calls a "bustling metropolis." Suketu Mehta writes about these transformations:

“Bombay is all about transaction – dhandha. It was founded as a trading city, built at the entrance to the rest of the world, and everybody was welcome as long as they wanted to trade.”

The city began expanding into the suburbs, and slowly Dharavi went from being at the edge of the city to having a central location. In 1908 Mumbai was a symbol for mercantile power in India, and thus fresh commercial developments in the southern part of the city were introduced under the Ballard Estate Scheme. The apartment complex, a new mass housing type, was initiated in the city, and large-scale private projects conquered the area of Colaba. In 1919 the Bombay Improvement Trust-appointed governor, George Lloyd, inaugurated a new housing scheme. This scheme proposed the conversion of Mahim Cove’s southern part into a residential and commercial complex for middle- and upper-class residents and the relocation of the tanneries from central areas to the northeast part of the city. Even though the plan was well prepared by the Municipal Corporation, the lack of funds led to its rejection.

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170 Erlandson, “A History of Dharavi,” 48; REDHARAVI, 15
171 Sharma, xxii
172 Mehrotra, “Making an Urban Landscape,” 260
173 Even though some researchers argue that the Bombay Improvement Trust contributed significantly to the evolution of the city’s planning, others are sceptical about the outcome of these schemes. One example from the latter group is the sociologist Liza Weinstein, who argues in her dissertation on the sociology of Dharavi that the Bombay Improvement Trust demolished more housing that it actually built. Source: Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai,” 60
174 Sundaram, 20
175 Prakash, 85
176 Mehta, 15
177 Weinstein, 61; Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 251
178 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 251
Figure 13: Mumbai's spatial transformation. On the left: the seven islands of Mumbai 1509, and on the right: Greater Mumbai, 2013
1. The Seven Islands of Bombay, 1509

2. The Island of Bombay, 1812-1816


4. Geological Map of Bombay, 1865

5. The Island of Bombay, 1897

6. The Island of Bombay, 1909

7. Bombay Guide Map, 1933


MUMBAI’S SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS
In an attempt to change the urban fabric of the city, in 1929 the government acquired a loan for improvement works, and within a decade the Marine Drive at the Fort area was reconstructed. In 1940 the city’s population increased to 1.8 million people, and the “industrial elite of Bombay and the indigenous class” encouraged an expansion of Mumbai in the suburbs.179 Between 1941 and 1951 the city’s population grew by another 76%.180

In 1944 tanning was the most profitable activity in Dharavi, which hosted almost 16,500 residents. Some of the most important tanneries were located at the centre of Dharavi, including the Western India Tanneries, with 450 employees; the Modern Tanneries; the Universal Tanneries; and the Goldfish Leather Work.181 Tanning was not only the most profitable activity for the area’s economy, it was also the most hazardous to employees’ health. The continuous contact with chemicals adversely affected workers and caused high rates of mortality among them.182 In 1944, a report by the Rotary Club of Bombay stated the results of a Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) research project, which presented the unhealthy conditions in Dharavi, and in 1948 labour protection laws were officially adopted. As a result, many tanneries stopped operating at that time.183

In March 1946, following a series of discussions between the British Government and the Congress and Muslim League in India, the British offered India its independence. The country would be composed of a three-tier federation.184 The first meeting of the Post-War Development Committee on June 22 appointed three boards to discuss the housing and infrastructure problems of the city. Rahul Mehrotra states,

“In fact Bombay’s history was a result of such a process [laissez-faire growth] where many impulsive and incremental gestures contributed to its creation rather than a large-scale superimposition of a pre-conceived order. This had some shortcomings, as the lack of a preconceived “masterplan” resulted in a situation

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180 Sharma
181 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 56
182 Ibid., 57
183 Ibid., 56
184 Prakash
where the city was always ill-prepared for either disaster, major influx, or even simple growth.\footnote{Mehrotra, “Making an Urban Landscape,” 258}

Discussions about the city’s regeneration accelerated after Mumbai gained its independence. The chief engineer of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Nilkanth Modak, was chosen as the principal for the Committee, and his duties included the management and preparation of a holistic master plan for Mumbai.\footnote{Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai,” 64} In January 1947, Modak co-operated with the architect Albert Mayer to outline the project, which placed at its centre Dharavi’s redevelopment.\footnote{Ibid., 65} The plan suggested rehousing 7,600 families in Dharavi by relocating the tanneries, and rebuilding upper-class housing at Kala Killa. Furthermore, Modak and Mayer addressed the need to incorporate several activities for different users in the area. The final plan conceptualized Dharavi’s centre with a municipal library, surrounded by shopping areas, parks, a festival hall, a hospital, a playground, and a sports field.\footnote{Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 252; Weinstein, 66} Dharavi was envisioned as a Mumbai suburb served by an underground railway station at Matunga (figure 15). Even though the Municipal Corporation had officially accepted the project, the lack of funding and the 1948 Rent Act, which froze rents, became major hurdles for its realization, and the project was never implemented.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure15.png}
\caption{Modak and Mayer’s projection for Dharavi’s urban transformation in 1946. Source: KRVIA Studio 2006/2007}
\end{figure}
After Independence

“Where once the city had hummed to the rhythm of its cotton mills and docks, now there was the cacophony of the postindustrial megalopolis...Armies of poor migrants, slum dwellers, hawkers, and petty entrepreneurs occupied the city’s streets, pavements, and open spaces. Mumbai appeared under siege imperiled by spatial mutations and occupation by the uncivil masses, a wasteland of broken modernist dreams. Currently it enjoys the dubious distinction of being home to Asia’s largest slum, Dharavi.”

Dharavi was recognized as a slum in 1976, and since then it has had the reputation for being one of “Asia’s largest slums.” Gyan Prakash writes that rather than see slums as “alien to modern Bombay,” it makes sense to think of them as the city’s “intimate other,” which hold up “a mirror to elite spaces, reflecting the grotesque other side of colonial and capitalist spatialization.” A slum is a phenomenon accompanying the urban development in neoliberal nations and is accepted as a living reality, especially in India. Reduced to its basic characteristics, Dharavi today is an area of substandard housing that does not meet building codes and in some parts has inadequate amenities, such as electricity and water supply. In Dharavi water is only provided for a few hours in the morning, and people have created their own illegal ways to access it at non-scheduled times (figure 16). Moreover, it is important to note that almost 1440 inhabitants share only one public toilet in Dharavi.

Figure 16: On the left: Mixing of fresh water supply and sewage creates a risk of contamination. At the Centre: Temporary and illegal connections that run three hours daily in Dharavi. On the right: lack of a drainage system that causes floods on Dharavi’s roads. Source: Sketches by Martha Kolokotroni for the group project “Equity through Infrastructure,” while studying at the Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design Dharavi Studio at GSAPP, Columbia University in 2009.

Following a survey in Mumbai, slum dwellers had to acquire a photo identity card and pay the government a license fee before being officially recognized as Mumbai residents. As official residents they gained voting rights and were eligible to participate in slum rehabilitation or redevelopment projects. Since 1978 efforts have been undertaken to redevelop slums all around Mumbai, with Dharavi at the centre of this process. Even though Dharavi is usually used as the template for studying slums, in this section it will serve as an economic success story of an informal area that contributes US $500–600 million annually to Mumbai’s economy from its local and sometimes illegal services and unregistered industries.

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189 Prakash, 11–12
190 Since July 2011, Dharavi has ceased to be Asia’s largest slum. Source: Clara Lewis, “Dharavi in Mumbai is no longer Asia’s largest slum,” The Times of India, July 6, 2011
191 Prakash, 66
192 Bansal and Gandhi, 6
193 Conard, Mehta, and Orff, eds., Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment
Dharavi, as the social anthropologist Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky characterizes it, is a “pool of resources” that has developed without any assistance from the state, and without following any preconceived master plan.\textsuperscript{194} Today 80\% of its population live and work within Dharavi’s borders.\textsuperscript{195} Research conducted in 1986 by the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) estimated that 1044 manufacturing units are operating in the settlement.\textsuperscript{196} Saglio-Yatzimirsky points out that low-paid, flexible, skilled workers mainly compose the work force that structures these manufacturing units.\textsuperscript{197} Since many of them are unregistered, they pay no direct taxes to the state. However, the informal economic activities in Dharavi are profitable for the state because they are mainly “dirty” jobs that are otherwise hard to fill, such as recycling, or jobs related to exports to international markets. The focus on exports has increased significantly since the 1980s, when India celebrated its entrance into the international market.\textsuperscript{198}

Studies of Dharavi’s history and growth have uncovered the importance of the tanning industry in the settlement’s flourishing economy prior to India’s Independence in 1947. When the state adopted its 1948 labour protection laws, most of the tanneries, with the exception of the Western India Tanneries, failed to register their exact number of workers, many of whom stopped working or continued working illegally.\textsuperscript{199} In 1971, a new slaughterhouse was built in Deonar, and of the 39 tanneries that operated in Dharavi, only 27 received alternative space in the new area.\textsuperscript{200} Tanning activities in Dharavi were slowly replaced with prosperous leather businesses, which mainly produced garments for domestic distribution. As noted in a 2010 report about Dharavi by the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) and the Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute for Architecture (KRVIA), 30 leather manufacturers and almost 5000 employees work in the leather industry in Dharavi.\textsuperscript{201} Dharavi, like the other major leather product manufacturing areas in Mumbai (Byculla, Nagpada, and Kurla East), helps to keep the city’s boutiques economically successful.\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{194} Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 3  
\textsuperscript{195} Erlandson, “A History of Dharavi,” 49  
\textsuperscript{196} REDHARAVI, 14  
\textsuperscript{197} Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 159  
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 58  
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 163  
\textsuperscript{201} REDHARAVI, 15  
\textsuperscript{202} Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 161
Dharavi residents’ ingenuity and spirit of entrepreneurship have not been limited to the leather industry. Today more than 500 people in Dharavi work in textile and tailoring businesses that produce 500 to 600 shirts per day (figure 18–19). Additionally, many inhabitants work in embroidery services. In Dharavi, gold and jewellery can be found in the “jewellery area” located in Sakinabai Chawl, at the Main Road, which operates at specific times during the week. This area used to be a Gujarati monopoly, but recently employers from Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have also set up operations here.

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203 REDHARAVI, 15
204 Shalman (Dharavi’s resident), interview by author, Mumbai, September 17, 2013; REDHARAVI, 26
The recycling industry in Dharavi employs over 10,000 people and is considered one of the largest in India. According to a 1986 survey by the National Slum Dwellers Federation, its annual turnover is estimated at Rs 60 lakh (US $150,000). The people involved in the recycling of plastic, both men and women, earn only Rs 45 daily (US $0.73). In Dharavi’s 13th Compound everything is recycled, from plastic bottles to oil and medical waste from hospitals, and new products are made and exported all over the world. China is one of the largest consumers of recycled plastic. One of the major commodities that is frequently produced from recycled materials for the Dharavi market (not for export) is the kite, which is made for local festivals and sold in the market. Material that cannot be recycled is cleaned and sold second hand at the open market. The 13th Compound, the recycling hub, is located at the edge of the settlement on Mahim Creek, where the Mahim-Sion Link Road intersects with the 60-Feet Road, and the land belongs to the Bombay Municipal Corporation (figure 20). Mumbai generates approximately 10,000 tons of waste daily, and 80% of the dry waste ends up in Dharavi, where it is dumped in large bags and containers in Mahim Creek. At

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206 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum, 107
207 Ibid., 109
208 REDHARAVI, 24
209 Ibid., 26
210 Sharma, 107,111
211 Bansal and Gandhi, Poor Little Rich Slum, 110; and Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz, eds., Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, 152
that point, raddiwalas (waste collectors) and pheriwalas (waste dealers) also deposit the daily collections in sheds. Those who own a vehicle collect the waste and finally give it to kaantawalas, who distribute it to various industries in Mumbai. The workers who oversee the process are the seths.\footnote{Joshi, “The Women of Wasteland,” 166} The Tera Compound (otherwise called the 13th Compound) handles over 722 recycling industries, which generate over 3000 bags of recycled plastic daily. Out of all 722 industries, only 350 are officially registered, and most of the employers are self-employed and between 21 and 50 years of age.\footnote{Sharma, 111; REDHARAVI, 15}

Figure 20: Dharavi’s recycling industry, the 13th Compound, 2013

The food preparation industry (figure 21–22) in Dharavi has a long history dating back to 1952, when the first bakery was established in the area. Today more than 25 bakeries are operating within the settlement’s borders, and the daily production varies from sweet snacks to sliced bread and buns.\footnote{REDHARAVI, 20} Food distribution through lunchboxes for workers is another business that has long been practiced in Dharavi. The dabbawalas collect dabbas (food packages) on a daily basis from several places in Dharavi and distribute them to projected destinations around the city.\footnote{Stina Ekman, “Food: The Dabba Makers – An Entirely Informal Industry,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 174}
Figure 21: Food Preparation in Dharavi: Making Papads, 2009

Figure 22: Food Preparation in Dharavi: The Papad Drying Process, 2009
The economic mosaic of Dharavi is also filled with several small-scale manufacturing and production units such as restaurants, cobbler and grocery shops, and the following other businesses (figure 23):

- Printing industries: Bollywood posters and large roadside advertisements in Mumbai are often produced by graphic designers, editors, printers and paper suppliers that work in the 50 printing industries in Dharavi. A large number of these industries operate within residents’ homes.216
- Soap factories: There are four soap factories operating in Dharavi.217
- The manufacture of surgical threads from goats’ intestines is a business that has flourished in Dharavi.218

According to the 1986 survey by the National Slum Dwellers Federation, and the report by the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), and the Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute for Architecture (KRVIA) in 2010, the number and types of manufacturing units existing in Dharavi are as follows:

- 244 small-scale manufacturers
- 43 large industries
- 152 businesses related to food preparation
- 50 printing presses
- 111 restaurants
- 722 recycling units
- 85 units entirely for exports
- 25 bakeries.219

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217 Sharma, 117
218 REDHARAVI, 26
219 Ibid., 14
Figure 23: Dharavi Main Road, commercial area in 2013

Pottery production also has a long history in Dharavi. It began when the first potters, the *Kumbhars* moved to Mumbai from Saurashtra in 1877. As soon as they relocated to Dharavi they set up their workshops within their homes in Kumbharwada (figure 24). While in 1932 there were only 319 *Kumbhar* families, their population significantly increased after 1947, when many of them left Junagadh in Gujarati and resettled in Dharavi.\(^{220}\) Today over 1500 families are involved in pottery production in Kumbharwada. Every family has the ability to produce large quantities of pottery daily – over 300 pots per day – and 75% of all pottery made in Kumbharwada is exported all over the world.\(^{221}\) The clay for the pots is usually imported from the ancestral villages of the potters, which are around 1000 km. away from Dharavi.

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\(^{220}\) Sharma, 113

\(^{221}\) Interview with a Kumbharwada’s resident during the site visit in 2009; Kundalkar, “Potters, Sailors and Financiers,” 63
Housing typologies in Dharavi differentiate between permanent structures (pakka houses), temporary structures (kacha houses) that are only used for newcomers until they find a pakka house, and huts (jhonpri). In pakka houses, cement often covers not only the walls, but also the floor. In a few cases asbestos on the roof is used to provide insulation. Pakka houses are often two-story buildings, connected with ladders inside or outside the house. On the other hand, materials that are available in the area, such as wood and bamboo, are used as the basis for building the jhonpris. According to figures presented by the Dharavi studio at KRVIA in 2006 and 2007, residential structures occupy 32.5% of Dharavi’s land, while mixed-use structures that host residential and industrial activities occupy 14.86%, and mixed-use structures with residential and commercial services take up 6.16%.

Dharavi has many histories that not only function within Mumbai’s borders but also serve as constituted regimes of knowledge on a global scale. Dharavi’s post-independence reputation as India’s largest slum has attracted global interest and has called into question the idea of the slum’s existence in the future of the city.

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222 Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 48
223 Ibid.
The Slum Crisis of the 21st Century
A Need for Action

At the beginning of the 21st century, concerns about the rise in poverty and the proliferation of slums resulted in a focus on the worldwide slum crisis. This crisis manifested itself in a series of documents, generated and released by international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Considering the fact that a slum is usually perceived as an illegal and sometimes dangerous urban area, these growing slum numbers have gained significant attention in global media and have seeded concerns at multiple levels of governance. Heavily steeped in the rhetoric of a political vision – a future city without slums – governments around the world have responded to this urban crisis with redevelopment projects. So far, this top-down approach, which often accompanies the adoption of a neo-liberal economic model, has not always been successful in its implementation. This was exactly the moment when the word “slum” attracted global interest. To set the basis for this dissertation it is important to explore the roots of this trend by looking more closely at the following three global documents and their stated objectives:

2. *Slums of the World* (2003), a UN working paper that presents the methodology used for defining and counting slums in 2001\(^*\)
3. *The Challenge of Slums* (2003), the UN-HABITAT’s first report to introduce global estimations of slums and discuss the role of governments in the evolution of slums.\(^*\)

These documents serve as a basis for examining the immense interest in and complex dialogue surrounding these slum territories. These documents offer a perspective on the actions proposed for the city’s future, some of which included slums and some of which did not. Ample evidence suggests their significant role in providing important information and suggestions for the future of urban slums and in influencing many governmental plans. By examining these documents, this section aims to uncover their connection to the recent redevelopment projections for Dharavi, including the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project, which was officially introduced by the government of Maharashtra in 2004 as part of the vision to transform Mumbai into a “world-class city.”\(^*\) The central questions here are simple. What were the global mechanisms contextualizing the DRP? Who was involved in preparing the ground for it, and what were the economic relationships between the project and these documents? Answers to these questions are crucial for understanding how these global systems not only appeared but also applied in different cities.

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\(^*\) Bombay First and McKinsey, *Vision Mumbai*
The first document that encapsulates the slum crisis of the 21st century is titled *The Cities Alliance for Cities Without Slums: Action Plan for moving Slums* (1999) and appeared as a Cities Alliance product. The Cities Alliance is a global partnership between three leading organizations, the UNCHS (UN-HABITAT), the World Bank, and the European Union. Other members of this partnership are the governments of Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, the USA, and the NGOs Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and the Habitat for Humanity International. The alliance was established in May 1999 and had as its target the reduction of poverty in major cities by 2020. Despite the fact that global institutions singled out India as a place of poverty, the Indian government was not part of the alliance.

The alliance’s central goals are enriching cities’ economies through private and public investment, and providing effective local government. The four approaches the alliance has outlined for meeting these aims are as follows:

- Developing or enhancing national policy frameworks to address urban development needs
- Developing and implementing local inclusive strategies and plans
- Strengthening the capacity of cities to provide improved services to the urban poor
- Developing mechanisms to engage citizens in city or urban governance.

In fleshing out the alliance’s goal and methods, the World Bank and the UN-HABITAT focused on the most problematic legacies of the previous century, specifically the problem of shelter, which included the issue of slums. Thus they launched the *Action Plan* in December 1999, through the Cities Alliance partnership. The plan uses the word “slums” to denote the following:

“...the products of failed policies, bad governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional land markets, unresponsive financial systems, and a fundamental lack of political will.”

Considering the fact that slums are stories of urban failure, the Action Plan aspired to “improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.” Six actions articulated the agenda and became associated with this goal:

1. Strengthening in-country capacity by restructuring policy and operating frameworks and eliminating legal/technical constraints from upgrading to scale; overcoming institutional bottlenecks; encouraging local commitment and resolve, including political understanding and buy-in; and strengthening learning and training
2. Preparing national/city upgrading programmes by helping committed countries design upgrading programmes to scale

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230 The World Bank, UNCHS (Habitat), Cities Alliance, *Cities Without Slums: Action Plan*
231 Ibid., 1
232 Ibid.
3. Supporting regional and global knowledge and learning that capture and share the
varied approaches and local practices to get the job done better with the full
involvement of the affected communities; organising networks of practice; fielding
specialists to help countries and cities move to scale
4. Investing in slums with appropriate basic infrastructure and municipal services
identified, implemented and operated within the community
5. Strengthening partner capacity to focus attention on the task, with emphasis on the
resources, knowledge and tools to help governments and communities do the job well
at scale
6. Leadership and political buy-in by the partners of the Alliance to prioritise slum
upgrading.233

These six actions were embedded in two types of projects: Slum Upgrading Projects and City
Development Strategy Projects. In this context, slum upgrading involved improvements in
housing conditions and basic infrastructure (including water reticulation, sanitation and
drainage systems, electricity, and lighting), mitigation of environmental hazards, construction
of community facilities such as open spaces and health centres, accessibility to education and
health programmes, and many more actions related to the improvement of living conditions
in slums.

Once these actions were announced, a significant number of projects from around the world
was registered and approved as part of the Slum Upgrading Action Plan. As part of this
agenda, the project “Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City” was approved in
November 2004. The total cost of the project was estimated at US $4,738,617 (figure 25). The
Cities Alliance members that sponsored the project were the following international
foundations: the Rockefeller Foundation; the Urban Management Programme (UMP), which
formed part of the UN-HABITAT’s platform; the United States Agency for International
Development (USAID), and the World Bank.

One of the project’s objectives was to relocate and rehabilitate slums and pavement dwellers.
The World Bank’s has been interested in Mumbai’s slums since 1985, and the organization is
still active in “assisting” the city’s problematic territories. Although this first phase of the
project was officially closed on April 30, 2008, the vision of transforming Mumbai into a
world-class city is still active today.

233 Ibid., 7
The contribution of the Cities Alliance Action Plan to the multilayered dialogue between global organizations about slum-free cities was uncovered in September 2000, when 147 political leaders from 189 nations adopted the Millennium Declaration and produced 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and 18 targets to be achieved in the 21st century. With the appealing words “From the era of commitment the international community must enter an era of implementation,” the Millennium Declaration established these goals to eradicate poverty in the next decades.

The Action Plan’s ambition to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 was reintroduced as a target under the seventh millennium goal of ensuring environmental sustainability in cities. The United Nations assigned the UN-HABITAT...
platform the responsibility of supporting governments in meeting the Cities Alliance Action Plan’s goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of Millennium Development Goals and Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 1. Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 2. Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education</td>
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<td>Target 3. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling</td>
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<td>Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women</td>
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<td>Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 4. Reduce child mortality</td>
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<td>Target 5. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5. Improve maternal health</td>
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<td>Target 6. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 7. Halil and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 8. Halil and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 10. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 11. Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 9. Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - nationally and internationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 12. Address the least developed countries’ special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 10. Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 13. Deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 11. In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target 14. In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 12. In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies - especially information and communications technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 26:** Extract of the Millennium Goals, which highlights 11 targets for achieving significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Source: United Nations General Assembly, "United Nations Millennium Declaration," 8th plenary meeting, September 8, 2000, http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm [Accessed June 4, 2013]

In attempting to set the groundwork and conditions for achieving Target 11 (figure 26), UN-HABITAT – in close collaboration with Cities Alliance and the United Nations Statistic Division (UNSD), which is the central apparatus for providing statistical information to the UN, organized an assembly of 35 individuals from around the world in Nairobi in October 2002, for the Expert Group Meeting (EGM). The purpose of this meeting was to adopt an agreed-upon definition of slums. By addressing and agreeing upon specific characteristics of these areas, UN-HABITAT could then proceed to classify which of these areas are and are not perceived as slums. In seeking to arrive at a definition, the group suggested five conditions slums have in common:

- No access to improved water
- No access to improved sanitation facilities
- Lack of sufficient living area, overcrowding
- Lack of structural quality/durability of dwellings

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Security of tenure. Once these conditions were accepted, it was possible to develop a working measurement for counting them. In essence, UN-HABITAT partnered with the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) and the Global Urban Observatory (GUO) and developed a methodology for counting slums around the world for the year 2001. The suggested methodology and the data analysis of this project were published in the UN-HABITAT report *Slums of the World: The face of urban poverty in the new millennium* in January 2003. Following the group’s recommendations, a number of appointed professionals were assigned to prepare case studies on slums in 34 selected cities around the world. This classificatory dimension of UN-HABITAT’s work has been carried forward mainly by scholars: Professor Emeritus of Urban Development Patrick Wakely and academic Kate Clifford of the Development Planning Unit (DPU) of the University College of London (UCL) co-ordinated the process. In an effort to monitor the different case studies, Patrick Wakely developed a “checklist” (a series of guidelines) for the assigned representatives in each case study. The framework of the checklist was structured around four key categories:

1. **Introduction: the city.** Under this category there were questions regarding the history, geography, urban economy, demographics, and governance of the city
2. **Slums and Poverty:** The types, location, age, population, size and characteristics of city slums formed the body of this part. Additionally, important data such as maps and census data were a requirement
3. **Slums: the people.** This part was set up as a reflection of individual stories from inside of slums; it also revealed vital information about the cost of living and the economic dimensions of slums
4. **Slums and Poverty: the policies.** In asking questions about policies and actions that have been taken to improve slums, this section aimed to identify the role of government in changing slums.

In the context of India, three cities – Ahmedabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai – were selected as case studies under this project. Professor Neelima Risbud, from the School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi, was assigned to prepare the case study for Mumbai. Following the proposed checklist, the report includes important details regarding the urban context, the history, the physical form, the demographics, the urban economy, and the governance of the city.

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236 Ibid., 18
237 The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) was established in 1995 as a Population Policy Research Fellowship programme of the Population Council, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Since its founding it has worked as a non-profit, non-governmental international organization, conducting high-quality and policy-relevant research on population and health issues facing sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, it became an autonomous institution with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. UN-HABITAT’s Global Urban Observatory organizes global progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda. The programme addresses the urgent need to improve the worldwide base of urban knowledge by supporting Governments, local authorities and organizations of civil society as they develop and apply policy-oriented urban indicators, statistics, and other urban information. The programme co-ordinates the monitoring of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals and activities pertaining to the production of reliable and up-to-date urban indicators at national, regional, and municipal levels. The Global Urban Observatory assisted the Agency in the effort to become, by 2013, a premier reference centre for data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting on sustainable urbanization. The activities of GUO fall under two main areas: Global Monitoring, and Development Impact Assessment
238 UN-HABITAT, *Slums of the World: the face of urban poverty in the new millennium*
239 UN-HABITAT and DPU from UCL, “Reporting on slums in selected cities,” reference prepared by Patrick Wakely
city of Mumbai. Additionally, the report provides an overview of the types, origins, and profile of slums and offers data regarding access to services, tenure options, a health system, education, and occupations. The study for Mumbai was combined with the 33 individual researches for different case studies, which were subsequently incorporated into a global report in 2003.\textsuperscript{241}

It was the first time that more than 1 million slums around the world were examined. Some results have shown that in 2001, around 920 million people, who represented 32\% of the world’s urban population, were living in such areas. As the map in figure 25 shows, a majority of slum dwellers were located in Asia.

![Distribution of Urban Slum Population by Developing Regions](image)


Particularly in South Central Asia, urban classified slums dwellers made up 58\% of the total population. India and Pakistan were major locations for informal settlements: they hosted 194 million urban slum dwellers, who represented 73.9\% of the total informal population of South Central Asia. In 2001, a full 55\% of the total population in India was living in slums.\textsuperscript{242}

These alarming numbers and the study’s key findings were published in the UN-HABITAT global report on Human Settlements, \textit{The Challenge of Slums}, in September 2003. This report explored the concept of the slum in various stories from around the globe, offering an operational definition of the term “slum” and presenting the first global estimations of the

\textsuperscript{241} UN-HABITAT, \textit{The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements}

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
exact number and location of slum dwellers. The report also examined analytically the socio-economic and spatial characteristics of the shelter conditions under which slum residents live. It also projected that by 2030, the number of slum dwellers worldwide would reach 2 billion. At the centre of the report were policies and previous slum upgrading projects that marked the urgent need to identify and focus on a new model of slum transformations in the 21st century. More specifically Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, the executive director of UN-HABITAT, in the introductory part of the report writes,

“The report identifies participatory slum upgrading programmes that include urban poverty reduction objectives as the current best practice. It emphasizes the need to scale up slum upgrading programmes to cover whole cities, and to be replicated in all other cities, as well as for sustained commitment of resources sufficient to address the existing slum problem at both city and national level. It also emphasizes the need for investment in citywide infrastructure as a pre-condition for successful and affordable slum upgrading and as one strong mechanism for reversing the socio-economic exclusion of slum dwellers. In this context, the report highlights the great potential for improving the effectiveness of slum policies by fully involving the urban poor, as well as the need for the public sector to be more inclusive in its urban policies.”

A problematic part of the report’s statement of objectives is the fact that it is eerily silent on the matter of funding these upgrading projects. Despite the fact that the executive director of UN-HABITAT recommends the involvement of the urban poor and the public sector in this process of transforming slums, the main source of funding is unclear. Would it arise from the public sector or from the private sector? And what level of involvement would the urban poor have in this process?

In the concluding part of her introduction, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka presents this report as a tool for managing this challenge of slums. In her words, the report “provides directions for the future that are worthy of consideration by national governments, municipal authorities, civil society organisations and international organisations concerned with improving the lives of slum dwellers.” In this statement governments remain visible as a locus of development, and in this sense these words deserve closer scrutiny. Such logic is not new in discussions of slum transformation. In stark contrast to the previous quote, which recommends an involvement of urban poor in the process of slum upgrading, this statement suggests that the development of slums in cities of the future depends only on governmental and top-down sources of power. As a counterpoint to that argument, the report recognizes the existence and proliferation of slums “as the result of a failure of housing policies, laws and delivery systems, as well as of national urban policies.” What is at stake here is the fact that although the report recognizes the failure of governments towards slums, it also implies that they should still have a key role in transforming or eradicating slums in the future. Instead of seeking alternative ways of approaching the problem, the report remains anchored in previous ideologies and fractured sovereignties. The previous three reports generated a sense of alarm within multiple levels of governance, all of which responded differently to the 21st-century slum crisis.

243 Ibid., Introduction
244 Ibid., Introduction
Part B: Politics
“Money passed hands, societies were registered, commencement certificates were issued, some of the old houses were demolished and the residents sent off to transit camps. And then nothing happened.”

Change

Change as a concept is associated with the passage of time. This chapter examines the way in which change is embedded in Mumbai’s shanty towns among two major stakeholders: the slum dwellers and the state. Particularly, it demonstrates how for dwellers change is mainly understood as an apparatus for dreams, aspirations, and hopes for the future, while for the state change is a mechanism for wielding power.

In Mumbai, the main vehicle of change is politics. Throughout India, the “World’s Largest Democracy,” politics is a product of communal participation and commitment that also encompasses forms of power and dominance. It is a space of multiple sovereignties, and the balance among these sovereignties determines the vehicle’s overall efficiency. If for any reason this vehicle is not functioning properly, then politics can end up becoming a hindrance to change. This balance in Mumbai’s shanty settlements has been shaken many times for various reasons. This chapter stands as an analysis of these reasons and provides an overview of the different political expressions of change (or, in this context, the process of slum upgrading) over a specific period of time.

As the cultural theorist Stuart Hall rightly remarks, “Interpretation becomes an essential aspect of the process by which meaning is given and taken.” Slums have been depicted, viewed, and defined according to different and at times contradictory interests. At stake here is the relation between the subject who sees the slum and the object – the slum – that is seen. The changing perspective of the observer transforms what is seen. In order to fully understand the strategic intersection among these various depictions in Mumbai’s shanty towns, the process of change is described, analysed, and assessed by unraveling the stories behind “the slum” – celebrated in Mumbai as a space of change – and the emergence of slum policies.

The phrase “Indian slum” has gone from being used (almost without discussion) as a generic term in the 1950s to becoming an indispensable part of the political agenda after 1970. Evaluating the process of slum upgrading in post-Independence Mumbai affords a look at the role of state government within different periods and exposes several levels of its power and involvement in the transformation of shanty settlements. Consequently, three historical moments in which the state changed its approach to slums – acting as clearer of the slums, as provider for the slums, and then subsequently as facilitator in their alteration – are assessed here. These stages are reflected in the development of five ambitious plans: the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) in 1971, the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) and the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) in 1985, the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) in 1991, and the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) in 1995. Although all five projects were

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245 Mumbai has been the official name of the city since 1995. The city was formerly known as Bombay. For the purposes of this chapter, the name Bombay is used when referring to any events occurring before 1995, and Mumbai is used when referring to events after 1995.


introduced by the state, they failed to achieve their intended goals. In evaluating the reasons behind this failure, it is important to identify the difficulties and results of each individual plan in relation to the state’s projections and intentions. A useful way of understanding this procedure is studying the legalization of the urban poor’s status as slum policies in Mumbai became established and developed. Particularly, it is essential to investigate the eccentricities of the various rules that have left a mark upon every subsequent plan or programme.

The chapter is structured into seven sections. The first section presents the dilemmas and anxieties associated with the rise of slums in post-colonial Mumbai. It offers an overview of the state’s approach on migration issues and provides a glimpse of the first attempts to plan an expansion of the city. Additionally, it highlights the reasons behind the development of slums in the city and assesses the first government efforts to clear them.

Section two addresses the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) of 1971, which repositioned the role of the slum in the city. Whereas slums had been regarded as illegal neighbourhoods, they developed into housing solutions for migrant workers, and soon plans followed for improving slums through a series of upgrading works. This section also considers the importance of surveys of informal settlements and provides insights into the first slum census in Mumbai, in 1976.

Section three focuses on the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) of 1985, part of a larger development project initiated as a collaboration between the World Bank and the Government of Maharashtra. This programme provides an opportunity for understanding the origins of important concepts in the slum upgrading process. One such concept is the housing co-operative, an influential idea that provides a vision of collaboration between global organizations and the state; it continues as a model for development plans to this day.

Section four outlines the essential objectives of the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP), which Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi initiated in 1985 during the Congress party anniversary celebrations in Bombay. Rajiv Gandhi announced a grant of 100 crore (US $26 million) for slum redevelopment in the city as a response to the change in the political scene after Shiv Sena – the right-wing extremist party – won Bombay’s municipal council elections. The progress of this project provides a crucial glimpse into the first attempt to redevelop Dharavi.

Section five thematizes the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) of 1991 and presents the manifold narratives associated with it and the relations between the political scene and the redevelopment approach; section six provides insights into the ambitious Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) of 1995 and gradually uncovers the complexities behind the non-implementation of the dominant redevelopment approach.

The last section assembles the critical concerns raised about problems with each programme. Contradictions and complexities characterize the narratives behind the many slum redevelopment plans. An interesting feature of all of them is that despite the large amount of resources invested in these projects, in hindsight all were perceived as failures.
The theoretical part of this study is based upon an extensive review of the existing literature and other research on the transformation of slums. The main bulk of this chapter deals with the scholarship and state documents on this topic. Many studies have attempted to evaluate slum upgrading in Mumbai through its different planning stages, but this research will focus on sources that highlight the mechanisms at work in slum transformation.

The work *Bombay: Can it House its Millions?* (1989), by scholar and administrator Pachampet Sundaram, who served more than 22 years as a specialist on urban issues to the government of India, is a milestone in scholarship on Dharavi and a significant influence on this study.249 Sundaram’s work takes an analytical approach to its subject and offers strong evidence concerning the government’s response to the emergence of slums, especially after 1971. Sundaram enables us to observe issues and problems in urban government and discusses policy ventures in the city in depth. Similarly, A.R. Desai and S. Devadas Pillai’s edited work *Slums and Urbanization: The Indian Slum* (1991) provides insights into the evolution and definition of slums in Mumbai. Their effort is vital for understanding the problems and perspectives of slum dwellers in the years after India’s Independence.250

In an effort to make sense of slum improvement strategies, sociologist S.S. Jha, in her work *Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums* (1986), addresses questions of improvement works in Mumbai’s shanty settlements and provides analytical information regarding the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) during the 1970s.251 Her approach is important for understanding the structural bodies that represented various actors in this process of upgrading. The work *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, edited by Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (1995), collects papers from prominent thinkers on Bombay’s evolution.252 Thus, the social geographer Swapna Banerjee-Guha evaluates the urban development process in Bombay by criticizing the city’s Development Plan of 1964 and especially the concept of ‘The Twin City,’ an alternative plan produced by the leading Indian architects Charles Correa, Pravina Mehta, and Shirish Patel. At this point, it is crucial to acknowledge Charles Correa’s personal views on their plan, offered in the book *Bombay to Mumbai: Changing Perspectives*, edited by Pauline Rohatgi, Pheroza Godrej, and Rahul Mehrotra (1997).253 It is also important to identify the contribution of the urbanist Pratima Panwalkar, in the edited work of Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner, who evaluated the shift from slum improvement to slum upgrading strategy.254

Moreover, the journalist and writer Kalpana Sharma, in *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum* (2000), describes and discusses the upgrading process by way of interviewing not only key figures, but also residents in the slum of Dharavi during the 1980s.255 Deeply immersed in the dialogues about *Community Participation and Slum Housing* (1995),

252 Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner, eds., *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1996)
the human geographer Vandana Desai offers evidence regarding the Slum Upgrading Scheme and the Prime Minister Grant Project of 1985.\textsuperscript{256} Both scholars consider and critique the changing role of slums through time.

Finally, the anthropological perspective of Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, in their \textit{Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life} (2007), has also been an important influence for studying the processes of transformation, mainly during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{257} Vinit Mukhija’s \textit{Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai} (2003) provides an insightful understanding of the urban and spatial impact of the redevelopment strategy in Dharavi.\textsuperscript{258}

This chapter is not a study of slums, nor is it a study of Dharavi. However, it forms an essential background for understanding how the territory of Dharavi was to become the terrain of economic contestation and negotiation in Mumbai. The political involvement in spatial transformation and policies espoused by the state prepares the ground for the launching of the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) in 2004. The repeated complications of the previous plans lie at the heart of Dharavi’s makeover. Unraveling them will uncover, if not unmask, the hidden agendas and plans of various actors involved in slum upgrading.

\textbf{Framing the Post-Independence Image}

\textbf{From 1947 to 1957}

This first section provides a glimpse of the background structures behind a newly independent, post-colonial Bombay. It focuses on the appearance of slums in the city and the state’s attitude towards them. In particular, the section discusses the demolition method that was the state’s initial attempt at eradicating slums and traces its efforts at legalizing this strategy. An extraordinary population growth after 1960 indicated that slum clearance was not an effective approach and underlined the need for a new governmental strategy towards slums. Thus, the following discussion is essential for understanding and evaluating the process of change in Bombay’s shanty settlements and sheds light on the logic of how slum improvement came into being.

Post-Independence India offered a new perspective on what it meant to establish a financial paradise in a former colony. Decolonization had brought about significant economic expansion in India’s cities, and Bombay became a magnet for migrants and enterprise. The Partition of Pakistan from India in 1947 brought with it a great influx of migrants to Bombay, and by 1951 the city’s population had reached nearly 2.3 million.\textsuperscript{259} Bombay’s rapid metamorphosis into a financial centre resulted in an increase in the demand for housing, and this in turn generated a palpable tension between the original inhabitants and the newcomers.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{The historical timeline of Bombay’s urban development.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.png}
\caption{The demographic changes in Bombay’s population over time.}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{257} Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, \textit{Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life} (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007)

\textsuperscript{258} Vinit Mukhija, \textit{Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai} (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003)

\textsuperscript{259} Gyan Prakash, \textit{Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City} (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 254
The complexities of this tension were encapsulated and challenged in the Bombay Rent Act of 1947. The Act provided housing security to the original inhabitants of the city who were residing in pre-1947 buildings. The tenants had to pay the rent (if they had not done so before) for the years after 1940. These tenants were protected from eviction. In the event of a tenant’s death, the family had the right to live in the apartment. Any landlord who desired to demolish a building and construct a new one had to provide equal residential space to all existing tenants in the new structure. The Act protected occupants by placing them at the centre of the process. Keenly aware of the situation, unhappy landlords organized themselves and protested against the policy. Migrants who arrived in the city after 1947 were not able to find a house and were condemned to live in slums. At that moment, slums in Bombay were considered neglected and perilous areas and were characterized by the absence of basic amenities. Indeed, they were also open places with formidable economic activity and unique social interaction that was taking place within three typologies: single or multistoried buildings; “patra chawls”, which are semi-permanent structures; and “zopad pattis”, which are squatter colonies.260

Reflecting the immense explosion in population that Bombay witnessed after 1950, the 144 slums of Bombay hosted almost 1 million dwellers, half of the city’s population, within 876,800 acres of land.261 In response to the endlessly reproducing shanty towns, the city’s municipal authority (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation – BMC – India’s most energetic local body)262 pursued the mesmerizing demolition strategy popularly known as the “bulldozer method.” The strategy was at its most pronounced in South Bombay.263 The powerful local government, which could demolish any slum at any time, legalized the clearance strategy in selected areas, through the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act in 1954. These selected areas were of two types:

- The ‘clearance areas’, which were considered as unfit for human habitation due to structural despair of sanitary defects and the only effectual remedy for improving conditions was the demolition of all settlements.
- The ‘redevelopment areas’. In this case the clearance was followed by a redevelopment scheme prepared by the Corporation. Under this scheme there was projection of accommodation for the poor.”264

As part of this strategy the central government launched the Slum Clearance Scheme in 1956 and set as a goal clearing slums in six Indian cities, including Bombay. Demolitions posed a grave threat to the dwellers’ peaceful lives. The residents were removed and placed in alternative accommodations, typically far from the city. As a result people lost their jobs and were not able to economically support their families. The distance from medical services generated additional difficulties in daily life, and most dwellers preferred to return to their

260 Desai and Pillai, Slums and Urbanization: The Indian, 126–127
261 Ibid., 132
262 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is a pre-eminent municipal body, which was created in 1888. It is recognized as one of the most energetic local bodies in the country. It is structured around the deliverable wing, which is responsible for the preparation of policies and regulations and the executive wing, which is responsible for the implementation of the policies. BMC works for the public transportation, the provision of electricity, the education and medical facilities and in the first years it was never involved in slum upgrading directly.
263 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum, 12
264 Desai and Pillai, Slums and Urbanization: The Indian slum, 375
original spots, and rebuilt their shelters from scratch. The ambitious Clearance Plan did not last for long as it failed to understand and mitigate the consequences of slum expansion in the Indian cities.

These first two post-Independence decades tell the story of how slums emerged as a product of a governmental policy towards migration and how this policy then led to further actions to mitigate slums in the city. Both impulses on the government’s part demonstrate the need for developmental planning in the city.

At the dawn of another population surge in the 1960s, the city was on its way towards becoming an ebullient metropolis of 4 million people (figure 1). More migrants arrived and more slums were formed. The increased demand for housing is documented by the sociologist S.S. Jha in the chart that appears in figure 2. The city’s expansion led to the Development Plan for a Greater Bombay, introduced in 1964 (figure 5). The initial goal was to transform Bombay into a new larger city by 1977, but this target was extended to 1981. By challenging the geographical limits of the island, the plan pledged an expansion of the city on the north-south axis. The financialization of South Bombay led to reclamations at Nariman Point, Caffe Parade, and New Navy Nagar (figure 3). New flat terrains were converted into prominent residential and industrial landscapes in the north of Bombay.

Figure 1: Bombay’s geographical expansion and population growth. Source: Charles Correa, The New Landscapes: Urbanization in the Third World (London: Mimar Book, 1989), 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Population (million)</th>
<th>Annual Housing Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1991</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2001</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To control the fast growth of these emerging housing territories, the government initiated the concept of Floor Space Index (FSI), which is the ratio of the plot area to the built area. Eyeballing a magnificent urban skyline, the government set the FSI at a high of 3.5 to 4.5 for the urban centres such as Nariman Point (figure 3), and for the rest of the city it was fixed from 1.33 to 2.45. The FSI for slums was set at 1.33 (figure 4). A very large proportion of the urban landscape became taken with this numbers game, and in the following decades the concept of the FSI would play an important role in policies and slum upgrading projects.

The Development Project came in for stern criticism for its cost and narrow focus from academics such as Swapna Banerjee-Guha, a prominent specialist in social studies in Bombay at the time. In a provocative paper on the “Urban Development Process” (1996), she argued that the project was unrealistic and “self-contradictory.” In her view no real plan for the city could focus on urban development while simultaneously decentralizing economic activities. An article in the newspaper *The Times of India* (July 1964) shared her scepticism and criticized the plan as “a pot-pourri of various regional and district survey maps grouped together incoherently with a palliative sprinkling of unimportant land-use recommendations.”

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**Figure 3:** Nariman Point is located on the south western part of the island of Bombay. It covers land that was reclaimed from the Arabian Sea in the 1960s and was built in the 1970s and 1980s. Source: Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (Bombay: India Book House Pvt Ltd, 1995), 285

**Figure 4:** North of Nariman Point; Slums in Bombay. Source: Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (Bombay: India Book House Pvt Ltd, 1995), 31
Along similar lines and in response to the project, three leading Indian architects – Charles Correa, Pravina Mehta, and Shirish Patel – wrote a “long enthusiastic letter” to the municipality and suggested an alternative plan (figure 6). Contradicting the idea of a linear north-south expansion of the city, the three architects proposed the creation of a “self-contained twin city” by expanding it along an east-west axis and by opening up new growth centres across the harbour. The plan envisioned restructuring the city by distributing already existing population between the old and the new space, thus accommodating potential population growth. Although the letter outlined new and interesting ideas, it went unanswered. Indeed, the “twin city” idea appeared in The Sunday Times and sparked an unusual discussion about the future of Bombay. Mulk Raj Anand, the editor of the design magazine MARG (Modern Architectural Research Group), read the article in the newspaper and decided to publish the alternative plan with details in the June 1965 issue of MARG (figure 7). This publication attracted the interest of a few legislative officers such as the young Chris Srinivasan, who foresaw the plan’s potential, and through the new governmental body CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation) convinced the state government to accept the concept. In 1970, following the acceptance of the concept, the state government of Maharashtra announced that they would be making 55,000 acres of land available for acquisition in accordance with the plan. This was to be the only moment of celebration for this alternative plan because soon after the idea of the “twin city” was fully abandoned and the state reverted back to the initial plan of 1964. Charles Correa, the lead architect of the alternative plan, condemned the role of state in the design of cities with the statement “cities do not change because of ideas but because of political will.” His critique proved to be too radical for years to come.

The intent at the heart of the early Development Plan was to clear slums. Mindful of the problems resulting from the Slum Clearance Scheme in 1956, the municipality recognized that the demolition strategy had not been a success. They therefore changed their approach to the shanty settlements of Bombay. Instead of treating them as a problem associated with providing housing to the poor, the government began to see the shanty towns as part of the solution to the problem of housing a booming migrant population. The complex experiences that originated within this new approach to the slums are exemplified in the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP).

268 Mehrotra, “Evolution, Involution, and the City’s future: A perspective on Bombay’s Urban Form,” 313
269 Mulk Raj Anand, Anil de Silva, Karl Khandalavala, eds. MARG XVIII, no.3 (June 1965): 30–45

Slum Improvement Programme (SIP)

In 1971, the government espoused a friendlier approach to shanty settlements and moved to improve them. The Maharashtra Slum Areas Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment Act, which was adopted by the state government in 1971, made the seductive promise to protect slum dwellers from eviction and to allow any legitimate slum in the state to participate in improvement projects. The Act defined a “legitimate slum” as

“any area that is or may be a source of danger to health, safety or convenience of the public of that area or of its neighborhood, by reason of that area having inadequate or no basic amenities, or being unsanitary, squalid overcrowded or otherwise and the buildings in any area, used or intended to be used for human habitation are in any respect, unfit for human habitation or by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation light or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors, detrimental to the health, safety or convenience of the public of that area.”

What is interesting about this extract is how the state declares and problematizes the slum and at the same time shifts its aim from demolishing to improving it. This change of mindset was

272 Government of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Slum Areas Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment Act of 1971, Maharashtra Act No. XXVIII of 1971, Chapter 2, Slum Areas 4 (Mumbai, 1971), 20
reflected in the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP), which was launched by the state government in 1971. The scheme accepted slums as housing solutions for the city’s migrants and therefore envisioned their improvement as providing amenities and infrastructure. The central government financially supported the project by allocating Rs 151 crore (US $28 million) for a six-year period. The improvement works began in 1972 and included

“laying of water mains, sewers and storm water drains; provision of urinals, latrines, community baths and water taps; widening, realigning or paving of existing roads, lanes and pathways and constructing new roads, lanes and pathways; providing street lighting; cutting, filling, leveling and landscaping the area; partial development of the area with a view to providing land for unremunerative purposes such as parks, playgrounds, welfare and community centres, school dispensaries, hospitals, police stations, fire stations and other amenities run on a non-profit basis; demolition of obstructive or dilapidated buildings or portions of buildings; any other matter for which it is expedient to make provision for preventing the area from being or becoming source of danger to safety or health or a nuisance.”

For the execution of the improvement scheme, the state government appointed the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA). The duties of the Authority were to survey and review slum areas, to formulate rehabilitation schemes and to implement them. The Authority could appoint committees in order to facilitate the process. Thus, in February 1974, the state government established the Maharashtra Slum Improvement Board to co-ordinate the works of the SIP. However, in April of the same year, central financial assistance stopped for unknown reasons and the local government had to carry on its funding and implementation of the scheme without national assistance. Jha in her work *Structure of Urban Poverty* (1986), in which she offers details about the legacies of the project from 1972 to 1974, notes that the scheme mainly focused on providing infrastructure (roads, street light, water taps) and gave less consideration to social issues (figure 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic amenities during the years 1972-73 &amp; 1973-74 to the slums of Bombay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanctioned and completed projects during the specified period 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people benefited                                    329,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of WCs                                                  5,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of water taps                                          2,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of street lights                                       531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads in square metres                                        205,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

274 Government of Maharashtra, *Maharashtra Slum Areas Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment Act of 1971, Maharashtra Act No. XXVIII of 1971, Chapter 1-A, Slum Rehabilitation Authority for implementing Slum rehabilitation Scheme (2A-3-4-5)* (Mumbai, 1971), 4
The SIP lasted for almost two decades, from 1971–1990, and was never officially discontinued. A total of Rs 70 crore (US $13 million) was spent, and official statistics reveal that almost 2.2 million slum dwellers benefited by the end of March 1987.273 Dharavi, as one of the largest shanty settlements in Bombay, for the first time was furnished with electricity, sanitation facilities, water, and new roads.276

The programme had a smaller impact than anticipated. The improvement works did not affect the majority of slum dwellers in Bombay. The main obstacle to a successful process of implementation was spatial allocation. Although the project’s impact was limited to providing facilities to settlements located on government or municipal land, almost half the settlements, around 45%, existed on private land.277 Additionally, an official BMC report written in the 1990s by the municipal commissioner of slums, K.G. Pai, indicated that there was an absence of long-term financial planning in the programme, and the initial estimates covered only the first year.278 The high density of the population and the lack of physical space in several areas became an obstacle to the improvement plans. In her work for slum upgrading in Bombay in 1996, the urbanist Pratima Panwalkar offers an example of how this new infrastructure was misused. Toilets and water taps had to be placed on the pavements of the affected areas but added less value to the project than expected because they were overused to a degree that had been unforeseen. Additionally, the high cost of maintaining the new facilities generated tensions among residents.279 The conflict was between the dwellers that were willing to pay for the maintenance fees and those who could not afford them. And in some cases the refusal of some residents to accept improvements such as electric utilities produced delays in the execution of the scheme.

Chatterji and Mehta’s anthropological critique of Bombay’s slums in 2007 has emphasized the consequences of not preserving the improvement works in the years that followed.280 They use the case study of Dharavi to show how approaching the improvement process in a “piecemeal fashion” instead of ameliorating living conditions resulted in confusion and chaos.281 An equally significant problem noted by Sundaram was the fact that the project was never placed within the context of city planning; thus delays in the project’s implementation created further problems in the settlements.282 Vinit Mukhiya and Pratima Panwalkar reveal an

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273 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, 70
274 Liza Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009)
275 Sundaram
277 Panwalkar, “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme,” 123
278 Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007), 136
279 Ibid., 136
280 Ibid., 71
important element that did not form part of the project: provisions for tenure security. This omission in turn resulted in a fierce battle over plans for upgrading in the city.\textsuperscript{283}

An ultimate and hefty barrier to the scheme’s implementation was the lack of exact information regarding the slum population in the city. While forging its slum improvement plan, the government was not equipped with the necessary geographical, social, and economic data about the shanty towns. All of this had an adverse effect on government attempts to become involved, predict needs, and provide support. The resulting deadlock complicated the sense of euphoria that the new era of slum improvements seemed to promise and led to discussions about the need for a slum survey. Thus a remarkable moment did issue from the failed attempts to implement improvements: the first slum census of 1976.

On January 4, 1976, the local government undertook the first official enumeration of slum dwellers in Bombay. The survey was a head-counting procedure that lasted one single day and had the help of 7000 personnel.\textsuperscript{284} As a ladder for the city and the shanty settlements, the census indicated different types of occupied land and identified that there were 2.8 million slum dwellers living in 1,671 settlements (figure 9). The overall slum population was 40% of the city’s total population, and 83% of this population lived in the suburbs. The survey revealed the density of the settlements occupying Dharavi to be 300 in just one acre.\textsuperscript{285} The recognized slum dwellers were given identification cards to assure an alternative location if they should have to move. As a part of the project, the shanty towns were also provided with metered electrical connections and infrastructure for water and toilets.\textsuperscript{286}

In 1983 an effort to document the additional slum pockets that had appeared since 1976 identified 4.3 million people living Bombay’s shanty settlements. If we add to this number the 700,000 pavement dwellers, almost 5 million dwellers, half of the city’s population, were living in slums in 1983 (figure 10).\textsuperscript{287}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Owner</th>
<th>Slums</th>
<th>Tenements</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>39,404</td>
<td>197,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>89,751</td>
<td>448,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay Municipal Corporation</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>118,000</td>
<td>507,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Board</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58,061</td>
<td>262,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Individuals</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>322,000</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,671</td>
<td>627,216</td>
<td>2,864,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{284} S.S. Iha, \textit{Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums} (Bombay: Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1986), 9
\textsuperscript{285} Desai, \textit{Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay}, 138–139
\textsuperscript{286} Sharma, \textit{Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum}, 164
\textsuperscript{287} Panwalkar, “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme,” 122
Figure 9: Spread of slums according to the slum census conducted by the State Government on January 4, 1976. Source: S.S. Jha, Structure of Urban Poverty: The Case of Bombay Slums (Bombay: Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1986), 9
The survey of 1976 was used as a powerful instrument for recognizing the feasibility of Bombay’s slums as social entities, and it left a legacy that future governments found unpalatable: For the first time, slum dwellers were accepted as official Bombay residents, and by acquiring identity cards they secured their participation in the SIP and other upgrading projects. To control the issue of photo passes, the state government appointed a Controller of Slums in 1977. His role was to prevent the proliferation of the slums, to protect the existing settlements from being encroached upon by new tenants, to defend the vacant land by removing any unauthorized structures, and to co-ordinate the slum upgrading plans.  

The following diagram (figure 11) shows the organizational chart in the management of the improvement programmes and the individual roles in this process:

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In the same year, 1977, the Maharashtra Slum Improvement Board merged with the Housing Board and the Bombay Building Repairs and Reconstruction Board, and on December 5,  

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\[288\] Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay, 116
Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) was established. MHADA is the state body responsible for constructing and selling housing units for low-and-middle-income groups. As a facilitator, and not a direct provider, MHADA deals with the funding and implementation of slum upgrading schemes and exercises considerable influence in Bombay’s shanty settlements. Today it is the governmental body that pays particular attention to the process of slum redevelopment, especially in Dharavi.

However, from 1978 to 1983, MHADA’s impact was minimal. It did not succeed in building more than 3000 housing units per year, an insignificant number considering the population growth of Greater Bombay. Sundaram illuminated the glaring deficiencies behind this poor implementation with some notable examples: First, MHADA, as a new development institution that arrived on the city’s scene, was not equipped with adequate professional staff in various disciplines, such as architecture, planning, sociology, finance, and engineering. This had implications for the ability to develop an overall long-term plan. Not surprisingly, difficulties arose in the organization of each suggested project, and delays related to the execution of plans were inevitable. But behind this situation, ways of understanding and explaining the bigger hurdle of the execution go hand in hand with the co-ordination and the role of the municipality (BMC). The human geographer Vandana Desai comments that MHADA’s futile first years were a result of BMC’s attitude. Bombay’s municipality was India’s strongest local government; it acted independently from the state on its own housing plans. When MHADA was formed, the municipality saw itself as an independent agent and treated the state body as “no more than a glorified developer.” In this battle over the political economy of Bombay’s slums, the municipality provided no financial support for MHADA’s projects, and problems of co-ordination resulted. Furthermore, state agencies were not able to perform their responsibilities on municipal land. As a result their achievements were limited to the 10% of Bombay’s slum areas that belonged to the state.

The political debates on providing slum housing, the role of state and local government, and the changing nature of interventions provide a glimpse of a broader picture: the complex narrative of the politization of the slum upgrading process. From the normative strategy of clearance, state and local government moved to a friendlier approach of improving and reshaping Bombay’s shanty towns. After 1977, slums were seen as means not only of housing migrants, but also of increasing power. It was in the 1980s, under the shadow of this hunger for power, that slums became a fixture in political agendas and evolved as a key element in arguments over election procedures. The interest in slums and their spatial concerns was slowly replaced by an interest in their economic concerns, which was reflected in the transformation of slum territories. The “euphoria for everything mega” is mirrored at the inauguration and evolution of two schemes: the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) and the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP), both launched in 1985.

289 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?
290 Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay
291 Ibid., 128
The Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP)

The Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) is foregrounded in this section, not in chronological terms, but in view of how slums shifted from being perceived as “sources of danger” to being considered places of political and economic interests. This section is devoted to the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) and the slum policies that went with it; the point of comparison will be the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) of the previous decade. A pervasive shift from the government’s previous ideologies on slums is the change of focus from individual dwellers to slum co-operatives, a change reflected in the policy of providing communities with long-term land security. Another important point is that the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) acted in concert with a World Bank initiative, as a facilitator in slum areas, mainly in India. It therefore offers a vantage point from which to explore the rationale behind this global interest in Bombay’s land since the 1980s.

The Bombay Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) was formed in 1975 as a complementary body to the state government with the function of organizing metropolitan planning and development in India. It was developed to serve various functions in the region that other agencies such as BMC were not able to fulfill. In 1977, the BMRDA formulated a Sectoral Housing Policy, which seemed to adopt an approach to slum areas that was in line with the World Bank’s new “rationalist – humanist” approach. Since the 1970s, the World Bank’s involvement in urban development in India has focused not only on Bombay, but also on Madras and Calcutta. Its targets were to provide “help” and to strengthen the development of each city. In Bombay, a series of meetings took place between government officers and representatives of the World Bank from 1979 to 1982. Furthermore, the international institution funded a critical research study for the city: the “Bombay City Study,” which focused on the improvement of housing. In 1985, the $52 million Bombay Urban Development Project (BUDP) emerged as an agreement between the International Development Agency of the World Bank (IDA) and the Government of Maharashtra (GoM).

The official World Bank report for the evaluation of the project in 1996 describes the intentions of the scheme as follows:

“The objective of these interventions was to raise the level of services provided to the population, and to strengthen urban planning and service delivery institutions, particularly those of local government. The scope of these urban activities was subsequently broadened to include medium-sized cities. The Bombay Urban Development Project (BUDP) identified land, infrastructure and shelter development as being the most critically neglected Bombay Metropolitan Region (BMR) problems which were not addressed by the Bank’s earlier projects.”

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294 Panwalkar, “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme,” 125
295 The World Bank, *Implementation Completion Report, India, Bombay Urban Development Project (Credit 1544-IN)*, June 10, 1977, India, i
The BUDP was incorporated into the state’s programme for Affordable Low-Income Shelter (ALIS) for 1983/4 to 1989/90. Being part of this strategy, the project had four major mechanisms:

“1. The Land Infrastructure Servicing Programme (LISP): LISP set as a goal the provision of 88,000 services sites, including community facilities, core house repair loans.
2. The Local Government Finance Administration and Services (LOGFAS): This part set as a goal better equipment and civil works for improving the maintenance of roads, drains and collection of disposal of refuse in the areas of Bombay, New Bombay and Thane Municipal areas.
3. The Technical Assistance, Training and Equipment (TATE): This aimed at providing the efficiency of the agencies that would implement and coordinate the project.
4. The Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP): Upgrading of slums in Bombay including provision of tenure, improved infrastructure services and home improvement loans and community facilities.”

The objectives as stated in the official World Bank report are as follows:

“- To increase the public supply of affordable land, infrastructure and shelter particularly for low-income families and small businesses.
- To improve the local government’s financial and administrative capacity to deliver and maintain services, particularly infrastructure created under BUDP.
- To strengthen the government’s institutional capacity to plan, coordinate, implement, and evaluate BUDP projects, programs and policies, and to replicate the achievements.
- To improve public sector cost recovery and to reduce in a major way public and private costs of shelter investments through more efficient and equitable land use planning and pricing policies and more appropriate performance-oriented design standards, development control and building regulations.
- To direct a larger proportion of private investment in land servicing and shelter construction into low cost units for low-income families.”

An integral part of the project was the $9 million Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP), which had set as one of its goals the in-situ improvement of 100,000 households in 15 hectares of BMC area – making up 10 to 20% of Bombay’s slums. An unusual counterpoint to the SIP was the provision of leasehold tenure for slum co-operatives, renewable for 30 years, with a minimal monthly rent. The cost of the rent depended on various factors such as location, size, and the land use of each settlement. The eligible housing co-operatives were recognized under the census of 1976; Dharavi was one of these areas. Shelters erected after the cut-off date were subject to demolition without being offered any alternative site. Additionally, it was decided

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296 The objectives of the ALIS programme were primarily concentrated on the reduction of slum dwellers and aimed to increase affordable shelter. The state government provided free land to agencies to implement the project. The affected population was to build private shelters following a design prototype. Almost 85,000 families benefited from this programme. Source: Sundar Burra, “Towards a pro-poor framework for slum upgrading in Mumbai, India, Slum upgrading,” in Environment and Urbanization 17 (2005): 67
298 The World Bank, Implementation Completion Report, India, Bombay Urban Development Project (Credit 1544-IN), June 10, 1977, India
299 Desai, Community participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay; Panwalkar; “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme”
under the 1964 Development Plan that upgrading works should be relocated to areas not already reserved for parks, schools, or other public use. As a first step, the state government constituted a community extension wing with representatives of various organizations to examine reserved land and to study the feasibility of potentially qualified slum pockets in the city. The committee identified a large number of eligible slums. The community workers visited these settlements and communicated the aspects of the project to slumlords, individual residents, and families by motivating them to form co-operatives for participating in the plan. Indeed, in some cases there were complications involving things such as features of the land itself. At times the areas in question were situated on undulating land or designated dangerous areas (for example under high tension cables). The unclear boundaries between the different co-operatives in each slum and the verification of the eligibility of each individual member presented significant difficulties for the selected places. The state government recognized these problems and in order to make the plan more viable, suggested a new cut-off date: the elections of December 1984. However, this strategy did not notably change the situation, and the government recommended a new measurement in November 1988 under which all slum dwellers were eligible to participate in SUP only if they paid the amount of Rs 251 (US $5) for the improvement works. Home improvement loans, to be recovered in a 20-year period, were provided to individuals or to co-operatives.

The SUP established the concept of housing co-operatives instead of individual participation for three notable reasons:

“1. To sustain and develop the gains resulting from enhanced services and the potential gains from enhanced land values arising out of security of tenure
2. To prevent misuse of these capital gains
3. To operationalize the concept of change of status of the community from the one of slum dwellers to that of residents of ‘Environmentally Acceptable Legal Shelter (EALS)’.”

The role of the housing co-operatives was to supervise the construction of the dwellings and to maintain open spaces and services within the slum areas. Not every resident, however, was eager about becoming a member of these co-operatives, and therefore internal conflicts were inescapable. In some cases, the whole community rejected a proposal either because they were not persuaded by it or because they were anxious for the future of their settlement. Additional difficulties arose when new squatters arrived in these communities with the intention of taking part in the upgrading. In this case the community leaders had to inform the new members about the features and limitations of the programme.

The SUP offered the option of in-situ upgrading or of total reconstruction. The productive dilemma of the total reconstruction option was not only the question of density but also the matter of retaining the occupants in their original sites. As a result, in April 1992, the state government launched a new policy on slum upgrading, commonly known as the “2.5 FSI

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300 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, 126
301 Panwalkar, “Upgradation of Slums: A World Bank Programme”
302 Ibid., 132
303 Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay
This Act approved, as an exception, the increase of the FSI from 1.33 to 2.5 for the housing co-operatives on governmental, municipal, and private land. This added more buildable space to the structures, which could be used directly by the co-operatives or by the landowners and private developers. This was the first moment when slums attracted the private sector in Bombay. The additional space had a marketable value. However, in August of the same year, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra announced an increase to the reconstructed slum tenements from 180 sq.ft to 250 sq.ft, which left minor buildable space to be sold in the market.

In 1987 the Rent Control Act was applied under the pursuance of the World Bank. The amendment initiated a five-year “rent holiday” for the buildings constructed during and after the Act. At the end of this five-year period, a standard rent would be fixed and landlords were only permitted to increase the rent in the case of necessary repairs such as renovations or special additions. At that moment, the real estate prices in Bombay were higher than at any other time in the city’s history and labour costs were on the rise. The combination of these factors – the price of land, the Rent Control Act, the increased size of the tenements provided to slum dwellers, and the rising cost of labour – led to a poor response from private developers. Although the SUP opened the discussion over the liberalization of the market, at the same time the restrictions became a hurdle for change in the 1980s.

In September 1994, three years after the original date of the programme’s completion, the SUP was winding things up. According to the official “Implementation Completion Report” by the World Bank in 1997, only 22% of the initial targets were met and the project was judged only “marginally satisfactory.” Of the initial 100,000 units, just 22,204 were reconstructed; 21,604 of these units were on state government land, and only 600 were on municipal land (figure 12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>SAR Original</th>
<th>Restructured (Dec. 1994)</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Actual as % of restructuring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Financial (Rs crores)</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Financial (Rs crores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. + 1a LISP</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>196,3</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>366,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SUP</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>53,4</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>21,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. LOGFAS</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,8</td>
<td></td>
<td>146,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. TATE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,9</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDP Total</td>
<td>282,3</td>
<td></td>
<td>544,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAR = Staff Appraisal Report

Figure 12: Project (BUDP) Implementation Performance. Source: The World Bank, Implementation Completion Report, India, Bombay Urban Development Project (Credit 1544-IN), June 10, 1977, India: 3

The report’s compelling narrative outlines four factors behind the difficulties in implementing the project. These problems “boil down to the lack of a strong constituency for in-situ slum

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304 Panwalkar, 136
305 Ibid.
306 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, 135
307 The World Bank, Implementation Completion Report, India, Bombay Urban Development Project (Credit 1544-IN)
upgrading on a cost-recovery basis.”308 As a first hurdle, the document suggests the problem of land acquisition and the role of the state and local agencies on the reserved lands. The report critically argues that MHADA and BMC reclassified the land for their own use so that they themselves could develop it in the future: consequently, these two agencies put up strong resistance to upgrading Bombay’s slums. The second obstacle to the process was the provision of legal tenure to housing co-operatives of slum dwellers. The politicians disliked this decision as they felt they were losing control over slum territories. The third reason behind the incomplete implementation of the scheme was the choice of in-situ reconstruction, which proved to be very problematic in high-density areas. Finally, the scheme “was undermined by several parallel programs that financed essential infrastructure in slums, or provided new, free (or almost free) housing to slum dwellers.”309 Such a scheme was the PMGP, which was introduced in 1985 by the central and state governments of Maharashtra.

The report revealed a pattern that was occurring with problematic political involvement in slum improvement plans. Beyond the scope of this document, it is crucial to identify on one hand the state government’s desire to open up the issue of transforming slums for a global dialogue; but on the other hand it is critical to understand the limitations and complications of such an approach. This intriguing report marks an important moment in understanding how such slum projects formed the basis of a political battle in the city: the report shines a spotlight on the hidden political agendas of the state and local governments in Bombay from 1985 to 1990 and shows how their competing agendas stymied efforts at implementing change in the slums.

The SUP was never fully implemented. Leading academics and researchers have addressed the hurdles it faced and evaluated the programme’s outcome. These experts include the anthropologists Roma Chatterji and Deepa Mehta, the geographer Vandana Desai, and the sociologist Liza Weinstein. As an addition to the World Bank’s report, Vandana Desai’s study Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay (1995), recognizes some other reasons behind the incomplete implementation of the Slum Upgrading Programme.310 Her approach considers the process of land acquisition and the committee’s role in identifying this reserved land, both of which were factors delaying the project’s execution. She adds that the landlords who did not agree with the provision of land-tenure to the slum dwellers tried to “block the scheme” in any possible way.311 Finally, the increase in the housing societies’ expected monthly expenditures due to the new housing loan agreements made the programme less attractive to some of the housing societies. It was also implied, by the World Bank, that the temporary transit camps that would have housed the dwellers in the time of upgrading should have been built by the dwellers themselves. That detail was an even stronger motive for co-operatives to abandon the scheme because it raised their costs. For Chatterji and Mehta in their critical assessment of their Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life in Bombay, the SUP was underutilized.312 In their view, the poor response to the project among slum residents had the same basis as the administrative difficulties in dealing with the

308 Ibid., Part 1. Paragraph 9
309 Ibid.
310 Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay
311 Ibid.
312 Chatterji and Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life, 138
complexities of the land acquisition procedure and the limitations of the affected land itself. The programme was restricted to areas that mainly belonged to the state. Development activity on private land and in the majority of the municipal areas did not form part of the project. Thus, this plan only affected a minority of slums. Liza Weinstein’s sociological view on the slum redevelopment in Bombay is highly critical of the nature of the housing co-operatives. She argues that bureaucrats took over the leading roles in the co-operatives and as a result the project got lost under managerial difficulties.313 The same criticism is voiced by Panwalkar, who notes that for the housing communities, “A cooperative can serve as an instrument of exploitation if it falls into wrong hands and is monopolized by corrupt individuals or groups.”314

In comparison to the SIP, the SUP was “undeniably progressive.”315 Such benchmarking between the two projects provides a powerful basis for understanding slum upgrading in Bombay. For the key interlocutors of the housing policies in the city, the SUP is a unique step towards improving the security of dwellers by recognizing them as official citizens and creating official local communities. The co-operatives have played an important role in changing the physical environment of slums. Of those housing co-operatives that acquired their leaseholds between 1985 to 1994, most of them - 141 of them - demonstrated the faith that dwellers were absolved of their involvement in the project. Parallel to the Slum Upgrading Programme, in 1985 the central government introduced the PMGP for the redevelopment of Bombay’s slums and more specifically of Dharavi. According to the World Bank’s report, launching another project parallel to the SUP created problems.

The Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP)

This section elaborates upon the first redevelopment project in Bombay’s slums, with a specific focus on Dharavi, initiated by the 1985 Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP). Redevelopment in this context is understood as the process of reconstructing housing units for dwellers either in-situ or in other places. The story of this project reveals a set of striking challenges and contradictions related to the shift in political ideology from improving to redeveloping slums in the city. This narrative uncovers the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as catalytic agents in transforming slums and evaluates their relation not only to the political outline but also to slum dwellers.316 The paradoxes underlying the evolution of this project raise questions about the introduction of the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project in 2004. Ways of understanding and explaining the rise of the redevelopment strategy go hand in hand with the political backdrop in the city, the state, and the country. Hence, this portion begins by picturing an important change in the political scene of Bombay, while simultaneously charting the inauguration of the project.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during the anniversary celebrations of the National Congress Party in Bombay in 1985, announced a grant of a 100 crore (US $26 million) for slum

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313 Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai”
315 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, 133
316 Mukhiya, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai
redevelopment in the city. The National Congress Party was established in 1885, and since then it has been national in scope and centrist in its political ideology. It is understood that the central government made this grant available at the celebration as a response to the change in the political scene in Bombay’s municipal council elections. In 1985, Shiv Sena – the right-wing extremist party – won the BMC elections and succeeded in securing seats in the parliament that the Congress party had held for many decades.

Shiv Sena is a religious political party, founded in 1966 by Balasaheb Thackeray, who was popularly known as the “Snarling Tiger” (figure 13). The party came onto the scene as an anti-immigrant and anti-slum group, and its political approach primarily relied on violence.317 The “Sons of the Soil,” the party’s followers, expressed their principles under the ethnicist slogan “Sundar Mumbai, Maratha Mumbai” – “Beautiful Mumbai, Mumbai for the Maharashtrians.”318 In 1985, when the party won the municipal elections, their first announcement was that they would undertake a massive slum demolition programme, called “Operation Slum Wreck.”319 However, it did not take them long to realize that their strongest support was emerging from the shanty towns themselves, and therefore they rapidly set about changing their political image from one of an anti-slum party to that of a slum-friendly party.320

Figure 13: Shiv Sena’s political heir known as the “Snarling Tiger.” Source: Photograph by Raghu Rai in “Mumbai loses its Boss,” Pune Mirror, November 18, 2012 [Accessed 4 March, 2014]

Such changes in the political winds raised questions from the opposition and suggested the dawn of a new era to counter right-wing politics in Bombay. It was under these circumstances

317 Prakash, Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City, 230
318 Suketu Mehta, Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 55; Mukhija, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai, 26
319 Mukhija, 27
that Rajiv Gandhi introduced the PMGP as a way of countering the mounting influence of Shiv Sena in the city. From the total grant of 100 crore (US $26 million), 37 crore (US $9 million) was allocated specifically for the redevelopment of Dharavi, and as the journalist and writer Kalpana Sharma mentions, “suddenly Dharavi’s location became much more attractive.”\(^{321}\) From the 37 crore, a total of 17 crore (US $4.5 million) was reserved for the provision of new infrastructure, such as widening roads and laying sewerage lines.\(^{322}\) The amount of 2 crore (US $500,000) was diverted for cleaning the Mithi River, which separates Dharavi from the north part of Bombay. The remaining 18 crore (US $4.7 million) was used for the reconstruction of co-operatively owned housing for the dwellers. The project in Dharavi was a pilot programme of reconstruction that was to be implemented on a cost-recovery basis and set as a goal the encouragement of residents’ financial participation.

Within the framework of redevelopment, the logic of housing co-operatives harked back to the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP). In his definitive research on slum redeveloping strategies in Bombay, Mukhija offers four explanations of how this concept of community involvement formed part of this project:

> “First cooperatives allow for easier administration, project implementation, and maintenance of common infrastructure in the reconstructed areas. Second, the beneficiaries pay a lower property tax. Third, cooperatives can exercise control over beneficiaries, making it difficult for them to sell their new apartments. Fourth, the provisions of the Maharashtra Slum Area Act, 1971, only allow for the lease and transfer of public land to cooperatives of slum-dwellers, not individuals.”\(^{323}\)

Gautam Chatterjee, who was the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer responsible for implementing the PMGP, decided to adopt a new learning approach towards the housing co-operatives before assigning to them specific roles. During an interview he had with Sharma, Chatterjee revealed that his primary emphasis would be placed on the needs of the communities rather than on the seemingly enduring point of fixing the slums as an outsider.\(^{324}\) Thus, he visited the communities and discussed with the members their desire for change. As a key outcome of this exercise, the inhabitants broached the crucial issue of the formal-informal housing debate and demanded the legalization (“formalization”) of their settlements. Chatterjee correlated this outcome with some of his ideas for redeveloping Dharavi, and with the support of the then housing secretary, Dinesh K. Afzalpurkar, suggested a new slum transformation strategy based on the communities’ financial participation, which was officially approved in 1986.\(^{325}\) Under the PMGP, the housing co-operatives would lease the slum land for an initial (and renewable) period of 30 years. They could also use these tenancies as a security to raise funds from housing agencies such as the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) for construction works.\(^{326}\) The amount that was to be

\(^{321}\) Sharma, *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum*, 177
\(^{322}\) Ibid., 168
\(^{323}\) Mukhija, *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai*, 44
\(^{324}\) Sharma, *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum*, 169
\(^{325}\) Ibid.
\(^{326}\) HUDCO is the housing agency which primarily finances state and city-level project agencies for executing land development and house construction. It offers cash loans to individual plot holders and slum dwellers with secure sites for house construction and repairs but the loans are routed through the housing agencies or the Apex societies.

Source: Sundaram, *Bombay: Can it house its millions?*, 116
raised by loans from the housing agencies would cover 50% of the total construction costs. Additionally, members of the co-operatives were expected to contribute a fixed amount at the beginning of the improvement works. This amount would be different for residential and commercial tenements; tenants of commercial tenements had to pay an extra charge. The difference between the two sums would then be reflected in supplementary monthly inputs. The residents’ contribution would cover the 15% of the construction cost. The remaining 35% of the total expenses would be covered by the PMGP’s grant.327

Although the housing co-operatives were assigned the task of employing their own architects, the government was responsible for selecting the building contractors even though they would work under the architect’s direction. To organize and facilitate the process of the scheme, the state government appointed the Dharavi committee in 1986 and commissioned the leading architect of the “twin city,” Charles Correa, to head the responsibilities, such as urban and architectural planning, the organization of financial assistance for construction, and the process of upgrading the status of tenure. As a first step beyond the scheme’s organization, Charles Correa identified a major drawback: the lack of a socio-geographical map of Dharavi. Hence, he hired the Hyderabad-based National Remote Sensing Agency to conduct an aerial survey of the enclave. The survey was carried out in 1986 and identified 55,000 families to be located in the area; these areas were being served from 162 water taps and 842 toilets. With a ratio of almost 800 people using one toilet per day, they desperately needed to increase the residents’ access to basic facilities.

Evaluating the results of the study, the committee prepared the first Dharavi Redevelopment Plan, which proposed resettling 35,000 slum dwellers (from a total of 55,000) in-situ, into new structures four to five stories high. Each building would contain apartments of various sizes, ranging from 165 to 430 sq.ft of carpet area. The normal size of the Low Income Group (LIG) was 180 sq.ft and the cost of each apartment was almost Rs 37,000 (US $700). With a goal of improving living conditions, the plan also recommended that nearly 20,000 families should be relocated somewhere else outside of, but close to, Dharavi in order to free up space for schools, parks, and other recreational facilities. As part of this proposal the relocation of tanneries to Deonar in northeast Bombay and the relocation of families that were placed in areas considered dangerous, such under high-tension power lines and close to railway tracks, was also recommended. For the construction period, the state government offered to provide transit camps for the affected dwellers (figure 14).328 The Correa Committee selected 12 peripheral parts of Dharavi to participate in the redevelopment process. All these areas were easily accessible by car or by bus. As soon as the plan was ready to take off, the Chief Minister Sharad Pawar publicly announced his vision of seeing “Dharavi as the new Singapore” with high-rise apartment blocks.329

327 Sharma, 170; Mukhiya, 44
328 Ibid., 161; Ibid., 45
329 Mukhiya, 45
The opposition to this plan received powerful support from two NGOs, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), which had become active in Dharavi since 1985.

SPARC is a housing and social service NGO that worked successfully against slum evictions in Mumbai during the 1980s. NSDF emerged in 1974 to support the rights of slum dwellers in the country. Their alliance against the governmental plan of altering Dharavi has proved to be not only intellectually important, but also radical. As a first step they questioned the survey’s viability given the methodology it used. They argued that an aerial survey in the densely populated Dharavi cannot be accurate as the boundaries between the tenements are blurred. Moreover, an aerial study is not an accurate way to present the exact number of floors in each building because it only provides images from above. The official survey’s numerous promises were strongly undercut by a new investigation organized by the SPARC/NSDF alliance. In 1986, the NGOs’ agents trained representatives from each settlement to gather information about their neighbourhoods. At the end of the enumeration day, the responsible team collected the information and shared the data with the people of each settlement. The records were double-checked along with the identity cards and the electoral poll’s documentation. As a consequence, people produced the map of Dharavi themselves (figure 15). This survey revealed important statistics about the population, landownership, and economic activity in Dharavi. It was found that of the 175 hectares that shaped the area, 106 hectares belonged to BMC, 43 hectares to private landowners, and the remaining 26 hectares to the state and central governments (figure 16). As a counterpoint to the official survey, the new investigation identified that a total of 100,000 families resided in 86,000 structures. Sheela Patel, the director of SPARC, during an interview she had with Vinit Mukhija on his research on slum redeveloping policies in Bombay, described this new investigation as “talking to the
government with facts.”

The updated survey demonstrated that residents were organized in 85 different neighbourhoods, known as nagars, with distinct identities, and had never considered Dharavi as one settlement.

By the end of 1987, in the middle of this investigation, a new plan was being prepared by SPARC titled “People's Plan for Dharavi.” Contradicting the official plan, this new scheme recommended keeping the reconstructed structures of up to two floors and providing an apartment of 280 sq.ft carpet area to each family. According to the people’s plan guidelines, this would have significantly reduced the construction costs. The new scheme also rejected the concept of relocating people or businesses outside of Dharavi and argued that there was enough space to house all dwellers at the original sites. During an interview by Vinit Mukhija with the activist Arputham Jockim from the NSDF in 1997, it was understood that the People’s Plan was also critical for the involvement of private developers in the construction process. The plan implied that any connection with the private sector might have caused the relocation of people in order to make the project more profitable for the developers.

Figure 15: Dharavi map, produced by the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Dharavi’s residents in 1986. Source: Kalpana Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum (India: Penguin Books, 2000)

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330 Ibid., 45
Figure 16: Ownership of Dharavi’s land, held by different authorities: State government plot no. 1, 15, 60, 61, Private plot no. 2, 3, 5, 13, 38 – 60, and the remaining belong to BMC. Source: Vandana Desai, “Dharavi, the Largest Slum in Asia: Development of Low-Income Urban Housing in India,” Habitat 12, no. 2 (1988): 71

The alternative scheme sparked a debate between the government and the local NGO. As a response, representatives of the PMGP offered a series of arguments to justify the choice of their guidelines and dubbed the NGO’s approach unrealistic. Resettling all Dharavi’s residents in apartments of 280 sq.ft in low-rise buildings was not achievable as there would be no space left for other facilities and the essential infrastructure. Additionally, the extra carpet area would increase the cost of maintenance, and this might create new expenses for the residents. As a final comment to SPARC’s suggestion on having residents in the role of builders instead of hiring private contractors, the PMGP officers questioned the residents’ technical abilities to supervise the building process. Although the government was very critical of this new plan, at the end of 1987 it revised the original scheme based on external factors. The key rationale behind this revision was the lack both of long-term funding for reconstructing the whole area and the lack of transit camps to house the dwellers during the construction works. Mukhija adds another important factor: the political outcome. If the government shifted 20,000 dwellers far from Dharavi, this would be impractical from a political standpoint because 20,000 votes could be lost.331

The PMGP lasted for nine years, from 1985 to 1996, and contributed to changes in the living conditions in Dharavi. The total amount spent on the redevelopment of the area was almost

331 Mukhija, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai
US $8.5 million. More specifically, a total of US $4 million was expended on infrastructural improvement such as the widening of three major roads:

- The main street connecting north and south Dharavi widened to 90 feet, popularly called since then as the ‘90 Feet Road’
- The primary connection between Sion and Mahim Creek was widened to 60 Feet
- The Soft road in the middle of Dharavi.

Almost US $4 million was spent on housing reconstruction. A total of 3,800 out of the projected 35,000 houses were reconstructed in 12 suburban areas at Dharavi’s edge (figure 17). Finally, the amount of US $500,000 was spent to clean the highly polluted Mithi River.

*Figure 17: The PMGP Colony, Transit Camps, in Dharavi’s Sector 5*

Beyond the “Singapore vision” of high-rise buildings, which was beginning to shape the periphery of Dharavi, lay the government’s new approach to transforming slum settlements in the centre of the city. Thus, the PMGP’s progress goes one step beyond the conventional slum improvement strategy towards the approval of slum redevelopment. This approach, as Mukhiya argues, was not only acceptable to the slum dwellers and landowners, it was also an attractive prospect to private developers as it added market value in the new constructions for potential buyers. Yet it was also problematic and unstable: it was unclear who had ultimate control over these transformations, and the strategy’s success depended upon Bombay land prices. This strategy underlined the launch of key elements that were to frame the basis of

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332 Weinstein, ”Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai”
333 Mukhiya, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai
334 Ibid.
the Dharavi Redevelopment Project in 2004. Such elements entailed the establishment of in-situ reconstruction, the importance of housing co-operatives and community participation in slum transformation, the recognition of a strong presence of informal economic activity within the area, the identification of the different nagars in Dharavi and the discussion on the size of the reconstructed apartment for slum dwellers. Recounting the years of the PMGP, one can see how important the first Dharavi survey was and how the introduction of local activism through NGOs influenced the spatial evolution of Dharavi. Sundaram, in particular, has drawn attention to this so-called slum redevelopment strategy.335 His arguments are summarized in his statement that “the Redevelopment of Dharavi Slum presents a model of assimilating political leadership and local communities in a participative process of formulating shelter and financing strategy.”336 In his informative words written in 1989, Sundaram identifies the key outcomes of the project behind the construction of Dharavi’s skyline. Although these new high-rise buildings surrounded Dharavi, the centre was still chaotic with high-density, low-rise settlements.

The project drew the attention of various scholars. In her thoughtful analysis of Dharavi’s evolution, Kalpana Sharma argues that the project sounded “logical on paper, but in fact it was not.”337 Considering that the plan concentrated on people’s needs, her argument is intriguing. Her critique identifies problems with the project by looking at residents’ previous living conditions. More specifically, she points out that the state generated a cost-recovery plan without taking into account the investments that people had made in the past. In some cases, they were already paying off previous debts from improvement works, and now under the new project they were asked to accept more debt for potential reconstruction. Another problematic point surrounded the question of rent costs as they related to landownership. Residents were asked to pay rent to the municipal corporation if they lived on BMC land. However, if they lived on private land, they had to pay a much lower amount than for PMGP structures. Consequently, people who were living on municipal land began selling their tenements and moved to other slums in the city. For Chatterji and Mehta, the contrast between the high-rise buildings at Dharavi’s periphery and the central chaos pointed to the plan’s failure to take spatial density into account and to bring its agenda as conceived on paper into reality.338 Moreover, they claimed that the Prime Minister Grant Project was “the first scheme that actually considered slum redevelopment in a systematic fashion and planned the construction of new residential structures for slum dwellers on the same site where they squatted.”339 Their statement outlined the government’s concerns over slums and raises an interesting question as to how long this “systematic fashion” was to last. In a broader context, Vinit Mukhija points out that the high price of real estate in Bombay after 1986 was a major obstacle to the project’s success. He adds that many people and businesses had to move out of the city, and as a result the project seemed less attractive.340 Ultimately, Liza Weinstein states that the project was “mute” because it had little effect inside Dharavi and only physically changed its periphery. However, she does recognize the importance of the scheme and in her

335 Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?
336 Ibid., 161
337 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum, 170
338 Chatterji and Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life
339 Ibid., 138–139
340 Mukhija, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai
A dissertation about the Dharavi Redevelopment Project discusses the legacies that such a scheme left behind: the practices of slum redevelopment and the in-situ building construction in Bombay's slums.341

The PMGP was an undeniably compact project, which embedded mixed dynamics related to spatial configuration. It highlighted the ambiguities associated with the new strategies for slum redevelopment in Bombay and exposed the basis for doubts about the entire approach. Dharavi attracted the interest of developers in the private sector as well as NGOs eager to participate in the slum's transformation. However and as Mukhiya notes for the role of NGOs, “empowerment can mean different things to different actors at different points in time.”342

The project challenged the role of NGOs and residents as catalytic agents and evaluated their position, which is shaped differently in the unraveling of the new Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) for Greater Bombay in 1991.

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341 Weinstein, 83
342 Mukhiya, 63
Figure 18: An example of the proposals for the PMGP Committee by the Indian architect P.K. Das: Proposed Housing Scheme for the Annanagar housing co-operative in Dharavi. Source: P.K Das, "Housing for Annanagar at Dharavi, Bombay," JIIA (December 1988): 40–42
Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD)

During the 1990s, a significant increase in real estate values changed the economic landscape of Bombay. The city reportedly had some of the world’s highest land prices in 1995 (figure 19). This change in the property market was associated with the economic liberalization that the country witnessed in late 1980s and in early 1990s.
This changing context meant that the slum redevelopment strategy, which had gained considerable traction in the previous decade, required a closer look. With an eye on the potential increase in the value of the reconstructed land, the political leaders of the two prominent parties, the Congress party and the Shiv Sena, had embedded in their electoral campaigns their promises to deliver housing to slum dwellers in the city through the redevelopment process. This section examines one of the projects intended to fulfill these promises, the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD). The complex narratives behind this redevelopment approach cast light on the political and economic scene in the city as a whole. As this section illustrates, the SRD was a short-term scheme with low spatial impact, but it nevertheless managed to disrupt the city’s political arena during the 1990s.

The Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) grew out of the tangled political geographies of Bombay. Political leaders foresaw a potential economic profit to be gained from redeveloping the slums, and in 1990 Balasaheb Thackeray publicly announced that if his party won the state elections in 1995, it would redevelop all the city’s slums by providing apartments to the dwellers in-situ. In response to this salvo, in March 1991 Chief Minister Sharad Pawar of the Congress party launched the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD). This programme formed part of Pawar’s vision of transforming Bombay into the commercial and financial centre of India. 343

The SRD was a citywide voluntary scheme. It differed from the previous PMGP but was every bit as ambitious. The dwellers that expressed interest in participating in the process had to establish housing co-operatives such as those proposed in the SUP and PMGP. The co-operatives were responsible for hiring an architect, and the government was responsible for finding a builder to conduct the construction work. The SRD was not a free scheme, and thus the dwellers had to pay the amount of Rs 15,000 (US $280) out of the total construction cost of Rs 75,000 (US $1,400) for a 180 sq.ft tenement. In comparison with the previous scheme, this project set as its primary goal the task of attracting private developers to the slums. 344 Therefore, it suggested an increase of 150% in the maximum allowed FSI, which was 1.33 for the slum areas. In April 1992, when the guidelines of the project were developed, the state government launched a new policy on slum redevelopment, commonly known as the “2.5 FSI Scheme.” The extra FSI allowed private developers to profit from the reconstruction by selling the additional building space in the open market. To control the potential for the exploitation of slum areas by private developers, the government limited the maximum profit from the investment to 25%. 345 This strategy aimed also to spark the landowners’ interest, and thus it encouraged their participation as developers or in partnership with other developers. By 1983, it was recorded that the 50% of the slums were located on private land.

In April 1992, the state government appointed a “special committee” to facilitate and organize the scheme’s implementation. The committee was structured around three official

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343 Gurbir and Das, “Building Castles in Air: Housing Scheme for Bombay’s Slum Dwellers,” 2478
344 Ibid.
345 Mukhija, Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai, 29–30
representatives: the municipal commissioner of Greater Bombay, the chief executive officer for state housing, and the controller of slums. The housing co-operatives had to submit their suggestions to the committee, which would then evaluate feasibility. By 1995, a total of 160 proposals were introduced for approval. From this number, the government accepted 89, which involved a total of 17,600 tenements. However, only 4 of these proposals took off, and by 1998 as few as 2,242 houses were constructed.346

The issue at stake behind these disappointing numbers is an intricate system of incentives and conditions. The scathing critique of the Indian architects Gurbir Singh and P.K. Das equated the project’s low numbers with the absence of interest on the part of developers.347 They argued that builders were reluctant to discuss the process with slum dwellers and the architects also assumed that these deliberations might take longer than planned. Another major problem was the lack of transit accommodation during the reconstruction works. Concurring with this assessment, Mukhija added that the time management problems and the delays in approval procedures were what made developers hesitant about participating.348 Liza Weinstein argued that government-imposed restrictions made the scheme unattractive to most contractors.349

At this point, it is crucial to mention a violent episode that greatly impacted social and political stability in Bombay in 1992, permanently altering the city. The Danga was an outbreak of violence that triggered the religious war between Hindus and Muslims (figure 20). It is one of the darkest periods in the history of Bombay, and it occurred in two phases. The first phase began on December 6, 1992, when Hindus demolished the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The Babri Masjid had been built in 1528 after razing a Hindu temple, which was believed to be the birthplace of the Hindu God Ram. The mosque was considered a monument of national significance for the Muslims, and Hindu extremists destroyed it on December 6 with the intention of replacing it with a Hindu temple. This event had a major impact in the cosmopolitan city of Bombay and more specifically in Dharavi. The religious party Shiv Sena organized a morcha in Dharavi to celebrate the victory of Hinduism after the demolition of the Babri Mosque. The celebration activated the reaction of the Muslim population living in Dharavi and ended with 33 deaths. However, what was to be remembered as the worst day of the first phase was December 9, when Shiv Sena and another religious party, Baharatiya Janata Party (BJP), called a general strike, known as bandh, following the arrest of their followers after the incidents in Ayodhya. This turned out to be the signal for their supporters who attacked mosques and Muslim settlements. As Sharma recounts,

“In one locality, the Shiv Sena put up a notice announcing an award of Rs 50,000 to anyone pointing out a Muslim house.”350

By December 16 the city counted 227 losses. The second phase of the Danga began on January 9 and lasted for only a few days. The last day, January 12, marked the end of a “systematic
attack on and destruction of Muslim establishments and homes in many parts of the city.\textsuperscript{351} The Shiv Sena’s political leader, Balasaheb Thackeray, wrote in his party’s statement that it was time for attacks to stop as “the fanatics have been taught a lesson.”\textsuperscript{352}

The religious war had a major economic and political impact in Bombay. First, almost 150,000 dislocated people left the city in 1993 between January 10 and 15; most of them were migrants. Second, a total of 784 deaths were recorded by the end of the war; this loss of life had a traumatic impact on the city’s social fabric. Finally, the religious war exposed the city’s fragility and left behind a politically transformed place that was dominated by ethnicists who highlighted their power in the state elections following the Danga (figures 21, 22).

The political alliance of the two religious parties, Shiv Sena and BJP, gained seats after the state elections of 1995. While Congress obtained 80 seats, the alliance acquired 138 seats in total (figure 20). This political shift represented a new hegemony and impeded the plans of the previous government. As a first step, Thackeray posed a grave threat to the Congress’ SRD and gradually replaced it with an entirely fresh Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS). The following section tells the story of the new project’s inherent struggles and seeks to uncover the dynamics of its structure. It aims to shed light on the programme’s legacies (which paved the way for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project in 2004) and pays particular attention to how such a programme came into being and evolved.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 1990 & 1995 & 1999 \\
\hline
Congress & 141 & 80 & 75 \\
National Congress Party (NCP) & - & - & 58 \\
Shiv Sena & 52 & 73 & 69 \\
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) & 42 & 65 & 56 \\
Others and Independents & 53 & 70 & 30 \\
\hline
Total seats & 288 & 288 & 288 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Party positions in Maharashtra state assembly elections. Source: Vinit Mukhija, \textit{Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai} (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 27}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 280–281
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid.
Figure 21: Consequences of the Danga in Bombay. Source: Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (Bombay: India Book House Pvt Ltd, 1995), 314

Figure 22: Human chains and demonstrations after the war. Source: Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (Bombay: India Book House Pvt Ltd, 1995), 314
In 1995, two years after the end of the _Danga_, the extreme right-wing political alliance of Shiv Sena and BJP won the state elections. It was recorded that almost 5% of the Muslim population in the city voted for the alliance, even though Shiv Sena was strongly connected to the anti-Muslim events in 1992 and 1993. The discourse of terror was not unique to the political landscape of the city, and it was believed that this 5% was an expression of that fear.\textsuperscript{353} Heavily steeped in the rhetoric of sovereignty, the new state government, as a first step, decided to change the name of the city from Bombay to Mumbai (figure 23). This happened also with other cities, such as Madras, which was rechristened as Chennai, and Calcutta, which changed its name to Kolkata. This modification of names was more symbolic than substantive. Particularly noteworthy here is how Shiv Sena’s political heir made pointed use of the new name in his interview with the writer Suketu Mehta in the book _Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found_. When Suketu Mehta initially approached Balasaheb Thackeray with the intention of writing a book about the city of Bombay, the political leader harshly corrected him by replacing the name “Bombay” with “Mumbai” during their discussion.\textsuperscript{354} This short

\textsuperscript{353} Mehta, _Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found_, 64

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 97
dialogue with the “Snarling Tiger” marked the coming of the new context of change in which Thackery would replace the previous SRD with one that he considered more viable, the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS), popularly known as “The Free Scheme.” Unlike the previous project, which had required slum dwellers to contribute Rs 15,000 (US $280) for the planned construction, the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme aspired to provide them with free housing. The new scheme set as one of its goals the provision of 800,000 free houses to 4 million slum dwellers in Mumbai within five years.

To illustrate the goal and to flesh out this ambition the government set up an 18-person committee, “a study group” that was headed by the official Dinesh Afzalpurkar, previously involved in the PMGP. The committee consisted of 12 governmental agents, two private developers, two architects, one representative from the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), and Sheela Patel from SPARC as a representative from local NGOs. After two months of research, the committee identified 2,335 eligible slum clusters to participate in the process and suggested a series of recommendations to be embedded in the final redevelopment plan. They also estimated the total construction costs to be as much as Rs 15,900 crore (US $3 million). In her paper on slum upgrading in Mumbai, the zealous activist Sundar Burra from SPARC summarizes the committee’s recommendations:

“1. Wherever possible, slums be redeveloped in-situ – and this was possible in about 80% of cases; where slums are located on land reserved for public amenities, wherever possible these amenities should be shifted to other locations; however, if this were not possible, then the slums would have to be relocated along with those on land in dangerous locations and in no-development zones;
2. Pavement dwellers in the city, hitherto denied any rights or amenities, would have the same rights as slum dwellers with regard to the right to rehabilitation, as long as they met with eligibility conditions;
3. Those slum dwellers whose housing could not be upgraded in-situ had the right to be resettled in alternative locations;
4. Owners of private land could participate in the scheme, and were given benefits if they did so.”

Moreover, the committee called attention to the need for a central agency to organize and facilitate the planning procedure. As a result the state government restructured the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) in 1995. Gautam Chaterjee, who was previously the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer responsible for the implementation of the PMGP, was settled as the head of the Authority and began to formulate the planning guidelines. Following the legacy of the previous SRD, this project had as a primary goal redeveloping slums in-situ by providing housing to dwellers and at the same time attracting private investment in these areas. However, as the delivery of housing was free of cost, in order to make the project appealing to developers the Authority removed the previous limitation of the FSI and introduced the strategy of the Transferable Development Rights (TDR). For the slum redevelopment process the FSI was set at up to 2.5. Under this new formula, developers had to

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355 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia's Largest Slum, 177
356 Burra, “Towards a pro-poor framework for slum upgrading in Mumbai, India,” 72
357 Ramya Ramanath, “From Conflict to Collaboration: NGOs and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India”, (PhD diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2005), 223
358 Gurbir and Das, "Building Castles in Air: Housing Scheme for Bombay's Slum Dwellers," 2479
359 Burra, “Towards a pro-poor framework for slum upgrading in Mumbai, India,” 73
construct housing units for all slum dwellers in the selected areas, and any extra space was transferable and could be sold on the open market of any alternative area in the city. The amount of space allowed for this free sale component did, however, depend on the location of the slum. For the island city and the suburbs the developer was offered a free sale component of 7.5 sq.ft for every 10 sq.ft. reconstruction space. But in Dharavi, it was slightly different: for every 10 sq.ft. of reconstruction space, the developer was offered a free sale component of 13.3 sq.ft.  

For slum dwellers, the scheme provided a cross subsidy. Private developers had to make an advance payment of Rs 20,000 (US $470) for the future maintenance expenses of the redeveloped slum housing units. The project was open to all occupants whose residence in the city had begun before January 1, 1995. The eligible residents were promised housing units of 225 sq.ft., limited to nine feet in height, with built-in toilets (in the SRD they had received 180 sq.ft.). To mitigate the burden of property taxes, for the first ten years the government reduced the taxes of eligible slum dwellers by 50%. 

For the plan’s implementation, developers needed to secure the consent of 70% of eligible residents. To avoid any problems with the provision of transit camps during the construction period, the government suggested that developers should find the land and transfer the dwellers into temporary housing under governmental expense. It was also understood that the FSI for the transit accommodation was set at up to 2.5. Sharma notes that as soon as the guidelines were announced, developers, who found a remarkable investment opportunity in Dharavi due to the previous instructions, moved into the area and communicated with dwellers, urging them to form housing co-operatives to participate in the plan. Here is her apt description of the entire process:

"Money passed hands, societies were registered, commencement certificates were issued, some of the old houses were demolished and the residents sent off to transit camps. And then nothing happened."  

In 1995, real estate prices in Mumbai reached their peak and several investors expressed their enthusiasm for redeveloping slums in the city under the latest scheme. Such investors were the L.C. Gandhi of Lok Group, Niranjan Hiranandani, and Madhav Jog, who sought financial aid to implement their projects. However, the high prices of Mumbai’s land significantly dropped within one year. As a result of the massive drop in the price of land, any additional cost to developers made the project less attractive to them. The corpus for funding future maintenance expenditures burdened their plans. Developers faced other burdens as well. The scheme stipulated that they pay Rs 840 per square foot of constructed area for essential infrastructure such as roads, lighting, drainage, and transportation systems. Furthermore, developers had difficulty meeting their responsibility to house the eligible dwellers in temporary housing during the construction time. The major problem they encountered was the lack of available land to house 4 million slum dwellers in the city. All three of the factors just mentioned presented investors with nagging doubts about how profitable and feasible the

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360 Gurbir and Das, “Building Castles in Air: Housing Scheme for Bombay’s Slum Dwellers,” 2478
361 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slam, 179–180
362 Burra, “Towards a pro-poor framework for slum upgrading in Mumbai, India,” 73
implementation of the scheme would be. Thus in 1996, as they were going into the second year of the scheme, few of them expressed an interest in participating.

For their part slum dwellers realized that these changes could exact a heavy toll on their lives. They assessed the project’s guidelines carefully, and it is intriguing to note that a majority of them were not keen to participate. Their experience with previous projects that had not been fully implemented, in combination with an ingrained fear of a possible political change in the state elections in 1999 (which could result in this scheme being replaced with another plan), made the slum dwellers wary of sacrificing what they already had. In some cases, dwellers were also concerned that the cost of maintenance might turn out to be higher than what was proposed. In other cases, they were uncertain about the scheme’s commercial aspects. The majority of residents mainly worked in small-scale industries that were not part of the SRS. Such issues made them sceptical about the economic viability of the project.

The state government recognized these difficulties, and by the end of 1996 Balasaheb Thackeray changed the number of beneficiaries from the plan, from 4 million to 50,000. In 1998, the developers’ interest was very low, and the state decided to contribute financially to the scheme by launching a new initiative called the Shiv-Sahi Punarvasan Prakalap Limited (SPPL). This new governmental enterprise set a goal of raising 100 billion rupees (US $2.2 billion) for the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme. In order to implement this goal successfully, the state requested from the public agencies BMRDA and MHADA contributions of 3 billion rupees each (US $6 million) as a principal investment. The new initiative worked closely with the Slum Rehabilitation Authority. During the same year, a total of 446 proposals were received; of those 367 were approved and only 145 actually started construction (figure 24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposals received</th>
<th>Proposals approved</th>
<th>Construction began</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Government land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government land</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay Municipal Corporation land</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHADA land</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private land</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>446</strong></td>
<td><strong>367</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 24:** Status of Slum Rehabilitation Scheme proposals, 1998. Source: Vinit Mukhija, *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai* (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 124

During 1999, the SPPL finalized a plan to construct 10,550 houses in seven areas in the city and financed 29 projects. By the end of the year only 78 apartment blocks were completed. The outcome was far below the government’s expectations as the buildings were badly designed and poorly constructed, with no water supply. In Dharavi, most of the buildings

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363 Chatterji and Mehta, *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life*, 145
364 Mukhija, *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai*, 124
365 Chatterji and Mehta, *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life*, 145
remained unfinished, with plastered brick walls. As a result, the settlement’s dwellers lived under even more pressure than before and the settlement failed to take off.

Several scholars became engaged in fierce discussions over this project. Chatterji and Mehta, who are uniformly aware of the different approaches to governmentality and the city, found interesting the “gap between political compulsion and the pragmatics of governance. Not just this, but also the fact that these contradictions are articulated publicly in newspapers on day-to-day basis.” From an anthropological perspective on Dharavi, they recognized the daily battle of governmental representatives on various issues of the project as a reflection of the political powerlessness of the individuals involved. Mukhija questions the government’s characterization of the scheme as free. He argues that since it is impossible to house 4 million dwellers and at the same time build an equal amount of floor space for market sale within five years, the contribution of dwellers would have eventually been unavoidable. He also insists that the real estate factor is a crucial parameter for any slum project in a megacity. As Chatterji and Mehta comment, Mukhija also harshly criticizes the role of the state in this scheme and suggests four significant changes to its involvement for future redevelopment projects: a more active role for the state as a regulator, more state involvement in developing, the state’s promotion of institutional innovations, and greater state involvement in financing this process. Weinstein argues that a key flaw in the redevelopment process is the state’s “piecemeal approach” in specific slums such as Dharavi. She suggests that for every slum settlement there be a separate redevelopment project suited to the special characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the tenements. In the SRS, a homogeneous strategy proved to be unrealistic in many cases. But Sharma takes issue with some of these criticisms, claiming that the committee’s initial recommendations were workable and applicable, but, as Mukhija also argued, the change in real estate prices was the major obstacle to the project’s implementation.

The SRS was more than an ambitious and complex scheme. It was a seductive illusion created by a new political leader whose capital-intensive and power-driven visionary schemes followed on the heels of governmental splurges and extremes. The slum redevelopment approach was in its early stages and definitely needed more organization and experience than the political alliance of Shiv Sena and BJP had at the time. However, it is essential to mention that the project had gained respect for its acknowledgement of indirect factors such as the high prices and its appeal not only to private developers, but also to the NGOs that would play such a vital role in developing plans for Dharavi in future years. The project was abandoned in 1999 when the Congress won back the state elections from the far right. One of the new government’s first steps was to condemn the project as unfeasible and work on alternatives to replace it.

366 Ibid., 146
367 Mukhija, 32
368 Ibid., 141
369 Sharma, 178
The Millennial Development

“Writing against apocalyptic and dystopian narratives of the slum, subaltern urbanism provides accounts of the slum as a terrain of habitation, livelihood, and politics. This is a vital and even radical challenge to dominant narratives of the megacity. Subaltern urbanism then is an important paradigm, for it seeks to confer recognition on spaces of poverty and forms of popular agency that often remain invisible and neglected in the archives and annals of urban theory.”

At the dawn of the new global era that Ananya Roy calls “millennial development,” the eradication of slums has been placed at the centre of various political and economic agendas. In her work Poverty Capital, Roy seeks to understand the way informality in cities today is studied and researched. She also examines the actors that manage and produce this “poverty” agenda on a global scale, as well as the role of state, when domestic and foreign investments meet this agenda. In her work Roy uses the concept of “subaltern urbanism” as a metonym for slums. In an effort to identify and assess the reasons behind the formation of this poverty agenda in India, which is represented through housing policies, Roy investigates several implications of and methods for applying the concept of subaltern urbanism. These methods have been very different from the dominant techniques for slum transformation in Mumbai from previous decades. The more recent methods, while a departure from earlier ones, still originate from state planning and are promoted as a new set of housing policies.

In one of her lectures on Indian “slum-free” cities at the Asian Century in the Emergent Cities Symposium at Uppsala (2012), Roy connects the neo-liberal economic model in India to the state’s “activism” in using its housing policies as a means of achieving slum-free Indian cities. Her speech on the models of development being promoted in her home country warrants close consideration because she identifies the paradoxes that shape and govern these models of change. One example she points to is the plan to eradicate slums in India by replacing them with high-rise skyscrapers, creating an image of urban India that is based upon the bankrupt model of Dubai’s development. The paradox of basing a scheme for development upon a failed plan is one of several contradictions in India’s post-colonial slum policies.

This first chapter traced the changing ideology towards slums in Mumbai’s housing policies. Five projects were presented chronologically and evaluated, each of them representing in some way the three basic approaches to change in this context (slum demolition, slum improvement, and slum redevelopment). Slum demolition during the 1950s and 1960s appears to have been the “simplest” solution for “cleaning up” the post-Independence metropolis. This “bulldozer method” was followed by projects employing the slum improvement method, which also offered a solution to the problem of housing the growing influx of migrants into the city. This strategy was applied in Mumbai’s shanty settlements

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572 Ibid.
during the 1970s and the 1980s. After 1990, improvement of slums was replaced by the redevelopment method, which appeared not so much as a solution to the problem of slum conditions but rather as an opening for private capital to participate in solutions for housing the population. All three approaches suggested a top-down method towards slums, giving the state a leading role in the decision-making process.

What this chapter showed is not only how the different roles of state have been shaped since 1947, but also how dwellers, activists, and scholars alike became part of this process of transforming slums. The latest redevelopment strategy reflects this friendlier approach of involving residents in the process. However, the true “friendliness” of this approach is questionable as slum dwellers were not the only addition to this pattern of changing slums: bureaucratic procedures also came into the mix, along with other limitations that have generated delays to the process of change.

This section concludes by initiating the discussion of the latest model of change, the redevelopment process, and posing a question which can be viewed as a challenge for the following chapter. Can redevelopment ever be the solution for tackling the increase of slums in the cities, or is it just one more governmental tactic that will be replaced by the future approaches in the decades that follow? And if redevelopment is the solution, are the existing planning tools effective? Through the analysis of one particular governmental project, this research will expose the deficiencies of this approach and propose a methodological reorientation that can steer planners into more efficient avenues of transforming the fabric of urban slums.
“The Dharavi model, set to make history as a giant step forward for urban reform in the country, is being actively considered by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation for replication in other cities.”

[Shalini Singh, “Dharavi makeover gets Cabinet approval, to cost Rs 7,500 cr,” The Economic Times, March 22, 2004]
Money


Referring specifically to Dharavi, Roy argues that slums, which she calls “spaces of poverty,” are celebrated as “subaltern urbanism” at the borders of redevelopment.\footnote{Ibid.: 123} Through the lens of “Neoliberal Populism” she depicts flows and strategies that people in the urbanized world apply to “do cities.”\footnote{Ibid.; and Fran Tonkiss, “Informality and Its Discontents,” in Informalize! Essays on the Political Economy of Urban Form, Vol.1,” ed. Marc Angélil and Rainer Hehl (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2012), 55–70} This process of “doing” cities has, since 2000 (as Solomon Benjamin argues), adopted a specific vocabulary of “comprehensive planning,” where informality is “ghettoized via programs for ‘basic needs.’”\footnote{Solomon Benjamin, “Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy beyond Policy and Programs,” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 32, no. 2 (September 2008): 719; \footnote{Ibid. : 719–729} Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class city; A summary of recommendations (New Delhi: Galaxy Offset (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2003); and Shahana Chattaraj, "Shanghai Dreams: Urban Restructuring in Globalizing Mumbai" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012)\footnote{Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics,” Environment and Urbanization 13, no. 2 (October 2001): 23; and Sheela Patel, “Dharavi is in the Midst of a Storm,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 285} Particularly in the case of India, Benjamin writes that “doing” cities mainly involves the participation of developers, the Indian metro elite, retailers of branded products, and India’s offices of international donors. All these actors work together to make cities more competitive. In “Occupancy Urbanism,” Benjamin focuses upon and defines all these procedures as “the politics of developmentalism,” which contains policies, projects, and planning programmes.\footnote{Ibid. : 719–729} One such programme that is scrutinized here, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, forms the core of this section.

The ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) was launched in 2004 and was scheduled for completion by 2013. Even though the project has become an important topic of discussions and articles in the media and press since 2004, as of 2014 the project has neither fully proceeded nor been abandoned. The DRP encompasses the grand vision of a slum-free, “world-class” Mumbai. This vision aims to reproduce the “Shanghai” development model of high-rise residential and office buildings within Dharavi’s densely populated area and was the first redevelopment project in India to introduce public and private partnership as a solution to the slum crisis that escalated at the beginning of the century.\footnote{Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class city; A summary of recommendations (New Delhi: Galaxy Offset (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2003); and Shahana Chattaraj, "Shanghai Dreams: Urban Restructuring in Globalizing Mumbai" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012)\footnote{Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics,” Environment and Urbanization 13, no. 2 (October 2001): 23; and Sheela Patel, “Dharavi is in the Midst of a Storm,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 285} Whereas the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai in “Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics” (2001) argues that the world seems marked by an international “victory of neoliberalism,” the activist Sheela Patel claims in her essay “Dharavi is in the Midst of a storm” that this development project goes to “the heart of the crisis of modern development practice.”\footnote{Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics,” Environment and Urbanization 13, no. 2 (October 2001): 23; and Sheela Patel, “Dharavi is in the Midst of a Storm,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 285} This modern practice, which attempts to be globally competitive, fully depends upon the technical expertise and the mechanisms of the private sector. With the above considerations, Dharavi is
identified as the testing site for applying the vocabulary of comprehensive planning and for experimenting with various possibilities of politics.

By examining the slum redevelopment strategy and pinpointing its ramifications, this study illuminates certain aspects that were influential in the decision-making for the spatial mutations, visions, and reconfigurations of Dharavi’s territory through the prism of the DRP; the picture that emerges is one of a process encompassing more weaknesses than strengths. This study also identifies the different actors involved in this process and characterizes the levels of their participation in the project between the years 2004 and 2013. The key actors evaluated in this research are as follows: the architect and mastermind of the DRP, Mukesh Mehta; the government officials, decision- and policy-makers; the local activists; the journalists; and the developers that were involved in the project. Additionally, along with these actors there are also “object” actors, such as a survey, a series of drawings and master plans, and several policies placed at the centre of the process that became the trigger for significant changes and challenges for Dharavi’s spatial configurations over the examined decade. It is crucial to also highlight how the involvement of these actors has changed through time and added controversy to the narrative surrounding Dharavi.

The story of the DRP has been portrayed in a variety of ways in research papers and dissertations related to slums, mainly in the fields of sociology and anthropology. That work is largely based upon interviews and fieldwork, methods that have proven fruitful for understanding the settlement. However, it is important to stress the limitations of those methods in relation to two major parameters: the time frame allowed and the number of voices represented directly. Examining the Dharavi Redevelopment Project as a model for the future redevelopment of slums requires day-to-day scrutiny and a methodological approach that incorporates the majority of voices contributing to the DRP. This study avoids the limitations of previous approaches by offering an analysis of newspaper coverage of Dharavi. Karl Kraus has underlined the importance of newspapers for studying complex social changes in cities in his essay “In these Great Times,” where he specifically writes,

“…and then it happens to occur to me, it becomes clear to me on a cloudy day, that life is only an imprint of the press. If I learned to underestimate life in the days of progress, I was bound to overestimate the press.”

Kraus’s approach forms the basis of a methodological exploration that takes redevelopment and the discourse of daily newspapers as its two major and interconnected objects of study and evaluates their joint effect on Dharavi’s spatial transformation. The press offers a way of more fully understanding and examining analytically the reasons the DRP has not been implemented. Newspapers witness the daily structure of an event, such as the DRP, without knowing what will happen the following day. In stark contrast to a historical examination of the project, which looks backwards and examines the stories through the filter of time, an

381 Two main examples are: In sociology from Liza Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai”(PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009) and in anthropology from Shahana Chatteraj, “Shanghai Dreams: Urban Restructuring in Globalizing Mumbai”

382 Karl Kraus, “In these Great Times,” in In these Great Times: A Karl Kraus Reader, ed. Harry Zohn, trans. Joseph Fabry, Max Knight, Karl F. Ross and Harry Zohn (UK: 1976; reprint. UK: Carcanet Press Limited, 1984), 75
Investigation of newspapers affords a view from a particular point in time based upon daily events and projections into the future from that vantage point.

This chapter is a partial effort to show how a study of the redevelopment project can move beyond conventional practices of producing knowledge and assessing research. Examining and organizing the information presented in newspaper reports can provide the basis for both understanding key ideas regarding the complex evolution of the DRP and uncovering predominant patterns in the process of transforming slums. The number of newspapers that referred to the DRP gradually increased after 2004 and reached its peak in the years 2007 and 2009. Almost 500 articles written in daily Indian English-language newspapers are scrutinized for the purposes of this analysis. This number represents the majority of discussions around the DRP in Mumbai and allows us to evaluate the discourse constructed around this topic. These articles convey the complexity of the DRP and uncover the levels of involvement of each actor who participated in the project.

This part of the research is neither a mere critique of the slum redevelopment process nor yet another discussion about the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Rather, it outlines the strategies that shape decision-making in the design and transformation of slums today and exposes the need for more effective ways of spatially configuring slums in the 21st century. As the sociologist Saskia Sassen claims, the space of the city becomes a contested space of politics in which “non-formal political actors” can form the political scene “in a way that is much more difficult at the national level.”

**Vision Mumbai**

**Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City**

In September 2003, within the context of the millennial goal of a slum-free city, a sequence of recommendations appeared for transforming Mumbai into a world-class city. Bombay First and the private consulting firm McKinsey produced and released recommendations (figure 1) that bore uncanny similarities to the deliberations over slum transformation presented in the beginning of the century, specifically in *The Challenge of Slums* (2003), UN-HABITAT’s first report introducing global estimations of slums and discussing the role of governments in the evolution of slums. These recommendations were recapitulated in the report *Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City; A summary of recommendations*, which encapsulates the core global trend towards the slum-free city and suggests particular strategies for putting the proposals into practice in Mumbai. The report was incorporated into the government plans in 2004 and soon enough the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project became part of these plans.

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In view of continuing signs of economic stagnation in Mumbai since 1990, Bombay First and the consulting firm McKinsey organized a study that would identify the city’s weaknesses and suggest a strategic plan for transforming Mumbai into a world-class city by 2013. Following Roy’s deliberations in “The Blockade of the World-Class City: Dialectical Images of Indian Urbanism” (2011), the term “world-class city” here refers to “a phantasmagoria, the dream world of a postcolonial development.”

Bombay First is a local non-profit organization that has been active in private and public partnerships in Mumbai since 1995. It was established within the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and aimed at a partnership between state and business in the city. Having succumbed to the seductive vision of “London First,” according to which London would be transformed into the world’s financial capital, one of India’s senior bureaucrats, B. G. Deshmukh, aspired to a similar vision. Together with the leadership of BCCI, he helped create Bombay First.

The organization’s first mission was to “offer the best the private sector has to offer to the problems of urban planning and governance in Mumbai.” More than 180 businesses from Mumbai became members and contributed financially to the creation of this organization. The Governing Board was made up of state and local commissioners as well as local activists from Bombay’s middle class.

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390 Ibid., 97
In early 2003, referencing the model of “London First,” Bombay First decided to head a study of recommendations for transforming Mumbai into a world-class city. Because the NGO did not have the technical staff to conduct this study, it appointed the international consulting firm McKinsey to oversee the research. Ranjit Pandit, the managing director of McKinsey India, who was a member of the Bombay First’s Governing Board, was closely involved in this study, and in a four-month period McKinsey produced a ten-year plan, the report Vision Mumbai.391

Vision Mumbai – “the dream image of a world-class city,” as Ananya Roy aptly characterized it in her lecture on “slum-free” cities at the Asian Century in the Emergent Cities Symposium at Uppsala (2012) – aspired to eight goals pertaining to the city’s economic growth. These goals involved infrastructure; various conditions such as health, education, pollution, sanitation and water; governance; funding; public-private partnerships; and low-income housing.392 In an effort to inscribe these goals into the city’s socio-economic life, the report suggested a comparative study with two other cities that were successfully transformed into “world-class cities”: Shanghai and Cleveland. Most agree that the private-public partnership between industry and government was behind both cities’ successful transformations.393 On the heels of the report outlining this vision, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh predicted that Mumbai would be “the next Shanghai.”394 Similarly, the deputy chief minister of the State of Maharashtra, Vilasrao Deshmukh, highlighted the “Shanghai Vision” for Mumbai:

“Today, Shanghai has become a symbol for Mumbai, that city started from zero and see where it is today. Citizens here will start having confidence in the government when they see Mumbai’s transformation in the next five years.”395

The plan’s main goal harked back to the model of previous case studies and aimed at reducing slums from 50–60% by 2003 to 10–20% by 2013 using the following five initiatives:

1. Increase land availability by 50–70%
2. Create 800,000 low-income houses to rehabilitate existing slum dwellers by redesigning the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) process
3. Build 300,000 additional low-income housing units by creating “Special Housing Zones” (SHZs) through targeted incentives
4. Create islands of excellence through integrated development
5. Redevelop the city block-by-block.396

391 Ibid., 108–109
392 Ananya Roy, “Making the Postcolonial Futures: The ‘slum-free’ cities of the Asian century” (lecture, Emergent Cities: Conflicting claims and the politics of informality Symposium, Uppsala, Sweden, March 9, 2013)
393 Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai, 10–11
394 Darshini Mahadevia and Harini Narayanan “Slumbay to Shanghai: Envisioning Renewal or Take Over?” in Inside the Transforming Urban Asia: Processes, Policies and Public Actions, ed. Darshini Mahadevia (New Delhi, Ashor Kumar Mittal, Concept Publishing Company, 2008), 94, 95
395 Ibid., 94, 95
396 Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai, 20–23
Within the framework of the proposed policy-making, the redevelopment approach was celebrated as the “proper” solution to protect the city from the slum “threat.” In this context, some of the vital ideas were to increase the Floor Space Index (FSI) from 3 to 4 (thereby achieving additional building space) and to reduce the eligible number of slum dwellers who could participate in slum upgrading projects (by imposing a cut-off date of January 1, 1995). Additionally, the proposal called for inviting developers, NGOs, and communities to visit the slums and present their plans, after which the dwellers would decide which plan best fit their needs.

Vision Mumbai gained the interest of the Maharashtra state government, and in February 2004, the chief minister launched a special Task Force charged with preparing an implementable action plan based on the recommendations of Bombay First and the McKinsey report (figure 2). The updated document was generated with the active involvement of the following departments of the Maharashtra government: the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), and the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC).

In Shanghai Dreams (2012), Shahana Chattaraj argues that three motivations were behind Bombay First’s interest in promoting the report with the Maharashtra state government:

1. The state’s commitment to this large-scale programme of Mumbai’s transformation
2. The state’s financial commitment, which following one of the report’s suggestions would be controlled by the Mumbai Development Fund
3. The participation of the private sector and NGOs in designing and implementing the project.

The Task Force proposed guidelines similar to those of Vision Mumbai. As a first step, it designated subgroups to research the suggested five areas of transformation: i) strategic planning and financing, ii) housing, iii) economic growth, iv) physical infrastructure, and v) governance. In a departure from the Bombay First and McKinsey report, the Task Force structured its recommendations along two tracks: the fast and the slow track. As part of the fast track, the action plan concentrated on the eradication of slums, proposing as a starting point the development of Dharavi:

“Develop at least three sectors of Dharavi for commercial or office use and extend the Bandra-Kurla Complex to Dharavi.”

397 Government of Maharashtra, Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City, First Report of the Chief Minister’s Task Force, (Mumbai, 2004), ii
399 Government of Maharashtra, Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City, 1
400 The Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) is a commercial and office hub in the centre of Mumbai. It shares a border with Dharavi and is believed to be the first of a series of “growth centres” that served as models for future redevelopment in Mumbai. After its completion, all eyes turned to Dharavi as an extension of the BKC.
401 Government of Maharashtra, Transforming Mumbai into a World-Class City, 14
It was the first time in the 21st century that Dharavi’s holistic transformation was discussed in the city’s political and planning circles. However, as the historian Gyan Prakash notes in *Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City* (2010), “this initiative of change comes not from architects and urban planners but from business leaders and a global consultancy..."
firm.” Additionally, Chattaraj argues that this “outsourced” urban planning and policy-making process moves towards the “marketization” not only of public services, but also of public functions. These studies and critiques of the Task Force’s conclusions raise the question of the degree to which large-scale urban planning projects depend for their success upon the involvement of policy and planning experts. In seeking to answer these questions, it is important to acknowledge Gavin Shatkin’s work on Privatopolis, where he argues for a vision of future urban spaces and city designs in which the private market plays a central role.

The eradication of slums dominated the Task Force agenda between December 2004 and February 2005, when a violent demolition of slums that had been erected in Mumbai after 1995 left more than 90,000 slum families homeless. Vijay Patil, a city official who declared that “it was time to turn Mumbai into Shanghai,” guided these demolitions, which are also known as the “Indian Tsunami.” In the spirit of these times, the chief minister of Maharashtra explained to the media, “every Chief Minister wants to be remembered for something.”

A few months before the demolitions, in July 2004, the Citizens Action Group (CAG) was formed as an external advisory group for transforming Mumbai into a world-class city. The CAG consisted of 28 Mumbai citizens from fields such as governance, banking, industry, and academia and also included representatives from slums. The stated mission of this group followed the Task Force objectives: to monitor Mumbai’s transformation, with the involvement of citizens from the private and public sectors, into a world-class city. The chairman of the group was the chief minister, and key members were Narinder Nayar from Bombay First, Ranjit Pandit from McKinsey India, and the local activist and Dharavi resident Jockim Arputham from National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF). The Citizens Action Group met regularly and also supervised the six subgroups formed by the Task Force.

In November of the same year, the project “Transform Mumbai into a world-class city” was approved as part of the Cities Alliance’s Slum Upgrading Programme and the City Development Strategies. (The Cities Alliance members that supported this project were: the Rockefeller Foundation, the Urban Management Programme [UMP] of UN-HABITAT, the American USAID, and the World Bank.) The implementing agencies in India were the All India Institute of Local Self Government and the World Bank. The first phase of the project, which was approved on November 5, 2004, lasted for five years, and on April 30, 2008, the project was considered closed. To achieve the vision of “a dream city,” some of the organizations sponsoring the project – the World Bank, Cities Alliance, the Government of

India and the All India Institute of Local Self Government – set up the Mumbai Transformation Support Unit (MTSU) in July 2005. The MTSU was established as an external body to plan, monitor, and implement projects that were focused on the city’s physical and social infrastructures, environment, housing, governance, strategic planning, and economic growth. Some of the unit’s major responsibilities were to provide technical support for the CAG’s working subgroups, such as background research and consultations. In this sense, the unit’s work was a major catalyst for the implementation of individual projects. In the report produced by the MTSU just after its formation, one of the projects under its umbrella was the development of Dharavi. The report foresaw the following:

“Improving housing and living conditions by rehabilitating over 50,000 families in Dharavi slums over seven years through an integrated urban renewal approach and private-public partnership.”

In March 2006, the Task Force was upgraded to the Empowered Committee, a state engine headed by the chief secretary of Maharashtra. The Committee consisted of 17 government officials, including the municipal commissioner of Mumbai and the chief executive officer of MHADA, along with seven members of the Citizens Action Group (among whom were Narinder Nayar of Bombay First, Ranjit Pandit of McKinsey India, and Deepak Parekh of HDFC Bank). Since the establishment date, the Empowered Committee has been having monthly meetings to initiate, review, and find ways to implement the individual projects that form the vision of transforming Mumbai into a world-class city by 2013 (figure 3). In the first meeting, the pilot project of Dharavi’s redevelopment became an indispensable part of the discussion agenda. However, the meeting’s outcome was not to rehabilitate the dwellings of 50,000 families in Dharavi, but to increase the number of families impacted to 100,000, raising interest and pressure in favour of the transformation process.

**Figure 3**: The institutional framework for “Transforming Mumbai into a world-class city”

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408 Transforming Mumbai into a world class city, Cities Alliance and Mumbai Transformation Support Unit, statement by Mr. U.P.S. Madan, project Manager, MTSU, Phase II

409 Ibid.
Dharavi’s pilot project was important as a model for eradicating slums in Mumbai and throughout India; it received support not only from government but also from individuals who anticipated the profitability of this project as a future market. Although the initiative did not originate from the work of architects and planners, it attracted the interest of individual professionals such as the Indian architect Mukesh Mehta. The following section draws upon Mukesh Mehta’s profile and recognizes his role in the governmental plans for transforming Dharavi.

The vision of a slum-free Dharavi

“If we can make Mumbai slum-free, then every city in India can be made slum-free. And if any city in India can be made slum-free then any city in the world can be made slum-free.”

Mukesh Mehta is the Indian architect who became the “mastermind” of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. He was born and raised in Mumbai and studied architecture and urban design at the Pratt Institute in New York. Having finished his studies, he then worked as an architect building luxury homes on Long Island, New York. During the 1990s, Mehta returned to Mumbai to achieve his vision, the project named “Dharam.” In May 2007, in an interview with the journalist Mark Jacobson at the National Geographic magazine, he said that before he returned to India he almost had an “epiphany” and decided to “dedicate his life to fixing slums,” because he realized that the people of Dharavi were his heroes. According to his visions, “fixing” slums was an approach strongly connected to “redeveloping” slums. Thus in 1997 he set up an office in Dharavi and began working on the area’s redevelopment. Between 1997 and 2004, he drafted different plans and aimed at changing Dharavi’s reputation from being Asia’s largest slum to being Asia’s most beautiful city. The key ideas behind his ambitious project were to develop the area as an unbroken entity rather than implementing a piecemeal approach, and he was very much inspired by the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) in 1995. Initially, in 1997, he approached Dharavi as a developer and expressed an interest in participating in the SRS. However, as soon as he located his office in Dharavi, his interaction with residents added a social aspect to his draft plans. Moreover, Mehta soon realized the political importance of the area:

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411 Ibid.
415 Jacobson, “Dharavi: Mumbai’s Shadow City”
416 Weinstein, “Redeveloping Dharavi: Toward a political economy of slums and slum redevelopment in globalizing Mumbai” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009), 113
417 Jacobson, “Dharavi: Mumbai’s Shadow City,” 81
The right wing political coalition of the two parties, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena, had been in power at the state level since 1995. In seeking support for his plan for redeveloping Dharavi, Mukesh Mehta approached governmental representatives and particularly Balasaheb Thackeray, who had expressed his interest in funding the project. However, in 1999, the Congress party won the elections and showed no interest in supporting Shiv Sena’s projects, including the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Mukesh Mehta worked for three years to persuade the new government to approve his plan, and in November 2002 the state government’s secretary, Suresh Joshi, arranged a presentation about the DRP at the Maharashtra Infrastructure Development and Support Act (MIDAS) Summit. The summit lasted for three days and emphasized the importance of private investment in public projects. In the same meeting Shirish Sankae from McKinsey India discussed his vision for Mumbai and laid out statistical information and the “alarming” numbers for the city’s projected housing needs, all of which were subsequently published in the document Vision Mumbai. Joshi advised Mehta to “approach the government as a partner, rather than as a customer to whom he was selling his plan.”

In 2003, with the emergence of the report Vision Mumbai, the eradication of slums became a crucial issue for the political agenda in the new century, and Mehta’s project fit perfectly with this agenda. In January 2004, as soon as the state government adopted Vision Mumbai, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project received significant attention and attracted the interest of the central government. In contrast with the state, the central government in 2004 was a right-wing alliance of the BJP and Shiv Sena. Their interest in redeveloping Dharavi became evident when they offered US $100 million for the implementation of Mehta’s project. In the course of pursuing this agenda and taking part in the political debate, the state government realigned its agenda and incorporated the redevelopment of Dharavi into its revised plans. The whole area of Dharavi was declared an undeveloped area, and thus the government appointed the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) as a Special Planning Authority (SPA) to oversee the process in accordance with Mukesh Mehta’s suggestions. The SPA was appointed on March 3, 2005 (figure 4). Once again, Dharavi’s transformation became an arena of political conflict and competition for sovereignty between the central and state governments.

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419 Weinstein, 114
420 Ibid.
423 Weinstein, 115
424 Ibid., 121
Figure 4: The Government in Urban Development Department (UDD) resolution appointing the Slum Rehabilitation Authority as Special Planning Authority (SPA). Source: Dharavi Redevelopment Project, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Draft Planning Proposals for Dharavi Notified Area (Mumbai, March, 2013)

In 2004 Mukesh Mehta was assigned the profitable role of Project Management Consultant for a “sustainable, mainstreamed, slum-free Dharavi.” He prepared the ground and

423 Ibid., 121; and Jacobson
developed a series of guidelines to encapsulate the ideas for Dharavi’s fresh look. With the aim of achieving the holistic transformation of the area, Mukesh Mehta introduced a sectoral approach and initially divided Dharavi into 12 segments. He later modified the plan to include nine, and finally five sectors for gradual development over a seven-year period (figure 5). All sectors were shaped using large main roads as borders, and all of them were to provide public amenities, such as schools, playgrounds, and market areas. Each sector would have its own developer and be self-sufficient.

![Dharavi's five sectors plan. Source: REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KRVIA (Mumbai, 2010)](image)

Sector one (figure 6), located on the south-east and north-west boundary of Dharavi, includes the 10,760 slum units that – according to a survey initiated by the government in 2007 and conducted by MASHAL – existed there. The majority of these units are residential. However, the first sector also includes several amenities, such as the municipal hospital Lokmanya Tilak (also known as “Sion Hospital”) on the north-east side of the Sant Kabir Marg (the largest plastics factory on the north-west side); four existing primary schools; and – along the central

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426 Dharavi Redevelopment Project, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Draft Planning Proposals for Dharavi Notified Area* (Mumbai, March, 2013), 26
railway line – several small vegetable farms. A small cemetery near Mahim Station, small temples, churches, and mosques are also part of the first sector.427

Figure 6: Dharavi’s sector 1. Land use plan. Source: Material provided to author by Hrishikesh.R. Patil, sub-engineer for the DRP/SRA, September 19, 2013

Sector two (figure 7) hosts 15,707 slum tenements and is located on the south-east periphery of Dharavi. One of the most productive parts of this area is Kumbharwada, the pottery colony, in which there are many small retail shops and small-scale industries. Sector two has no municipal hospital or dispensary; it only has one school, nine temples, three mosques, and two churches.428

428 Ibid.
Figure 7: Dharavi’s sector 2. Land use plan. Source: Material provided to author by Hrishikesh.R. Patil, sub-engineer for the DRP/SRA, September 19, 2013

Sector three (figure 8) is located at the centre of Dharavi and houses 12,750 slum units, primarily in municipal chawls. This sector also includes the biggest BMC hospital in Dharavi, several leather tanneries, bakeries, and small-scale industries. The private school Ganesh Vidyalaya and three other primary schools serve the educational needs of the sector’s residents. One of the biggest environmental problems of this sector is the pollution from the open nallah, located on the south-western periphery of its borders.429

Figure 8: Dharavi’s sector 3. Land use plan. Source: Material provided to author by Hrishikes.R. Patil, sub-engineer for the DRP/SRA, September 19, 2013

Sector four (figure 9) occupies the north-east boundary of Dharavi, in very close proximity to Banda Kurla Complex (BKC). In total, this sector includes 10,815 slum tenements, a BMC dispensary that provides medical services for local inhabitants, a big leather market, several jewellery shops, and retail shops. Since there is no educational institute in this sector, the residents attend schools in sector three.\footnote{Ibid.}
Sector five (figure 10) is located on the north-east boundary of Dharavi, which is marked by an institutional building of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) colonies. This sector hosts the smallest number of slum tenements in Dharavi – only 4,574. Additionally, leather shops and non-polluting industries occupy the majority of the area, and the Manohar Joshi College and a municipal school serve its residents’ educational needs.\footnote{Ibid.}
Many parts of the enclave’s territory, constituting almost 239 hectares, had already been developed under previous plans and did not need to be included in the redevelopment project. Additionally, all lands belonging to the central government and the railways, along with territory that was already under redevelopment in almost 91 Slum Rehabilitation Schemes, were marked as “excluded areas” and thus did not form part of the DRP (figures 11–12). The area under redevelopment would only cover 144 hectares and include the construction of 57,531 new tenements.
Figure 11: Excluded Properties Plan of Dharavi. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 1, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 76
Figure 12: Land Ownership Plan of Dharavi. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 1, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 77.

Legend

1. MCGM
2. PRIVATE
3. RAILWAY
4. CEMETARY
5. STATE  GOVT.
6. UNCLEAR  AREAS (c.s. boundary incomplete/c.s. not found)

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<td>ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES TO BE TREATED AS PVT. OWNERSHIP MAP OF DRP AREA</td>
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The total construction cost of the DRP was estimated at Rs 9,250 crore (almost US $2 billion), and implementation was planned for the end of 2013. Drawing on a private-public partnership, the plan projected that 65% of the area would be rehabilitated housing for slum dwellers while the remaining 35% would be available to be sold on the open market. In other words, the 35% at private developers’ disposal set the basis for a tentative formula under which they could profit from the project. This appealing percentage came equipped with Mukesh Mehta’s suggested development strategy known as “HIKES,” which derived from the following five desirable conditions for Dharavi: Health, Income, Knowledge, Environment, and Socio-Cultural Development (figure 13).

![Development Strategy Proposed for Dharavi](image)

Figure 13: Mukesh Mehta’s HIKES approach for Dharavi Redevelopment Project, Source: SRA Government, Dharavi Presentation [Accessed May 31, 2013]

To secure Health, the plan foresaw opening a polyclinic and a centre for battered women. A series of industries would secure Income: a leather research institute, footwear design factories, and jewellery firms. Educational institutes such as the National Institute of Design, which researches leather and ceramic design, would provide the knowledge needed to support these industries. Furthermore, in all five sectors, schools with libraries would be easily accessible. To secure the “world-class” character of the area, the plan also envisioned global institutes such as the International Institute of Visual and Performing Arts. Modelled along the same lines, experimental theatres would bolster the Socio-Cultural development of the area.\footnote{SRA, Dharavi Presentation [Accessed May 31, 2013]} The DRP would address the lack of recreational and open spaces in Dharavi by providing recreational grounds for an obligatory 15% of the developed area, with special attention to parks for young children. The bidding document for the DRP envisaged Dharavi
as “the first Eco-Suburb of Mumbai.” In an effort to achieve this vision, the plan applied seven “Eco-Housing” criteria during the project’s implementation:

- Site Planning which involves the following actions: Implementation of Bio-Diversity Conservation for eco housing, removing of top-soil for landscaping and preserving it for re use on site, prevention of soil erosion, and proposed drainage pattern of the site should respond to the existing drainage patterns
- Environmental Architecture through adopting climate responsive design practices to achieve thermal comfort criteria, to ensure glare free day light, and to facilitate natural cross ventilation in and around the building
- Energy Conservation and Management with the use of fluorescent lamps
- Efficient Building Materials – particularly finishing materials
- Water Conservation by setting up decentralised treatment plants based on non-energy intensive and eco-friendly technology and segregating of waste
- Other Measures such as provisions for handicap access and earthquake protection codes.

Additionally, the document proposed three projects – a Heritage Museum, an auditorium, and a gymnasium – to serve the Socio-Cultural needs of the community. Two main centres in the settlement would provide space for social activities and public interaction. The project was slightly different from the conventional SRA projects in terms of the settlement’s size and its focus on slum dwellers’ rights. The initial SRA report on the DRP provided an overview and outlined the key characteristics of the project. As in the SRA projects, the DRP increased the size of rehabilitated residential tenements to 225 sq.ft. In this case, all eligible slum dwellers were offered a free unit of 225 sq.ft., and if some dwellers aspired to have a larger unit, they would be obliged to pay the cost of constructing the extra space. Eligible dwellers were those residents who had moved to Dharavi prior to January 1, 1995. Following the guidelines of previous SRA projects, the developer would provide Rs 20,000 (US $350) per year for the maintenance of the tenements over a period of 15 years following the tenements’ construction.

Equally ambitious was the rehabilitation of commercial tenements, which would also allow for 225 sq.ft. units free of cost; the occupants would cover the cost of any additional space. In contrast to the previous slum rehabilitation projects, the DRP estimated that a large part of the existing industries would also fall within the redeveloped area, and thus the government introduced a new industrial policy for Dharavi, which was embedded in Development Control Regulations (DCR) (figure 14). However, this rule was only for non-hazardous and non-polluting industries and therefore did not include the recycling and leather industries.

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434 Ibid., 31–32
435 Ibid., 33
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Carpet Area in the range of (in sq.ft.)</th>
<th>Carpet Area to be provided .... (in sq.ft.)</th>
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<td>With 10% reduction</td>
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<td>251 to 1000</td>
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<td>1001 to 1500</td>
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<td>1500 and above</td>
<td>225</td>
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**Figure 14:** Projection for rehabilitating industries in Dharavi under the DRP. Source: Development Control Regulations. Source: Regulation for Dharavi Notified Area, Modification, [http://www.sra.gov.in/htmlpages/pdf/ENGLISH_FINAL_DCR.pdf](http://www.sra.gov.in/htmlpages/pdf/ENGLISH_FINAL_DCR.pdf) [Accessed May 31, 2013]

In a departure from the previous slum projects in Mumbai, the new DRP foresaw an increase in the Floor Space Index from 2.5 to 4, with all additional space to be purchased within Dharavi. This rule was meant to counteract the strategy of the Transferable Development Rights (TDR), which was a formula that enabled developers to transfer and sell any extra space in selected areas throughout Mumbai. In the case of the DRP, this strategy was not allowed: all rehabilitation was to take place in situ. Although in previous plans developers needed to secure the consent of 70% of eligible residents, no such consent was required for the DRP. In an effort to embed the “world-class” vision into the territory, the guidelines also projected a series of physical changes in Dharavi. Such changes included the establishment of a minimum front open space of three meters in front of each structure, a range of pathways whose length was between three and six meters, a new road system, and elevated green corridors (figures 15–19).
Figure 15: Proposed Road Network Plan of Dharavi. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 1, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 78
Figure 16: Existing roads in 2003 and suggested road system under the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Source: Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, Kate Orff, eds., Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment (New York: GSAPP Columbia University, 2009)
Figure 17: Schematic Street Section – 36m wide Arterial Roads. Source: Dharavi Redevelopment Project Bidding Document, Vol III –DRP - Sector 1 (Mumbai, February, 2008), 39

Figure 18: Proposed Elevated Greenway Layout Plan for the DRP. Source: Dharavi Redevelopment Project Bidding Document, Vol III –DRP – Sector 1 (Mumbai, February, 2008), 27
In order to forge a more attractive view of Dharavi’s future, Mukesh Mehta suggested a different land division from what already existed in the area. Thus, the residential area would cover the majority of the land – 77% of the rehabilitated area – while the commercial area would only cover 17% (figure 20).

In this project, the role of the developer was crucial for considering the different characteristics of each sector. The developer’s responsibilities included providing transit camps for all eligible slum dwellers free of cost and managing the transition from old tenements to transit camps.

Such an initiative was a central challenge for people who had already been living and working in Dharavi. The master narrative that guided Dharavi’s uniqueness was the model of living and working in the same area. This model of an informal economy in Dharavi had been contributing around US $500 million each year to India’s GDP. The provocative question of how sustainable the project would be in economic terms was a source of some concern: the project would mean that many people already living in Dharavi would lose their jobs.
Dharavi Redevelopment Project
Between 2004 and 2014

“The Dharavi model, set to make history as a giant step forward for urban reform in the country, is being actively considered by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, for replication in other cities (2004).”

“Shalini Singh, “Dharavi makeover gets Cabinet approval, to cost Rs 7,500 cr,” The Economic Times, March 24, 2004

Figure 21: Dharavi Redevelopment Project advertisement. Source: The Times of India, January 24, 2004
Resettling slum dwellers in Dharavi and transforming the city into a “glittering globalizing Shanghai” was the leading promise of Minister Sushilkumar Shinde in January 2004, when he announced the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Images of high-rise residential and commercial buildings, which emerged from mainly Asian cities in the 21st century, were poised to replicate themselves in Dharavi. As the concept of “the slum” was entering an ambiguous period in the modern development era, this “beautiful” image of Dharavi’s future was held up as a paradigm for the future direction of other Indian slums. The initial plan prepared by Mukesh Mehta projected the area’s transformation in five phases and within five sectors. In all five sectors, new residential buildings were to replace Dharavi’s existing 70,000 tenements, and 15% of the area would go to gardens and playgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Nauzer Bharucha, “Dharavi could be a liveable township soon,” The Times of India, February 2, 2004</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>“It is a big and a total facelift to Dharavi. It will become a model township in the country” – Suresh Joshi, a senior official in MHADA. (Source: Katyal, Sugita and Lengade, Jayashree, “Asia’s largest slum to get $1.3 billion facelift,” Daily Times, February 11, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>“How will the new project help me? Property taxes will be high and as it is, I have so many bills to pay for” – Bhimavati Maitre, Dharavi resident (Source: Sugita Katyal and Jayashree Lengade, “Asia’s largest slum to get $1.3 billion facelift,” Reuters, February 11, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukesh Mehta</td>
<td>“Instead of bleeding the city, this region will start contributing to it. The redevelopment plan for the region will see industrial pockets being created for these entrepreneurs who have been living here for several years without relocation” (Source: Renni Abraham, “Dharavi recast plan: sky is the limit,” Business Standard, January 30, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists (NGOs)</td>
<td>“Dharavi has assumed importance because of its proximity to the Bandra-Kurla Complex, which is emerging as a major financial and trading hub of Mumbai. Several acres of prime land can become vacant if the slum dwellers are relocated to tall buildings.” – Jockim Arputham, in “With Rs 5,600 crore, Dharavi won’t be a slum,” The Times of India, January 23, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers</td>
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</table>

**Chart 1: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2004**

Once this collection of images of the new beautiful Dharavi emerged, the press responded with enthusiastic headlines such as these: “Dharavi could be a liveable township soon,” “Dharavi Project cleared,” “State declares Rs 5,600 crore plan (US $1 billion) for Dharavi, Rs...”

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418 Ibid.
175 crore (US $30 million) package for weavers,” and “With Rs 5,600 cr, Dharavi need not slum it any more” (figures 22–23).

Figure 22: “With Rs 5,600 cr, Dharavi need not slum it any more,” The Times of India, January 22, 2004

Figure 23: Nauzer Bharucha, “Dharavi could be a liveable township soon,” The Times of India, February 2, 2004

Nauzer Bharucha, “Dharavi could be a liveable township soon,” The Times of India, February 2, 2004; “Dharavi Project cleared,” India Business Insight, March 31, 2004; “State declares Rs 5,600 crore plan for Dharavi, Rs 175 crore package for weavers,” The Economic Times, January 22, 2004; “With Rs 5,600 cr, Dharavi need not slum it any more,” The Times of India, January 22, 2004
The topics concerning the DRP that most attracted journalists’ interest in 2004 were the project’s cost and its top-down nature. During the project’s first year in particular newspapers spotlighted the individuals who played an active role in the project’s realization – specifically Mukesh Mehta and governmental representatives. However, it is important to stress that over time Dharavi’s residents also joined in on the newspaper discussions and began to express their concerns about their future lives:

“Development is fine. But we also need land for the kiln, to store clay and to make pots’ said the potter, Raju Wala whose family has been fashioning pots in Dharavi for many generations.”

This quote and the dwellers’ words in Chart 1 illustrate some of the residents’ initial anxieties, which mainly related to Dharavi’s unique identity as an economic centre in Mumbai. The interviewee in this piece for the Daily Times is representative of the majority of Dharavi’s dwellers in that they work where they live. In fact, only 20% of Dharavi’s residents work outside of the enclave. While the media were focusing their attention on the DRP as a cosmopolitan vision for rehousing residents and simultaneously shifting the slum’s identity towards that of a business centre, they were overlooking an important issue: what the future would hold for Dharavi’s strong informal economic activity and unique model of living and working in the same place.

Forecasts about the project generated questions and concerns not only among Dharavi’s residents but also among local activists. Two NGOs mainly concerned with slum upgrading projects in Mumbai were the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF). SPARC, a local NGO headed by Sheela Patel and Sundar Burra, had already worked with government on previous slum projects and had taken an active role in supporting the rights of slum dwellers. SPARC had been active in Mumbai since 1984 and had strong global links to funding and network opportunities. In the late 1980s, SPARC clustered with NSDF and the women’s rights NGO Mahila Milan (MM), and since then the alliance functions mainly within the politics of informal space in India. The three partners are committed to supporting the urban poor against demolitions or any plan that is not beneficial to poor urban dwellers. Observing the projections of Dharavi’s planned 2013 takeover as it appears in the news media, Sheela Patel from SPARC and Jockim Arputham from NSDF have sought to engage authorities in a dialogue to address all these vital concerns and challenges related to the DRP. Initially they attempted to respond to the ambitious headlines with their own statements in newspapers. Their media presence was limited, but they did manage to comment for The Times of India or Reuters a few times, as in the following remarks by Arputham in 2004:

“Dharavi has assumed importance because of its proximity to the Bandra-Kurla Complex, which is emerging as a major financial and trading hub of Mumbai. Several acres of prime land can become vacant if the slum dwellers are relocated to tall buildings.”

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440 Katyal Sugita and Lengade Jayashree, “Asia’s largest slum to get $1.3 billion facelift,” Daily Times, February 11, 2004
441 “With Rs 5,600 crore, Dharavi won’t be a slum,” The Times of India, January 23, 2004
According to Arputham, Mukesh Mehta’s motivation for embarking on a redevelopment plan for Dharavi was the location’s strategic importance. In 2004, Mehta appeared in the news as a prominent figure noted for his confidence and assurance that in 2009 people would be able to see “tangible results” in the area.442 In contrast to the residents’ concerns about the economic and social future of Dharavi, Mukesh Mehta voiced strong support for the project’s goal of integrating the residents of Dharavi with the rest of the city. However, his statements as quoted in different newspapers were at times contradictory. For the Financial Times he highlighted that what he saw in Dharavi was not poverty, but an emerging class ripe for services and trade. In a statement for Business Standard, he argued that “instead of bleeding the city, Dharavi will start contributing to it.”443

For their part, governmental representatives selected specific aspects of the project to hold up as models for other areas. Thus Suresh Joshi, a senior official in the state agency MHADA, who had supported the Dharavi Redevelopment Project since 2000, foresaw the project as a model for the country, and he was willing to find ways to replicate it:

“It is a big and a total facelift to Dharavi. It will become a model township in the country.”444

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442 Renni Abraham, “Dharavi recast plan: sky is the limit; For the past 15 years,” Business Standard, January 30, 2004
443 Merchant Khozem, “Selling India’s organized shanty town to foreign investors: Khozem Merchant reports on a Mumbai slum’s aspirational consumers,” Financial Times, October 19, 2004 and Abraham, Renni. “Dharavi recast plan: sky is the limit; For the past 15 years, Asif Ahmed has been running…,” Business Standard, January 30, 2004
444 Sugita Katyal and Jayashree Lengade, “Asia’s largest slum to get $1.3 billion facelift,” Daily Times, February 11, 2004
In this first year the Dharavi Redevelopment Project did not attract the attention from journalism that it did in later years. Few newspapers carried headlines related to the project, and few discussions articulated aspects of the story. Even though the DRP was a costly plan that involved both the private and public sector, no voices from the private sector appeared in the news during that year. On the other hand, Mukesh Mehta became the story’s main protagonist by advertising the image of a slum-free Dharavi. His major ideas paid particular attention to the amenities that the redeveloped Dharavi would feature, such as parks, playgrounds, and recreational spaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Vinneta Pandey, “Finally, a makeover for Dharavi,” DNA, August 27, 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Government | “Dharavi residents are the major stakeholders in the project. The ownership of the entire land is fragmented among many government agencies. Our first step is to hand over the same to the Slum Redevelopment Authority (SRA).” – Secretary of special projects Sanjay Ubale  
(Source: Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi inches towards makeover,” DNA India, November 9, 2005) |
| Residents | “For many years people keep promising to redevelop but nothing happens.” – Jagmohan Bhattia, in “Inside the slums- India,” The Economist, January 29, 2005 |
| Mukesh Mehta | “The NGOs want Dharavi residents to remain poor and remain happy with little charity work done there. We are offering them a chance to become entrepreneurs with healthy income, which is what the NGOs too must offer them”  
(Source: Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi inches towards makeover,” DNA India, November 9, 2005) |
| Activists (NGOs) | “Mehta says he spent 7 years making presentations on his dream project, but these were made to the politicians, bureaucrats, not to the people who live in Dharavi”  
| Developers | |

**Chart 2: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2005**

Although very few newspaper discussions were related to the DRP in 2004, the next year was even quieter in this regard. Most of the articles related to the DRP were published in the *Daily News Analysis (DNA)*, which entered circulation in Mumbai in 2005 and aimed to attract a young, English-educated Indian audience. Some of the headlines that framed the discussions were as follows: “Finally, a makeover for Dharavi” (in August); “State has new plans for Dharavi redevelopment” (in October); and "Dharavi inches towards makeover” (in November).445 Implicit in these headlines was the desire for change, reflected in the word

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“finally.” The discussions about the DRP highlighted the amenities that would be part of the project and alluded to Dharavi’s makeover as a tourist destination:

“There are also plans to set up experimental theatre, peace parks, a cricket museum, free housing for residents, and art galleries across the five sectors / all aimed to make Dharavi a tourist destination.”

Important contradictions mark this preview of the enclave’s projected tourist identity, which would encourage a commercially oriented audience to visit Dharavi. Tourism here is understood as a process of attracting people from all over the world for business and shopping. However, in the wake of 2005, another interesting form of tourism was emerging in Dharavi: “slum tourism,” which is analytically examined in the next section.

Mukesh Mehta’s presence in the news throughout 2005 was even stronger than in 2004. Having noted in 2004 the lack of discussion about industrial activity in the “new” Dharavi, in 2005 he articulated a new agenda in the newspapers by highlighting the importance of industries for his plan. Thus, in one of his first interviews, Mehta revealed that 300 new industries such as jewellers, fashion institutes, and small leather factories would dominate the area by providing job opportunities to many slum dwellers. In his statements he also added to the mix the construction of schools, which would offer free education to children from other areas such as Sion and Mahim. While newspaper articles sketched a spectacular Dharavi, the government was particularly silent on the subject in the news during 2005, and Dharavi’s residents remained sceptical.

Against this background of governmental silence, the activists Sheela Patel, Jockim Arputham, and Sundar Burra publicly came out against the project as it was currently planned. In an attempt to “internationalize” themselves, they summarized the weak parts of the DRP from the residents’ viewpoint and published these discussions in a journal paper titled “Dharavi: A view from below.” As a major counterpoint to the process of realization of the project, the three activists framed the discussions by characterizing the project as a top-down strategy that did not attempt to involve residents in the process of transformation and therefore would not be successful in its implementation. In their thoughtful analysis about previous and current attempts to transform Dharavi, they suggested that a bottom-up approach to redevelopment of the area, with community participation, would be much more effective for all parties involved. The dilemmas and anxieties associated with the redevelopment approach crystallized in this paper. In the same publication, the three activists attacked Mukesh Mehta personally and questioned his motivations:

“There is another way in which Dharavi can be redeveloped. By adopting a bottom-up approach, through community participation, by drawing up plans that are people centered, and by addressing the livelihood concerns of the poor. Mr Mehta, we are not against global capital per se; we are not against sky-scrapers per

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446 Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi inches towards makeover,” DNA, November 9, 2005
447 Ibid.
se and we are not against the pursuit of profit per se. But does this have to be at the
cost of the poor? That’s the important question to answer.”

In an interview with DNA in November 2005, Mukesh Mehta responded to the article and
rebuffed the activists, arguing that they wanted people in Dharavi to remain poor:

“The NGOs want Dharavi residents to remain poor and remain happy with little
charity work done there. We are offering them a chance to become entrepreneurs
with healthy income, which is what the NGOs too must offer them.”

While Mukesh Mehta selected English-language Indian newspapers as the venue for his
statements, activists since the beginning of the project had shared their ideas and concerns in
academic circles through their participation in publications and conferences. The debate
between Mukesh Mehta and activists unleashed energies that had remained suppressed as the
project was scheduled to progress, until finally, starting in 2005, a social storm began to erupt
in Mumbai.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press</th>
<th>Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi slum is now realty gold mine,” DNA, January 30, 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Government        | “The Chief Minister’s approval removed the final hurdle to begin the project which
                   will about 7 years to complete” – Iqbal Chahal, the state official overseeing the
                   massive project (Source: Madhurima Nandy and Gigil Varghese, “World’s largest slum project to take off,” Hindustan
                   Times, November 17, 2006) |
| Residents         | “They say they will give us apartments to live in, but if we can’t work how can we
                   afford to live here?... How can we trust anyone? This plan looks good on paper, but
                   we don’t have faith it will become reality” – Abdul Ansari, 70-year-old resident
                   (Source: Sudhin Thanawala, “Slums separate Bombay from its future Struggle over plans for
                   redevelopment slows city’s progress,” SFGate, October 12, 2006) |
| Mukesh Mehta      | “The plan is at a very advanced stage now and things are working out well at
different levels of the State Government. I am very positive about the plan getting
a final clearance very soon” (Source: Abhiram Ghadyalpatil, “Now, Dharavi makeover awaits CM nod,” The Economic Times,
August 8, 2006) |
| Activists (NGOs)  | “But residents have questions and the officials have no answer...World class
schools are a great idea, but will students who’ve been in civic schools until now,
many in Kannada, Urdu and Tamil–medium, get admission?... We want change
too, but in a positive way” – Raju Korde (Source: “Maximum Slum,” The Indian Express, September 24, 2006) |

450 Ibid.
451 Mukesh Mehta in Smita Deshmukh “Dharavi inches towards makeover,” DNA, November 9, 2005
Developers

“Singapore, Hong Kong and even New York have housed their poor in tall buildings. We have to create roads, parks, schools and hospitals too. A comprehensive project like Dharavi can be successful. But the question is – are we committed to drive the change?” – the developer Niranjan Hirandani

(Source: Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi slum is now realty gold mine,” DNA, January 30, 2006)

Chart 3: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2006

In 2006, increasing discussions concentrated on progress towards implementing the DRP. The majority of newspapers recapitulated the pivotal concerns over the enclave’s socio-economic viability and captured debates between activists and residents on one hand and Mukesh Mehta and governmental representatives on the other. Starting from this time, Dharavi’s territory became a site of contention and conflict. The headlines summarized the three major concerns: the project’s financial sustainability, its global nature, and local politics (as municipal elections drew near, politicians were mostly concerned with how the project would affect their political agendas). This first concern gave rise to a new identity model: Dharavi as a “realty gold mine.”

Attention to socio-economic contexts appeared mainly in The Times of India and Hindustan Times at the beginning of the year. A typical example was the article “Dharavi slum rehabilitation will include industries,” on January 24, which exemplified the economic interest in the area and offered analytic details about the nature of Dharavi’s industrial future. This article included important information about Mukesh Mehta’s sectoral approach to redeveloping Dharavi.

Sector one would host the majority of industries (1100) and would include the 13th Compound, with an annual turnover of 4000 crore (US $700 million). The appointed officer on special duty with responsibilities for the DRP, Iqbal Chahal, announced in the beginning of the year the government’s plans to offer space free of charge for the existing industries in the redeveloped sector one. This space was planned only for industrial units that took up to 300 sq.ft. each. For the rehabilitation of units that were larger than 300 sq.ft., the DRP proposed that owners would have to pay an extra fee for keeping their industries in Dharavi.

While discussions about the project’s economic future were taking place in specific newspapers, in The Times of India, Nauzer Bharucha, a senior editor, began introducing various voices that questioned the foundation of the project as a top-down approach (figure 25):

“Will the Dharavi rehabilitation project be a boon for slum dwellers or just another multi-crore business opportunity for builders?”

452 Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi slum is now realty gold mine,” DNA, January 30, 2006
453 “Dharavi slum rehabilitation will include industries,” Hindustan Times, January 24, 2006
In his January 25 article “Highrises not suitable for Dharavi slum dwellers,” Bharucha uncovered important details in the project as planned that the majority of the press had thus far avoided discussing. Almost 25% of families who had been offered accommodations in the 60,000 free tenements as part of various development projects for Dharavi had illegally sold their houses and moved out of the area just after the project’s announcement. Moreover, Bharucha defined how the term “high-rise” had been translated for residents in previous slum schemes in Dharavi and pointed to difficulties such as the maintenance of the rehabilitated buildings. Past experience had shown that mismanagement and a lack of maintenance for the provided infrastructure could create more problems in the dwellers’ daily lives than they had experienced before. Particularly, he wrote that old people were forced to climb to higher floors when lifts did not work, and they had to carry water when pumps were broken. In the same article, Bharucha invoked a variety of voices, such as those of local architects who had not yet expressed their opinions on the DRP in newspapers. The architect P.K. Das criticized the role of the Floor Space Index (FSI) and argued that “housing projects are not about FSI but they are about building a human and sustainable environment.” The architect Arvind Adarkar returned to the project’s economic viability and argued that the “high-rise” approach is not the solution for reducing the number of slums. This article identified a series of scale problems involving residential spaces and revealed the need for a more detailed and long-term master plan.

In response to these critiques, Mukesh Mehta provided some elaboration and clarification: developers would have to guarantee lifts and electrical maintenance in the rehabilitated

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455 Ibid.
456 Ibid.
457 Ibid.
structures for 15 years. He also added that adaptability was never an issue in developing countries and that the slum dwellers embraced the plan. Looking back from the vantage point of the third year into the plan, Mukesh Mehta then offered assurances that the plan was already in “a very advanced stage” and would soon be cleared by the state government. His confidence in his dream project seemed to authorize a few other rumours. According to one of them, the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) would invite Expression of Interest (EoI) forms from developers all over the world during a one-month period, in February 2006. Through these forms, developers would express their interest in rehabilitating one of the five Dharavi sectors. It was the first time that such a negotiation with a developer had sought to “ensure good amenities” in Dharavi, and in 2006 developers raised their voices and expressed their interest in participating in the project. A case in point was the Indian developer Niranjan Hirandani, who referred to world-class cities such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and New York as successful examples of how to house Dharavi’s dwellers in tall buildings. Calling into serious question the idea of the state’s commitment to the project as a whole, he commented,

“Singapore, Hong Kong and even New York have housed their poor in tall buildings. We have to create roads, parks, schools and hospitals too. A comprehensive project like Dharavi can be successful. But the question is if we are committed to drive this change.”

In fact, a lack of government commitment was a historical aspect of previous slum projects and soon became an obstacle to progress in implementing the new project. In February, the EoI forms were not ready and thus the first delay of the project was unavoidable. In seeking to cover this delay, newspapers highlighted the project’s positive aspects and the remarkable future of Dharavi as a tourist destination by repeating “important” details concerning the project’s implementation between February and March. However, on April 21 this situation changed and interest turned to the bureaucratic procedures needed to inaugurate the project. Newspapers followed the DRP’s progress and carried daily headlines such as “Dharavi Redevelopment Project gets a boost.” In the same spirit, this article underlined important factors in funding the DRP: the significant role of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) agency, and the collaboration between the state and central governments.

In August, another extension for the release date of EoI forms augmented the discussions and criticisms in the news centring on the project’s feasibility. Abhiram Ghadylpatil’s article “Now, Dharavi makeover awaits chief minister’s nod,” in The Economic Times, reported the words of the housing secretary, Swadheen Kshatriya, who avoided offering another date for the release of the forms and in his interview only mentioned that “the forms will be finalized soon.” As a response to this statement, the journalist Gayatri Ramanathan wrote an article

458 Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi slum is now realty gold mine”
459 Ibid.
460 “Striking profits; SRA plans a complete redevelopment of Dharavi,” India Business, February 7, 2006
461 Prashant Hamine, “Dharavi Redevelopment Project gets a boost,” DNA, April 21, 2006
462 HUDCO is the housing agency that primarily finances state and city-level project agencies for executing land development and house construction. It offers cash loans to individual plot holders and slum dwellers with secure sites for house construction and repairs, but the loans are routed through the housing agencies or the Apex societies
463 Abhiram Ghadylpatil, “Now, Dharavi makeover awaits chief minister nod,” The Economic Times, August 8, 2006
on August 11 in Business Standard expressing his disappointment about the project by characterizing it as “utopian.” In a succinct review of the previous press material, he wrote,

“Not everyone is delighted. Dharavi’s vociferous NGOs have accused the Government of banishing the poor, after grabbing their land in connivance with the builders’ lobby.”

In September, governmental representatives took a more active role in the news coverage and tried to put a more positive face on the project. Recalling Mukesh Mehta’s words, Chahal, the officer on Special Duty with responsibilities for the DRP, expressed his confidence concerning the project’s realization and the future of Dharavi by claiming that in seven years, Dharavi would be one of the best places to live in Mumbai. The question of who would benefit from the project still remained to be answered. Nevertheless, regardless of widespread scepticism, officials supported the importance of the project and justified the unexpected delay in its implementation by reminding readers about the nature of the process:

“It’s essential that we integrate Dharavi with the city and not perpetuate its status as a dirty island with slightly better facilities. The SRA schemes are meant for slum pockets or ghettos of small areas. Dharavi has to be developed holistically.”

Fostering high hopes for the plan, officials announced that all necessary bureaucratic clearances had been given and the project was ready for submission to the Empowered Committee, formed in March 2006 and headed by chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh. In the committee’s second meeting in September 2006, the housing secretary Kshatriya included in the discussion agenda a review of the evolution of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, and in November 2006, during the third meeting, he informed the committee that all EoIs would have to be issued by November 30 of that same year. In one of his interviews with DNA in the same month, Kshatriya spoke publicly for a key readjustment in the project’s procedure. According to the initial rules in 2004, there was no requirement that slum dwellers give their consent to Dharavi’s redevelopment. But following the housing secretary’s words in the news, it came to light that the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) required the consent of 70% of the enclave’s residents. It now appeared that the project’s realization would strongly depend upon the residents’ agreement.

In December 2006, the Expression of Interest forms had still not been prepared for distribution, and this created a buzz in the newspapers. Kavitha Iyer, a senior journalist in The Indian Express, projected that the forms would have to be made available by mid-December. In her article “From Vancouver to LA, to Hong Kong, builders to bid for a slice of Dharavi’s pie,” she outlined the importance of the project’s real estate value and provided more information to readers about which cities received information on the bidding: Vancouver, New York, Los Angeles, London, Dubai, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore. In contrast to Iyer, the journalist Smita Deshmukh, in an article appearing the same day in DNA, voiced her displeasure over

465 “Dharavi rehabilitation plan to be kicked off in October,” The Economic Times, September 28, 2006
466 Kavitha Iyer, “From Vancouver to LA, to Hong Kong, builders to bid for a slice of Dharavi’s pie,” The Indian Express, December 13, 2006
the project’s lack of progress. As Deshmukh pointed out, the unpredictable delay of the EoI forms had generated an upsurge in the cost of the project from the initial Rs 5,600 crore (US $1 billion) to Rs 9,200 crore (US $1.7 billion). Additionally, she projected another delay due to a sudden announcement of local elections in January 2007. In this moment of ambiguity Mukesh Mehta’s persistent confidence was clear in his words “It’s true we will have to wait for a few more days. That’s life I guess.”

By the end of the year, Kavitha Iyer wrote another article referring to the election period, and in the headline she summarized the concerns over further postponement: “Running late, Mumbai makeover projects now frozen by election code.”

The bureaucratic delays and the resulting cost increase were two key factors holding up the project in 2006. But concerns over the project really began to peak with the political storm over the 2007 elections.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>“We plan to make Dharavi the Manhattan of Mumbai, with world-class infrastructure, ample office space with uninterrupted power supply and transport facilities” – T. Chadrashekhar, the new Officer on Special Duty, DRP (Source: Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi project gets vital status,” <em>DNA</em>, September 18, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>“Everyone wants to move out of a slum. We all want to give our children a better future. But the government must hold meetings with us, listen to our fears and answer our questions honestly. Only then, we will support their scheme” – Rehana Sheikh, resident of Kumbharwada (Source: “On shaky ground in shantytown,” <em>The Times of India</em>, May 26, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukesh Mehta</td>
<td>“The redevelopment of Dharavi had been pending for the last 10 years only because the government has been listening to the problems and concerns of the residents” (Source: “Dharavi locals to protest makeover,” <em>The Times of India</em>, June 19, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists (NGOs)</td>
<td>Jockim Arputham: “This project is meant for developers to mint money and not to help us. If the residents aren’t satisfied with the outcome, they will cut Mumbai’s two main rail lines by lying across tracks that border the slum” (Source: Jay Shankar, “Potters, scrap dealers race for battle on slum makeover plan,” <em>Livemint</em>, July 12, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers</td>
<td>“We have taken the forms. If the conditions and terms work out, we will bid. Who is developing the slum is not important. The more crucial factor is that the country’s financial center be cleared of its largest slum,” – Niranjan Hiranandani, from MD Hiranandani Constructions (Source: Raghavendra Kamath, “Top companies line up to rebuild Asia’s biggest slum,” <em>Business Standard</em>, June 2, 2007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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467 Smita Deshmukh, “Rs 9,200 crore Dharavi project put on hold,” *DNA*, December 13, 2006
468 Kavitha Iyer, “Running late, Mumbai makeover projects now frozen by election code,” *The Indian Express*, December 20, 2006
The BMC Elections

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections remain a pervasive and politically important event in contemporary Mumbai. Held every five years, they have a significant influence on city projects like slum upgrading. Slums in Mumbai house more than the half the city’s population, and in the local elections politicians look upon the slum dwellers as a vital source of votes.

BMC is a local political body, one of the richest and most energetic local bodies in the country. Created in 1888, its structure consists of a deliverable wing, which is responsible for preparing policies and regulations, and an executive wing, which implements policies. BMC manages not only public health and hospitals, transportation, electricity, education, and medical facilities, but also slum demolitions and slum encroachments in Mumbai. The municipal commissioner, who is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, appointed by the state government of Maharashtra, heads the corporation. He is responsible for the local infrastructure, such as the sewage system and school districts. The mayor of Mumbai also heads BMC, but his role is only ceremonial and includes no direct responsibilities. The tenure for each mayor is two and a half years, while the tenure for the municipal commissioner is five years. The corporation consists of 227 councillors, who are directly elected at ward elections, and five nominated councillors. For administrative reasons, Greater Mumbai is divided into six zones, each of which consists of three to six wards, which are named alphabetically. In total, 24 administrative wards constitute the city of Mumbai; Dharavi belongs to zone two in the G-North ward and comprises six electoral wards (figure 26).

In every Indian election there is a set of guidelines laid out by the electoral commissioner called the “Model Code of Conduct,” or “the Election Code.” These rules are intended to provide transparency during the campaign and maintain a balance among all parties during the electoral period. Just short of one month before the elections, the code prevents political parties from participating in public discussions or expressing opinions in the public media.
At the end of 2006, the government announced BMC elections for February 1, 2007. The DRP, “a global showcase scheme,” became an important issue for both the Congress and Shiv Sena during this pre-election period. The Congress, which formed the state government and initiated the plan in 2004, needed the collaboration of the local government in Mumbai in order to have the project implemented within the expected time frame. On the other hand,

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469 Kavitha Iyer, “Dharavi Redevelopment Project main issue,” The Indian Express, January 10, 2007
Shiv Sena, which controlled the central government, wanted to be involved in the political scene of Mumbai, and such a project as the DRP offered the possibility of different levels of participation. Additionally, Dharavi was an important election hub because it hosted almost one million potential voters. Both leading parties stood to gain economically and politically from progress in the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, and thus they included the project’s implementation in their political agendas (figure 27).

In December 2006, as soon as the elections were announced, the Election Code of Conduct went into effect and governmental representatives were no longer allowed to voice their opinions in newspapers. This situation provided an opportunity for others to raise their voices, and discussions and criticism of the project from residents, activists, and architects flooded the press. Furthermore, by the end of 2006 six representatives of the Citizens Action Group wrote a protest letter to the chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh. Acting as an advisory group for the process of transforming Mumbai into a world-class city, the Citizens Action Group posed 30 questions in the letter to the chief minister and also presented alternative solutions for redeveloping Dharavi that were contrary to Mukesh Mehta’s ideas. One such alternative solution involved local communities in the design process rather than relying solely on the ideas of developers from all over the world. The press responded to these ideas with alarming headlines (figure 28) and raised new concerns about the plan’s development, thus further delaying the release of the EoI forms inviting private developers to participate in the process.
A few weeks before the BMC elections, the project’s future hung in the balance. While political figures complied with the Election Code of Conduct and refrained from responding to the protest letter, Mukesh Mehta used the media as a platform from which he could counter the criticisms from the Citizens Action Group. In his interview with *The Indian Express*, he stated directly that his presentations had already addressed all 30 of the concerns raised in the letter; moreover, he pointed out that some of the letter’s signatories had previously expressed satisfaction with the project’s design (figure 29). In the interview he related his experience with Dharavi’s residents and his impression that the majority of them were content with the plan for redeveloping the slum. The protest letter and discussions against the project were, he argued, the product of a minority of people who were not directly associated with the area.

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478 Kavitha Iyer, “Dharavi project: ‘We’ve answered all doubts satisfactorily,’” *The Indian Express*, January 10, 2007
The elections were finalized in the beginning of February; 2376 candidates participated and 227 corporators from the 24 wards were elected. The majority of them – 83 corporators – were from the right-wing party, Shiv Sena, while the Congress party came in second with 68 successful corporators (figure 30). In Dharavi 11 corporators were elected in total: five from Shiv Sena, five from Congress party, and one from another party.

The 2007 BMC elections returned local government to Shiv Sena, and concerns around the feasibility of the project deepened: the opposition Congress party had introduced the project in 2004. Shiv Sena had shown not only their ability to mobilize large masses of the Hindu
population but also their interest in redeveloping slums in Mumbai and introducing their own rehabilitation projects. In contrast to January 2007, very few discussions about the DRP were reported in the news between February and April. A key reason for this silence was the ambiguity over the project’s status. Previous experience had shown that each time the political scene changed, projects related to slums were strongly affected and usually replaced by more ambitious plans. However, as the Congress party was still controlling state governance, the media showed concern over the Expression of Interest forms in April and May (figures 31–33).

Figure 31: “CM okays Dharavi redvpt scheme,” The Times of India, May 24, 2007

Figure 32: Neepaj, Pryadarshie, “Green signal for Dharavi makeover,” The Indian Express, May 23, 2007
The journalist Surendra Gangan, in one of her articles in DNA, pronounced that on May 31, global companies could apply to participate in the redevelopment of Asia’s largest slum and
that the project could begin its implementation process in early 2008.471 In *The Indian Express* Mukesh Mehta expressed his satisfaction that the project was one step closer to realization:

“After so many years of perseverance, I am relieved that things have fallen in into place.”472

While some articles trumpeted the news that the “green signal” had been given to “Dharavi’s makeover,” not all actors were satisfied with the process.473 At this point, a striking change occurred in the media: residents and representatives of NGOs became much more active in the discussions than before. *The Times of India* (the second most popular English-language paper in India after the *Hindu*), a few days before the release of the advertisement inviting developers to participate in the DRP, published a series of thoughts and comments made by Dharavi’s residents in opposition to the project. In their statements the residents argued that they had not been properly informed about the future economic impact the project would have on their lives (figure 34). From two very different angles, Mukesh Mehta presented his project as clear and human-friendly, but many residents expressed their anxiety:

“We only read about our own neighborhood in the papers. We know that towers are going to come up here, but no one tells us what’s going to happen to us,’ said Ramhimtullah Qureshshi, an automobile manufacturer in Dharavi.

‘Everyone wants to move out of a slum. We all want to give our children a better future. But the government must hold meetings with us, listen to our fears and answer our questions honestly. Only then, we will support their scheme,’ said Rehana Sheikh, a resident of Kumbharwada.”474

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472 Mukesh Mehta in his interview in “Green Signal for Dharavi makeover,” *The Indian Express*, May 23, 2007
473 Ibid.
In concert with Dharavi’s residents, the social activists Jockim Arputham (from the NSDF) and Raju Korde, both residents of Dharavi, raised up their voices and challenged the nature of the project by exposing more directly the pure economic purposes that framed the DRP. A day before the release of the global advertisement in DNA, Arputham stressed that if the project failed to meet the approval of the slum’s residents, they would block the streets of Mumbai in protest. Korde called attention to another issue crucial to Dharavi’s residents: that of access to information about the project,

“All we have by way of information is the notification brought out by the government in the papers, and that too was in English, not even in Marathi papers. This just stated what the modified rules were. It didn’t tell us what the exact scheme was.”

In response to these allegations, Mukesh Mehta gave an interview to DNA with the aim of clearing up any misunderstandings or damaging suspicions around the project. In particular, when the journalist Puneet Yadav questioned him about the lack of information about the project available to the slum’s residents, Mukesh Mehta replied that the Slum Rehabilitation Authority had already distributed 70,000 pamphlets and booklets about the DRP in various languages, and everyone in Dharavi was highly informed. The information had been

475 “Dharavi slumdwellers threaten agitation,” DNA, May 29, 2007
disseminated among Dharavi’s families and industries, and 200 to 300 mass meetings were held with residents.\textsuperscript{477}

These cross-cutting opinions were summarized and included in a detailed article about Dharavi by Mark Jacobson in the \textit{National Geographic} magazine in May 2007.\textsuperscript{478} In his article Jacobson brought together the different voices – those of residents, Mukesh Mehta, and activists – that had dominated the news in India. He uncovered the personal stories and levels of involvement of each group in the DRP. His article had a great influence on a global audience that was not familiar with Dharavi’s reality. The article became very popular and both sparked and shaped discussions about Dharavi.

The chief minister Deshmukh addressed some of the issues these voices were raising. He highlighted the need for transparency with regard to the project, but he also argued that the government had closely examined the role of residents in this process even before the project was launched. Deshmukh added some important details about the DRP, such as the role of the FSI and free apartments for slum dwellers, and noted that the global aspect of the project mainly had the purpose of bringing in experience from all over the world to increase the chances of a successful makeover.\textsuperscript{479} I.S. Chahal, the CEO of the DRP, a few days before the release of the DRP’s advertisement clarified the process of inviting global developers. He mentioned that the EoI forms would be distributed in 16 cities around the world, and he set October 2007 as the inauguration date of the project’s implementation. Each developer would be invited to participate in the redevelopment of only one of the five suggested sectors in Dharavi.\textsuperscript{480} Additionally, transit camps to house 20,000 would be built in Dharavi to ensure that residents would not need to move out during the construction.\textsuperscript{481}

Global developers interested in participating in the redevelopment plan were observing these discussions in the newspapers and anticipating the release of EoI forms. For example, the general director of the real estate firm Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA) publicly said how much he was inspired by the DRP as he was reading more information online and in the news, and this made him more eager to participate in the process.\textsuperscript{482}

\textsuperscript{477} Mukesh Mehta, in his interview with Puneet Nicholas Yadav, “Dharavi’s industrial ethos will survive,” \textit{DNA}, May 27, 2007
\textsuperscript{478} Jacobson, “Dharavi: Mumbai’s Shadow City”
\textsuperscript{479} “Green Signal for Dharavi makeover,” \textit{The Indian Express}, May 23, 2007
\textsuperscript{480} Surendra Gangan, “Dharavi redevelopment kicks off,” \textit{DNA}, May 24, 2007
\textsuperscript{481} Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi makeover gets going,” \textit{DNA}, April 27, 2007
\textsuperscript{482} Kavitha Iyer, “Mumbai to Karachi, via Dharavi,” \textit{The Indian Express}, May 6, 2007
While “all eyes were on Dharavi,” the state government of Maharashtra published the advertisement on May 30, 2007, inviting global developers to take part in the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (figure 35). “The Opportunity of the millennium,” as it was promoted, presented the DRP as a great democratic occasion that should be replicated not only in Mumbai’s slums but also in areas around the world. The announcement indicated that the total cost of the project was Rs 9,300 crore (US $1.8 billion) and asked coquettishly: “is this enough to turn you on?”

The advertisement directly preceded the distribution of EoI forms in 16 cities around the world, including Singapore, Dubai, and other Asian cities. Developers who matched specific criteria could buy and fill out the forms by the end of July. The bidding methodology for the DRP as it was presented in the commercial offer was a three-stage process:

1. Phase one – Verification of Bid Security deposit as per the relevant tender condition
2. Phase two – Technical Evaluation
3. Phase three – Financial Evaluation

“Upon verification of the Bid Security, technical bids of all bidders who have submitted the requisite amount of Bid Security as per the relevant tender stipulation

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would be assessed in Phase two. Commercial offers of only those bidders, who score a minimum prescribed score in the Phase-Two i.e in technical criteria, would be opened thereafter in Phase-Three.”

The plan involved a ten-member Committee of Experts (CoE), appointed by the government, consisting of planners, architects, activists, and former bureaucrats who would scrutinize the forms in August and announce in September which applications had qualified. According to the proposed plan, the CoE would have access to all documents presented for review and should submit a detailed report to the government. Members of the committee were the Maharashtra chief secretary D. M. Sukthankar, chief planner Vidyadhar Phatak; structural engineer Shirish Patel; Director of the Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute for Architecture (KRVIA) Aneerudha Paul; urban planners Arvind and Neera Adarkar; and activists Jockim Arputham (NSDF), Sundar Burra, Sheela Patel (SPARC), and the housing expert Chandrashekhar Prabhu.

“Bidders would be assessed on the basis of technical criteria, which have been outlined in Table here in below.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Design</td>
<td>Developers to make presentation to Committee of Experts on proposed layout &amp; designs of the respective sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Master Program depicting the Project timeline with Risk Mitigation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Environment Friendly Technology</td>
<td>Commitment by the developer for environment friendly development like whether the Project would be registered for LEED certification, usage of Energy STAR equipment, adopting MCGM standards for Eco Housing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Usage of modern technology Corporate Safety Plan, Project Specific Safety Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 5: Criteria of participation for the developers – DRP. Source: Dharavi Redevelopment Project Bidding Document, Commercial offer (Mumbai, February, 2008)
More than 100 forms were expected to be sold by the end of June. Local and global media had been covering the process, and articles and reports with headlines such as “Dharavi Redevelopment to begin today,” and “Top companies line up to rebuild Asia’s biggest slum” dominated the newspapers during the summer of 2007.

On the day following the project’s announcement, the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) sold a dozen forms. The Mumbai-based developers Hiranandani Group, who purchased a form, spoke to the media, describing the importance of the project and their interest in participating in this process:

“We have taken the forms. If the conditions and terms work out, we will bid. Who is developing the slum is not important. The most crucial factor is that the country’s financial centre will be cleared of its largest slum.”

Mukesh Mehta predicted the success of the project, and just after the announcement he started discussing ways of replicating his ambitious project in other slums worldwide. However, residents and activists, threatened by the top-down government development plans, organized themselves in a collective demonstration to demand their right to participate in this process that was to change their lives. The rally was christened “Dharavi Bachao Andolan,” which is translated as “Save Dharavi,” and was planned for June 18, 2007. Hundreds of Dharavi inhabitants, waving black flags, gathered outside MHADA’s office in Bandra to protest the DRP (figures 36–37). The message they were communicating was that they “[would] not surrender” to the government’s requests. The demonstrations were quiet and well-organized. As Jonatan Habib Engqvist in his essay “Black Flags” (in the edited collection Dharavi: Documenting Informalities) points out, the main issue residents wanted to raise with their black flags was their concern that they be allowed to reside where they had their livelihoods. The plan made them eligible for free apartments of 225 sq.ft., but the status of their future economic security and access to work remained unclear.

489 Raghavendra Kamath, “Top companies line up to rebuild Asia’s biggest slum,” Business Standard, June 2, 2007
490 Ibid.
492 Ibid.
Arputham spoke publicly to the media and highlighted that the main reason behind this demonstration was to force the government to have a dialogue with Dharavi’s residents. With the houses and livelihoods of almost a million slum dwellers at stake, Arputham insisted that people’s participation in the redevelopment was crucial.\footnote{494} Entering into the nuts and bolts of the development plan, Dharavi’s residents called into serious question the key proposals of the project, such as the provision of 225 sq.ft. of apartment space free of cost to each family in Dharavi. Many dwellers opposed the DRP’s holistic approach by identifying smaller details that had shaped their lives. For example, a 45-year-old resident, Shakuntala Rege, emphasized this point:

“I have a 330 sq.ft house. Why should I settle for 225 sq.ft? The state government wants to make Dharavi another Bandra Kurla Complex and drive us out.”\footnote{494}

On June 18, Dharavi’s protestors presented a series of demands. As Mukesh Mehta saw it, their aim was to engage the government’s attention and further delay the project:

“The redevelopment of Dharavi has been pending for the last 10 years only because the government has been listening to the problems and concerns of the residents.”\footnote{495}
What followed most certainly made the protests rank among the most public ones in Mumbai. The government announced its plans to shift the eligibility cut-off date: those eligible for free housing would now have to have taken up residence in Dharavi before January 1, 2000 – not January 1, 1995. The first impact was that now almost 17,000 more families would benefit from the project, and thus more housing would have to be constructed by developers. All residents who moved to Dharavi after January 2000 would be treated as Project Affected People (PAP) and would be offered additional, as yet undefined facilities. The second and perhaps more far-reaching impact was that extending the cut-off date for an extra five years meant conducting a new survey to identify the exact number of tenements that had been established between 1995 and 2000. In view of the previous experience with surveys, this placed more pressure on private developers by adding a few more months’ postponement to the process.

The Dharavi Survey

In September 2007, the DRP authorities issued a tender for a socio-economic survey in Dharavi and assigned the Pune-based NGO Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (MASHAL) to monitor the process. While Jockim Arputham, who was also the vice president of MASHAL, publicly announced that he was never consulted about this survey, MASHAL’s executive head and urban planner, Sharad Mahajan, spoke to the press and mentioned that for the first time the process would be transparent and all data would be available to everyone online. He also stated that Arputham had been well informed about the entire process. The initial goal was to complete the survey within three months. However, due to Dharavi’s physically and socially complex structure, the survey lasted for more than a year, and on June 15, 2009, MASHAL submitted the results of the survey to the government. For the purposes of that survey the five sectors were divided into 97 nagars and 190 sub-nagars, or communities. Using a GIS mapping tool and biometric identification, MASHAL collected information
about demographics, income, and structures in Dharavi. Although SPARC and NSDF (two local NGOs) had conducted previous surveys in Dharavi, they were not keen to participate in the 2007 survey because they disapproved of the top-down nature of the redevelopment project. Nevertheless, as Sheela Patel and Jockim Arputham argued in their paper “Getting the information base for Dharavi’s redevelopment,” local political groups urged them to participate, and in December 2007 SPARC and Dharavi resident Vikas Samiti agreed to carry out the survey with MASHAL by correcting maps and collecting information for the structures. Their participation was crucial because local residents were not always willing to communicate real and accurate stories to the MASHAL employees, whom they mistrusted. However, SPARC and NSDF had come down on the side of Dharavi residents in the course of their involvement in previous plans, and their clout with the local population allowed them to collect more accurate information.

MASHAL initially classified each slum structure and marked it with a structure number. Subsequently, the surveyors generated photo IDs for the slum dwellers and assigned each resident a number. In all MASHAL distributed 30,142 identity cards and collected documents from almost 51,670 inhabitants. These documents were submitted to the Assistant Commissioner of G-North ward, who decided the eligibility status of these dwellers based on existing policies. Additionally, MASHAL prepared a questionnaire for the survey; SPARC subsequently altered it to use in local domains. By the end of the year, MASHAL had mapped 54,114 slum structures in total, while SPARC had completed around 11,000 surveys in the second sector of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Each structure that was considered hosted a single family, and only the ground floors were taken into account for this particular survey. However, in Dharavi it was common for structures to be subdivided to host various families on other floors, and thus the number of the structures calculated by MASHAL did not reflect the exact number of people living in Dharavi. The survey also faced other hurdles, such as fear and insecurity on the part of some residents, who as a result supplied surveyors with inaccurate and imprecise information.

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501 Ibid.
**Figure 38**: Number of Structures as found in MASHAL Survey. Source: Dharavi Redevelopment Project, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Draft Planning Proposals for Dharavi Notified Area* (Mumbai, March, 2013), 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carpet Area of Slum Structure in sq.mt.</th>
<th>No. of Slum Tenements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 sq.mt.</td>
<td>3411</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 sq.mt. - 10 sq.mt.</td>
<td>15331</td>
<td>45.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 sq.mt. - 15 sq.mt.</td>
<td>9294</td>
<td>27.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 sq.mt. - 20 sq.mt.</td>
<td>2875</td>
<td>8.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 sq.mt. - 25 sq.mt.</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>3.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 sq.mt. - 30 sq.mt.</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 sq.mt. - 35 sq.mt.</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 sq.mt. - 40 sq.mt.</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 sq.mt. - 45 sq.mt.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 sq.mt. - 50 sq.mt.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50 sq.mt.</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33550</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mukesh Mehta, commenting on the survey as it neared completion, stated in one of his press interviews that he was indifferent to the people living in Dharavi and that he only needed survey data on the exact number of structures for planning reasons:

“Why do I need to know who lives here? I just need the details of the land survey and the number of the plot on which the structure stands for my planning purposes.”

His statement came as a counterpoint to his previous position that had placed residents in the centre of his project. In contrast to Mukesh Mehta, Sheela Patel, Jockim Arputham, and Katia Savchuk suggested that the survey was vital not only for the official purposes of the DRP but also because it helped to expand the dialogue among the authorities and residents.

Meanwhile, despite the fact that the project aimed at attracting foreign developers, by the end of June, out of the 101 companies that had purchased the bidding document, only eight were international firms. As a consequence, the government of Maharashtra decided to extend the deadline for submission of EoI forms from July 31 to August 16. The limited foreign interest received media attention, and several newspapers attempted to cover the reasons behind this lacklustre showing. In DNA one of the foreign developers that had already bought the form revealed that there were many suspicions about the role of the government in Dharavi’s redevelopment. In particular he mentioned that developers were not convinced that the government would be able to move the slum dwellers when the flats were ready. On the other hand, the economic future of India and the location of Dharavi prompted global firms to purchase the forms. Many developers assumed that India would follow the Chinese model and thought the DRP could be a great opportunity to get involved in India’s market.

By the end of August 2007, a total of 78 companies had applied for the project, including 25 international ones. Out of these 78 firms, 27 alliances, or consortia, were formed. For example, the local firm Akruti Nirman joined forces with Dubai-based Limited; the leading Indian real estate company Oberoi Constructions linked up with the Chinese Shimao Development Group; and the local developers HDIL grouped with the American-based Lehman Brothers. Officials announced that they would scrutinize the forms in September and then invite financial suggestions by the end of October. On December 15, it was projected that the list of qualified developers would be finalized, and the project would start by the beginning of 2008.

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502 Gayatri Ramanathan, “Dharavi Redevelopment is robbing us of space,” Mint, September 5, 2007
503 “Only 8 foreign firms interested in Dharavi,” Hindustan Times, July 2, 2007
507 Smita Deshmukh, “78 firms in race for Dharavi makeover,” DNA, August 31, 2007
All eyes are on Dharavi, again

Four major points about the Dharavi Redevelopment Project monopolized the interest of Indian English-language newspapers in 2008. The first was the delay in private-sector involvement. The second point was the focus on personal and social issues during demonstrations against the DRP, one in March and the other in September. The third point that attracted media interest was a by-product of the other two points: the series of discussions and exchanges that provided a glimpse of the larger bureaucratic processes at work and culminated in the resignation of a key official representative of the redevelopment project. The latter action uncovered complications that formed the administrative context of the project.

The f__irst was the delay in private-sector involvement. The second point was the focus on personal and social issues during demonstrations against the DRP, one in March and the other in September. The third point that attracted media interest was a by-product of the other two points: the series of discussions and exchanges that provided a glimpse of the larger bureaucratic processes at work and culminated in the resignation of a key official representative of the redevelopment project. The latter action uncovered complications that formed the administrative context of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press</th>
<th>“Dharavi residents protest state’s 300 sq ft home plan,” The Times of India, September 25, 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>“Two things changed – the size of the houses and the number of slum-dwellers to be rehabilitated. We will ask the developers if the project is still economically viable for them or if an increase in Floor Space Index FSI is needed” – Swadheen Kashtriya, principle secretary, housing (Source: Rukmini Shrinivasan, “FSI hike for Dharavi redevelopment,” The Times of India, May 4, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>“All land in Dharavi is owned by the 350 families staying here for more than 400 years. The government last year issued a notification, stating it would take over all private land and utilize those for slum rehabilitation. But ours is not slum. Dharavi was a part of seven islands which once made Mumbai” – Ramkrishna Keny, resident of Dharavi (Source: Kiran Tare, “Give up a 6,000 sq.ft home, get just 225 sq-ft in return,” DNA, March 15, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukesh Mehta</td>
<td>Mukesh Mehta claimed that he was working overtime to clear the “misconceptions”: “I am open to dialogues in any forum. Even if there is a public debate on the middle of the road. Why, economic redevelopment has been prominent in the agenda” (Source: Aditya Ghosh, “Inside the New Dharavi,” Hindustan Times, February 7, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists (NGOs)</td>
<td>“The government had promised to involve us in consultation yet, the chief minister held a meeting on Friday without even informing us. He issued the 300 sq.ft. housing comprising of 269 sq.ft. home with a 131 sq.ft. balcony. People should not forget that the three railway lines-harbour, central and western run along Dharavi and we can bring the city to a halt from here at Dharavi” – Raju Korde (Source: Neeta Kolhatkar, “Dharavi rehabilitation caught in a political wrangle,” DNA, September 28, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developers</td>
<td>“The delay is only adding to our costs. But we will cover the amount if the government is able to resolve all problems especially protests from local slum...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

173
dwellers and carry out the survey of eligible people (which is still unsure to whether the cut-off date should be year 1995 or 2000)” – a prospective bidder
(Source: Rajshri Mehta, “More hurdles and questions emerge,” DNA, April, 2008)

Chart 6: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2008

In January 2008, out of the 27 alliances or “consortia” that had applied to participate in the DRP, 19 were shortlisted. Most of them had expertise in real estate or engineering and most of them comprised an Indian/international partnership. The Indian partners in this process were the following companies: the Reliance Engineering Associates (India’s largest private sector enterprise with businesses in energy and materials); the India bulls Group (a strong presence in financial and real estate services); Unitech Ltd and DLF, both well-known real estate developers in India; Godrej Properties, specializing in residential and commercial buildings; Africa-Israel Investments in India; Larsen & Toubro engineering and construction firm; Videocon Realty and Infrastructure; Kingston Properties; the Runwal Group; the MRG, a joint venture of Indian and Dubai-based companies; the Conwood Group; Kalpataru real estate developers; Lanco Infrastructure (with expertise in solar energy and construction); Nagarpura Construction, a collaboration between Oman and Dubai-based companies; HDIL; the Lodha Group; Akruti developers; and the Neptune Investment Group. Some of the international collaborations were Dubai’s Emmar Group, South Korea’s Hanwha Group, China’s Shea Homes, Saudi Arabia’s Banaldin Group, USA’s Vornado Group, and Lehman Brothers from Hong Kong. Not all of the Indian firms involved had grouped with international firms, even though this was the government’s initial goal.

Following the delay in 2007, the 19 consortia were required to submit their financial suggestions about the sector they aspired to redevelop. Additionally, they were asked to submit a master plan along with detailed illustrations of the proposed land-use and architectural drawings. The initial deadline for their submission was the end of January 2008. After the submission, a first round for selecting the most qualified investors was scheduled to follow in March. However, as there were not enough clarifications about technical and financial conditions and a new economic crisis in real estate was brewing, developers raised a large number of questions, and the initial January deadline was moved to the end of May. More than 700 queries were related to construction and infrastructure, while the majority of them were about the lack of information regarding the exact number of eligible slum dwellers. The survey for identifying Dharavi’s residents before 2000 was incomplete, and the government was uncomfortable with this added complication to bureaucratic procedures. The total number was essential for defining the final master plan because it stood to add 17,000 more projected tenements to the drawings. In this case, developers needed assurances that their investments in Dharavi’s redevelopment would be as profitable as they had expected before submitting their financial proposals. Even though the global aspirations of the DRP met with hurdles that global forces faced because of the economic slowdown, the power of bureaucracy was the key sticking point in the project’s implementation.

508 Abhiram Ghadyapatil, “Government’s bid to hike flat size halts Dharavi makeover,” The Times of India, May 1, 2008
509 Gigil Varghese, “Real Estate Developers have 700 Queries,” Hindustan Times, April 8, 2008
The 2007 survey was incomplete at this point in time because of two major obstacles: the residents’ limited trust in governmental representatives, and inaccuracies in the collected information. First, the employees of the state-appointed NGO, MASHAL, attempted to survey the structures by visiting Dharavi’s different areas. Since Dharavi’s residents did not trust them, they often gave imprecise information regarding their status and socio-economic backgrounds. Second, the GIS mapping tool that was used for an aerial survey counted a specific number of structures. Each structure was counted as a single-family residence. In Dharavi most structures were combinations of various smaller structures, and they usually housed an average of two or three families. Thus, the number of structures was not an indicator of how many families were residing in Dharavi, and the faulty information gathered in this manner added another layer of delay to the survey.

This first hold-up in the 2008 bidding process proved costly: changes in real estate prices drove the total cost of the project up from Rs 9,250 (US $1.7 billion) to Rs 12,000 (US $2.2 billion). Developers expressed their dissatisfaction in the newspapers, and a considerable majority of them even argued that the delay in the process was an intentional political move tied to the fact that state elections were just around the corner in 2009.

In May 2008, a few days before the submission deadline, the chief minister announced another extension for the bidding process until July 31 instead of the previous deadline of May 31. As developers became increasingly concerned about the economic viability of the project, they wanted to increase the Floor Space Index from 4 to 4.5, and the government needed more time to examine this requirement. The extra FSI would have meant adding height to the buildings to accommodate the increased number of eligible slum dwellers. When the project was launched, the state government had increased the FSI limit for the area of Dharavi to four “exceptional case[s].” With five years added to the cut-off date, nearly 17,000 extra families would be eligible for housing, and developers pressed for more profitability through an increase in the FSI. The incomplete survey and the government’s uncertainty about changing the FSI delayed the bidding process even further, and the deadline for submitting proposals was now pushed back to the end of 2008.

In September, the global economic slowdown had a crushing impact on the real estate sector worldwide, and many housing and commercial projects that followed the Shanghai model ground to a halt. Deeply worried over the fate of the DRP, the chief minister, Deshmukh, made this reference in one of his interviews: “The DRP is likely to be affected from this economic crisis.” In the wake of the crisis, the prices of cement and steel skyrocketed and the cost of the project rose to Rs 15,000 crore (US $2.8 billion). The developers who had shown an interest in participating in the DRP requested an exemption from paying a scheduled upfront fee that was almost 10% of the project’s cost. The state government accepted their request and announced that the 19 short-listed companies would submit their drawings to the officials by the end of 2008.

510 Rajshri Mehta, "More hurdles and questions emerge," DNA, April 6, 2008
512 Yogesh Naik and Ashley D’Mello, “Meltdown may hit infrastructure projects in the city,” The Times of India, November 11, 2008
Meanwhile a second occasion dominating media discussions was the demonstration by activists allied with politicians against the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. On March 12, all political parties except the Congress teamed up with the right-wing party Shiv Sena, which had won the BMC local election in 2007, and demonstrated in Dharavi. Shiv Sena party leader Uddhav Thackeray led the rally and threatened officials that if they would not listen to the protestors’ demands, the demonstrators would continue their rallies across Mumbai for the rest of the year.513 The March protest set the framework for four issues concerning the DRP. The first, and the one that engaged the government’s attention the most, was the rehabilitated housing for slum dwellers. The government had previously declared that they would provide 225 sq.ft. of housing free of cost for eligible dwellers that began their residence in Dharavi before 2000. Many residents who were located in much bigger structures felt that 225 sq.ft. was small, and they joined the protest, demanding that the government increase this number to 400 sq.ft. Supporting this demand, Thackeray spoke to the press:

“We will not allow laying of a single brick in Dharavi if the residents did not get 400 sq ft home instead of the proposed 225 sq ft... The redevelopment should be done only if 70 per cent of the residents agree with the development plan. The residents of chawls on BMC land should get houses of 753 sq ft.”514

The second demand was the right to self-redevelopment for areas with special local character, such as Kumbharwada and Koliwada. These two areas had resisted participation in the project. The third demand was for more facilities for existing industries and extra free space in the new Dharavi for traditional businesses, such as pottery and leather workshops. The fourth demand concerned an aspect of Dharavi that official drawings had omitted entirely: the settlement’s religious places, which the protestors wanted to see included in any rehabilitation plan. Although the demonstration was well organized, it turned violent as some residents manhandled the governmental employees who had carried out the survey in Dharavi. Many believed, and the news reported, that Shiv Sena had been behind this violent incident.

With his eye upon the upcoming elections, and recognizing that Dharavi’s redevelopment had become a major political issue, the chief minister announced in April 2007 an increase in the size of the redevelopment tenements, from 225 sq.ft. to 269 sq.ft. In September he raised the size again, to 300 sq.ft., without official authorization. His announcements failed to elicit positive feedback from either Dharavi residents or developers. In light of the changing numbers and continual delays because of bureaucratic procedures, developers started losing interest in participating in the project. At the same time, slum dwellers at the end of September continued their demonstrations and now increased their demands to 400 sq.ft. of housing, free of cost.515 Black flags blanketed the area again and Shiv Sena had found an issue to shape the political agenda for the upcoming state elections.

Another event at the beginning of the year only worsened the situation: the sudden resignation of a key official involved with the DRP, Prabhu Chandrashekhar. Chandrashekhar, the vice president of MHADA, had replaced I.S. Chahal in late 2007 as the head of the DRA (Dharavi Redevelopment Authority), the agency appointed by the

513 Kiran Tare, “Parties rally behind Sena on Dharavi,” DNA, March 13, 2008
514 Ibid.
515 Neeta Kolhatkar, “Dharavi Rehabilitation caught in a political wrangle,” DNA, September 8, 2008
governmental Slum Rehabilitation Authority for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the DRP. Not even a year later, and for unknown reasons, Chandrashekhar quit his position at the DRA at a crucial moment for the DRP. The absence of an official DRA representative lasted until Gautam Chatterjee was handpicked for the job in August 2008. Chatterjee knew the area from his time as the first director of the Prime Minister’s Grant Project in 1985. In one of his first announcements in his new role, Chatterjee said,

“There is a lot of pressure to execute fast. I don’t pay heed to any other pressure. The project is for the people of Dharavi, who have, over time, bought slum quarters to solve their housing problem in Mumbai because they couldn’t afford anything better. They aren’t encroachers. They too have paid fat amounts to slumlords to get themselves a 220 sq. ft. tenement there. The project’s objective is their mass economic upliftment by providing better alternatives of living and business opportunities.”

From the first moment, Chatterjee expressed his interest in redeveloping Dharavi for the purpose of ameliorating living conditions for its residents rather than generating profit for private developers. After a year of economic crisis, delays, and demonstrations, the state government’s choice of Chatterjee to head the Dharavi Redevelopment Project clearly indicated a turn to a more open process that invited slum dwellers to participate and paved the way to the upcoming state elections.

The Year of Housing

“We have decided the year 2009 as the ‘year of housing’ with a focus on affordable housing. In this year various schemes of affordable housing will be implemented in association with the private sector,’ Kumari Selja, the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation mentioned in the beginning of the year.”

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<td>“No one is denying the local residents participation. We had initially said that the developer should get a 60% consent from them, and later increased it to 70%. Recently, however, we removed the clause as it was the only way to take the scheme forward. We had to take the step as the residents refused to give consent unless they were promised bigger flats. It is not possible to entertain all their demands” – a government official (Source: Rajshri Mehta, “Dharavi redevelopment plan is caught in the crossfire,” <em>DNA</em>, November 2, 2009)</td>
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<td>Residents</td>
<td>“I have heard about the redevelopment project only through newspapers or any other organizations that work here. None of these politicians want to know what we want” – Gupta, who lives with his wife and 7 children in Dharavi</td>
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516 Mandhurima Nandy, “We are modifying development rules to give rise to a new city,” *Mint*, August 26, 2008
517 "Asia’s biggest slum, Dharavi, being redeveloped,” *The Economic Times*, January 20, 2009
Chart 7: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2009

Considering the fact that 2009 was declared the year of housing in Mumbai, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project once again came to engage the city’s attention. However, the tale of redeveloping India’s largest slum became intertwined with a unique socio-political framework that was structured around several important events: the global economic slowdown, the national and state elections, the Dharavi survey and the impact it had on the design process, and two successive letters – sent by the appointed committee of experts – questioning the viability of the project and the position of Mukesh Mehta.

The economic downturn in the real estate market worldwide caused many developers who had previously shown an interest in participating in the DRP to reconsider their involvement in the project. The media in Mumbai attempted to uncover this impact by interviewing representatives from the private sector, especially in the first months of 2009. In one of his articles in DNA on the DRP, the columnist Rajshri Mehta communicated how Sandeep Runwal, the director of Runwal Group (one of the partners of the 19 short-listed consortia), admitted that the company was reconsidering its participation in the project. Similarly, Mofatraj Munot, the chairman of the Kalpataru Group, identified the economic difficulties of the project and revealed that his company was about to re-evaluate the plan’s economic viability before they submitted their proposals.314 Additionally, many of the developers owned that not only the economic crisis but also political opposition, which in the past had already presented an obstacle to transforming slums, made them hesitant about participating in the process. As Vinod Goenka from the Conwood developers put it,

314 Rajshri Mehta, “Dharavi project bidders consider pulling out,” DNA, February 1, 2009
“There is a lot of political opposition. In addition, the demand for a higher area of 400 sq.ft. as against the 300 sq.ft. stipulated by the government is making the project unviable. Added to this, the property market is in a bad shape.”

It is hardly a surprise, then, that in the beginning of March when the selected consortia were asked to present their plans, five potential developers dropped out, leaving only 14 to participate in the bidding for the DRP.

**Figure 40**: Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Design Proposal for Sector 5. Concept Master Plan, submitted by OBEROI Constructions on February 18, 2009. The architects of the Master Planning project were SOM, New York. The team’s statement was built on the following six objectives: 1. Creating an exciting master plan leading to the development of a vibrant community and new district, 2. Creating an identifiable sense of place for the project as a district, 3. Responding with many challenging design solutions for the mixed use SRA development, 4. Respecting the urban fabric, 5. Aspiring to create a world class district that will play a vital role in the economic and social advancement of Greater Mumbai, and 6. Making best use of existing and proposed regional transportation access points and creating a network of local circulation routes that allow for a vibrant street life, safe pedestrian environments, and ease of travel. Source: KRVIA Library in Mumbai

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519 Ibid.
520 The consortia that left the process were HDIL with Lehman Brothers; Godrej Properties, which partnered with Larsen & Toubro; the Mukesh Ambani’s Reliance Engineering Associates, which was linked with Urban Infrastructure Venture Capital; and Hanwha Engineering and Construction of Korea, linked with the Potential Group
Figure 41: Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Design Proposal for Sector 5. Concept Master Plan, submitted by OBEROI Constructions on February 18, 2009. The architects of the Master Planning project were the office of SOM, New York. Source: KR VIA Library in Mumbai

Figure 42: Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Design Proposal for Sector 5. Building Types, submitted by OBEROI Constructions on February 18, 2009. The architects of the Master Planning project were the office of SOM, New York. Source: KR VIA Library in Mumbai
From the final 14 consortia, only five would be selected to redevelop the suggested sectors in Dharavi. The announcement of the successful five alliances was planned for July 20. However, as developers needed more clarifications about the process, the government extended the bidding period to July 30.\(^{521}\)

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 43:** “Dharavi bidders wrongly briefed by consultant,” *The Times of India*, June 10, 2009

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\(^{521}\) “Bid for Dharavi plan deferred,” *DNA*, July 20, 2009
Figure 44: “Dharavi makeover hits bump,” The Times of India, June 21, 2009

Figure 45: “Uniform plan for Dharavi developers,” The Times of India, June 27, 2009
On July 30, while newspapers were preparing the ground for the successful bidders – with headlines such as “Today you’ll know Dharavi bidders”\textsuperscript{522} – the government failed to announce the bids, and officials declined to offer a new date.\textsuperscript{523} As the newspapers reported, people were surprised by this unexpected occurrence:

“This is inexplicable. Everyone is shocked. There can be no reason for the government to suddenly postpone bids hours before they were to be opened.”\textsuperscript{524}

Judging from the discussions in the press, three main reasons were behind this postponement of the bidding process: i) Property experts suggested that due to the economic slowdown, the state government was concerned that a lack of participation would make the process less competitive; ii) Officials announced that there were a few more changes in the Development Control Rules (DCR) for Dharavi, such as the increase in the amount of free housing space for eligible slum dwellers and a change in the FSI. These changes were not yet finalized, and more time was needed to reframe the policies; iii) Not all of the Indian bidders had lined up with foreign partners. Without foreign partners, Indian developers were not able to participate in the process, and since there was an economic crisis worldwide, many foreign developers opted out of the alliances.\textsuperscript{525}

These concerns and excuses left even more developers feeling uncertain about the project’s feasibility, and on October 6, another six out of the 14 remaining consortia dropped out of the bidding process. By the end of the month only seven were left in the competition. Mofatraj Munot, the chairman of the Kalpataru Group, which abandoned the process in October, pointed to the political scene and lack of clarity as the main reasons behind the withdrawal of his company from the DRP:

“There is no clarity and a lot of politics in the project. We felt the effort was risky.”\textsuperscript{526}

Hari Pandey from HDIL added that the endless deadline extensions due to the lack of clarity from the government had led his group to resign from the project at an earlier stage.\textsuperscript{527}

Just after the official announcement about the successful bidders, it was understood that the biggest problem with the remaining participants was that none of them had experience in redeveloping slums. Property analysts brought up this issue in newspapers by specifying that slum development projects, especially in India, need a lot of experience, as there is usually a strong socio-political background that can always alter or delay the procedure of redeveloping them.\textsuperscript{528} Gautam Chatterjee was also concerned about the absence of competition between the seven final developers and mentioned that he would have to discuss this difficulty with the Committee of Experts to study how they might proceed.\textsuperscript{529}

\textsuperscript{522} Rajshri Mehta, “Today you’ll know Dharavi bidders,” DNA, July 30, 2009
\textsuperscript{523} “Dharavi: Bids not opened, no fresh date,” The Indian Express, July 30, 2009
\textsuperscript{524} Nauzer Bharucha, “Move to postpone Dharavi bid opening raises eyebrows,” The Times of India, July 31, 2009
\textsuperscript{525} Rajshri Mehta, “Government defers opening of Dharavi bids,” DNA, July 31, 2009
\textsuperscript{526} Shashank Rao and Naresh Kamath, “Dharavi depressed,” Hindustan Times, October 31, 2009
\textsuperscript{527} Sreehari Nair, “Dharavi: Slumping developments,” The Economic Times, April 2, 2009
\textsuperscript{528} Madhurima Nandy, “Six consortia opt out of Dharavi project bidding,” LiveMint, October 16, 2009
\textsuperscript{529} Ibid.
Meanwhile, when the consortia presented their plans for Dharavi in March, officials recognized that the developers had different design strategies in mind, and therefore the government asked Mukesh Mehta to produce a master plan for one of the five sectors that would serve as the design guideline for all of the real estate companies that were to participate in the DRP.\(^{530}\) Thus, for the purposes of the bidding, the Standardized Master Plan (SMP) and a series of design guidelines were generated. As it was written in the bidding document, the vision for the SMP was a development that incorporated “sensitivities” to the following:

- 1. Integration of the residents into the mainstream
- 2. Interactions for livelihood and lifestyle within the community
- 3. Inherent flexibility of trade
- 4. Non-rigid cohesive mixed use for efficient use of space
- 5. Pedestrian dominant movement to tackle high densities.\(^{531}\)

According to the newly proposed master plan, two-level buildings would be constructed on elevated podiums.\(^{532}\) The first two levels of the podiums would be 14 meters high and house commercial services and amenities such as police stations, fire stations, post offices, libraries, and community centres, while the third level would serve as a parking lot, accessible with ramps at different sides (figure 46). Above the podiums there would be mainly the rehabilitated buildings, and at the deck level there would be common space for schools and gardens. The rehabilitated buildings would consider light requirements, and the distance between them could be no less than 12 m. To provide adequate light and ventilation between commercial units, the SMP suggested intermittent cut-outs at the top-podium level (figure 47). The architectural design foresaw pedestrian roads and elevated walkways with green zones as the main arteries within the area. This “tweaked” plan also proposed two extra bus stops strategically located near T-Junction and Sion Hospital to create easy access from all residences and businesses.\(^{533}\)

\(^{530}\) Kavitha Iyer, “Design in place for Dharavi makeover,” *The Indian Express*, May 17, 2009

\(^{531}\) Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 2, Dharavi Redevelopment Project*, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 62

\(^{532}\) Aneesh Phadnis, “Dharavi ties up for change,” *Mumbai Mirror*, May 9, 2009

\(^{533}\) Nauzer Bharucha, “Uniform plan for Dharavi developers,” *The Times of India*, June 27, 2009
Moreover, the SMP suggested a circulation strategy that highlighted the importance of a pedestrian grid that needed to be maintained at all levels of the podium, and elevated greenway connectors to maintain “pedestrian continuity” at top podium level. To achieve what Mukesh Mehta called “Traffic-Calmed Streets,” the master plan proposed several measures aimed at providing security to the pedestrians in the use of road space. Such measures are the chicanes, curb extensions and bulb-outs, and speed tables (figure 48).

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**Figure 46**: The suggested design strategy for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project in 2009. Source: Aneesh Phadnis, “Dharavi ties up for change,” Mumbai Mirror, May 9, 2009

**Figure 47**: Provision of cut-outs. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 2, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 73

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534 Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 2, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 66
While attempting to be flexible and adaptable to different developers’ suggestions, the SMP incorporated this circulation strategy in its layout and distributed the suggested design concepts as shown in figure 49:

While the CoE suggested that the height of the rehabilitated buildings should be no more than seven or eight stories, Mukesh Mehta proposed buildings with 12 to 18 floors and suggested increasing the proposed FSI, which was already up to four.

The drawings of all five sectors in the DRP as they were distributed in the bidding documents for the developers are presented below:
Figure 51: Bidding Documents. Sector two. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 2, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009).

Notes
1. This drawing contains proprietary information of Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and must not be disclosed to any Third Party unless otherwise authorized in writing by SRA.
2. The drawing is shown in isometric in nature and for the guidance to the Developer only.
3. All the information given in this drawing is extracted from the Approved SRA Scheme Layout obtained from SRA and the PTS Map furnished by Prashant Surveyor in the Year 2000.
4. Delineation of the Sector Boundary is in accordance to the New Proposed Road Layout. The Sector Boundary cannot be changed.

Key Location Plan

Legend
1. Proposed Service Road
2. Proposed Four Lane Road
3. Excluded Properties

Scale  Date  Sign of Architect
1" = 20'  06/06/09  NIKETA SIDDHARHTA

Sheet No.  Rev.no  North
1/1  1800  

Dharavi Redevelopment Project

MAP SHOWING EXCLUDED PROPERTIES IN
SECTOR-2

Drg.No. MMP CPL/Dh/SS/ 06

Dwnt by Chkd by
NIKETA SIDDHARTHA

Client: Slum Rehabilitation Authority

Principal Project Consultant: M.M. Project Consultants Pvt Ltd
Figure 53: Bidding Documents. Sector Four. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 4, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009)

Map Showing Excluded Properties in Sector 4

Notes:
1. This drawing contains proprietary information of Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and is not to be disclosed to any third party unless otherwise authorised in writing by SRA.
2. The drawings shown in this drawing are indicative in nature and for the guidance to the Developer only.
3. The proposed Sector Boundary is in accordance with the New Proposed Road Layout. The Sector Boundary cannot be changed.

Client: Slum Rehabilitation Authority
Principal Project Consultant: M.M. Project Consultants Pvt Ltd

Set of Deviations for Section 4, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 2009)
Figure 54: Bidding Documents. Sector five. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009)

Notes
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2. The drawing is indicative in nature and for the guidance to the developer only.
3. All the information given in this drawing is extracted from the Approved SRA schemes layout and the PTS Map furnished by Prashant Surveyor in the year 2000.
4. The delineation of the Sector Boundary is in accordance to the new proposed road layout. The Sector Boundary cannot be changed.

Key Location Plan

Legend
1. Plot No. and Elevation Plan
2. Plot No. and Elevation Plan, shown in Plan View
3. Excluded Plot Area

Scale
1:2500

Date
16.06.09

Sign of Architect
NIKETA SIDDHARHTA

Client: Slum Rehabilitation Authority
Principal Project Consultant: M.M. Project Consultants Pvt. Ltd.

Dharavi Redevelopment Project
MAP SHOWING EXCLUDED PROPERTIES IN SECTOR-5

Drg.No.: MMP/CPL/Dh/SS/06

Notes
1. This drawing contains proprietary information of Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and is not to be disclosed to any third party unless otherwise authorized in writing by SRA.
2. The drawing is indicative in nature and for the guidance to the developer only.
3. All the information given in this drawing is extracted from the Approved SRA schemes layout and the PTS Map furnished by Prashant Surveyor in the year 2000.
4. The delineation of the Sector Boundary is in accordance to the new proposed road layout. The Sector Boundary cannot be changed.

Key Location Plan

Legend
1. Plot No. and Elevation Plan
2. Plot No. and Elevation Plan, shown in Plan View
3. Excluded Plot Area

Scale
1:2500

Date
16.06.09

Sign of Architect
NIKETA SIDDHARHTA
As soon as the master plan was finalized, social activists denounced the government’s decision to have it as a model for redeveloping Dharavi and characterized the plan as “Machiavellian.” They accused the government of only going through with the project for the benefit of developers. Members of the appointed Committee of Experts aligned themselves with the activists and sent governmental representatives several letters challenging the nature of the project and the suggesting design guidelines. The first letter was written and signed by all ten committee members in June and was sent to the chief minister, Ashok Chavan. It charged that Mukesh Mehta was not equipped to handle the project and recommended that he be removed from his position. The following is an extract from the letter:

“Our understanding is that the Cabinet decision was to appoint Shri Mukesh Mehta as Project Advisor. The Empowered Committee headed by the Chief Secretary went far beyond the Cabinet decision and decided to make him Project Management Consultant, an entirely different and much expanded role...Our impression from meeting with the Consultant is that he was not competent enough to handle the project of this magnitude, to say the least.”

To support their position, the committee members mentioned that Mukesh Mehta was assigned the role of consultant without any transparent bidding process. He had submitted no EoI form, and what is more, by 2009 he had already earned the “colossal” fee of over Rs 9 crore (US $1.7 million). They voiced their concerns about Mukesh Mehta’s understanding of issues such as infrastructure, transportation, and environmental restrictions; moreover, they raised questions about his objectivity in deliberations with bidders. (The letter implied that he was strongly connected to certain firms that had competed for the project.) The letter was also critical of the new urban design guidelines of the SMP that were to serve as a model for developers. More specifically, the letter characterized the guidelines as “hopelessly inadequate and detrimental to the proper redevelopment of Dharavi and to the legitimate interests of its inhabitants as well as the people at large.” Additionally, the committee opposed the suggested FSI limit of 4, charging that it was inadequate to ensure a “minimally acceptable quality of life.” As a response to these accusations, Mukesh Mehta displayed extreme annoyance and retorted with a letter that questioned the motives of the committee members. He implied that the upcoming state elections and the corresponding political backdrop were behind these “totally baseless, inaccurate and irresponsible allegations.”

The last (but equally significant) point that the committee raised in the letter was the absence of a detailed socio-economic survey of Dharavi. By that moment MASHAL had identified 60,158 structures in Dharavi and 45,563 tenements out of the total number that were mainly residential. The digital GIS software was mainly used to pinpoint the number of structures, and MASHAL’s employees conducted surveys to provide the data needed to reconstruct the study’s socio-economic backdrop. The survey lasted 18 months. According to the NGO’s statistics, from May 2009 to August 2009 almost 6,000 to 7,000 tenements had been sold in

536 Kavitha Iyer, “Now, Dharavi project panel wants consultant out,” The Indian Express, June 9, 2009
537 REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KRVIA (Mumbai, 2010), 49
538 Kavitha Iyer, ”Now, Dharavi project panel wants consultant out” and Nauzer Bharucha, “Dharavi makeover hits bump,” The Times of India, June 9, 2009
539 Nauzer Bharucha, “Dharavi makeover hits bump”
540 REDHARAVI, 47
Dharavi, possibly to private investors who thought the DRP was closer to realization than was really the case.\textsuperscript{541} The committee questioned the number of structures by arguing that MASHAL’s employees had only surveyed the ground floors in the area, whereas many structures had one or two additional floors housing extra families.

In the beginning of July, another open letter to the chief minister summarized the debate between the committee and the state government concerning the project. In this letter, the committee characterized the plan as a “sophisticated land grab...that is being driven by personal greed and not [the] welfare of the residents of Dharavi.” The letter also raised issues related not only to the livelihood of the residents, but also to more environmental topics, such as lighting for pedestrian walkways, ventilation in buildings, and the use of open spaces.\textsuperscript{542} Still more, the letter expressed the committee’s objection to legislation that limited slum dwellers’ rights to the land; the letter recommended that the land should be leased to dwellers for 99 years. Instead of involving the private sector in this process, the committee argued, the government should invest in providing proper sanitation, water supply, and waste management facilities in the area. Finally, the committee members called for encouraging residents to participate in Dharavi’s redevelopment in smaller sectors, following the government-approved master plan.\textsuperscript{543}

The letter was signed by all of the committee members, and D.M. Sukthankar, who supervised the committee, made this comment about it in the news:

“We gave our view only after scrutinizing plans. We are not here to accept everything placed in front of us.”\textsuperscript{544}

Responding to the letter, Gautam Chatterjee put his primary emphasis on the timing of the committee’s comments and resistance to the project. In his interviews in newspapers, Chatterjee mentioned that the concerns addressed in this letter had already been part of presentations made by developers previously, and he expressed his surprise that the committee decided to raise issues that had already been resolved.\textsuperscript{545} Moreover, he made the following comment about the project’s impact on the residents’ livelihood:

“We are building an integrated township and we have taken precautions to ensure that livelihood is not affected.”\textsuperscript{546}

Another setback to the project occurred when revelations began to emerge over the results of the Dharavi survey. The BMC assistant commissioner of the G-North ward, Narayan Pai, who was involved in the survey, revealed that 63% of the residents in sector four were ineligible to acquire free housing as part of the project because a large majority of them relocated to Dharavi after the cut-off date for eligibility, January 1, 2000. In particular, it turned out that

\textsuperscript{541} Nauzer Bharucha, “7000 slums in Dharavi sold for Rs 700 crore,” \textit{The Economic Times}, September 11, 2009
\textsuperscript{543} REDHARAVI
\textsuperscript{545} Esha Roy, “A year on, panel raps Dharavi plan,” \textit{The Indian Express}, July 7, 2009
\textsuperscript{546} Rao and Kamath, “Dharavi makeover plan still on”
only 3,127 in the sector were eligible to participate in the DRP.\textsuperscript{547} These numbers brought to light the need for another Dharavi survey that would uncover more details regarding each individual sector. At this point more developers lost their faith in the project’s implementation and began to reconsider their involvement.\textsuperscript{548}

As soon as these numbers concerning the fourth sector came to light, the committee started preparing an alternative plan, which aimed to divide Dharavi’s 239 hectares of development area into 32 sectors instead of the proposed five. The alternative plan suggested that slum dwellers in each of the 32 sectors would appoint developers of their choice and also participate in the design process with them. The role of the government would be limited to providing the funding for amenities and facilities for each sector.\textsuperscript{549} This plan aimed to highlight the key flaws in the DRP’s conception and proposed plan of implementation: the lack of participation from residents, the limited competition in the bidding process, and the small number of residents eligible to participate in the project.\textsuperscript{550} In early 2010, the committee sent its plan to Gautam Chatterjee for him to study and analyse.

The “year of housing” was important not only for Mumbai’s economy but also for its political scene. In that year the national elections of Lok Sabha on April 30 and the Council of States elections on October 13 resumed important topics that shaped the political agendas; the Dharavi Redevelopment Project was one of them.

On the national level, the Indian Parliament contains the head of state and the two houses that form the government: the house of the people (Lok Sabha) and the Council of States. The Council of States has 245 members, out of which 233 are elected indirectly for a six-year term. On the other hand, Lok Sabha comprises directly elected representatives who serve for a five-year period. At maximum strength Lok Sabha consists of 552 representatives. Each city offers a specific number of representatives based on its size. In the case of Mumbai, six seats are reserved from Mumbai North, Mumbai North-West, Mumbai North-Central, Mumbai South, Mumbai South-Central and Mumbai North-East wards. During the Lok Sabha elections of April 2009, Mumbai had in total 196 candidates. In Mumbai South-Central, which includes Dharavi, the battle was between the Congress party and Shiv Sena.

The Congress representative, Eknath Gaikwad, popularly known as the “Giant Killer” because of his victory against Joshi of Shiv Sena in the elections in 2004, was much more confident than before in the beginning of 2009, and when speaking of the DRP he emphasized the positive aspects of the project, as in this statement:

“I have done a lot of work in my constituency and this will help me retain the seat. I am changing the face of Dharavi and creating an entire township with good stormwater drains, sewage roads, gardens, schools, and hospitals.”\textsuperscript{551}

\textsuperscript{547} Naresh Kamath, “Most Dharavi residents may not get flats,” Hindustan Times, October 28, 2009
\textsuperscript{548} Rajshri Mehta, “Dharavi survey makes the developers edgy,” DNA, November 2, 2009
\textsuperscript{549} Kavitha Iyer, “5 years on, Dharavi plan back on drawing board,” The Indian Express, October 28, 2009 and Shalini Nair, “32 clusters, over 50 developers to choose from,” The Indian Express, November 27, 2009
\textsuperscript{550} REDHARAVI, 49
\textsuperscript{551} Somit Sen, “Giant Killer of 2004 is confident in 2009,” The Times of India, April 4, 2009
On May 1, of the total votes in Mumbai, 62% came from the slums, and in the Mumbai South-Central ward the Congress representative MP Eknath Gaikwad defeated Suresh Gambhir, who represented Shiv Sena, by 75,706 votes. From that moment Gaikwad was nicknamed “slum-bhai” because the majority of his votes came from slum dwellers. His first announcement was about the progress of the DRP, and in particular he said,

“We have to keep up the good work. The Dharavi Redevelopment Project and other slum rehabilitation projects along similar lines are on my priority list.”

The conjuncture of the national elections, the shifting but catalytic role of the Committee of Experts, the economic crisis, and the design guidelines for Dharavi’s redevelopment in 2009 all highlighted the fact that the redevelopment strategy was clearly a top-down approach. Those steering the process included the government as well as other actors whose involvement is traced above. But perhaps surprisingly, those opposing the imposition of this project “from above” were not only activists but also government-appointed experts: in fact, three members of the Committee of Experts were activists who participated in the black-flag protests against the DRP in 2007. The print media had their own vital role to play in the process of reviewing and reconsidering plans for Dharavi’s future, and they presented opinions and statements that shaped the tale of the project at this stage of its development and implementation. The varied, complex narrative conveyed in the press revealed not only the key motivations of the different actors who participated in the DRP but also the shifts that occurred in their attitudes towards the project. Discussions in the press from 2010 and 2013 demonstrate how all these components delayed the project’s implementation and shaped the progress of the DRP. As the news media coverage from the time suggests, a project of this kind is generally unfeasible, whether in Dharavi or in any other place where residents live under similar conditions.

“Developers unhappy with Dharavi Development Plan” (DNA, 2010)

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<td></td>
<td>“Since the DRP has been a non-starter for so long, MHADA has presented a plan that the agency be allowed to develop sector 5 on its own using a floor index of 4. The plan will generate public housing stock for MHADA, but the government won’t earn any premium if the sector is awarded to private developers. The premium of Rs 400 per sq.ft. of rehabilitation area is meant to provide for off-site infrastructure which is very much required when the slums will be transformed into towers as high as 30 storeys” – an official</td>
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<td>(Source: Shalini Nair, “Now, MHADA proposes to develop one of five Dharavi sectors,” The Indian Express, June 8 2010)</td>
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Residents

532 Sanjeev Shivadekar and Hemali Chhapia, ”Masses join classes in staying away from polls,” The Times of India, May 1, 2009
533 “Super six surprise,” The Indian Express, May 17, 2009
In November 2008, when I signed the agreement, I was promised that the bidders would be chosen within a month but the project was delayed for no fault of mine. We were asked to redo many things that were originally approved, resulting in my present cash crunch.”


The state takes decisions arbitrarily and keeps us in the dark” – Raju Korde


“Pacifica feels that instead of parking its money on a project that may not take off, it could look at other investments. But we are still hopeful that we can persuade Pacifica and bid for the project” – Nayan Bheda, managing director of Neptune Developers

(Source: Madhurima Nandy, “US firm exits Dharavi project citing delays,” LiveMint, April 23, 2010)

During the preparation of an alternative plan for redevelopment of Dharavi by the government-appointed committee of experts in November 2009, the chief minister Ashok Chavan established a new panel of specialists to facilitate and support the implementation of the DRP. The panel clearly stated that the 32-sector development plan was not as viable as the five-sector approach; they therefore recommended retaining the initial plan:

“We have ruled out the other option of redeveloping it (Dharavi) in smaller sectors within the existing five. It would have just delayed the project further,” said an official.555

Once the panel had agreed upon the five-sector strategy, the chief minister declared a change in the process of inviting private developers. In particular, he announced that the state government would invite bids for one sector at a time rather than all five sectors at once. This change was designed to lock in the development process and discourage any other delays. In the first round all interested parties would bid for only one selected sector, and only when that bid was awarded would the bid continue for another sector. The Dharavi Redevelopment Authority, headed by Gautam Chatterjee, was assigned the responsibility of deciding which sector the developers could bid for.

Because of its small size and proximity to the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), sector five was selected as the first to be redeveloped. Of the 63 hectares covering the sector’s territory, only 23 hectares were available for redevelopment, as the majority of the land in sector five belonged to private owners. The DRP had projected that the redevelopment would involve only government-owned areas in Dharavi. According to a 1985 survey, of the 175 hectares


Chart 8: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2010
that shaped the area, 106 hectares belonged to BMC, 43 hectares to private landowners, and the remaining 26 hectares to the state and central governments.

Sector five seemed a promising place to begin the redevelopment process: with 9,300 tenements, it was the most thinly populated of the five sectors, and its few industries operated on only 2% of its land. In comparison, sectors one and three hosted a large majority of the enclave’s residents, most of whom ran smaller businesses in this mostly industrial area, and sector four was also densely populated, with almost 10,500 tenements. Sector two was home to Kumbharwada, the pottery colony, whose residents declined to participate in the project. Strong opposition to the project arose from this sector, and its rehabilitation would have been one of the hardest.

Following the previous design guidelines, the seven consortia that were left in the competition for redeveloping Dharavi were asked to submit their financial proposals for sector five by the end of June 2010. Considering the fact that the bidding process had already been delayed for two years and now the number of participants was very small, the developers submitted their proposals with less enthusiasm than before. The California-based real estate developers Pacifica Companies, which had joined forces with the Indian Neptune developers and Sindhu Resettlement Corporation, opted out of the process at the end of April. Nayan Bheda, the managing director of Neptune Developers, explained,

“Pacifica feels that instead of parking its money on a project that may not take off, it could look at other investments. But we are still hopeful that we can persuade Pacifica and bid for the projects.”

In light of yet another delay, the state body Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) expressed an interest in redeveloping the fifth sector of Dharavi. In his role as vice president of MHADA, Gautam Chatterjee publicly announced his intention of upgrading sector five and appointed a contractor. He additionally suggested rehousing the eligible slum families that were residing in the sector with an FSI of four. Government officials initially did not accept Chatterjee’s suggestion. The chief minister, Ashok Chavan, in his opening speech at the inauguration ceremony of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority’s new office in the Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), highlighted and encouraged private investment in Dharavi, stressing that it could be a source of extra revenue for the state. According to his remarks, it is better to find private developers for redevelopment projects rather than “depending on the state-run housing agency MHADA.” To support the initiative of involving private investors, in October 2010 MHADA decided to conduct a new survey of sector five to identify the exact number of structures and eligible slum dwellers that could be involved in the DRP.

Meanwhile, while developers and residents concerned themselves with the details of the bidding process, the state issued a Government Resolution (GR) directing the Dharavi

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556 Naresh Kamath, “Dharavi revamp gets a push,” Hindustan Times, February 25, 2010
557 Madhurima Nandy, “US firm exits Dharavi project citing delays,” LiveMint, April 23, 2010
558 Rajshri Mehta and Surendra Gangan, “MHADA bid to develop Dharavi on its own,” DNA, June 8, 2010
559 Ninad Siddhaye, “MHADA not capable enough for redevelopment projects: CM,” DNA, August 27, 2010
Redevelopment Authority to pay Rs 14 crore (US $2.5 million) to Mukesh Mehta. The resolution clarified that the consultant had satisfactorily completed his work and was not responsible for the delay of the project. In stark contrast to the conditions of the initial contract and the statement by the Committee of Experts in opposition to Mukesh Mehta’s role, the authorities now agreed to offer him the money he demanded, and by the end of March 2010 he was paid an extra Rs 12.2 crore (US $2.2 million). This sparked many reactions not only from activists and residents but also from government representatives who had been questioning Mehta’s role since the Committee of Experts’ letter.

MHADA: the state agency to redevelop Dharavi

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<td>Government</td>
<td>“We studied the issue and found that the previous six expressions of interests did not giving us an appropriate cost, and would, in fact benefit the builders. Mhada, which has proven to have a good track record in housing projects, will develop one sector” – Chief Minister P. Chavan (Source: “MHADA to redevelop Dharavi’s sector 5,” <em>Hindustan Times</em>, March 24, 2011)</td>
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<td>Residents</td>
<td>“With so much cash, power and votes, no one expects the battle over Dharavi redevelopment to end soon” – Krishna, a Dharavi resident (Source: Jason Burke, “Money, power and politics collide in the battle for Mumbai’s slums,” <em>The Guardian</em>, March 5, 2011)</td>
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<td>Mukesh Mehta</td>
<td>“I see it as a deliberate and malicious attempt to oust me and let someone else reap the harvest of my vision, hard work, dedication and sacrifices. I will leave no stone unturned and do whatever it takes to get justice”</td>
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<td>Activists (NGOs)</td>
<td>“We have been fighting for the issue for a long time. Any development in this region should take into account the small businesses that have been thriving in this region. The redevelopment should aim to enhance and improve the potential of the business ventures” – Jockim Arputham (Source: M. Saraswathy, “Dharavi redevelopment proves a Headache for small businesses?” <em>Business Standard</em>, July 17, 2011)</td>
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<td>Developers</td>
<td>“Even Singapore was a city of shanties and dilapidated structures barely 40 years ago. It took a visionary approach by the state and sustained redevelopment activity to transform it into a world-class city. Let’s spell out the policies and the intention, give the guidelines, and then go about transforming the city” – Prakash Shah, director of Hiranandani Constructions (Source: “It’s the right time for redevelopment,” <em>DNA</em>, May 14, 2011)</td>
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A catalytic change took place in the DRP’s process of realization when in November 2010 Prithviraj Chavan replaced chief minister Ashok Chavan. While Ashok Chavan had opposed MHADA’s involvement in the redevelopment of sector five, Prithviraj Chavan highly supported the state’s participation in the DRP. Particularly, he argued that MHADA’s nodal role would engage more developers through a renewed competitive bidding process that could replace the already existing proposals with new ones that resulted from more competition.

MHADA’s involvement activated various objections from the local NGOs and the political scene. Speaking publicly to daily newspapers, the activist Raju Korde, who represented the NGO “Dharavi Bachao Samitee” (which had opposed the DRP since 2004), admitted that “the only concern[s]” he had about MHADA were the quality of housing that MHADA would provide and its ability to integrate local enterprises in the redeveloped area. Furthermore, Eknath Gaikwad, the successful representative of Mumbai South-Central in the national elections in 2009, dismissed the idea that MHADA could redevelop the slums effectively and agreed with Raju Korde that MHADA’s construction guidelines were “poor” for an ambitious project such as the DRP. He added that some of the high-rise buildings that existed in sector five were mostly constructed by MHADA during previous slum rehabilitation projects, such as the Prime Minister Grant Project in 1985 (PMGP), judging from their deteriorating state, he doubted MHADA’s competence to reconstruct parts of Dharavi (figures 55–56). Much of Gaikwad’s support in the Lok Sabha elections in 2009 had come from the slums, and his position towards MHADA’s participation was undoubtedly politically motivated. In order to illuminate certain aspects of his position, Gaikwad had a meeting with four other corporators and other officials at the end of January 2011, and as a result they sent a letter to chief minister Chavan and asked that the original agreement of implementing the DRP with strong private sector involvement be maintained. In this letter, Gaikwad emphasized the political consequences of “the government’s flip-flop” for the base of the Congress party’s support and underlined his concerns about the Congress’s image in the upcoming local elections in the beginning of 2012. As a response to the letter, officials representing MHADA stated that politicians had no reason to worry about the project as the plan’s alterations aimed at benefiting most slum dwellers. However, the chief minister overlooked the letter and in March gave public assurances that MHADA would redevelop sector five.

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563 Rajshri Mehta, “CM push for Dharavi makeover,” The Times of India, January 26, 2011
564 “Role of MHADA in Dharavi plan upsets few Congress men,” The Times of India, February 1, 2011
565 Ibid.
Figure 55: The PMGP Colony Transit Camps by MHADA under the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) in 1985. It is located in the current Sector 5, the first sector to feel the redevelopment practice under the ambitious DRP. When the Prime Minister introduced the PMGP for redeveloping Dharavi, governmental representatives selected 12 peripheral areas easily accessible from the outside for a pilot project.

By the end of May, Chavan cancelled the final bids on the other four sectors and focused on inviting new appointment proposals for a project management consultant for sector five. Even though the chief minister announced that the first round of inviting bids for consultants...
would have been in the beginning of June, MHADA opted out of this process and instead pronounced immediate plans to appoint Shirke Constructions, which had also been MHADA’s official developer in other slum rehabilitation projects, as the official consultant for sector five.\textsuperscript{566} This choice drew much attention from newspapers because it exposed the project’s lack of transparency. Without the bidding process, MHADA’s role would be criticized as an effort to monopolize Dharavi’s redevelopment. Thus, MHADA set the end of September as the new date for inviting proposals to appoint the consultant for sector five and cancelled the agreement with Shirke Constructions.\textsuperscript{567} Regarding the funding of the project, MHADA had given assurances that they would initially invest from their resources, and once the rehabilitation of slum dwellings was finalized, they would cover the rest of the cost by selling the extra tenements on the open market.\textsuperscript{568} To manage and ensure the implementation of the project in sector five, MHADA had decided to establish a company as a “special purpose vehicle” that would be responsible for all projects related to Dharavi. This internal mechanism was responsible for inviting proposals for constructing the rehabilitated buildings for sector five in Dharavi. In September, the project faced another stalemate, and the process of inviting contractors was rescheduled. In his speech Satish Gavai, MHADA’s vice president, mentioned,

“Everything is ready to float tenders inviting contractors for sector 5. We are awaiting the amendment of the Development Control Regulations to enable us to give 300 sq. ft. homes to those being rehabilitated.”\textsuperscript{569}

Even though the former chief minister, Ashok Chavan, had agreed to provide eligible slum dwellers with 300 sq.ft. of housing free of cost, the amendment had not received an official signature from the new chief minister, Prithviraj Chavan.\textsuperscript{570} Because of the upcoming local elections in early 2012, the new minister did not sign the amendment before the end of the year, and thus the project was further delayed. Alongside the pre-election period, the former chief minister Manohar Joshi, who represented Shiv Sena in the beginning of 2011, organized another demonstration in Dharavi with the demand of 400 sq.ft. of housing free of cost for the eligible slum dwellers and the right to “self-redevelopment” for the areas of Kumbharwada and Koliwada, both of which had opposed the DRP since 2004.\textsuperscript{571} The rally did not last long and was not as violent as the one in 2007. As soon as the chief minister officially announced that MHADA would redevelop sector five, Shiv Sena, the leading party in Mumbai, expressed opposition and instead argued that BMC was the more suitable agency to redevelop Dharavi because it owned almost 70% of the land.\textsuperscript{572} Once again, Shiv Sena understood the decisive importance of the project in the upcoming BMC elections in 2012, and the party therefore added the project’s implementation to their political agenda.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation of the central government of India in 2011 introduced the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), a new policy that

\textsuperscript{566} Ketaki Ghoge, “MHADA opts for competitive bids for sector 5,” \textit{Hindustan Times}, June 7, 2011
\textsuperscript{567} Rajshri Mehta, “Dharavi redevelopment bids next week,” \textit{The Times of India}, September 9, 2011
\textsuperscript{568} “Global bids again for Dharavi redevelopment,” \textit{LiveMint}, June 28, 2011
\textsuperscript{569} Kavitha Iyer, “Tenders to be floated for consultants,” \textit{The Indian Express}, September 29, 2011
\textsuperscript{570} Sandeep Ashar, “Dharavi redevelopment Project awaits CM’s clearance,” \textit{The Times of India}, October 29, 2011
\textsuperscript{571} “Government under fire for Dharavi Project,” \textit{The Times of India}, February 2, 2011
\textsuperscript{572} “Sena wants BMC, not MHADA, to redevelop Dharavi,” \textit{Hindustan Times}, May 28, 2011
aspired to a slum-free India. The policy envisioned that the central government would cover 50% of the cost for slum rehabilitation projects for selected cities in India; Mumbai was one of these cities. Although RAY was highly respected by the state governments around India, it was not in step with Mumbai’s model to date for rehabilitating slums. A significant sticking point was the fact that RAY did not involve itself with providing free housing to slum dwellers, and it did not concern itself with determining whether or not residents were eligible to participate in the projects. Aruna Sundararajan, the joint secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, alluded to these aspects of their potential role in redevelopment:

“We cannot give free housing to all slum dwellers, so we have to create an approach that accommodates all…. The design of rehousing will be created on a case to case and location to location basis.”

On the other hand, chief minister Prithviraj Chavan expressed his interest in integrating the SRA’s projects with RAY and enthusiastically embraced the idea of such a partnership in the newspapers, where he gushed, “there is a need to 'creatively' marry the existing schemes with RAY for Mumbai.” He added that he was keen to find ways to “weave both schemes together.” Even though the DRP was one of the schemes to which he was referring, its complex evolution led the government to decide that it was incompatible with the RAY guidelines. It therefore continued as a project that the government would monitor and control but whose implementation would be independent from RAY. This came also as a result of the tensions between the central and state governments of Maharashtra.

The last event that sparked discussions about the DRP in the press throughout 2011 and delayed the project further was the World Bank’s sudden interest in funding it. The World Bank’s managing director, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, visited Dharavi during a tour in Mumbai. Sheela Patel (from SPARC) accompanied her on this tour and described to her all the previous efforts that had been made to redevelop and change Dharavi’s principal identity. In a meeting she had the following day with the chief minister Chavan, Iweala revealed that the Bank was looking at “helping” Dharavi, but they had not yet taken any decision. This interest in redeveloping Dharavi related not only to the Bank’s attention to Indian slums since 1985 with the introduction of the “progressive” Slum Upgrading Project (SUP) but also to a general interest in slums worldwide in the 21st century.

The unique pattern of policies that were introduced to redevelop Dharavi, along with the intense interest in the news media concerning the project’s evolution and implementation, made the enclave a model for other slums in India starting in 2010. Even though the project in Dharavi was not implemented, the state government of Ahmedabad adopted the private-public partnership model and invited proposals for rehabilitating the slum areas of Amraiwadi. For the first time a redevelopment project that had not itself been implemented,

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573 Kavitha Iyer, “Slum-free Mumbai key to slum-free India,” The Indian Express, September 28, 2011
574 Ibid.
577 P.S.A. Sundaram, Bombay: Can it house its millions?, (New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1989), 133
578 “1st slum redevelopment on Dharavi model gets nod for Ahmedabad,” The Indian Express, July 15, 2011
and may have even been on the verge of failing, served as a model for development in other similar settings. The DRP’s impact could be felt on a national scale. It triggered greater private-sector involvement in slum projects throughout India and influenced future slum policies. As Mukesh Mehta stated in the documentary *Dharavi: Slum for Sale*, the transformation of Dharavi into a “slum-free city” would signify that every city in India could be made “slum-free.”

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<th>Voice</th>
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<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td>“All the necessary clearances have been secured, and the tenders [will] soon be floated…. The government wants to earn the faith and confidence of all stakeholders” – Housing Minister of Maharashtra, Sachin Ahir (Source: Sanjay Jog, “Govt resolved to bring in transparency: Saschin Ahir,” <em>Business Standard</em>, June 25, 2012)</td>
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<td><strong>Residents</strong></td>
<td>“There is confusion and the plan changes every second day. We, the residents, for whom the scheme is being implemented, are being kept in the dark” – Milind Tulaskar (Source: Naresh Kamath, “Dharavi’s sector 3 should use cluster development model,” <em>Hindustan Times</em>, February 27, 2012)</td>
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<td><strong>Mukesh Mehta</strong></td>
<td>“Some officers are abusing their powers to undermine the project. They don’t have even one authentic reason to terminate a legally binding contract” (Source: Clara Lewis, TNN, “Dharavi consultant shown the door,” <em>The Times of India</em>, August 18, 2012)</td>
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<td><strong>Activists (NGOs)</strong></td>
<td>“Dharavi is a non moving duck” – Jockim Arputham (Source: “Dharavi redevelopment project yet to take off,” <em>The Times of India</em>, February 28, 2012)</td>
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<td><strong>Developers</strong></td>
<td>“There is no clarity on the project. We can construct houses and provide infrastructure, but there is no planning on shifting of people” – Subodh Runwal, Director of the Runwal Group (Source: Naresh Kamath, “Just 1 bidder for Dharavi revamp scheme; MHADA cancels tenders,” <em>Hindustan Times</em>, July 4, 2012)</td>
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*Chart 10: Voices of key actors (DRP) – 2012*

Ahead of the BMC elections on February 16, 2012, the two major political parties, the Congress and Shiv Sena, attempted to expand their agendas to involve redevelopment planning in Mumbai. The Dharavi Redevelopment Project had been used as a template in the past for political battles not only in local elections but in state and national elections as well.

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Many decisions and debates had shaped the realization of the project, but nothing was officially accepted until ratified by the chief minister. The decisions about the rehabilitated 300 sq.ft. of housing free of cost, the FSI of 4, and other issues involving the design guidelines of the area would not be officially valid until signed by the chief minister, Prithviraj Chavan. In an effort to allow work to continue on the much-delayed project, Chavan, a few hours before the official announcement of the elections and before the Election Code of Conduct came into force, signed the new policies for Dharavi and integrated them with the official Development Control Rules (DCR) for Greater Mumbai.

These new rules arose from the debates that had taken place since the project’s inauguration, and the strategic strengths and weaknesses behind them began to unravel publicly once they were aired. More specifically, Chavan made it mandatory for all developers participating in slum redevelopment projects in Mumbai to reserve 20% of any area above 2000 sq.m. to accommodate the eligible dwellers in 300–500 sq.ft. houses free of cost. Those eligible were identified as the dwellers who had moved into the slum before the cut-off date of January 1, 1995. The extension of the cut-off date to January 1, 2000, was only feasible in cases like that of the DRP, where the project was considered vital. If dwellers had moved into the slum after the cut-off date, they would have to pay a transfer fee of Rs 40,000 (US $700) for residential structures and Rs 60,000 (US $1000) for commercial structures to participate in the rehabilitation. According to the new rules, an FSI of 4 was also approved for any slum redevelopment project, and each eligible dweller would receive a house of 300 sq.ft. free of cost in the rehabilitated area. Those living in much larger houses would be eligible to have a house of 400 sq.ft. if they purchased the extra 100 sq.ft. at construction cost. In the case of industrial units, the maximum cost-free size available would be 225 sq.ft., and those who needed larger areas for their workshops would have to pay the extra costs themselves. In Kumbharwada, Dharavi’s traditional pottery colony, a common space of 2,230 sq.m. would be provided. Additionally, it was expected that small businesses would be protected under the DRP and a ten-year corpus fund established for maintaining the rehabilitated buildings. For the redevelopment of slums in Mumbai, a sectoral approach would be followed and competitive bids would be solicited for the governmental land. In his first speech just after the official approval of the new rules, Chavan highlighted that this project would ensure a better quality of life in Dharavi:

“Under this project, infrastructure facilities like roads, toilets, gardens will be developed to improve people’s standard of living. The redevelopment of Dharavi was first approved in 2004. It is aimed at benefiting 60,000 families in the vicinity.”

The declaration of these rules generated political and social objections, particularly over the lack of restrictions in the new DCR guidelines on the height of buildings. Since the launch of the project in 2004, the number of stories had been a key issue in debates between Dharavi’s residents and the government. Local activists who had previously witnessed the damaging social consequences of putting slum dwellers in high-rise residential buildings (e.g. the lack of...
social interaction and productive common space) opposed the new rules and demanded that the government reconsider adding a height limit to the Development Control Rules.

Opposition parties also criticized the decision of the government to announce these rules a few hours before the Election Code of Conduct went into effect. Adding their voices to the debates in daily newspapers was the means for political parties in Mumbai to expose problems. Particularly, as Vinod Tawde, the leader of the right-wing party BJP, said in one of his statements after the official announcement of the new rules,

“As soon as the Cabinet was announced on Monday, we realized that elections would be announced today. The decisions announced by the government are not in the favor of the people, but with eyes on votes.”

Dharavi’s political underpinnings were challenged in the BMC elections in 2012, and for the first time in many years the majority of people voted for right-wing parties such as Shiv Sena in local elections. Of the six electoral wards that shaped Dharavi’s electoral territory, the Congress party managed to keep only one, while Shiv Sena gained two. The result in 2012 was different from 2007, when the Congress party had gained five out of six wards in Dharavi. Representatives of the Congress were not surprised by this “loss” in the area. According to Varsha Gaikwad, the daughter of the Congress politician Eknath Gaikwad, “the delay [of the DRP] has been one of the biggest factors in our loss in Dharavi. But the result in 2014 can be different since we expect work to actually start soon now.”

Eknath Gaikwad, who had opposed MHADA’s involvement in the project, responded to his party’s “loss” in the BMC elections and underlined his concerns about the project’s failure. He supported the argument that MHADA was “incapable” of redeveloping Dharavi and highlighted that another delay in the DRP could lead to a major loss of Congress support:

“People are angry with our party. People want development but we have failed to deliver. We gave so many promises and even distributed DVDs to the people of Dharavi on the basis of which Congress won the parliamentary and assembly elections.”

Figure 57: Eknath Gaikwad’s interview in “MHADA is incapable of developing Dharavi,” DNA, May 30, 2012

583 “Election code imposed as parties rush to announce slew of ops,” The Indian Express, January 4, 2012
584 Kavitha Iyer, “Stuck Dharavi Project to blame for Congress rout in area,” The Indian Express, February 21, 2012
585 “MHADA is incapable of developing Dharavi,” DNA, May 30, 2012
While Eknath Gaikwad was blaming the state agency for the DRP delays, MHADA’s CEO, Satish Gavai, was preparing to appoint a new project management consultant for the redevelopment of sector five. In March 2012 Gavai announced his intention of constructing 14-floor residential buildings in sector five to accommodate residents of 344 tenements. His ambition was to implement and finalize the project by the end of 2012. Expression of Interest forms were solicited in the beginning of June, and by the end of June only two firms had responded to the advertisement. The two firms were Shirke Constructions, which was MHADA’s official contractor, and the Neptune Group, which had already shown an interest in joining the project since 2007. The lack of attention from developers generated concerns in the government regarding the competition and transparency of the process, and as a result MHADA announced a new invitation in July. However, this new bidding invitation was no more fruitful than the previous one, and it attracted only two bidders: Premnath Associates and P.K. Das Group. The architect P.K. Das had extensive experience in Mumbai’s slums and had already shown his interest in transforming Dharavi since the Prime Minister Grant Project in 1985.

Once the EoI forms were announced in July, the government felt that Mukesh Mehta was no longer essential in the role of the project management consultant for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project and decided to terminate his services by sending him a 60-day notice in August. More specifically, officials commented to the press,

“When the global bid itself has been cancelled, and the rights to redevelop sector 5 have been awarded to MHADA, the government saw no point in continuing with the PMC (referring to Mukesh Mehta).”

Mukesh Mehta’s role in the project had been challenged many times in the past, especially by the Committee of Experts in 2007. Even though the July bid invitation from MHADA was unsuccessful, the government decided to leave the DRP without a consultant at this critical juncture in the project’s development. In October, for the third time, MHADA again solicited proposals for a sector five consultant in the hope that more developers would express their interest in joining the project. In this revised tender, the role of the project management consultant only focused on preparing the architectural and financial schemes and not on supervising the redevelopment work. The latter job would be the contractor’s responsibility.

At this point instead of concentrating on getting the process underway and shaping a comprehensive design for sector five, the government announced its plans to have MHADA redevelop sector three according to the cluster model. Sector three comprises 45 hectares and contains 12,600 slum structures. Half of its area belongs to private parties, and thus MHADA would only be able to rehabilitate a small part of the area. According to an official in the Hindustan Times,

586 “Maharashtra’s big-ticket Dharavi project broken into pieces,” DNA, March 20, 2012
588 Rajshri Mehta, “Show-cause notice to Dharavi consultant soon,” The Times of India, July 31, 2012
589 “Tender norms eased for Dharavi consultants,” The Times of India, September 22, 2012
“Redeveloping the entire sector in one go would have taken decades as acquiring private properties is a herculean task. If we allow revamp of individual buildings, the whole planning would have been in tatters. Hence we decided to do it in clusters so that some uniformity is maintained.”

Highly influenced by the alternative plan and MHADA’s delays, the DRA announced in September its intention of preparing a formal sanction plan for the remaining four sectors and bringing it under public scrutiny. More specifically, the authority was willing to invite suggestions and objections concerning the project. However, this decision failed to gain traction, and in November 2012, when MHADA was about to start redeveloping work, more than 5,000 local residents led by Shiv Sena protested against the project. Meanwhile, MHADA defended their plan and decided to start construction.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

**Figure 58:** Extract from the newspaper. “Dharavi residents stop revamp work before it can start,” *Hindustan Times*, November 2, 2012

**Construction time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press</th>
<th>“Sole building in Dharavi redevelopment project to be ready by April next year,” <em>The Indian Express</em>, October 23, 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We want to improve on the (existing) socio-economic structure of Dharavi. If all goes according to plan, there will be different Dharavi in the next 3–5 years” – Sameer Biswas, the CEO of the DRA</td>
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<td>(Source: Sudhir Suryawanshi, “Expect new Dharavi in 3–5 years: CEO,” <em>DNA</em>, April 1, 2013)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“We will not allow the redevelopment until our demands – of 400 sq ft houses and a corpus fund of Rs1lakh to each tenant – are met. We have the right to bigger homes as this is a special project and the government will earn crores of rupees through it” – Baburao Mane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Source: Dharavi Bandh on April 9 to oppose revamp,” <em>Hindustan Times</em>, March 29, 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

508 Naresh Kamath, “Dharavi’s sector 3 should use cluster development model,” *Hindustan Times*, July 4, 2012
At the beginning of 2013, in an effort to accelerate the project’s development and to facilitate the bidding process before the upcoming elections in 2014, Pritviraj Chavan announced his intentions to divide the four remaining sectors into 13 smaller clusters. From his statement it was clear that a single developer would be allowed to bid for either one or all phases of one cluster, and the deadline for inviting fresh international bids for the different phases would be August 2013. Even though the process seemed to be on a fast track, the government was still seeking a new project management consultant who would be responsible for integrating the planning of the remaining four sectors.

Meanwhile, MHADA, the state agency responsible for developing sector five, appointed P.K. Das as the architect for the sector at a salary of Rs 1.40 lakh (US $3,150) per month. P.K. Das had a long history of involvement in slum upgrading projects and appeared confident that the redevelopment would be finalized within a two-month period. For Das, planning and architecture were “democratic” means of social change that should be excluded from “the politics of democracy.” A multilayered goal of providing affordable housing along with redevelopment, accessible social infrastructure, and expansion of public space, lies at the centre of his work. According to Das, public space and the formation of neighbourhoods should form the basis for city planning, and mapping and surveys act as a “huge political process” that can activate public dialogue. Unlike local activists, Das has been very critical of NGOs’ involvement in slum upgrading projects. Even though he supported the idea of placing residents at the centre of the redevelopment process, he strongly opposed the way local NGOs in Mumbai promoted participatory planning.

Construction on the first experimental building in sector five began in February 2013 and was scheduled for completion before the elections in 2014 (figures 59–63). As Hrishikesh.R. Patil (a sub-engineer for the DRP/SRA) mentioned, there were two reasons behind the choice of this plot: 1. The land where the building would be located belongs to MHADA, and 2. It was a vacant space. The building as planned would host 356 tenements (self-contained units 300 sq.ft. in size) on 18 floors.

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591 Sharad Vyas and Rajshri Mehta, "CM outlines new Dharavi redevelopment plan," The Times of India, January 15, 2013
Figure 59: The first DRP building, which began its construction in February 2013, is located within the PMGP Colony’s borders, an area of Transit Camps built by MHADA

Figure 60: The first DRP experimental building – Construction Information
Figure 61: Construction works of the first DRP experimental building in Sector 5, 2013

Figure 62: Plan of the first building in Sector 5. Material provided to author by Hrishikesh R. Patil, sub-engineer for the DRP/SRA, September 19, 2013
P.K. Das’s appointment by the government and the construction of the first building at the beginning of 2013 spurred several discussions in the press. Senior government officials, who kept their anonymity, talked publicly about the process and raised their concerns about another potential failure in the project due to its link to the upcoming elections:

"We hope the state authority endorses our efforts as earlier, the plans were always changed at the last minute. It [is] some kind of flip flop, but we are sure the state will approve the plan and ensure its implementation this time,’ senior government officials said."593

"If the government fails to execute the plan this time, then people will no longer believe in them. It will badly affect us during the general elections in 2014,’ a senior congress leader said.”594

The political layering of the DRP became even more evident in March 2013, when several Dharavi residents, led by the Hindu Shiv Sena party, announced that they were organizing another demonstration on April 2013 and burnt copies of the DRP outside the Sion Railway station.595 Their demands this time pertained to the rehabilitation space to which residents were entitled. Specifically, they demanded apartments 400 sq.ft. in size instead of the 300 sq.ft.
that the state offered them after the January 2012 notification. Additionally, they invoked previous discussions about the unknown future of their families (figure 64). The story of Shiv Sena protesting with Dharavi’s residents has been a familiar one since the beginning of the project. Shiv Sena representatives spoke up in the news and once again characterized the project as “a conspiracy to oust the old and poor residents and replace them with affluent people who work in the Bandra-Kurla complex which is a financial hub.” 596 Full implementation of the project has passed from an ambitious private-public partnership to the state company MHADA; Dharavi’s fortunes now rest mainly with the government.

Figure 64: “Dharavi residents to go on strike,” DNA, March 29, 2013; and “Dharavi Bandh on April 9 to oppose revamp,” Hindustan Times, March 29, 2013

596 Ibid.
The CEO of the Dharavi Redevelopment Authority, Samir Kumar Biswas, responded to the protesters, whose strong support from Shiv Sena was clearly linked to a desire for electoral gains in 2014. Biswas characterized the demonstrators’ demands as “impracticable” and unreasonable. He preferred to elicit suggestions and hear objections from the public based upon his Draft Planning Proposal for Dharavi Notified Area, a publication that encompassed the challenges and planning proposals that were under discussion for the development of the DRP. As he wrote in this publication, the public was invited to respond to it within 30 days. Still, Biswas exuded enthusiasm and confidence in the project in his statement to the press that within three to five years they would all be experiencing a “different” Dharavi (figure 65).  

Figure 65: Sudhir Suryawanshi, "Expect new Dharavi in 3–5 years: CEO," DNA, April 1, 2013

In July 2013 the DRA received 2,015 demands and 765 suggestions and objections associated with the DRP. The government appointed the international consulting company Ernst and Young as the project management consultant for redeveloping the remaining four sectors:

“Ernst & Young won the bid as management consultant for the project. It will now help in revamping sector 1 to 4. They will also conduct a feasibility study,

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597 “Dharavi residents to go on strike,” DNA, March 29, 2013
598 Dharavi Redevelopment Project, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Draft Planning Proposals for Dharavi Notified Area, (Mumbai, March, 2013), 51
599 Sudhir Suryawanshi, “Expect new Dharavi in 3–5 years: CEO,” DNA, April 1, 2013
explore alternatives and suggest the tendering process,’ said an official from the DRA.  

While the bids were planned for August 2013, the government extended the tender process to November 2013 and later to 2014. The reason behind this delay was the threat of another “2009-like fiasco,” with tender documents eliciting a poor response. Senior DRA officials supported the extension:

“In 2009, besides the ego clash between two project authorities, property downturn was another reason for lack of bidders. We do not want [a] poor response this time.”

“Since the market is not doing very well, we may want to test the waters first by bidding out only 25% of the project, or one sector, initially and see what kind of response we get from developers. We are looking to float tenders as soon as possible. We are putting all options in front of the chief minister.”

Reflecting on the consequences of another delay in the DRP, the Congress representative Eknath Gaikwad publicly spoke about Biswas’s “intense” interest in the project’s implementation:

“We are happy with the chief minister who is now paying a lot of attention towards the Dharavi redevelopment. The outcome of the general election will be different this time around. The people will again back the Congress. Apart from the redevelopment project, the state government has also either completed or started new ones...The people are now realizing that the Congress is working hard to change the face of Dharavi. Most of the projects have high visibility.”

Figure 66: Sudhir Suryawanshi, "Dharavi redevelopment turns into political battle," DNA, August 11, 2013

Even though the majority of government officials envisioned the project’s implementation within the following years, members of the planning team and the CEO of SRA, Nirmal

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601 Anshumali Ruparel, “Dharavi development project inches ahead,” The Indian Express, August 10, 2013
601 “Mumbai: New consultant for Dharavi revamp plan,” The Times of India, July 17, 2013
602 Manasi Phadke, "Flop bids & 2 yrs later, gvt moves again on Dharavi redevelopment project,” The Indian Express, November 13, 2013
603 Sudhir Suryawanshi, “Dharavi redevelopment turns into political battle,” DNA, August 11, 2013
Deshmukh, had a different perspective. As Deshmukh mentioned, his aspiration was for the DRP to be implemented within the following ten years, and instead of portraying Dharavi as a new Bandra Kurla Complex, he viewed it more as a new Andheri (a residential suburb situated in the west of the city). For him the major and only hurdle in this process had been the residents’ resistance to the project. Similarly, R.B. Sankhe, the deputy chief engineer of the DRP and SRA, agreed that the implementation of the project might take another seven to ten years, with the only reason for the delay being the “political pressure with the upcoming elections.”

Meanwhile, a height cap by the aviation ministry forced a halt to the construction of the first building in sector five, which had started in February 2013 without the required height clearance. The construction of a second building was also held up as MHADA awaited environmental, heritage, and aviation clearances. It had been projected to start by the end of 2013.

The stories assessed here show the complex and paradoxical mechanisms at work behind the DRP and ultimately depict the redevelopment strategy for Dharavi as an unalloyed failure. The DRP – as it has both evolved and stagnated since 2004 – illustrates the challenges an architectural project can face when participating in the daunting task of slum redevelopment. Such challenges or hurdles are mainly associated with i) a highly complex bureaucratic apparatus, which involves several levels of top-down participation on a municipal, state, and national scale; ii) the neo-liberal idea of framing the entire project as a public-private partnership without including the residents’ participation; iii) the misuse of the project for political causes such as elections and party alliances; and iv) the notion that Dharavi as a slum should be eradicated and not upgraded.

A Tabula Rasa Project

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project has been defined and redefined against the background of the fancy “world-class vision” of Mumbai that encompasses commercial and residential complexes and features elevated skywalks and wide roads. This vision has glorified certain design paradigms, guidelines, and neo-liberal policies associated with global organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank. The media stories covering the development of the DRP provide a comprehensive narrative of how spatial transformations in slums occur and are produced, and how they differ from the simplistic vision of global organizations. Furthermore, the examined voices in the press reveal the effects of changing political and economic circumstances on the implementation of such project (chart 12).

This study is based upon almost 500 articles about the DRP. This sample was divided by the type of newspaper, using the following four categories: i) Economic (The Economic Times, The Financial Times, Business Standard, and Hindustan Times); ii) Moderate Political (The Times

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604 Nirmal Deshmukh, interview by author, Mumbai, September 19, 2013
605 R.B. Sankhe, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013
606 Manasi Phadke, “Dharavi redevelopment project: Hurdles slow down progress,” The Indian Express, February 6, 2014
607 Bombay First and McKinsey, Vision Mumbai
of India and Mumbai Mirror); iii) Conservative Political (Indian Express); and iv) Social (LiveMint and the Daily News Analysis [DNA]).

Combining the findings from the content analysis with the information gathered from the surveyed sample clearly shows that the year in which the DRP attracted the most attention from newspapers was 2007, when around 90 articles were written about it. The interest in the DRP in that year is not surprising if we consider that in 2007 the government announced the local BMC elections and introduced the ambitious DRP globally. Although the political scene was very active at that time due to the “Model Code of Conduct” of the upcoming elections, the majority of articles related to the DRP appeared in economic newspapers (41%). On May 31, 2007, the state government published the advertisement “The Opportunity of the Millennium” in 16 cities worldwide and invited developers from around the world to participate in the process. This action gained considerable attention in economic circles, and discussions about the project flourished. Examining 2007 shows the DRP’s strong interconnection with the economic scene but also with the political scene (33% of articles were published in political newspapers). In a demonstration of the DRP’s strong correlation to the global economy, the year 2008, when the international financial crisis hit, saw a marked decline in the number of articles and discussions about the project. The DRP fully depended on private developers and international lenders, and the economic crisis severely dampened their interest in participating in a large-scale, high-risk development project (US $1.7 billion).

In striking contrast to 2008, the year that followed showed another increase in discussions related to the DRP. This surge in interest was related to two major upcoming elections: the national Lok Sabha elections in April, and the State elections in October. In an interesting development, the percentage of articles on the DRP that appeared in newspapers with a social focus increased (to 37.5%), while the number of articles on the topic appearing in newspapers with an economic focus declined (to 25%). The DRP was no longer a “free market” project: recognition of its social ramifications was gaining momentum.
In 2010, limited discussions and clarifying remarks about the project by government officials again led to a sharp decrease in newspaper coverage of the DRP. Uncertainty around the redevelopment strategy increased, and a change in bureaucratic procedures made private developers unwilling to pursue the project. Ambitions of involving international developers had to be scaled back. This uncertainty dissolved in 2011 when the government appointed the state housing agency MHADA to implement parts of Dharavi’s redevelopment. The government’s decision was a de facto admission that the ambitious global slum redevelopment had been converted into yet another state project. This development did not bode well for the future of the DRP. State-led slum redevelopment projects in Mumbai had a poor track record: none of the previous schemes overseen by the government had been fully implemented.

It is also important to highlight the changing roles of different actors involved in the DRP between 2004 and the year before the construction was inaugurated, 2012. The key actors consist of the following: i) Dharavi’s residents; ii) Mukesh Mehta; iii) government officials representing an official committee (such as the Committee of Experts); state agencies (MHADA), ministers and other governmental organizations; iv) activists, who mainly represent local NGOs such as SPARC and NSDF; and v) others such as architects, researchers, and visitors. Chart 13 shows the “direct representation” of these actors (i.e. direct quotations from them appearing in the newspapers). For the purposes of this chart, any article containing a quote from one of these actors counts as one representation, even if the article contains more than one quote from that person.

It is not surprising to note the dominance of government representation in the newspapers given the fact that the DRP was from its inception a top-down project. The reduction in media coverage in 2010 during the government stalemate, and the corresponding spike in
coverage after the project’s assignment to the state agency MHADA, illustrates the government’s importance relative to other players.

Another interesting point the chart illustrates is how the role of activists changed relative to other actors. In contrast to all others whose representation fell precipitously in 2012, activists’ representation increased steadily after 2010. Even though local activists had been opposing the DRP as a private-public project since 2004, their representation in the news roughly mirrored that of the developers. However, as soon as the project was assigned to the state government and the private developers were out of the picture (after 2010), the role of activists significantly increased. As expected, the voices of private developers who were involved in the process during 2007 and 2009 vanished after the government excluded them from the project in 2011.

The chart also illustrates the trajectory of Mukesh Mehta’s involvement in the DRP as reflected in his contributions to the media discourse between 2004 and 2012. While his publicity peaked in 2007, he gradually lost the media’s attention. In 2009 he drew sharp criticism, and by 2012 he was forced out of the project.

This study has underlined the reasons behind the failure of this redevelopment project to date. Through all these years the Dharavi redevelopment Project has been developed and shaped differently based on various political and economic visions. Each approach has treated the project as if it were a blank slate – a *tabula rasa*. Dharavi became not only a space for competing visions, but also a site of contention and negotiation between different actors. Its spatial and social boundaries were challenged multiple times within a system of political economies that were shaped within various relationships. As of today no plan has yet been implemented. The DRP provides a case study subject for issues that give rise to larger questions and academic debates, outlined in the following two concluding observations:

First, this chapter has attempted to identify the strategic partnerships at work in slum transformation not only in the context of Mumbai, but also in the global context that characterizes the role of cities in the 21st century. The vision of a slum-free, “world-class” city modelled after Singapore and Shanghai has steered the efforts of global organizations (the UN and World Bank) and governments to design guidelines that are in line with this vision and place in their centre the project of redeveloping slums. This analysis of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project has demonstrated how this approach is not always effective or viable. Four main causes were behind the DRP’s apparent failure: bureaucratic failure that resulted in a series of delays; the political impact of the elections on all levels of government; local NGOs and their relationships with political parties; and the growth of a global economic recession that became a hurdle for the involvement of private developers in the transformation of Dharavi. All four components constituted a stumbling block to redevelopment and pointed to a gap between the proposed plan and the actual reality that both the design process and the urban design profession are unable to counter the changing politics, aspirations and fears of the people. At the same time, these factors also highlighted the dependence of slums’ spatial transformations on political economies and governmental strategies.
Second, this chapter has offered an alternative methodology for understanding and examining these changing conditions in problematic areas such as slums by tracing and evaluating the media discourse. It uncovered the importance of not only reading but also accepting newspapers as a tool in assessing the elements that construct the tale of redeveloping “problem areas.”

Since it is the events or happenings that are reported in the pages of newspapers provide a glimpse of a broader terrain under which many depict the redevelopment strategy as a “solution” to the “problem” of slums. Other voices argue that a plan like the DRP is nothing more than another government “trend,” a renewed partnership between architecture and governance, or otherwise a tabula rasa project. By presenting the different sides of these debates and raising questions about the DRP, the media exposed the need to investigate and focus on alternative methods that could also drive spatial change in slums. Such methods could be a new form of participatory planning that would not only rely on traditional approaches, such as plans, policies and surveys, but would also emerge from representations of space and the stereotypes that derive from examining particular events.
“The DRP is not the State’s first attempt to redevelop Dharavi, but it is the latest one and if left unchallenged, it could threaten the lives and businesses of many residents.”

[Sheela Patel, “Dharavi is in the Midst of a Storm,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 282]
Resistance

Resistance is certainly a word that sparks anxiety among Indian authorities involved in the transformation of Dharavi. The reason for this rests in the fact that since 1985 Dharavi has been converted into what the geographer Paul Routledge has termed a “terrain of resistance,” in which conflicts and contestations among various objectives, aims, and agendas remain sheltered under the weight of governmental and non-governmental activities. As a concept, the “terrain of resistance” contains a critical component that is closely related to the political struggle of territorial encounters. As Routledge claims,

“A terrain of resistance refers to those places where struggle is actively articulated by the oppressed, rather than being a metaphor defining for the oppressed where and how struggle should take place. More specifically, a terrain of resistance comprises an interwoven web of historical, political, cultural, economic, ecological, geographical, social and psychological conditions and relationships — a site of contestation among differing beliefs, values and goals that are place-specific.”

While previously the study focused on governmental approaches in newspapers to the problem of housing in Dharavi, this chapter concentrates on the non-governmental methods that are associated with issues and problems related to proposed projects for Dharavi’s future. The dialectic between the examined methods and projects is understood as the composed practice of resistance in Dharavi.

Specifically, three social movements that deployed alternative tactics of resistance against the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) are assessed: the Mumbai Alliance (an alliance consisting of the organizations SPARC, NSDF, and Mahila Milan); the URBZ team; and India’s ACORN foundation. This chapter is an extensive study of the emergence of these movements, the motives that led to their involvement in Dharavi’s politics, and their impact on the DRP. While in the 1990s India witnessed the rise of several grass-roots movements that attempted to oppose the political scope of redeveloping slums, the movements examined here are much different. Instead of replicating traditional methods of struggle, such as demonstrations and street blockage, all three movements developed a highly rational process for opposing the neo-liberal “mirage of development.”

The Mumbai Alliance was formed in 1985 as a coalition of three individual Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) — SPARC, NSDF and Mahila Milan — that aimed to build a communication bridge between residents and the government through enumeration strategy. The survey, or rather the use of accurate data, was and still is critical to the Alliance’s approach as it is a vehicle that can intrude into governmental plans and influence their development. The Alliance has been vital to the evolution of the ambitious Dharavi

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608 Paul Routledge, Terrains of Resistance: Nonviolent Social Movements and the Contestation of Place in India (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 35–38
609 Ibid., xvii
610 Ibid., 35–36
Redevelopment Project because it has provided adequate and new information on Dharavi that has stalled the project’s progress several times.

The second social movement is URBZ. This organization’s unique methods of resistance lie in the fields of research and creativity. Instead of focusing on discussions about the DRP, the URBZ team has uncovered great resourcefulness among the residents interested in the territory’s transformation. Through various workshops and exhibitions, the URBZ team has exposed several levels of dynamics that mark out the area of Dharavi as a model of urbanization in the 21st century. The organization has also developed several theoretical concepts and introduced Dharavi into academic discussions on the future of the slum.

The third grass-roots movement to be assessed is the ACORN foundation in India. Vinod Shetty, the head of ACORN in India, established a community centre and a school in Dharavi’s recycling area, the 13th Compound, in 2009. He assembled the workers in the waste management industry of Dharavi and involved them in participatory activities. He then documented their activities and displayed them in books, documentaries, magazines, and newspapers. His politics of resistance lies in his presence in the media. Vinod Shetty believes that through his role in ACORN he can get the media to create a “buzz” about Dharavi, and that this might raise awareness of the area in various audiences that can potentially change the project’s progress. As he noted, the DRP is always in the background of ACORN’s activities.612

Resistance to the DRP has evolved into an uncomfortably complex challenge that reflects conflicts of interests and involves several concepts that were incorporated into the DRP’s objectives. Included among these are: notions of participation, the emergence of NGOs, and the relationship between NGOs and official authorities.

Participatory planning is a vital process and one that has dominated various narratives in India for over a decade. As the planner Vandana Desai claims, in Mumbai the 1980s may be termed the decade of participation.613 But how exactly is the term defined? In Desai’s words, “participation assumes an activity in which the community takes part and the involvement of at least one other party, usually a government agency or a NGO.”614 Effectively engaging stakeholders requires the active contribution and involvement of people (participants) from various walks of life in the decision-making process.615 In his exploration of various levels of participation in the Third World, James Midgley claims that the effectiveness of this process depends on who has “ultimate control” over decisions, and he argues that only local communities should decide their own affairs.616 This point is also at the centre of John Turner’s argument in his work Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments, in which he begins his analysis with the question of “Who Decides?” about housing issues in low-income areas. In particular he writes:

612 Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013
613 Vandana Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay (New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, 1995), 37
614 Ibid., 38
615 Ibid., 43
Participation as a concept thus implicates communities in planning procedures. In Dharavi, which is divided into more than 80 neighbourhoods, each community is deeply associated with the notion of location and sometimes religion. In the past decade the concept of community participation has received attention in discussions about slums, and as James Midgley argues, it usually has negative connotations that convey the notion of disadvantage. It is a confusing term under which all kind of activities, principally related to housing, tend to congregate. In this context, however, the idea of community participation has evolved into a means of resisting governmental strategies that usually attempt to exclude dwellers from the decision-making process. For this reason UN-HABITAT has called this form of engagement “a right, a form of grassroots democracy” in which community members can have an impact on their daily lives through participatory activities, with or without government involvement.

In many cases, representatives of NGOs are the essential actors in community participation. Unlike the government, NGOs are “dynamic, flexible and socially concerned.” Their role is to mediate between the government and vulnerable populations, to understand the latter’s needs and to represent them in different groups in order to ensure desirable results. Even though NGOs have proved to operate effectively in most slums, the usual problems, such as limited resources, corruption, and bureaucracy, have hindered their ability to render service. Thanks to his personal experience with NGOs in India, the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has come to believe that these organizations usually have complex relations not only with the government, but also with the public sphere and local communities. Their structure can also be “uncomfortably complicit” and might threaten the politics of partnership.

In terms of the three examined NGOs, the focus of this chapter is limited to the relationship and the levels of partnership between each one of the organizations and the government. While the state would prefer to work autonomously with any of these three NGOs, the case of the Mumbai Alliance demonstrates that this is not likely to happen in Dharavi. James Midgley discusses three ways in which the state could respond to such forms of participation: first, through an anti-participatory posture, in which the government ignores any possibility of collaboration; second, through a participatory approach, in which the government encourages any kind of association with NGOs and local communities; finally, through a manipulative tactic, in which the state has underlying motives to work with neighbourhoods and may

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617 Turner, Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments, 12–13
618 Community Participation, Social Development and the State, 38
619 Desai, Community Participation and Slum Housing: A Study of Bombay, 38
620 UNCHS (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements HABITAT), Community Participation in the Execution of Low-Income Housing Projects, report prepared by UNCHS (Nairobi, 1983), 6
manipulate such collaboration for its own ends. Central to these approaches is the changing role of the government in relation to each social movement described as well as the dominant manipulative mode of the partnership that emerged between the Alliance and the state government of Maharashtra.

This chapter elaborates on all three concepts – community participation, the NGO, the relationship between the government and the NGO – and presents alternative modes of resistance in the transformation of what is usually known as “Asia’s largest slum.” The stories examined here serve as an antilogos to those who mistakenly suppose that the strength of Dharavi lies hidden beneath the current fashion of redevelopment. Providing the context in which social movements, political structures, creative activities, and research intersect, this section studies the relations of power, domination, and resistance. It attempts to demonstrate the need for an alternative approach that uses local resources and depends on the willingness of people to invest their energy to improve Dharavi’s infrastructure. Its conclusions have important broader implications and will form the basis of an understanding of the role of politics in representation of Dharavi.

The Alliance

At the end of the 1980s, India witnessed the flowering of a new model of development influenced mainly by Western planning practices and projects directed at a slum-free city. Central to this model were cities such as Mumbai, where the majority of citizens live and work in slums. As Arjun Appadurai argues in his essay “Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics,” in these urban contexts visions of equity have become “exhausted” and neo-liberal practices have come to dominate most political agendas. However, neo-liberal practices in Mumbai have also activated new forms of resistance that have been expressed in partnerships between slum dwellers and NGOs and have aimed to strengthen the capacity of the urban poor. This section draws attention to one of these partnerships, known as the Alliance, which was established in Mumbai in 1987. Three NGOs with different histories – the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), the Mahila Milan (MM), and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) – formed a new “urban activist movement with global links.” Since 1987, members of the Alliance have engaged in providing secure tenure of land and access to electricity, water, sanitation, and decent housing for India’s low-income population. The Alliance’s strategy revolves around its members’ commitment to a shared ideology of negotiation and participation. More specifically, as Sheela Patel, the founder of SPARC, states,

“The ultimate aim of the Alliance is to produce urban and development practices and policies that are inclusive of the poor. Our mission is to build the capacity of organized communities of the urban poor, especially women, in informal settlements, to stop forced evictions and develop the skills and confidence to

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623 Midgley, “Community participation, the state and social policy,” in Community Participation, Social Development and the State, 147
624 “Dharavi…the dreams becomes a reality,” advertisement in The Times of India, January, 24, 2004
626 Ibid.
The Alliance began working in Dharavi when the ambitious Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) first targeted Dharavi’s redevelopment. At that point, representatives of Dharavi’s communities approached the NSDF and raised their awareness of the fact that the government had decided to demolish 53,000 residential structures in Dharavi; the residents were unsure of how to protect their properties. In response, Jockim Arputham, the founder of NSDF, approached Sheela Patel and asked to collaborate with SPARC in order to secure housing for the affected Dharavi residents. Representatives of SPARC also invited the women’s grass-roots movement known as Mahila Milan to participate in this process with them. This is how the Alliance was formed. As noted, the three partners of the Alliance have different histories. In order to understand their practices of resistance in Dharavi’s redevelopment, it is essential to know how each one evolved over the years.

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)

In Mumbai, the turn of the 1980s was marked by a violent eviction of pavement dwellers in the island portion of the city. The undemocratic nature of this act, known as “Operation Demolition” and initiated by the state government of Maharashtra, fuelled opposition movements and petitions from residents and civil societies, who took the case to the Supreme Court. After several years of public demonstrations against the act, the Supreme Court ordered a stay that lasted until 1985, when the decision was vacated and the Court declared the use of pavements for housing illegal. At that point, hundreds of pavement dwellers abandoned the city in search of “accommodation” in other places. Although opposition to the operation was well organized and delayed the Court’s decision for a few years, it was not resilient enough to repeal the decision after 1985. Furthermore, in 1984 India witnessed a huge expansion of urban areas, and that was inextricably linked to the massive proliferation of slums and pavement dwellers. Since existing NGOs were not armed with relevant experience and knowledge, they struggled to respond to the situation. In this context new organizations equipped with various strategies and tools of resistance, such as the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), began as relief associations. SPARC was formed in 1984 by social workers, researchers, and other professionals who, in their pursuit of equity and social justice, aspired to explore new forms of partnerships with the urban poor.

In the early 1980s, Sheela Patel, who later became the Director of SPARC, and Celine D’Cruz, today’s Associate Director, were involved in a Mumbai community welfare centre called Nagpada Neighbourhood House. Both of SPARC’s leaders began their career in activism by offering health assistance to slum and pavement dwellers as well as day care for children. In the course of their daily activities they partnered with women, and with the aim of enabling

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627 SPARC Annual Report 2008–2009, report prepared by Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centre (Mumbai, 2009), 4
628 Sheela Patel, interview by author, Mumbai, September 20, 2013
629 Ibid.
630 Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007), 156
women and the urban poor to participate in housing issues, Patel and D’ Cruz established SPARC in December 1984. From the beginning, SPARC recognized the role of the state in decision-making for slum and pavement dwellers and thus set a goal of bridging the communication gap between the government and the low-income population. They also attempted to develop a “public voice that would be heard by governments and by a larger population.” To achieve their goal, they initially interacted with the urban poor and attempted to understand the complexity of their problems in everyday life. A central challenge for SPARC was deciding with which communities it should collaborate. At the time, the SPARC team was dividing urban squatters in Mumbai into three categories: those residing on private land, those living on municipal and state government land, and pavement dwellers. The NGO’s guideline was to work “with the poorest of the poor.” In Mumbai the most vulnerable population was that of the pavement dwellers, especially those who were female.

On November 1, 1985, after the Supreme Court declared the use of sidewalks for housing in Mumbai illegal, the affected dwellers took to the streets to protest against this life-threatening decision. The march had no impact on either the Court’s decision or the government’s approach to slum demolition. Observing and noting the predominant patterns of resistance in the city on this occasion, SPARC realized that a public protest was not a form of opposition that could accomplish things on the ground in Mumbai. Dialogue rather than protest was the best means of changing the state’s attitude towards pavement dwellers and the slums. Therefore, as Sheela Patel notes in her discussion with the academic Ramya Ramanath, SPARC decided to mediate between the urban poor and the government, and to make “peace with the devil and [begin] a dialogue with the city” regarding where to accommodate the affected dwellers.

A key method for achieving this dialogue was enumeration, otherwise known as a survey. With accurate figures and numbers, SPARC could uncover the precise aspects of the “problem” of slum and pavement dwellers and therefore communicate and collaborate with the state on the basis of evidence. SPARC identified that the future of the urban poor in Mumbai depended mainly on governmental decisions.

In 1985 SPARC collaborated with a group of women to conduct a survey of over 6000 households of pavement dwellers in Ward E, south of Mumbai. The women who participated in the survey were organized in collectives that gathered data through head counts – which made it possible to determine the settlement’s profile. With the assistance of community participation, they worked to help residents locate proof of identity and document their residency by means of videos or any records of exchanges with the government. These female collectives comprised nearly 600 women from the sidewalks of Ward E who called

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632 Ramya Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India” (PhD diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2005), 178
633 Chatterji and Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life, 156
634 Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India,” 178
636 Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India,” 180–181
themselves “Women Together,” or in Hindi “Mahila Milan.” Mahila Milan later became a grass-roots organization and partnered with SPARC. The entire process lasted one month, and the result of this participatory exercise was publicized in SPARC’s first report, “WE the invisible,” in 1985. The report, which analysed the problematic situation of pavement dwellers with the help of precise numbers and facts, was the first step towards building a bridge of communication between the community and the government. SPARC presented the results of the survey to several authorities, such as MHADA, and discussed with official representatives alternative housing solutions for pavement dwellers. SPARC attempted to work with the government on behalf of the homeless in Ward E. Borrowing the words of Ramya Ramanath’s dissertation on the role of NGOs in Mumbai,

“SPARC grew as an interesting anomaly. Words such as ‘struggle’, ‘battle’, ‘fight’ and ‘justice’ rarely appeared in its archival materials.”

In the 1980s, SPARC introduced a very unique practice of resistance in Mumbai, mainly focused on knowledge, discussion, and participation. For SPARC, the security of shelter for slum dwellers rested on the “foundation of any transformation from poverty, towards proper socialization, citizen building and constructive community practice, and yet it was the most difficult area to work in.” The key strategy for achieving such security lay in using the survey as a tool with which to collaborate with the state. In 1978 Michel Foucault examined the census as a technique for applying power in his work on what he termed “governmentality.” This neologism (formed from the phrase “governmental rationality”) implies the art of governing through particular techniques that involve collaboration between the governed and the governing. In his lectures at the Collège de France between 1977 and 1979 on Security, Territory, Population, Foucault explored the mechanisms of governmental power and found that the procedures of politics had become “answerable to ethics.” The government for Foucault was the “conduct of the conduct,” a series of practices used to have an impact on specific people. These practices involve several relations between communities and organizations, where there is a possibility of exercising “political sovereignty.” In 1981 Foucault supported the Socialist movement because he saw in it a vision of a potential dialogue between government and communities. However, the Socialists soon disappointed him as he realized that they preferred a role for “intellectuals as a supporting ideological chorus line rather than as interlocutors in a discussion about how to govern.”

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638 Mahila Milan was established in 1986 as a grass-roots movement in Mumbai and soon after its formation it partnered with SPARC and NSDF by forming the Alliance
641 Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India,” 183
642 Ibid., 206
645 Ibid., 3
646 Ibid., 7
For Foucault, “governmentality” is about how to govern, and at the centre of this neologism lie practices and working strategies that involve communication between the government and several communities. The SPARC-led census was a strategy central to the functioning of the modern state and one that Foucault saw as integral to the foundations of the state’s power and dominance. In his analysis, Foucault claimed that political processes are well hidden behind surveys, which are usually presented and conducted only from the top down.647

Over the years, SPARC’s enumeration strategy became a key technique for gaining a seat at the table where governmental decisions were concerned. SPARC was able to challenge several official surveys (conducted mainly by bureaucrats) and correct the government’s figures by revealing more accurate numbers related to housing issues and slum dwellers in Mumbai. As a consequence, the government gradually developed confidence in SPARC’s actions and involved the organization in several activities, by means of which SPARC was able to introduce community participation into several levels of governance. As the following sections show, SPARC worked with two other NGOs and a local academic institution (KRVIA) to involve the community in the decision-making for the DRP.

**National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan (MM)**

The National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) is a grass-roots organization established in 1974 in ten Indian cities by slum leaders, whose aim was to mobilize the urban poor to fight against demolition and to secure basic amenities for them. One of the main techniques used by the slum leaders to achieve their goals was to organize rallies and demonstrations. Jockim Arputham, the founder of NSDF, was born in 1946 in Kolar Gold Fields, an area close to Bangalore. In 1963, he moved to Mumbai, where he lived and worked in a slum known as Janata Colony. He got involved in activism at the end of the 1960s, when the housing structures in Janata Colony were threatened with demolition. One of his first actions was to establish a school in the settlement and to organize weekly events, such as singing classes, for the colony’s children. As soon as the school began operating, it became a local platform from which Arputham and the students could evaluate the community’s problems and find ways to overcome them. Demonstrations and protests were the key tactics of this process. Thus, six months after the school opened, Arputham and the students organized the first demonstration against the municipality.

One of the main problems in Janata Colony was the lack of government waste collection services. As a consequence, huge amounts of garbage were dumped in the school area. In response to this situation, Arputham mobilized the students to collect the trash and dispose of it in front of the municipal office in Chenbur, 3.5 km away from Janata Colony. When the municipal officers saw the garbage in front of their office, they became frustrated and, having no other solution, began negotiating with Jockim Arputham about how to secure waste management services in the slum. This negotiation was the slum dwellers’ first victory. Arputham notes in his autobiographical paper that “this event completely changed my life.”648

Since that time, he has engaged in activities to assist people in informal areas by challenging and fighting the undemocratic nature of the government’s actions.

In 1974, in an effort to persuade Mumbai’s municipality to clean one of the public toilets in Janata Colony, Arputham and his neighbours locked a civic officer in the toilet for nearly eight hours. In an interview with Robert Neuwirth, he admitted that this type of protest was the only effective means at their disposal for getting the government to respond to their grievances in the 1970s. As he wrote:

“We knew how to put on a demonstration. We knew how to stop things. We knew how to block the road. We knew how to close someone’s office. This was our principal method. It was the only method we had.”

In 1976, Janata Colony was demolished and Jockim Arputham, whose chief method of resistance had been struggling, fighting, and “stopping things,” realized that without continuous, ongoing actions by large numbers of slum dwellers, evictions would never stop and the impact on governmental tactics would only be temporary. As a consequence, and through his position in NSDF, Arputham decided to move away from the traditional practices of resistance that he had been applying in the 1970s, and to introduce new forms of opposition that might empower the community through various activities. Arputham spoke about this change in attitude in his interview with Robert Neuwirth, with whom he discussed in greater detail the new means of resistance: microeconomics and a savings strategy. Each community that enters NSDF today must create a savings association to which each family must contribute nearly two cents every day. These investments are restored to the community in various forms, such as loans for small businesses. Arputham believes that savings allow slum dwellers to work autonomously from the government and improve their quality of life. The three key elements in savings are information, finance, and communication:

“We are seeking development at the bottom, not intellectual development. For this you need three ingredients. Number one: information. Number two: finance. Number three: communication. Women provide all three. If you ask women whose husband has an affair, whose husband is drinking, they will vomit up information. They know everything about their communities. Second, there’s a saying in Hindi that the well-dressed man will not have a penny in the pocket. The woman has finances. She has to look after the house, the kitchen, the kids. You shake a woman, the money will fall down. Now, communication. Who has the communication? The woman. Given a 24-hour period, she will speak for 25 hours. When you have these things, it’s development. And we have these three in the women.”

Arputham’s innovative resistance strategy placed women in the center. Having observed the role women played in the 1986 enumeration of pavement dwellers as well as SPARC’s collaboration with them, he recognized women’s importance for solving existing community

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651 Ibid. and Sheela Patel and Jockin Arputham, “An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict in Dharavi, Mumbai?”, *Environment and Urbanization* 19, no. 2 (October 2007): 501
hurdles. At the time, SPARC encouraged and trained women to organize themselves and further develop their participation skills in a group. Mahila Milan was established in 1986 as a result. From the very beginning, Mahila Milan was centrally engaged in housing and community issues such as slum surveys, saving and credit activities, and infrastructure projects. The organization’s primary objective was to empower women in communities and to get them to become active members and leaders in urban development. The two main activities of Mahila Milan in its early years were model housing training and toilet sanitation design.

Mahila Milan’s housing training was a design exercise in which women of various communities were educated to plan their own houses. Central to this exercise was a deep understanding of existing land use and an assessment of local resources. Several dwellers participated in this exercise and as a result two to three housing models were built of materials such as wood, cardboard, cloth, and even concrete. Some of these model houses were constructed in Dharavi. The women presented their designs to officials from planning authorities, such as MHADA, and demonstrated their ability to be part of planning processes in their communities. SPARC’s report specifically states that the Mahila Milan model 280–320 sq.ft. house, 14 feet in height and with a mezzanine, was developed into an official shelter design sanctioned by authorities to improve informal settlements in India.654

Mahila Milan’s second far-reaching contribution to the community was the organization’s involvement in sanitation issues. Most informal settlements in Mumbai lacked hygiene services such as public toilets. An official aerial survey, conducted in Dharavi by the Hyderabad-based National Remote Sensing Agency in 1986, demonstrated that 55,000 families were being served by only 842 toilets, with a ratio of nearly 800 people using one toilet per day.655 In this regard, the most affected groups were women and children. Religious regulations made the situation even more difficult, especially for Muslim women, who were not to be seen by men on their way to the toilet. The result was a high degree of mortality among women who preferred not to use the toilet rather than be seen doing so by men.656 Since children and adults had to use the same toilets, children were often pushed aside to give their place to adults. Mahila Milan’s contribution was first to analyse the reasons behind the ineffectiveness of sanitation space in slums and second to work for alternative solutions to meet the needs of women and children. The women’s collective and their organized participation attracted the state’s attention. While Mahila Milan offered labour and design solutions and oversaw construction, the state contributed to the cost of building new toilets in 1993.657

Over the years, this network of women’s collectives has empowered itself through several forms of participation. Women were gradually trained to administer and manage resources and use them effectively to improve housing conditions in their communities. By 1987 Mahila Milan had formed a productive partnership with SPARC and NSDF. Their commitment to housing issues in informal societies and their attempts to bridge the gap between the urban

656 Interview with a resident in Dharavi, January, 2010
poor and the authorities had gradually taken shape as a strong form of resistance. Instead of using traditional methods to mobilize a vulnerable population, the Alliance used strategies such as enumeration and financial empowerment through savings. The group’s work in assisting the lives of the urban poor became even more evident during Dharavi’s redevelopment attempts in 1984 and in 2004.

The Alliance’s input in Dharavi

“The Alliance believes that Dharavi is a symbol of local struggles overcome by global investment in front of whom our governments bow down to deliver projects which are often at the cost of local concerns. We seriously feel concerned about the capacity of the present state institutions to arbitrate between the interests of the communities of the poor and international capital and local and national real estate businesses, who are in fact the new planners of cities.”

The Mumbai Alliance challenged the limitations and roots of top-down developmentalism and had a significant impact on activism that crossed local borders and also contributed to the “deepening of democracy” by bridging the gap between the government and grass-roots movements. When the Alliance was formed, the state government was busy trying to redevelop Dharavi through the PMGP project. During the anniversary celebrations of the National Congress Party in Bombay in 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced a grant of a 100 crore (US $26 million) for slum redevelopment projects in Mumbai. Of the total, 37 crore (US $9 million) was allocated specifically for improvement works in Dharavi. The first Dharavi project was a reconstruction pilot programme that was to be implemented on a cost-recovery basis by getting residents to participate financially in the process. However, at the time that the project was introduced, there was no accurate socio-economic survey of either the existent population or the precise number of housing structures in Dharavi. Residents were uncertain of whether they were included in the project and asked Jockim Arputham from NSDF, who was familiar with the area, to help them protect their houses from possible demolition. Arputham, who has been observing SPARC’s resistance practices since 1984, approached Sheela Patel to discuss how their collaboration might benefit Dharavi’s residents. He acknowledged the importance of SPARC’s enumeration methodology for mobilization, organization, planning, and evaluation and suggested it as a strategy for challenging the government’s official documents, rules, and regulations:

“For the first time, I found an NGO which believed in our cause and yet did not interfere in the way we worked. Together we can be more effective.”

SPARC’s technical expertise and connections to governmental authorities, NSDF’s mobilization skills, and Mahila Milan’s strength through women’s participation were the Mumbai Alliance’s chief strengths as the first united effort to resist the government’s projections and influence the top-down decision-making regarding Dharavi’s future.

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658 Sheela Patel, “Government of Maharashtra’s Expression of Interest for Dharavi’s Redevelopment,” e-mail message to several individuals, May 31, 2007
660 Jockim Arputham interview in Rashmi Bansal and Deepak Gandhi, Poor Little Rich Slum (Chennai: Westland, 2012), 89
An eight-person team appointed by the Alliance set up the steps for the first enumeration in Dharavi, the aim of which was to address the validity and reliability of statistics on the area. Of Dharavi’s 85 nagars, each is sub-divided into smaller communities with distinct characteristics. In the first stage, the team communicated with residents from different nagars in Dharavi who pointed out the borders and features of each neighbourhood. Initially, the team identified the local leader of each community and discussed with each of them potential partnerships that might be formed once the results of the survey were in. Most of the leaders were confident about this collaboration. Subsequently, the eight-member team trained five to ten people from each smaller community to fill out forms with the details of every family residing in their midst. The Alliance’s representatives collected and organized the material on a daily basis; at the end of each day they examined possible applications for the collected data.

A major outcome of this process was the first map of Dharavi to be developed and produced solely by its residents. Known also as the “People’s Plan for Dharavi,” it offered grounds for contradicting the official map of the area generated by bureaucrats of the Hyderabad-based National Remote Sensing Agency during the official survey of Dharavi in early 1986 as part of the implementation of the PMGP. As a counterpoint to the official survey, the new census revealed that not 55,000 families, but a total of 100,000 families inhabited 86,000 informal structures. The “People’s Plan for Dharavi” was finalized in November of 1986 and given to planning authorities for consideration and comparison with the official map (figure 1). The government’s dubious attitude to the Alliance gradually gave way to trust. At the same time several workshops and seminars took place in Dharavi and uncovered the nature and variety of occupations and activities in each community. Within the same period, community leaders joined a united organization, known as the Dharavi Vikas Samiti (the Dharavi Development Committee), composed of 200 Dharavi representatives involved in housing training, co-operative society formation, household data collection, housing assistance, identity cards, land ownership issues, and civic amenity demands in the settlement.

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662 Sharma, Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum, 173
This first Dharavi census generated by the residents was not only an instrument for evaluating, challenging, and producing new knowledge about the area, it was also an important method for empowering communities through participation. As Chatterji and Mehta argued in their work *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life*, the Alliance’s enumeration method could be viewed as “an agonistic field or a vector for contestation and negotiation with governmental and political agencies”– as an act of resistance. However, it is crucial to point out that this form of resistance is unique in that it allows the Alliance to retain its autonomy but also potentially collaborate with whichever party is in power at a given time.

Although the Alliance’s contribution to Dharavi in the late 1980s was fundamental, the academic Vinit Mukhija has uncovered a series of problems arising from its association with one of Dharavi’s housing societies. In his case study of the Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society, in *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai*, Mukhija argues that in settings of decentralized decision-making and control, there is high possibility of internal

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*Chatterji and Mehta, Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life, 158–159*

*Ibid., 165*
conflicts that may lead to an urgent need for centralization and conflict resolution from the state.\textsuperscript{665}

When the Prime Minister introduced the PMGP for redeveloping Dharavi in 1985, governmental representatives selected 12 peripheral areas easily accessible from the outside for a pilot project. Markandeya community was one of the areas selected. Unlike other settlements redeveloped by the PMGP authorities and developers, Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society chose to collaborate exclusively with SPARC. Through this opportunity, SPARC was given the twin roles of architect and developer. Although it is generally believed that representatives of the housing community selected SPARC as their contractor, Mukhija disagrees and claims that SPARC convinced the housing society to work with them and promised that they could deliver low-rise buildings similar to those already in Dharavi.\textsuperscript{666}

One of the major consequences of the Dharavi census was the confidence the authorities gained in the Alliance and its members. They thus agreed to SPARC’s initiative to serve as developer for Markandeya. However, as Mukhija’s research reveals, SPARC's appointed role became more complicated when it came into conflict with the government, the private contractor who was appointed to oversee the redevelopment process, and the community’s residents. Even though SPARC had the competitive advantage of being more knowledgeable than the government about the area, it did not manage to co-ordinate the development process successfully. Mukhija’s study makes the argument that SPARC was ineffective at representing the interests of the urban poor, and in the end the NGO’s contribution to the community’s redevelopment differed little from governmental intervention.\textsuperscript{667}

Along similar lines, Ramya Ramanath has argued that SPARC’s role has changed in an interesting manner over the years; although it started out as the voice of slum dwellers, it gradually became “the voice of profit making agencies” and restricted the participation of slum dwellers in activities related to housing improvement.\textsuperscript{668} For its part, however, SPARC contradicted Ramanath’s and Mukhija’s statements by arguing that Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society offered a good example of the layers of NGO involvement in government plans. As Sheela Patel states in her interview with Ramanath, “there are no mistakes in Markandeya – this was after all a first experiment in slum redevelopment.”\textsuperscript{669} She adds too that the Markandeya Cooperative Housing Society was the only community in Dharavi that managed to secure its own tenure on this occasion.

Another refutation of the charge that SPARC was unable to represent the interests of the urban poor is the 2001 case study of the Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society in Dharavi.\textsuperscript{670} The Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society was the first Society in Dharavi to allow slum dwellers in the settlement to design and construct their own housing. The project

\textsuperscript{665} Vinit Mukhija, \textit{Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai} (USA: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 38
\textsuperscript{666} Ibid., 80
\textsuperscript{667} Ibid., 40
\textsuperscript{668} Ramanath, “From Conflicts to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India,” 7
\textsuperscript{669} Ibid., 268
\textsuperscript{670} Sheela Patel, “Un-locking the processes and practices of informal settlements,” lecture manuscript, 4th Holcim Foundation Conference, Mumbai, April 11–13, 2013
began when 54 families from the Rajiv Indira community sent a request to SPARC asking for help in redeveloping their settlement. SPARC agreed and committed itself to assisting them in the role of developer. The project was implemented through a negotiated loan of INR 35 million (US $60,000), and the first building completed by the Rajiv Indira Society was inaugurated within three years. As Sheela Patel claimed,

"Unlike other SRA projects, this one in particular demonstrated the potential of a community-managed project."\textsuperscript{671}

\textbf{Figure 2}: The Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society in Dharavi

\textsuperscript{671} Ibid.
Figure 3: Inside the Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society in Dharavi

Figure 4: Inside the Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society in Dharavi
Figure 5: The Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society in Dharavi
Dharavi Redevelopment Project: The Resistance

In 2004, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project was officially inaugurated as a governmental Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) project that envisioned Dharavi’s transformation into a "truly wonderful dream."672 The project not only triggered intense discussion within the public sphere, it also provoked objections from several local and global NGOs, architects, researchers, and individuals who examined the project’s design guidelines and identified several flaws. The major objections were these: first, that one individual who was unfamiliar with slums had conceived the entire project by following Western design strategies; second, that the project had been produced without any community participation and that Dharavi’s residents had not been part of any discussions related to their future; third, that the plan envisaged the division and gradual redevelopment of Dharavi despite the fact that no accurate baseline survey had been made since 1986 and there was no clear infrastructure survey showing the connection between Dharavi and the rest of the city; and finally, that the unique model of living and working in the same place that prevailed in Dharavi’s structures and the economic spirit of its industries were totally absent from the plan. 673

Observing and noting the problematic patterns that dominated the DRP guidelines, members of the Alliance invited several professionals, retired bureaucrats, architects, planners, and NGO representatives from the city to join in a discussion of Dharavi’s future. Among the participants were the following:

- D.M. Sukthankar, former Chief Secretary of the Government of Maharashtra
- urban planners Shirish Patel and Vidhyadhar Phatak
- architects Arvind and Neera Adarkar
- Chandrashekhar Prabhul, housing expert
- Paul Aneerudha, Director of Kamla Rajeha Vidyaninhi Institute of Architecture (KRVIA),
- Jocki Arputham from NSDF,
- Sheela Patel and Sundar Burra from SPARC.

In a series of meetings, which took place on a regular basis in the SPARC office,674 the group, christened the “Concerned Citizens for Dharavi,” scrutinized the official documents of the DRP, summarized their observations and the project’s weaknesses, and finally informed the state government that neither Dharavi’s residents nor the people of Mumbai would benefit from the existing plans.675 These meetings were used as a template for addressing the ramifications and limitations of the top-down planning strategy applied in Mumbai. What followed was a series of letters, written and signed by the team of Concerned Citizens for Dharavi and sent to the government, in which the group reprimanded the DRP’s regulations and vowed to resist any act that placed norms of justice under threat.

672 “Dharavi…the dreams becomes a reality,” advertisement in The Times of India, January, 24, 2004
673 REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KRVIA, Mumbai, 2010, 36–37
674 Neera Adarkar, interview by author, Mumbai, September 21, 2013
675 Sheela Patel, “Dharavi is in the Midst of a Storm,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 282
The first letter, written by D.M. Sukthankar on February 26, 2007, raised the group’s objections to the modifications of the Development Control Rules (official policies) only in the case of Dharavi’s Redevelopment Project. The letter, which criticized the proposed redevelopment regulations, such as the planning guidelines advanced by Mukesh Mehta, was sent to the then Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA), I.S. Chahal. More specifically, the letter raised awareness about the suggested piecemeal approach, which viewed Dharavi as one huge slum instead of acknowledging and understanding the unique features of the 85 different nagars comprising the entire area.

A second letter was sent to Swadheen Kshatriya, the Principal Secretary of the Housing Department of the Government of Maharashtra, on March 14, 2007. Its purpose was to question the design regulations for Dharavi’s new structures. In his plan, Mukesh Mehta aspired to erect only high-rise buildings that would be conceived and designed by following already existing popular models such as those he depicted in a series of sketches.

Figure 6: The initial Mukesh Mehta Consultants guideline documents indicated that for the sake of visual effect, the buildings must have anthropomorphic proportions (Form of a Man) – that is, with a base, body and head. The buildings in this figure are inspired by popular high-rise buildings in the world (Empire State building in New York) and exhibit the suggested features. The columns and the piers, podium design of towers and special forms are placed to emphasize the tall buildings in Dharavi. “Developers and designers must try and include some variation and rhythm on the various floors, bringing some layout types and alternatives that can lead to preferential spaces.” Source: The MM Project Consultants, design guidelines during 2004. The material was provided by MHADA during a visit to their office in September 2013.

On May 9, 2007, a few days before the SRA published the “much awaited” advertisement for “Expression of Interest” forms for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi sent a third letter to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and addressed the following series of complications pertaining to the project:

1. Legal issues: Under this heading, the letter concentrated on legal requirements for development plans (the FSI for informal areas of Mumbai, the exact number of people living and working in them, and guidelines for already existent schemes such as the PMGP).

2. Lack of information: The letter identified the lack of a detailed baseline demographic and socio-economic survey of Dharavi after 2000 as a major problem for the redevelopment process. Since the last survey, conducted in 1986, the number of structures and residents had significantly increased, and there was no precise census of the number of residents living and
working in the area. Central to this problem was the limited data pertaining to ownership issues and to Dharavi’s topography. In particular, a detailed physical survey to determine flooding areas was needed to establish the required infrastructure, such as drainage systems.

3. The lack of strategic and traffic plans that would take into account the expected increase in Dharavi’s population in coming years.

4. The shortcomings of a sector approach, which treats Dharavi as one exceptionally large settlement instead of 85 different communities:

“The ‘sector’ based approach completely ignores the established boundaries, while imposing new divisions within and between communities. The existing Nagar boundaries must be central to the planning process.”

5. A lack of clarity regarding issues of eligibility and long-term maintenance of new buildings. Additionally, a lack of clarity regarding the location of slum dwellers during construction due to the failure to plan for transitional tenements.

The letter ended by offering the state the possibility of partnering with NGOs and residents:

“As a group, we would be happy to work with the government of Maharashtra to prepare a road map for the development of Dharavi that will be based on public scrutiny of all data; that will have the consent of the community; that will respect the links between housing and livelihoods; that will have diverse housing typologies to suit varied lifestyles and occupational factors as well as income groups; that will keep densities at manageable levels and restrict the role of developers to bidding for construction contracts. It should be possible to develop a low-rise, high-density settlement at Dharavi that keeps maintenance costs low and livability conditions high.”

A full consideration of the project’s difficulties as expressed in these three letters would have required extended attention from the state government. However, all these efforts to communicate with the state and discuss Dharavi’s future remained futile once the state government of Maharashtra had published the advertisement “The Opportunity of the Millennium” at the end of May 2007, and invited developers to express their interest in redeveloping “one of the largest slum pockets in the world.” The day after the advertisement came out, Sheela Patel sent an email entitled “Government of Maharashtra’s Expression of Interest for Dharavi’s Redevelopment” to various academic and non-academic institutions, NGOs, architects, planners, and other individual professionals who had an interest in Dharavi. In it, Patel initially criticized the way in which the advertisement referred to the settlement and raised her concerns about the viability of the methods that the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi used when approaching the government. As she noted,

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676 REDHARAVI, report prepared by SPARC and KRVIA (Mumbai, 2010), 42
678 Ibid., 8
“This advertisement informs me that the concerns and fears we all as a large group of organizations, institutions and individuals have expressed to our chief minister and to the government have not been headed (heeded) at all. We have been informed after every meeting in which we make representations that our concerns are being listened to and some modifications will be made. Yet we do not see any evidence of that.”

On June 2007, in direct response to the official newspaper advertisement, thousands of residents gathered at Dharavi T-Junction and walked to the MHADA’s office in East Bandra, a distance of about 2 km. Most of them were holding black flags as an expression of protest against the top-down Dharavi Redevelopment Project. The central message of this rally was that the government should give priority to Dharavi’s residents in the decision-making process for redeveloping their slum. In stark contrast to previous marches in Mumbai, this rally was well organized and the protesters expressed their demands peacefully. Their agenda highlighted the importance of the community’s participation in the design process, an increase in the size of free tenements, and finally the mandatory consent of 70% of the affected dwellers in all SRA projects (but 60% in Dharavi, which they agreed to treat as an exception). The peaceful protest in June 2007 demonstrated that Dharavi’s residents were not opposed to redevelopment but instead were asking the government to include them in the process of change. As the academic Jonatan Habib Engqvist argued in his article “Black Flags” in *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities*, this protest exposed the “organisational capacity of some of Mumbai’s informal citizens” and showed that Dharavi’s residents desired to “remain part of the city.”

Sheela Patel’s email and the black flags she raised created the basis for seeking alternative solutions to new partnerships between residents and the state. It was in this spirit that the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi recognized the power of the media as an alternative means of displaying resistance. The group subsequently released a fourth letter, written by Jockim Arputham, which was sent to the international press and to over 100 newspapers in India rather than to a government representative.

The letter, entitled “An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict,” examines the story of the project from the residents’ perspective and explores their views for Dharavi’s future. It opens with a description of the current situation in the city and emphasizes that “everyone in Dharavi wants improvements.” This statement in the letter demonstrates that the core of the resistance to the Dharavi Redevelopment Project is focused not on the process of redevelopment per se but on the way Dharavi’s slum dwellers perceive the process and their role in it. The text continues with a heavy critique of the DRP that not only identifies major problems, such as the lack of a survey, but also references Dharavi’s economic value. More specifically it states that the entire area has “an annual economic turnover of several hundred

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681 REDHARAVI, 43; Patel and Arputham, “Plans for Dharavi: Negotiating a reconciliation between a state-driven market development and residents’ aspirations,” 8
683 Sheela Patel and Jockim Arputham, “An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict in Dharavi, Mumbai?” *Environment and Urbanization* 19, no. 2 (October 2007): 504–506
684 Ibid., 504
million dollars.” It then investigates the history of Dharavi and exposes the flaws of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, which, it claims, is a complex and unrealistic plan for the area’s evolution. In conclusion, Arputham reveals the need for an alternative redevelopment project that would involve both the intense participation and the aspirations of the residents. Central to this alternative strategy is the need for an accurate survey that could be managed by local forces.

Right after Arputham’s letter was released to the media, discussions about Dharavi’s future flourished. As a result, on July 19, 2007, a group of 23 individuals – architects, academics, artists, and researchers from all over the world – wrote a sequel to the previous letter and sent it directly to the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. The Concerned Citizens for Dharavi also signed this letter, which summarized their previous attempts to readdress the weaknesses of the DRP. In its conclusion, the letter exhibited anxiety about the implementation of the project:

“We understand that the people of Dharavi are deeply disturbed at the prospect of the DRP implementation. We urge you and the chief minister of Maharashtra to look afresh at the DRP in the light of the comments above and seek the approval of the community at large before finalizing any proposal.”

Paul Aneerudha, Director of KRVIA and member of the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi, expressed in an interview that the Prime Minister responded to the last letter and indicated that the DRP as a government project required careful consideration on various levels. As a result, the central government placed pressure on the state government. (Both levels of government were controlled by the Congress Party at the time.) In August 2007, the state government began to change its position on the DRP. Chandrashkerkar, the Officer on Special Duty and the CEO of the DRP, invited the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi and resident representatives to several meetings and listened not only to their objections but also to their suggestions for the redevelopment process in Dharavi. Following these meetings, Chandrashkerkar realized that a baseline socio-economic survey and a transport study were essential to the implementation of the project. Therefore in September 2007, he officially invited tenders for the execution of the second survey in Dharavi.

Although members of the Alliance had previously been involved in several enumeration exercises for informal settlements in Mumbai, this time the organization was uninterested in undertaking the survey. The DRP authorities thus awarded the management of the process to the Pune-based NGO Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (MASHAL). Due to the Alliance’s familiarity with Dharavi, however, the government later urged it to contribute to the process. SPARC had been officially involved in the governmental census since December 2007; while MASHAL organized GIS mapping and biometric identification, the Alliance’s role was to correct the survey’s questionnaire, maps, and numbered structures in the area.

Community leaders in the second sector of Dharavi initially approached representatives of the

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685 Ibid., 505
686 Patel and Arputham, “Plans for Dharavi: Negotiating a reconciliation between a state-driven market development and residents’ aspirations,” 10
687 Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013
Alliance and acquainted them with the boundaries of each community. The survey group documented the demarcation lines and compared them to those that MASHAL had identified. The data differed, and thus several changes were made to MASHAL’s maps. In a few cases residents who were informed about the project did not share specific details about their communities. This became a burden for the strategy practiced by the Alliance, which managed to complete the survey in only one of the five sectors: the second one.689

The Dharavi census, which took over a year, offered grounds for new strategic planning in the area and also grew into an important technique for expanding the dialogue among the government, NGOs, and residents of Dharavi. This dialogue became the basis for new partnerships between the government and Dharavi’s residents in the years that followed. Additionally, the census became a weapon for residents who secured entitlements and were officially recognized as eligible dwellers thanks to their participation in the redevelopment process. Meanwhile, Chandrashekhar submitted his resignation in March 2008. In July of the same year, Gautam Chatterjee took over as the Officer on Special Duty and the CEO of the DRP. Chatterjee, who had already worked successfully with the Alliance in Dharavi in the 1980s for the PMGP, was eager to discuss the evolution of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project and collaborate with Sheela Patel and Jockim Arputham in 2008. A few weeks after Chatterjee was appointed to his new position, he was invited to attend several meetings on the DRP organized by the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi group. In January 2009, recognizing the group’s contribution, Chatterjee officially assigned the government role of the “Committee of Experts” (CoE) to the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi. Since then, the Committee of Experts has held an advisory role at every stage of the project. In 2007, the CoE scrutinized the bidding documents and made a series of recommendations that were later adopted by the government. The amendments were as follows:

1. In October 2008, new urban design guidelines, inspired by the CoE’s suggestions, were incorporated into the DRP’s regulations. First, the height of rehabilitated structures was limited to 14 stories, whereas in Mukesh Mehta’s initial plans, they could go up to thirty. Reduction in the structures’ height lowered maintenance costs. The main strategy for constructing the buildings was to use the two-tier podiums model (figure 7), in which the first two stories are put to commercial use while the top one is residential. In stark contrast to the previous regulations, the new guidelines set a minimum of 80% of free-sale buildings for construction by developers solely for commercial use. The plan indicated that the commercial developments were to be located on Dharavi’s periphery. Additionally, a minimum distance of 12 meters was required between rehabilitation buildings to ensure adequate light and ventilation.

689 Ibid., 247–248
2. In 2009, a circulation strategy and an infrastructure map were finalized. In response to previous concerns about the lack of a transport plan connecting Dharavi to the rest of the city, the new guidelines presented a series of drawings that addressed the problems of mass transit, pedestrian flow, and the different connections within Dharavi. In particular, and in addition to the existing nodes of the Mahim and the Sion railway station, along with the Dharavi Bus Depot Road, two new bus stations were strategically placed in sector three, near Sion Hospital and T-Junction (figure 8). Moreover, a new pedestrian circulation grid was to divide “pedestrian only” areas and “traffic-calmed” segments (figure 9). Finally, an elevated greenway was expected to maintain pedestrian circulation on the top podium level, as can be seen in Figure 10.

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**Figure 7:** A schematic section of the conceived two-tier podium. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding* (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 63
20.2. Circulation Strategy –

20.2.1. Mass Transit:
In view of integration with public transport the SMP proposes to have transport nodes in DRP having an effective walkable spread covering the entire DRP area encouraging and facilitating the pedestrian mode. So in addition to the existing nodes of Mahim railway station, Sion railway station and Dharavi bus depot, it is proposed to have additional two bus stations strategically located in Sector 3 near T-junction and Sion hospital.

Public transport integration –
The proposed standardized master plan must be pedestrian friendly and one of the key features of such a development is close connectivity with mass transit nodes.
The location of main bus and rail nodes must be such that the walk radius from all nodes envelopes the entire DRP area.

Figure 8: The mass transit plan integrated in the Standardized Master Plan. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 64

20.2.2. Pedestrian and Vehicular access:
The key criterion is to have access to all residents and businesses and maintain pedestrian permeability between sectors. The SMP proposes to adopt a circulation grid which will offer flexibility of layout at the same time maintain continuity between sectors. Access to excluded areas is an important issue which must also be addressed. The grid will be divided into ‘pedestrian only’ and ‘traffic-calmed’ segments to clearly demonstrate pedestrian dominant movement in the interiors of the sector.

Pedestrian and Traffic-Calmed –
The pedestrian grid once identified must strategically allocate pedestrian-only segments and traffic-calmed segments and hence very clearly demonstrating a walking environment in the interior of the sector.

Pedestrian streets need to have clear demarcation of design and signage. These however can allow for emergency services.

Traffic calmed street allow for freight requirements of the sector and also they can provide access to the excluded properties. They can be covered at top podium level at places to maintain pedestrian continuity.

Figure 9: The pedestrian and traffic-calmed plan integrated into the Standardized Master Plan. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 65
3. Based on the advisory group’s suggestions, the new guidelines recognized the residents’ demand for larger rehabilitation units, and the government announced an increase in the size of free tenements – from 269 sq.ft. to 300 sq.ft. – to eligible dwellers. Furthermore, for dwellers living in tenements larger than 300 sq.ft. an increase to 400 sq.ft. was projected and made feasible if they could pay the additional construction costs.\textsuperscript{691}

4. Following the Committee’s recommendations, the authorities produced the Standardized Master Plan in which all new guidelines were illustrated, as can be seen in the following figures (11–12):

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure10.png}
\caption{The suggested elevated greenway. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 66}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{691} Patel, Arputham, Burra and Savchuk, "Getting the information base for Dharavi’s redevelopment," 245
Figure 11: The Standardized Master Plan. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding* (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 68

Figure 12: Details of the standardized master plan. Source: Slum Rehabilitation Authority, *Bid Document: Final Common Set of Deviations for Section 5, Dharavi Redevelopment Project, International Competitive Bidding* (Mumbai, June 23, 2009), 70
5. From the beginning, the residents of Koliwada, one of Mumbai’s oldest fishing villages, and of Kumbharwada, the pottery colony, were not keen on participating in the project. However both areas were included as sites to be redeveloped in Mukesh Mehta’s plan. Due to the unique economic and historic character of the areas, Chatterjee, who respected the decision of the two communities, officially announced their exclusion from the project and granted them “gaothan” status. A “gaothan” is a declared village site within the city and is subject to distinct planning regulations.

A prominent consequence of the Committee of Experts’ interaction with the government was that the DRP authorities recognized the value of community participation and integrated the community’s suggestions into the official guidelines. The Committee of Experts became the official voice of resistance and criticism and continued to maintain the balance between top-down and bottom-up design strategies. Although the government was influenced by the Committee’s suggestions, the basis of the plan was still to create a moneymaking venture for it and the developers. The CoE that was advising the DRP authorities on the project soon felt that the state, out of its own ulterior motives, was allowing them to engage in what James Midgely terms *manipulative modes of participation*. These occur mostly in the realm of housing and urban development, when governments support communities with the aim of gaining political support and containing urban conflicts. In the case of Dharavi, as soon as the CoE realized in mid-2009 that it would not play a catalytic role in the DRP’s evolution in the coming years due to political changes that promised to reduce support for the committee’s agenda, its members submitted their resignation. However, their resignation was not accepted, and until today they have kept their official role as advisory committee without engaging in any action.

On July 9, 2009, the CoE sent a letter to the chief minister, Ashok Chavan. In it they focused mainly on the rights of residents and called the project “a sophisticated land grab.” A few days before the opening of bidding – consequently postponed to July 30, 2009 – the committee raised its concerns about the process and lambasted the undemocratic nature of the project, stating,

“The DRP is a sophisticated land grab. Over the years, residents from various parts of the city have been made to settle there by Government, while taking great care not to give them proper legal rights of occupancy. This legalization is something that should have been part of the people’s rights when they were first settled there, and is something that was high-handedly denied to them at the time.”

In another letter (dated to August 24, 2009) to Sitaram Kunte, the Housing Secretary, the CoE criticized Mukesh Mehta’s lack of experience in transforming slums and questioned his role as consultant to the DRP. Members of the committee suggested that Mehta should not be part of the project any longer. Furthermore, four additional letters – sent on November 4, 2009; January 16, 2010; and March 23, 2010 – highlighted flaws in the bidding process, such as the lack of completion due to the low number of consortia participating in the process. Two

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692 James Midgley, “Community participation, the state and social policy,” 149
693 Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013
694 REDHARAVI, 48
695 Ibid.
major reasons lay beneath this limited participation: the 2008 world economic crisis, and a lack of clarification in the bidding process. All four letters and the CoE’s demands focused on the need for an alternative strategy, a new method to handle Dharavi’s redevelopment – in other words, a new plan that would engage the people’s participation and respect both the existing boundaries of Dharavi and the area’s economic value. It was in this context that “an alternative strategy” for redeveloping sector four of the proposed DRP grew out of the collaboration between SPARC and the KR VIA.

An Alternative Strategy: Re-Interpreting Dharavi

While the governmental planning agency MHADA was busy monitoring Dharavi’s redevelopment process in sector five in 2010, SPARC and KR VIA had been working since 2009 on an alternative redevelopment strategy for Dharavi’s sector four. Unlike the government, which chose to start the transformation process in a low-density sector (sector five), SPARC and KR VIA selected a complex, high-density area as a model for redevelopment in the belief that it would be much easier to work in the remaining sectors afterwards.

SPARC’s familiarity with Dharavi has been evident since its involvement in the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) in 1985. Apart from the recognition it has received from government authorities in Mumbai and its links to Dharavi’s residents, SPARC has also maintained close connections with local and international academic institutions. One of its most important collaborations related to Dharavi has been its partnership with KR VIA.

KR VIA was established as an architecture school in Mumbai in early 1992. Paul Aneerudha arrived in Mumbai in 1993 to teach in KR VIA and shortly afterwards was appointed as the school’s Director. Since 1996, KR VIA has been involved in several projects in Mumbai and has collaborated with key architects and planners of the city, such as Charles Correa and Shirish Patel. Paul Aneerudha expressed that – though KR VIA had been working closely with the state and the municipal government for many years – it began to focus on Dharavi only in 2004, when the DRP came under public scrutiny: “everyone was talking about Dharavi at that moment.”

Aneerudha and his students examined the project’s guidelines and saw that there were a number of problems with the planning process for transforming Mumbai’s informal settlement. Since then KR VIA’s programmes and expertise have provided the basis for objecting to the project. A first step in this process was the 2006–2007 Dharavi design studio, in which students were asked to produce an alternative master plan for transforming Dharavi’s territory. Their study was structured into seven steps:

1. Mapping existing conditions, and identifying existing issues pertaining to development
2. Identifying objectives
3. Managing new projected requirements
4. Designing and planning new structures
5. Examining and modifying existing policies

696 Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013
697 Ibid.
6. Implementing the project. After studying the history, the demography, the infrastructure, and the land-use of the entire area, students became familiar with Dharavi’s informal but unique character and established the objectives of a new proposed master plan: to achieve community participation through planning; to retain the model of having people work and live in existing structures; to encourage public transportation by minimizing the use of cars; and to control density through financial viability. All these objectives were incorporated in 2007 into the students’ proposals for different communities in Dharavi. One such proposal is for AKG Nagar, an area of 9.23 hectares located in sector three. Principle sources of labour in the area are embroidery, commerce, home industries, and open tannery grounds. The students recognized the importance of living and working in the same area, and their suggestions focused on retaining this typology through the creation of commercial and housing clusters.

Figure 13: Students’ proposals for redeveloping AKG Nagar in Dharavi. Top shows the existing situation while bottom displays the suggested proposal for transforming the nagar. Source: KRVIA, Studio 2006/2007, “Creating a new Masterplan for Dharavi,” [lecture at All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), March 12, 2007]

At the same time, SPARC, which had already been opposed to the government project since 2004, recognized that its own ideas on Dharavi complemented the direction KRVIA was taking place. Sheela Patel thus approached Paul Aneerudha to discuss how he envisioned Dharavi’s future. Three months later, KRVIA and SPARC joined forces. As Aneerudha noted, in the beginning, SPARC funded KRVIA. The outcome of this synergy was an alternative strategy for sector four redevelopment that involved community participation in the planning

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699 Ibid.
700 Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013
process. By opposing the private-public approach to redevelopment that the government had adopted, SPARC and KRVIA developed an alternative plan that used analysis and design based upon consultations with local residents and NGOs.\textsuperscript{701} The entire process lasted only six months.\textsuperscript{702} As a first step, the working group got local residents to map the patterns and networks of their living and working conditions. The result was a hand-to-hand survey that identified a total of 10,577 existing tenements in sector four, out of which 8,547 were solely residential. SPARC and KRVIA organized the data of this survey into maps, which are clearly presented in the REDHARAVI report (2010).\textsuperscript{703} One of their main suggestions, which challenged the government plan and started with the mapping exercise, was the revision of the sector’s demarcation lines. In view of existing internal road patterns and with respect to the boundaries of each community, the new alternative plan proposed revised boundaries for the sector.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure14.png}
\caption{An alternative strategy. Suggestions to revise the sector boundaries. Source: REDHARAVI, 58}
\end{figure}

SPARC and KRVIA classified the different areas that constituted sector four under different types of communities. In particular, the research showed that forty co-operative housing societies, seventeen chawls, four nagars, and a few rehabilitated buildings formed the sector’s unique plan.\textsuperscript{704} Nearly 30% of the total structures in the area were primarily residential with various housing typologies.

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\textsuperscript{701} REDHARAVI, 56
\textsuperscript{702} Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013
\textsuperscript{703} ibid.
\textsuperscript{704} REDHARAVI, 60–62
\end{flushright}
Additional data gathered from the analysis of sector four related to the existing road and pedestrian system, public toilets, various institutions (religious, educational, and medical), and open spaces. All this information was important for the preparation of a new alternative master plan, which was based upon the following eight major objectives:

1. “Making sure that people are consulted at every stage of data collection, design, formulation and implementation
2. Guaranteeing that no one is evicted from Dharavi
3. Breaking down five sectors into numerous smaller clusters based on existing natural and social boundaries, and taking into account the need to protect people’s livelihoods
4. Developing – with the consent of the residents of Dharavi – a framework for redevelopment that divides Dharavi into clusters of appropriate size and kind, and following a transport plan driven by consideration for pedestrians rather than vehicular traffic
5. Preparing a plan for infrastructure and social amenities with an orientation towards pedestrianization, which is separately financed and implemented by public authorities
6. Enabling local subsectors/clusters to take up redevelopment when they are prepared to do so and in a manner they choose but within a set of guidelines
7. Tapping available government grants and subsidies, and exploring arrangements for institutional financing both for infrastructure and for housing
8. Limiting the use of Floor Space Index (FSI) as financial incentive to the absolute minimum required to make the project viable.\footnote{Ibid., 71}

The working group integrated its goals with the already existent plan and suggested two design scenarios. The first scenario was based on the Slum Rehabilitation Authority’s guidelines, under which the community was responsible for appointing a contractor. In this setting the sector was divided into 23 clusters in six zones. Each sector could gradually be
integrated according to residents’ daily requirements. If the representatives of any cluster considered the SRA approach more appropriate for them, they could appoint their own contractor. Alternatively, residents could choose a model for self-financing the redevelopment of their cluster. The second scenario involved the participation of slum dwellers who resided in housing that covered fewer than 300 sq.ft. In this case, the government would partially finance the project and residents would cover the remaining balance.  

Chatterjee “was convinced” by this alternative strategy, but he was promoted to another government role and had to leave his position as CEO of the DRP. The new CEO who replaced him was not keen on changing the guidelines of the DRP at that moment, so the government did not adopt the proposed alternative plan. The efforts undertaken by the working group proved to be a significant act of resistance that helped people in Dharavi to organize themselves and demand their rights. The project offered a method through which a collaborative process could take place between several actors from academia and a non-governmental organization; it formed “the basis of a much-needed dialogue between the government and the residents of Dharavi rather than producing an image of an area in which people cannot see their lives and their livelihoods reflected.”  

Although the proposal was significant in several ways, the holistic plan was not ideal. The Committee of Experts encouraged the plan’s implementation but never accepted it as their own project. Architect Neera Adarkar, a member of the CoE, admitted that the project was just “a methodology to mitigate the government’s approach towards Dharavi.” Details of the plan were published at the end of 2010, in the REDHARAVI report, which analytically described the process of resistance in Dharavi ever since the DRP’s official announcement in 2004.  

The above-mentioned events constitute the forms of resistance practiced in Dharavi in response to residents’ initial exclusion from formal domination mechanisms known as top-down techniques. The organized spirit of Dharavi’s residents and their collaboration with local organizations and academic institutions led to important modifications in the DRP’s guidelines. Additionally, the appointment of the CoE as the official advisory group in the evolution of the project secured a communication bridge between community demands and government actions. But despite the fact that the CoE has held an official role in the evolution of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project until today, it has not been very effective in the past three years. A closer look at the formal procedures reveals the limited influence that the committee has had on the project’s development ever since Chatterjee was replaced by another figure in 2010. However, this occasion did not affect the enthusiasm of the committee’s members who, instead of relying on traditional practices of resistance, such as protests, continue to use knowledge gathering and community participation to express their objections to the project. Meanwhile, these techniques have inspired several grass-roots movements that have developed a radical position against Dharavi’s redevelopment as a high-end district. Such movements include the URBZ team and the ACORN foundation.  

706 Ibid., 76–79  
707 Paul Aneerudha, interview by author, Mumbai, September 23, 2013  
708 REDHARAVI, 80  
709 Neera Adarkar, interview by author, Mumbai, September 21, 2013
User Generated Cities (URBZ)

Resistance to the DRP was based not only on the concepts of empowerment and participation, but also on opposition practices of grassroots movements inside and outside Dharavi that challenged the project’s viability. The strategies of these movements differ from those of the Alliance because they tend to work autonomously from the government and articulate opposition to issues of redevelopment hitherto neglected by political projections. An example of this is the URBZ team, an urban think/action tank based in Mumbai, which links the practice of resistance to the notion of creativity.

URBZ is a Dharavi-based interactive research platform that goes beyond state programs to provide alternative methodologies for creative urban development. URBZ facilitates the production of knowledge, information, and practices that help to build resilience in cities. It was co-founded in 2008 by three individuals: Geeta Mehta, a professor of architecture and urban design, Matias Echanove, a planner, and Rahul Srivastava, an anthropologist. Matias Echanove, who had already collaborated with Geeta Mehta on developmental issues at the University of Tokyo, first came to Mumbai in 2007 to intern at SPARC. At the time, SPARC was involved in Dharavi’s census, as described above. As soon as Echanove arrived, he became part of the enumeration team; his work entailed approaching people and asking them to show him the boundaries of their communities. During this first trip to Mumbai, Echanove met Srivastava, then the Director of PUKAR (an independent research centre in India founded by the historian Carol Breckenridge and the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai), and once he completed his internship at SPARC, he collaborated with Srivastava in PUKAR. At the time both of them were involved in discussions related to the impact of urbanization in cities and the growth of the informal sector. One idea that arose from these exchanges was the formation of URBZ, a concept that was already under discussion between Mehta and Echanove.

Echanove was introduced to Dharavi’s complex politics and the existing terrains of resistance to the DRP while he was involved in SPARC’s enumeration project. In his daily interactions with the settlement’s residents, he developed a familiarity with their keen desire to improve the space with the help of the area’s extensive resources. In stark contrast to governmental projections about Dharavi that relied exclusively on external sources (such as Mukesh Mehta’s master plan and ‘remarkable’ PowerPoint presentations), Echanove, [Geeta] Mehta, and Srivastava recognized and celebrated local initiatives for developing and reshaping space. For the three of them, Dharavi in its shape today had so much potential that everyone could learn something different from the experience:

“We always felt that Dharavi is a living laboratory of urban practices that we should learn rather than ‘redevelop.’”

As a counterpoint to the Alliance’s principles, which supported the participation of Dharavi’s residents in the government’s redevelopment process, the URBZ team was strongly opposed

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710 Matias Echanove, interview by author, Mumbai, September 20, 2013
to the nature of the redevelopment per se. To paraphrase Echanove and Srivastava’s words in their paper “The Village Inside,” the production of local knowledge, the encapsulation of visions, the decision-making, and the planning of communities can only be possible with the involvement of “motivated local residents.”

Central to URBZ’s approach was the question of how to motivate local residents by breaking down the old barriers of activism that had focused on mass mobilizations and demonstrations. Evaluating the already existent layers of contestation in Dharavi, URBZ shaped its practice of resistance around creativity, flexibility, interaction between residents, and a variety of techniques that expressed its aspirations. Through their collaborative platform in URBZ, the three members gradually developed methods of contradicting the traditional planning apparatuses such as “the heavy CAD maps and the GIS surveys” and concentrated mainly on participatory resourceful workshops.

They also examined the two principal concepts in Dharavi’s reality – the predominant “tool-house” and the “organic city,” which they called a “user-generated city” – and set them in the context of architectural theory by introducing Dharavi in academic discussions.

The “tool-house” is a multifunctional building that can serve both residential and economic purposes. Its flexible structural arrangements, which grant the inhabitant an opportunity to live and work in the same place, facilitate the economic spirit and productivity of the area in various creative ways.

“A tool house emerges when every wall, nook, and corner becomes an extension of the tools of the trade of its inhabitant – when the furnace and the cooking hearth exchange roles, and sleeping competes with warehouse space.”

In Mumbai, the “tool-house” model came about after the closure of mills, when many workers who had lost their jobs started running businesses in their places of residence. Similar models of living and working can be found across Asia. Of interest to URBZ was one of the Indian tool-house’s main advantages: the ease of transition to this model without a change of environment. Realizing the importance and the value of this type of accommodation for urban areas in Asia, Echanove and Srivastava acquired an office space in one of the several tool-houses in Dharavi in 2009 in order to explore the unique features of this model. This structure can host over 17 people, as shown in a drawing by URBZ.

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714 Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava, “The Village Inside,” in What we See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs, 144

The collection of several tool-houses in one area is what the URBZ terms a "user-generated city." Such a city is generated incrementally, without following any specific design or master plan. The "user-generated city" is a spin-off of the concept of the organic city, which is usually understood as an informal or unplanned urban area that develops spontaneously as a result of people's need for housing.\textsuperscript{716} The organic city is "often culturally dynamic and creative" and has all the potential of becoming an inextricable part of modern cities.\textsuperscript{717} In URBZ's approach, Dharavi is a combination of several tool-houses and has evolved into a typical organic city. The importance of the tool-house and organic city models is based on the fact that both were generated in an age of information through a local population's need to live and work in an urban area. The replacement of this complex "labyrinth" of pedestrian streets "packed with small vendors" (the predominant model in an organic city) with high-rise homogeneous apartments is "not as much an urban makeover as an economic takeover."\textsuperscript{718} Well-designed development driven by real estate interests rather than incremental change according to local needs jeopardizes the social, cultural, and economic character of these neighbourhoods.

Moving away from the methods that the Alliance used to resist the DRP, URBZ inaugurated its activities and practices of resistance by exposing the potential of local resources. Thus, instead of looking for means through which to collaborate with the government in Dharavi's

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{tool-house.jpg}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{716} Rem Koolhaas interviewed by Katrina Heron, "From Bauhaus to Koolhaas," in \textit{Wired Magazine}, July 1996, \url{http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/4.07/koolhaas.html} \[Accessed October 23, 2013\]

\textsuperscript{717} Matias Echanove, 'Master cities & Defiant Neighborhoods: Notes from Tokyo & Mumbai,' lecture manuscript, Media & Asian Transformations Symposium, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, July 15, 2007

\textsuperscript{718} Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava, "The Village Inside," in \textit{What we See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs}, 147
redevelopment process, the URBZ team motivated dwellers to participate in creative workshops that demonstrated that Dharavi had already been redeveloped by its inhabitants. The team therefore focused on examining residents’ hopes for the area’s future and attempted to find ways to implement their visions through design and research. In fleshing out its arguments, the URBZ team contributed to Dharavi’s communities with a cluster of events, such as the participatory workshop Urban Typhoon (held in Koliwada during March 2008), the online platform www.dharavi.org, and the construction of the Dharavi Shelter social club.

In March 2008, Geeta Mehta, Echanove, and Srivastava organized the Urban Typhoon workshop in Koliwada, Dharavi (figure 17). The workshop was built around the context of local participation, art, and social activities. At stake here is the manner in which the word participation is perceived. Here it is understood not as public marches or enumeration activities, but rather as a vehicle “to allow more connections and interdependencies” between residents and individual researchers and activists. The workshop was held in Koliwada between March 16 and 22, 2008, and drew attention to the formation of alternative visions for the area’s future that could be realized parallel to the DRP’s rollout.


Koliwada, which translates as “fishing village,” is one of the oldest settlements on the seven islands of Mumbai. Its location on the edge of Mahim Creek long facilitated the fishing activities of its residents, but over the years and with the construction of the Sion-Bandra Link Road, the area was filled with waste from surrounding sites, which made fishing nearly unfeasible. Although fishing activities have been significantly reduced, Koliwada still holds its title of fishing colony to this day thanks to its daily bustling fish markets. The history of the area has witnessed several attempts by the government to redevelop and change its unique

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719 Matias Echanove, interview by author, Mumbai, September 20, 2013
720 Urban Typhoon Workshop, Koliwada-Dharavi, report prepared by Urbanology, Mumbai, 2008
character. One such example was the latest Dharavi Redevelopment Project, which involved the transformation of Koliwada into a high-rise residential hub as part of Mukesh Mehta’s plan in proposed sector five. In 2007, after many years of resistance, Kolis, the residents of the area, were finally granted exemption from the DRP due to Koliwada’s long history and its unique character as one of the oldest fishing villages. One must note, however, that the Kolis were not opposed to the transformation per se but only to the government’s involvement in the change and its control over their life. Therefore, since 2008 they have been engaged in the process of forming housing societies in preparation for self-development.722 It was in this spirit that the residents invited several individuals to participate in the Urban Typhoon workshop and brainstorm about the area’s future:

“The purpose of the workshops is to brainstorm solutions to local issues, and trigger creative thinking...These workshops are designed to bridge the gap between theory and reality and between experts and local communities. Participation by people with deep knowledge of the ground reality and daily life of a community is considered necessary to produce effective and functional concepts. This local knowledge is rooted in the community’s experience and can manifest itself through events such as the Urban Typhoon workshops.”723

Over 130 people from all over the world voluntarily joined the workshop. Members of the organizing team included community leaders, social workers, and residents of Koliwada, individual architects and activists, and the three-member team of URBZ. The participants were divided into 12 groups and placed under the guidance of several professionals with backgrounds in architecture, political economy, anthropology, urban planning, music, social science, and the media. These workshops, which aimed to transform Koliwada from a redeveloping testing area to a creative hub, attracted the interest of the Alliance. Sheela Patel of SPARC and Jockim Arputham of NSDF participated in the event as guest speakers.

The final product of the workshop’s week was a rich variety of alternative proposals for the future of Koliwada as well as imaginative solutions translated into several formats – plans, pictures, collages, music, and guidelines – that enhanced innovative strategies and mobilized broad communities to engage in creative practices of resistance to the top-down transformation of Dharavi.724 The end of the workshop thematized the visions of residents regarding the future of their neighbourhood and successfully implanted these aspirations into their social life. Moreover, the productive week demonstrated that the residents could be successfully involved in the development process if a relationship between redevelopment and creativity was nurtured. As soon as the workshop was over, Mehta, Echanove, and Srivastava attempted to combine all of the alternative proposals, upload them online and leave them open to review by the public. One of their first ideas was to display the results of the workshop in the media. The residents, however, were not sure about representing their work in newspapers and thus the team of URBZ came up with the idea of creating a new website, www.dharavi.org, which would serve as a link between local residents and people interested in activities related to Dharavi. The webpage began operating in March 2008.

722 Ibid.
723 Geeta Mehta, “Harvesting Creativity at the Bottom of the Pyramid,” in Urban Typhoon Workshop, Koliwada-Dharavi, report prepared by Urbanology (Mumbai, 2008), 15–16
724 Urban Typhoon Workshop, Koliwada-Dharavi, report prepared by Urbanology (Mumbai, 2008)
The [www.dharavi.org](http://www.dharavi.org) soon grew beyond the coverage of the workshop and became an online platform that allowed anyone who had an interest in or an alternative idea for the development of Dharavi to publish it in any language. Architects, filmmakers, journalists, urban planners, and community members connected through this online platform, which used open source tools such as Google Earth and Flickr, to access discussions on the area’s future. Dharavi became a site for online examination in which data was generated and published by its users. The webpage set the basis for a tentative formulation of Dharavi’s various stories, but due to financial constraints, did not last for more than two years. In 2010, the webpage stopped its operations and all the information collected during this period was transferred to URBZ’s main page.

Meanwhile, in consideration of the fact that Dharavi – thanks to its complex layers and the constant change in its fabric – was the subject of URBZ’s research, the team set up an office within its boundaries, in the area of the New Transit Camp, in August 2009. In late summer of 2009, the office started operating in Dharavi by facilitating the production and exchange of knowledge and ideas for a better urban environment. From the outset, URBZ’s office also housed the Dharavi School of Urbanology, which aimed to invite researchers from all over the world to examine Dharavi’s unique characteristics and compare their knowledge to others’ experiences (figure 18).


From the very first day, the office in Dharavi provided consultation services related to architecture and planning and also acted as a meeting space for motivated researchers from around the world who could work and learn from the area. As soon as the team set up its business in Dharavi, it aspired that some projects would likewise originate with local residents:

725 Initially the team tried to rent a space in Koliwada, but as the rents there were very high, they looked into other potential neighbourhoods in Dharavi. Source: Matias Echanove, interview by author, Mumbai, September 20, 2013
726 Ibid.
“We didn’t have to wait for long before an architectural project came to us from within Dharavi.”

A local leader in the New Transit Camp asked Echanove and Srivastava to help him with the design and construction of a social centre for children and the elderly population in an empty plot, 30 meters away from their office. The design for a new building by URBZ in Dharavi was a great challenge for demonstrating alternative types of low-rise redevelopment within the economic dynamic of the residents. The URBZ team participated in the proposal and the construction of the building with the assistance of two architecture students from Italy, who had come to work in the settlement for a one-month period. The initial plan was for a large space on the ground floor that would house the elderly, while the first floor was projected as a space dedicated to children. Additionally, two open spaces were planned for the rear of the plot and the roof (figure 19).


The social centre, known as “the Shelter in Dharavi,” was completed within 2009 and hosted its first event on December 6, 2009. At the opening, nearly 50 children participated in drawing activities, and since then a variety of activities for children has been taking place in the Shelter each Sunday.

Before long the Shelter was transformed into a creative hub. It hosted children’s activities along with a series of other art events for the city of Mumbai. One such event was the Dharavi 48, a two-day happening that took place in March 2010 and included art exhibitions by Mumbai artists, pottery and painting workshops, photographic demonstrations, film screenings, and capoeira dance classes (figure 20). The workshop was organized in collaboration with URBZ and the residents of the New Transit Camp society. The aims of the two-day workshop were first to raise funds to extend the Shelter’s facilities, by adding for example extra space for a library and a computer room, and second, to raise awareness about Dharavi in Mumbai by getting different audiences to participate in the Shelter’s activities. In May 2010, another fundraising workshop, which focused on various sources of art in the city, showcased the work of local children and Mumbai artists.

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Since 2009, the URBZ team has been involved in various activities in Dharavi. It has organized seminars, art events, and participatory workshops that function inside and outside India. Through this sequence of occasions, URBZ has attempted to promote Dharavi as an organic city that is constantly changing and evolving through local initiatives. Residents have had an opportunity to express their aspirations for the future of Dharavi in pictures and plans as well as through various collaborations with individual researchers who have visited the area. They have resisted the forces that sustain the belief that Dharavi is just one more slum in Asia, and they have exposed the talents and interests of the inhabitants and the fact that redevelopment is a process that has been taking place in Dharavi for over a decade. In an article written by Echanove and Srivastava on the meaning of the term “slum” in The New York Times on February 21, 2009, a lawyer and longtime resident of Dharavi raised issues that do need to be considered in the redevelopment of Dharavi, and pointed out that

“‘We have always improved Dharavi by ourselves. All we want is permission and support to keep doing it. Is that asking for too much?’ Ramesh Misra.”

URBZ has contributed to the politics of resistance in Dharavi by exploring mechanisms of creativity that made it easier for residents to recognize and uphold their cultural identity. Such mechanisms produced new geographies of resistance that have crossed the borders of traditional activism. URBZ activities contributed to the erasure of Dharavi’s negative image as “Asia’s largest slum” and represented the area differently around the globe. Along similar

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lines but within a very different context, the ACORN foundation has nurtured its own brand of activism.

**ACORN in India: The Dharavi Project**

“When you are talking about recycling, waste collectors, rag pickers, you come against the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP). The DRP is always in the background.”

In the past decade, Dharavi has seen the rise of various grass-roots social movements that have been attempting to challenge the pro-development perspective. When reflecting on the diverse dynamics that have bred resistance to the DRP, we must remember that the government has supported and stands behind redevelopment. The two movements presented so far developed methods of opposition against the DRP through creativity, enumeration, research, and academic collaborations. While Mumbai’s Alliance used these methods as vehicles to open a dialogue with the government, the URBZ team tried to empower residents to act independently of the government to find solutions. Another organization that has worked to empower the people of Dharavi to resist plans for the area’s development from the government and outsiders is ACORN, a foundation that has conducted its work parallel to government efforts to transform the area. The ACORN foundation in India differs from many of the earlier social movements in the sense that it opposes the DRP in an indirect way, through mass media. This section elaborates on ACORN’s activities and also examines another possible narrative of resistance. It considers the formation of this organization in India not as the direct outcome of an opposition strategy, but rather as a platform that is able to reveal resistance.

ACORN in India is a non-profit organization that has been operating in three cities – Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore – since 2005. In Mumbai, the focus of ACORN’s work lies in providing services to rag pickers and people working in the recycling industry within Dharavi’s borders. Vinod Shetty, the foundation’s head in Mumbai, aspired to organize rag pickers and offer them a sense of community through the Dharavi Project, launched in 2008. During the day, Vinod Shetty works as a labour lawyer for the Mumbai High Court, while in his free time he co-ordinates the activities of the NGO. Since 2000, he has been engaged in consolidating unorganized and vulnerable individuals in groups and providing them with facilities and access to education. For him, Dharavi’s most vulnerable population group in every government project are the waste collectors who work in the 13th Compound. As he explains to the writers Rashmi Bansal and Deepak Gandhi, authors of *Poor Little Rich Slum*:

“Rag pickers are not just poor, they are invisible. Nobody wants to talk to them, engage with them.”

The 13th Compound, known also as Dharavi’s recycling hub, is located on the edge of the settlement on Mahim Creek, where the Mahim-Sion Link Road intersects with the 60-Feet Road. Mumbai generates approximately 10,000 tons of waste daily, and 80% of the dry waste

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729 Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013

ends up in Dharavi, where it is dumped in large bags and containers in Mahim Creek (figures 21–24). At that point, raddiwalas (waste collectors) and pheriwalas (waste dealers) deposit the daily collections in sheds. Those who own a vehicle collect the waste and finally give it to kaantawalas, who distribute it to various industries in Mumbai. The 13th Compound handles over 8,000 units of recycling materials, such as plastic, carbon, bottles, and metal, on a daily basis. Dharavi’s plastic recycling industry is believed to be the largest waste management industry in India; according to a 1986 survey by the National Slum Dwellers Federation, its annual turnover is estimated at Rs 60 lakh (US $150,000). The people involved in the recycling of plastic, both men and women, earn only Rs 45 daily (US $0.73). However, there are waste collectors who run their own businesses and might draw larger profits. One of these is Laxmi Kamble, a third-generation rag picker in Dharavi, who owns a business and earns US $100 per month. Nearly everything is recycled in the 13th Compound; new products are made and exported all over the world. China is one of the largest consumers of recycled plastic. The material that cannot be recycled is cleaned and sold on the open market as second-hand material. Over 10,000 people work in the 13th Compound, and as Shetty says, “the government has not a single scheme of taking care of these people. There are no jobs for people who are not educated, are not qualified.” Most of them are not eligible for any government plan as they are not officially registered as workers in the city. They are self-employed and have no access to official documents, such as election certificates, or identity cards.

731 Bansal and Gandhi, Poor Little Rich Slum, 110; and Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz, 152
733 Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013
735 Ibid., 109
736 Laxmi Kamble’s interview in “The Real Slumdogs” (Documentary), The National Geographic Channel, 2009
737 REDHARAVI, 24
738 Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013
Figure 21: The waste in Mahim Creek

Figure 22: Main Street in the 13th Compound, recycling area
With the introduction of the DRP in 2004, the lives of these people working in the waste industry were threatened. Their lack of official documents made them ineligible to participate in the redevelopment project. As a rag picker in Dharavi says in the documentary *The Real Slumdogs*,

**Figure 23**: View from the top of an industrial unit in the 13th Compound

**Figure 24**: View of 13th Compound from the top of an industrial unit
Reflecting on the nightmarish consequences of the project’s implementation, in April 2008 Vinod Shetty assembled Dharavi’s rag pickers in Mahim and issued them ACORN ID cards. On one side, each card displayed a photo of the person and his contact details followed by Vinod Shetty’s mobile number and address. The other side displayed a serial number and the person’s date of joining the organization. Even though these cards did not secure participation in government projects, they were a step towards granting rag pickers a foothold in society. They also gave them access to ACORN’s free medical clinics and basic amenities (figure 25).²⁴⁰ As Laxmi Kamble states about the ID cards,

“If you are part of an organization, you have the strength to question. All I want to show my children and the children of others is that whatever rights we have, we have to fight for them.”²⁴¹

![ACORN ID cards](image)

**Figure 25:** ACORN ID cards. On the left, the image shows the serial number and the date of joining of each member. On the right, the back of the card, which displays a photo of the holder and his contact details followed by Vinod Shetty’s mobile number and address. The cards were given to the author (Martha Kolokotroni) by Vinod Shetty in September 2013

Today, over 500 adults and nearly 100 children have been registered as members of the ACORN foundation. In 2009 these members had their own working space in the community centre established in a tool-house close to Mahim Creek. Through his experience in the waste industry, Shetty knew that the main “victims” of this industry are children with no access to any form of education, who are therefore at risk for involvement in dangerous activities.²⁴² In late 2009 Shetty set up a school for these children and attempted to expose them to the arts and technology by offering several creative opportunities (figure 26–28).²⁴³ In 2010, ACORN also established a partnership with Mumbai’s jazz club Blue Frog and initiated music workshops for children. Once per month, Blue Frog hosts musicians from all over the world to

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²³⁸ Babu’s interview in “The Real Slumdogs” (Documentary), *The National Geographic Channel*, 2009
²⁴⁰ Ibid.
²⁴¹ Bansal and Gandhi, *Poor Little Rich Slum*, 111
²⁴² Francorsi, “Talking Trash with Vinod Shetty,” in *Dharavi: The City Within*, 303
give live performances in Mumbai. Thanks to ACORN’s programme Dharavi Rocks, which works on raising funds for the foundation, the musicians in the Blue Frog have performed on stage with the children of the 13th Compound.

**Figure 26:** ACORN Foundation, the School

**Figure 27:** Inside the ACORN Foundation
Observing ACORN’s volunteer work for rag pickers, one sees little to immediately suggest that these activities are expressions of opposition to the DRP, but for Shetty these events work against the progress of Mukesh Mehta’s plans. Shetty’s strategy is to make Dharavi’s informal activities popular around the world. He argues that if Dharavi receives international attention focused on the lives of its residents, awareness will also be raised among researchers and bureaucrats who can impact development plans for Dharavi. More specifically, Shetty states,

“We use something from inside of Dharavi to tell a story… It is a series of multiple sounds, which can start a buzz, and once it starts growing, then it can influence the mainstream.”

ACORN’s path of resistance was to use media, whose power Arjun Appadurai emphasizes in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, where he argues that the consumption of mass media worldwide can provoke “resistance, irony, selectivity and, in general, agency.” With this aim in mind, Vinod Shetty has spread the stories of rag pickers in a series of documentaries, books, and newspapers to raise awareness about the people of Dharavi during the crucial years of the DRP’s rollout.

In March 2009, as part of the Dharavi Project, the director Parasher Baruah worked with Shetty on the documentary *Waste*, which exposes the daily process of recycling in the 13th Compound. The director followed the rag pickers for months and recorded their lives. The final product was presented in schools and colleges in Mumbai and introduced Dharavi to audiences that had never heard it. As Shetty argued, this was a way “to build up opinions

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744 Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013
746 *WASTE*, documentary, produced by Parasher Baruah (Mumbai: 2009)
against the DRP” by showing the innovation and the entrepreneurship of Dharavi’s residents.\footnote{Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013}

In a similar vein, in the same year the National Geographic Channel released the documentary *The Real Slumdogs* in response to the negative image of Dharavi promoted in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*.\footnote{*The Real Slumdogs* (Documentary), The National Geographic Channel, 2009} The documentary included several stories from inside Dharavi and revealed the creative spirit of Dharavi’s residents and the area’s distinguishing activities – industry and production. Vinod Shetty participated in the film by presenting not only the problems of undocumented rag pickers, but also their aspirations about their future. Laxmi Kamble, a rag picker who works in the 13th Compound and is also a volunteer for the ACORN foundation, described her daily life and discussed ACORN’s contribution to developing a sense of belonging in society.

In his effort to contribute to the discourse building up around Dharavi, Vinod Shetty came up with an idea for a book of stories in February 2009. The book, *Dharavi: The City within*, edited by the journalist Joseph Campana, is a collection of essays by journalists who have been writing about Dharavi for the last decade.\footnote{Dharavi: The City Within, ed. Joseph Campana (India: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013)} In his introduction, Campana explains that the book was conceived as an argument against the Dharavi Redevelopment Project.\footnote{Joseph Campana, “Introduction,” in Dharavi: The City Within, ed. Joseph Campana (India: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013), 3} The stories are arranged in four sections that chronicle different periods in Dharavi’s history: the first examines the settlement’s emergence; the second illustrates Dharavi’s living and working housing model; the third focuses on the social life of its residents; and the fourth traces the stories of redevelopment attempts in Dharavi. The book concludes with an account of ACORN and Shetty’s contribution to organized resistance to the DRP. The book was released in India in 2013 when another book on Dharavi, Rashmi Bansal and Deepak Gandhi’s *Poor Little Rich Slum* (published in 2012), was already available in bookstores. That book, which received considerable attention from the media in India, summarizes the observations and experiences of the authors during their time in Dharavi in 2011 and demonstrates the entrepreneurial spirit that prevails there.\footnote{Bansal and Gandhi, Poor Little Rich Slum} The book also includes an extensive presentation of ACORN’s project *Dharavi Rocks*.

These books and documentaries, along with Mukesh Mehta’s removal from the position of official consultant of the DRP, created a buzz around Dharavi. As Shetty put it, “finally the government woke up!”\footnote{Vinod Shetty, interview by author, Mumbai, September 13, 2013} Pointing to a series of publications that included representations of the Dharavi Project (figure 29), he suggested that international attention had generated a sense of alarm in an audience that wanted to know more about Dharavi, meet Dharavi’s residents, and further explore the unique characteristics of the area.
When reflecting on the various dynamics that triggered resistance in Dharavi throughout the last decade, one must remember that the Dharavi Redevelopment Project has always been the backdrop for these actions. The examined three practices of protest that originated from opposition to the DRP, by breaking the traditional patterns of contestation practices such as public demonstrations, have strengthened resistance and activated opposition by non-violent means. All the movements just discussed have uncovered diverse features of Dharavi that will play a central role in the involvement of both academia and the media in shaping Dharavi’s future.
The Construction Site

“The sometimes true story about the architects and planners who preserve some of the slums that are cleared to make way for their schemes, in order to have somewhere pleasant to live themselves, has a moral.”

In *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments*, John Turner suggests that people’s activities in low-income settlements should be seen as the solution rather than the problem of urbanization. In the first section of his book, Turner describes his visit to the *urbanizaciones populares* settlement in Arequipa, Peru with Pedro Beltran, a political figure appointed Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of Peru between 1959 and 1961. In the *urbanizaciones populares* nearly every building was made of concrete or brick and was a permanent structure “under construction.” Instead of seeing the possibilities of such a place as a construction site, Beltran saw “a vast shanty town” and soon decided to clear it.

The view of the *urbanizaciones populares* as a “dreadful slum” has been a challenge for architects and planners, who during the 1960s were charged with designing for other people’s lives without any knowledge of their needs and quality of living. The process of designing housing under this model involved construction that used available resources and had clear starting and ending points. Beltran viewed the *urbanizaciones populares* as a “construction site” for a future settlement, a stage upon which a transformation could take place in which the slum would become something other than a slum, driven by architects and planners. For Turner, however, the “construction site” was itself the end result: the stage upon which the slum was gradually transforming its purpose and form, driven only by its residents. Beltran’s position is the top-down approach to planning, while Turner represents the bottom-up approach.

The top-down approach in slum upgrading programmes involves the participation of architects, planners, policy-makers, and administrators. Top-down projects typically begin with design proposals and housing policies in which drawings have a principal role. As Turner argued, the major goal of this approach is to minimize cost and maximize productivity, with the result that procedures and products are standardized and large-scale (the result is a series of massive, low-income housing schemes). However, the problem with such “products” is not the economic cost, but rather the social one. These centralized decision-making systems that generate large housing schemes to replace slums and that appear to be beneficial to residents are actually “instruments of oppression widening the gap between the poor and the rich.”

On the other hand the bottom-up approach in slum upgrading programmes mainly involves the participation of residents. This is what Turner characterizes as a “locally self-governing
autonomous system.” As Turner suggests, this system contains personal and local resources, such as

“...imagination, initiative, commitment and responsibility, skill and muscle-power; the capability for using specific and often irregular areas of land or locally available materials and tools; the ability to organize enterprises and local institutions; constructive competitiveness and the capacity to co-operate. None of these resources can be used by exogenous or supra-local powers against the will of the people.”

In the case of the urbanizaciones populares, Turner saw a large site under construction with unlimited local resources that were gradually changing the use and form of the site's structure. All houses have been designed and built only by their users based on what the house does, rather than what the house is or how the house looks. This Architecture Without Architects introduced, as Bernard Rudofsky wrote and illustrated in his exhibition at MOMA in 1964, “the art of building.” This art of building does not carry out the predominant way in which planning has been applied, but rather places the resident at the centre of this process. Rudofsky’s exhibition was a challenge for the role of the architect and the urban designer, as he outlined that the architect is mainly concerned with business and prestige rather than the problems of living. In his exhibition, Rudofsky presented photographs and only one drawing of global examples of “vernacular architecture,” with the statement that architects should learn a lesson from it. Particularly, he wrote about anonymous builders,

“The beauty of this architecture has long been dismissed as accidental, but today we should be able to recognize it as the result of rare good sense in the handling of practical problems.”

The housing anarchist Colin Ward has also challenged commercialized approaches to designing and planning spaces in the 1960s. Additionally, Doxiadis, in his Anthropopolis, looked at this issue on a citywide scale and addressed the failure of cities to serve their residents. The ideal city – the anthropopolis – was designed to promote human development.

Beltran’s view of the urbanizaciones populares as slums also reflects the attitude of the state government of Maharashtra towards slums in the city of Mumbai. The official advertisement for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project of January 24, 2004, made it clear that the government intended a top-down makeover for Dharavi and compared the slum’s transformation to “the process of waking up to a truly wonderful dream.” Although the idea of the DRP was viewed by the government as a “wonderful dream,” not everyone saw it as a solution to the housing problem in Mumbai. Instead, many individuals and organizations...
foresaw that the DRP would be a nightmare not only for its residents but also for the city. They therefore developed various practices to resist its implementation. In searching for ways to transform Dharavi through the involvement of its residents, the three examined social movements – the Alliance, the URBZ team, and the ACORN foundation in India – established practices of resistance to the DRP that depended on what Turner called personal and local resources.

First, the Alliance aimed at bridging the communication gap between the government and Dharavi’s residents and prepared an alternative plan that represented the residents’ vision for the settlement’s future. Through a series of drawings and publications and using its daily interaction with residents, the Alliance challenged and influenced the limitations of the existing planning policies; as a result it established credibility as a potential partner with the government for such schemes. The Alliance’s involvement in alternative design proposals and its interaction with academic institutions also affected the project’s temporal discontinuity.

Second, the URBZ team empowered and inspired communal participation in planning activities for their settlement through the use of creativity, innovation, and research. With the introduction of design workshops, art exhibitions, and the establishment of an online platform for facilitating the transfer of local knowledge, the team created opportunities for residents to express their ideas for Dharavi and to develop alternative strategies for gradually improving their settlement. Going beyond the traditional boundaries of activism and working without the government, URBZ created a link between residents and researchers around the world, thus globalizing the activism in Dharavi.

Third, the ACORN foundation in India – through the use of media, a series of cultural events (such as music workshops), and the issue of ID cards for Dharavi’s residents – created a link between unregistered slum dwellers and the public sphere and offered a sense of identity to Dharavi’s residents. Additionally, it exposed the sense of entrepreneurship in Dharavi and thus aroused the interest of several professionals who worked parallel to the government, devising their own plans.

Through these different forms of resistance to the DRP, Dharavi has become a huge construction site in which building events takes place on a daily basis. These buildings have arisen from the visions and the creative and productive spirit of its residents, but also thanks to their strategic alliances with NGOs and, consequently, with the government. Transformation in Dharavi is a constant process that relies not only on government projects but also and mainly on residents’ aspirations. Furthermore, it is crucial to note the breadth of the methods used to improve living conditions in Dharavi (including research, creativity, media, and design). These stand in stark contrast to state mechanisms that depend only on capital and private investment.

The conclusions have important broader implications encapsulated in the following three statements. First, the practice of resistance in Dharavi is strongly linked to creative and innovative strategies that result from various experiences and events. Second, social movements represent powerful mechanisms for motivating residential participation in change. Third, the practices of resistance examined here have not only influenced a
government project's process of realization, but have also contributed to the transformation and improvement of the territory. Departing from the existing methods of shaping slums, these forces of local resistance could be beneficially used to bring about positive change through generating local events, in the context of a new planning approach that gradually evolves from participatory planning.
“Just remember: in Dharavi, it’s easy to be fooled by what’s on the surface.”

[Piers Pickard, “Is Slum Tourism in India Ethical?” *Wanderlust Travel Magazine* 91, (November 2007)]
In “The Work of Representation” Stuart Hall defines “representation” as the production of meaning through languages of different kinds. Modes of representation vary, depending upon both the perspectives and communication methods. In particular, languages can use a wide range of visual material – words, images, signs, symbols, and so forth. In all of these different modes, interpretation becomes “an essential aspect of this process by which meaning is given and taken.” The observer who interprets the representation has an important role in constructing his or her definition and identity. One of the most significant practices of representation is stereotyping, in which certain dominant interpretations prevail during the process of constructing meaning.

The central focus of this part is Dharavi’s entrapment in the structure of several stereotypes that became manifest in the course of media coverage and various public events. This chapter is structured around 11 events selected on the basis of two criteria: how popular or well-known they were, and whether they occurred within the relevant time frame. All selected events contributed to different modes of representing Dharavi’s space at a crucial moment in the city’s development. Thus, it is important to highlight that all of them occurred after 2004, when the state government of Maharashtra officially inaugurated the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. Moreover, the events follow not only a logic of connection, but also a logic of order. They are related to each other through several smaller elements, and in some cases the popularity of one of these events affects the progress of another. Even though none of them prevail within a territorial context, they are all strongly related to Dharavi’s spatial transformations.

Six sections will provide the framework for this chapter’s survey of Dharavi’s representations: “The Cancerous Lump,” “A Tourist Destination,” “The Sustainable Urbanism,” “A Playground for Ambitious Urban Planners,” “The Case Study in Academia,” and “The Spectacle of Dharavi.” In order to understand how Dharavi was articulated as a representational site, each section examines three levels of analysis: the production, the function, and the experience of every representation. The cases zero in on the different meanings and identities that were attached to Dharavi and explore their social and spatial impact on the DRP throughout its different stages. The theoretical aspects that inform the examination of representational strategies are threaded throughout the chapter’s discussion and analysis of events.

The first section, “The Cancerous Lump,” shows how Dharavi fed the appetites and imaginations of those who generated stories about it. More specifically, the section explores two major events that placed Dharavi at the centre of a fictional account. The first event is the book Q&A, written by Vikas Swarup in 2005, which portrays Dharavi as a “cancerous lump” slowly killing the megacity Mumbai. Dharavi’s dark depiction in the book captivated the

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769 Ibid., 33
770 Vikas Swarup, _Q&A_ (London: Black Swan, 2006), 157
interest of film producers, and in 2008 the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* was released. The film, which is the second event assessed here, adapted the story presented in *Q&A* and became very popular worldwide, especially in 2009, when it received numerous awards. Dharavi’s exposure in the film triggered many discussions and sparked objections over the film’s ethical shortcomings, particularly how it represents its subject, both through imagery and words (for example, in the provocative title). This section offers not only a study of the politics of the movie, but also an attempt to compare the outcome of the film with the different forms that the DRP took in the last decade.

The second section explores the upstart business model that accepts Dharavi as a tourist destination. Even though “slum tourism” in Dharavi was already around in 2006, the magnitude of the surge in visitors to the settlement after the movie’s release is hard to exaggerate. Dharavi became an Oscar destination. Visitors thronged to the areas depicted in the film, and the augmented demand for tourism encouraged local residents to take advantage of the resulting business opportunities. Thus several new tour companies started up in Dharavi after 2009. However, not everyone condoned the promotion of Dharavi as a tourist destination, and the popular media featured extensive coverage of the resulting discussions and critiques. On the one hand, this section examines the criticisms levelled at slum tourists and explores the motivations behind the new-found interest in Dharavi. On the other hand, it also explores the spatial changes these tours brought to Dharavi’s urban landscape at a moment when the DRP was beginning to approach a holistic transformation of its territory.

The third section traces the evolution of two events: Prince Charles’s association with Dharavi, and the TV show *Slumming it!,* produced and broadcast in the UK in 2010. In 2003, Prince Charles visited Dharavi for almost one hour and was very much surprised at the social possibilities and levels of organization he found in the settlement. Thus, in one of his speeches in 2009, he used it as a model of sustainable urbanism. His words in this lecture and his extensive references to Dharavi in his book *Harmony* (2010) motivated many individuals around the world to investigate and learn more about Dharavi. One of these individuals was Kevin McCloud, who visited Dharavi as part of *Slumming it!* to challenge Prince Charles’s arguments. Both events build the structure of this section, offering a view of Dharavi that runs counter to the representations of the area found within the DRP’s guidelines.

The fourth section, “A Playground for Ambitious Planners,” investigates the representations of Dharavi in two documentaries, *Dharavi: Slum for Sale,* and *The Real Slumdogs* (released in 2010 and 2009, respectively). Both documentaries provide insights into the living conditions of Dharavi’s residents and highlight the geographical position of Dharavi as a prime piece of real estate. *Dharavi: Slum for Sale* briefly relates the story of the DRP and uncovers some of its

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771 *Slumdog Millionaire,* (Film) directed by Danny Boyle (UK: Celador Films, Film4, Pathé Pictures International, 2008)
772 Kevin McCloud, *Slumming it!*, Episode 1, 2010. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm0iHRs9Bng](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm0iHRs9Bng) [Accessed December 17, 2013]
775 “Dharavi: Slum for Sale” (Documentary), directed by Lutz Konermann (Zurich: Hugofilm, 2010); and ”The Real Slumdogs” (Documentary), *The National Geographic Channel,* 2009
major weaknesses, and *The Real Slumdogs*, in a reference to the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, depicts everyday stories featuring residents and NGOs associated with Dharavi.

The fifth section looks at Dharavi from within the halls of Academia by considering four scholarly events: the Urban Age International Conference, a case study at Harvard Business School, a graduate design studio in architecture and an urban design programme at Columbia University, and an academic publication from a research group in arts and architecture. All four events accept Dharavi as a case study in several academic fields, such as business, economics, planning, arts, and architecture – and they explore Dharavi’s position in the future of Mumbai. The DRP forms the constant backdrop for the discussion in this section.

The last section summarizes all representations that are presented in the five previous sections and establishes a connection with the spatial future of Dharavi. More specifically, the section concludes with two major observations that are developed throughout this chapter and opens up a discussion about the future of megacity slums.

“Representation” is an important contribution to the politics of Dharavi: it awakens the limitations of how the settlement is manifested and celebrated in the public sphere, and it also addresses the complex structures behind the stereotypes. Each of these representations has a gradual but considerable impact on Dharavi’s urban landscape, and furthermore, it can activate spatial configurations that progressively shape the settlement’s future in the city – independently of governmental plans.

**The Cancerous Lump**

“Dharavi sits like a cancerous lump in the heart of the city. And the city refuses to recognize it. So it has outlawed it. All the houses in Dharavi are ‘illegal constructions’, liable to be demolished at any time. But when the residents are struggling simply to survive, they don’t care. So they live in illegal houses and use illegal electricity, drink illegal water and watch illegal cable TV. They work in Dharavi’s numerous illegal factories and illegal shops, and even travel illegally – without ticket – on the local trains which pass directly through the colony. The city may have chosen to ignore the ugly growth of Dharavi, but a cancer cannot be stopped simply by being declared illegal. It still kills with its slow poison.”

The novel *Q&A*, written in a two-month period by Vikas Swarup, was published in 2005. Vikas Swarup was born in Allahabad, but he left India at an early age to serve in the Indian Foreign Service as a diplomat. At the time he wrote the book he was based in London. *Q&A* is a fictional account that has been translated into 37 languages and has received several awards, including the Prix Grand Public at the 2007 Paris Book Fair. The book tells the story...
of a young slum dweller, Ram Mohammed Thomas, who is arrested for winning the TV quiz show *Who will win a billion?* Ram, an orphan raised by a priest in Dharavi, is selected to participate in the quiz show. Several of his life experiences help him to correctly answer all of the game show’s 12 questions and win the award of one billion rupees (US $15 million). However, the producers are not convinced that a slum dweller from Dharavi with limited access to education could win such a contest, and instead of paying him the award, they accuse him of cheating.

Swarup’s inspiration for writing the narrative was the story of Major Charles Ingram, who was convicted of cheating in the British version of the TV quiz show *Who wants to be a Millionaire?* As Swarup mentioned in his interview with Stuart Jeffries in *The Guardian* (January 2009), “if a British army major can be accused of cheating, then an ignorant tiffin boy from the world’s biggest slum can definitely be accused of cheating.”

*Q&A* presents stories from post-colonial India that provide a template for life in the country’s modern urban settings and slums. The Dharavi of Swarup’s novel, “a cancerous lump in the heart of the city,” embodies all of the failings and glaring imperfections of modern urban India, featuring informal structures that present a giant labyrinth of immeasurable difficulties and hazards. With its ubiquitous lack of running water, sanitation, natural light, or ventilation, Dharavi is, in Swarup’s words, “not a place for the squeamish.” Although the most important source for the novel is clearly Swarup’s imagination, he vividly portrays Dharavi as a real space of abject poverty.

In her essay “Genre and Gender” on the role of representation in soap operas, Christine Gledhill discusses the role of fiction in the production of cultural representations. Particularly, she averds that even though “fiction” is different from what is happening in real life, it contributes to the construction and circulation of a wide range of meanings applied in real life. In particular she writes that the pervasiveness of media is a fact of life. Several theorists of cultural and media studies, such as Stuart Hall, Norman Fairclough, Gillian Rose, and Sander Gillman, have discussed the power that media representation has to define and construct objects of knowledge. Dharavi’s representation in *Q&A* provides a good illustration of Stuart Hall’s work, which is focused on the constructionist approach of representation. Stuart Hall examines the object of representation and locates it within the fascination of “otherness.” More specifically, he argues that “difference” is a compelling and contested topic in the area of representation. Swarup’s book depicts Dharavi as a “different” area tucked away in a corner of the “modern skyscrapers and neon-lit shopping complexes of Mumbai.” Marking this area as alien to its surroundings makes it strangely attractive to the audience, precisely because it appears to threaten the order and control of normal city life.

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780 Ibid.
781 Swarup, *Q&A*, 157
782 Ibid.
784 Ibid.
786 Swarup, *Q&A*, 157
787 Hall, “The Spectacle of the ‘Other’,” 237
According to theories of representation, constructing otherness connects up with multiple levels of power. The most dominant practice of representation is the signifying practice of stereotyping. Through his work on cultural representations, Hall has established a definition of stereotyping as a strategy “includes the exercise of symbolic power through portrayal practices.” More specifically, he argues that “stereotyping is a key element in the exercise of symbolic violence.” Dharavi, in the novel, has been trapped within the negative stereotype of a “cancerous lump in the city.” The important occasion here is that Dharavi’s image as constructed in the book still belongs to what is termed fantasy, and as Hall claims, this is only half of the story. The other half is what cannot be shown, and thus a space remains in which the imagination can wander.

Dharavi’s entrapment in a negative fictional stereotype recalls Edward Said’s work on “Orientalism.” One of Said’s central ideas is that knowledge of the Orient in Europe was generated not through real events but from constructed stereotypical archetypes that Western societies used to represent parts of Eastern culture. Said’s work was highly influenced by that of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci. Foucault, in The Archaeology of Knowledge, maps out his power/knowledge argument: that discourse, through several methods of representation, produces knowledge of the “Other” (the different), but this knowledge is hidden underneath various layers of power. In particular, he writes in the introduction of the book,

“What one is seeing, then, is the emergence of a whole field of questions, some of which are already familiar, by which this new form of history is trying to develop its own theory: how is one to specify the different concepts that enable us to conceive of discontinuity (threshold, rupture, mutation transformation)? By what criteria is one to isolate the unities with which one is dealing; what is a science? What is a theory? What is a concept? What is a text? How is one to diversify the levels at which one may place oneself, each of which possesses its own divisions and form of analysis? What is the legitimate level of formalization? What is that of interpretation?”

For Foucault, power should not be viewed as an ownership, but rather as a methodology that requires constant reform. Power is not stable: it circulates and functions as part of a chain. Hall also points to the importance of power’s circularity “in the context of representation.”

A major factor in this circulation of power is media. In Foucault’s analysis the mediation of culture and the creation of stereotypes is a technology of power. In alignment with Foucault’s argument, Stuart Hall claims,

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788 Ibid., 259
789 Ibid., 259
790 Ibid., 263
795 Hall, “The Spectacle of the ‘Other’,” 261
“Stereotyping is a particular type of power which operates as much through culture, the production of knowledge, imagery and representation, a through other means. Moreover it is circular: it implicates the ‘subjects’ of power as well as those who are ‘subjected’ to it.”

At the time that the Q&A was published, the state government of Maharashtra was in the process of designing the guidelines for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. In 2005, the Mumbai-based newspaper Daily News and Analysis (DNA) featured headlines such as “Finally, a makeover for Dharavi,” “State has new plans for Dharavi redevelopment,” and “Dharavi inches towards makeover.” The book mostly attracted the interest of a global audience, including people who had never heard of Dharavi but had now encountered a vivid depiction of the settlement and its many complexities.

In particular, the stereotype that Dharavi is hazardous to the city in which it is located, that it “kills [Mumbai] with its slow poison,” has the power to suggest that the settlement should be removed, like any other “cancerous lump.” An interesting point here is that the novel’s author never actually visited the “dangerous” setting for his narrative: in an interview with Swarup at the end of his book, he was asked if he had ever visited Dharavi or had any contact with any residents from the area. His answer was as follows:

“I have never lived in Mumbai for any sustained period of time, and I have never visited Dharavi. But then India is a country where no one leads the life of an island. The lives of the rich and the poor, the high and the low, intersect every day. And if one observes, and learns, then one can also project. One may not have seen Dharavi but one has seen slums. You just have to magnify the slums you have seen ten times, or maybe a hundred times, to visualize the scenario in Dharavi.”

The depiction of Dharavi in Q&A originated in Swarup’s imagination. The book attracted less polemical attention than its later adaptation for the screen – the movie Slumdog Millionaire – but because it equated Dharavi with poverty, it drew the interest of several social theorists who noted that the area’s representation as a “cancerous lump” enlarged the gap between formality and informality. The novelist Salman Rushdie characterized the book as a “corny potboiler” and criticized it as “the kind of fantasy writing that gives fantasy writing a bad name.” In response to this evaluation, Swarup claimed that his book had not been intended as a social critique, but rather as a literary work. In his interview with Mark McDonald in The New York Times, Swarup suggested that his book was also never meant as a slum documentary:

“Indians are sensitive to the way their country is represented…I wasn’t trying for that level of realism. That’s the great thing about fiction. In my invented universe, I make the rules. Google took me wherever I needed to go.”

796 Ibid., 263
797 Vineeta Pandey, “Finally a makeover for Dharavi,” DNA, August 27, 2005; Shubhangi Kharpe, "State has new plans for Dharavi redevelopment," DNA, October 15, 2005; and Smita Deshmukh, "Dharavi inches towards makeover," DNA, November 9, 2005
798 Swarup, Q&A, 157
799 Interview with Vikas Swarup in Q&A (London: Black Swan, 2006), 370–371
800 Mark McDonald, "A Diplomat’s unlikely rise to ‘Slumdog’ Acclaim," The New York Times, April 1, 2009
801 Ibid.
While Swarup relied on search engines to take him wherever he needed to go to write the story, the English film production company charged with making the novel into a film, Film 4, got a much closer look at Dharavi. Even before Q&A was published, the producers had hired the screenwriter Simon Beaufoy, who was trained as a documentary filmmaker.\(^{802}\) Beaufoy first travelled to India and then read the book. He was very much inspired by the story of the “underdog,” but his unfamiliarity with Indian slums was his initial challenge in transferring the story of the main protagonist into images.\(^{803}\) As he claimed in one of his interviews with The Guardian, “the only way to do this with any authenticity” was to return to his documentary roots. Thus he visited Mumbai and wandered around for a while.\(^{804}\) In stark contrast to Swarup, Beaufoy preferred to dig around and investigate the utterly unknown in order to bring more realism to the film.\(^{805}\) Altogether Beaufoy made three trips to Mumbai and spent much time in the Juhu slum community, north of Dharavi. As he mentioned in his interview with The Times of India, instead of seeing Juhu as a slum, Beaufoy saw “a fully functioning town, with a school, a temple, a mosque, health care centers, if not hospitals” and felt that the term “slum” was not appropriate for this community.\(^{806}\) More specifically, he said,

> “When you come from a wealthy country to a less wealthy one, you are encouraged to feel a sense of a pity. And I never once felt that about anybody I met in the slums. If no one called the Juhu slums ’slums,’ if they’d called it something else, I would have been very happy.”\(^{807}\)

Beaufoy’s preparatory work led to the script of *Slumdog Millionaire*, a motion picture by the English director Danny Boyle, released on November 12, 2008. The movie was widely acclaimed and received four Golden Globes at the 66th Annual Golden Globe Awards, seven BAFTA Awards, and eight Academy Awards in 2009, including the awards for best picture and best adapted screenplay. Although most of the scenes were shot in the Juhu and Versova slums, the film represented the urban conditions in only one informal settlement, Dharavi. The film adaptation differed in several respects from the original narrative in the book. Two important changes involve the protagonist’s name and the opening scene. Swarup named the protagonist Ram Mohammed Thomas in order to make him represent Indian people of different religious backgrounds – Hindu, Muslim and Christian. In contrast, the movie’s protagonist is a Muslim boy named Jamal Malik whose mother was killed by a Hindu mob during the 1992 communal rioting in Dharavi.\(^{808}\) The movie uses the “riot” scene, a recollection of the brutal clash between Muslims and Hindus in the 1990s, to open the film. These changes offered a different view of the Indian post-colonial period than was presented in Q&A, and the most controversial modification was the insertion of the word “Slumdog” in the title of the film. The debate over this word was twofold. While the majority of Dharavi’s residents were offended by the name (and many protested against the word “dog” with banners such as “I am not a dog, I am the future of India”), the researchers and urban activists


\(^{803}\) Chandna Arora, “Simple Simon,” *The Times of India*, January 24, 2009


\(^{805}\) Ibid.

\(^{806}\) Arora, “Simple Simon”

\(^{807}\) Simon Beaufoy, interview by Chandna Arora in “Simple Simon,” *The Times of India*, January 24, 2009

\(^{808}\) Vikas Swarup interview by Stuart Jeffries in “I’m the luckiest novelist in the world,” Books Section in *The Guardian*, January 16, 2009
Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava (from URBZ) took issue with the title’s use of the misleading word “slum.”

On February 3, 2009, almost 70 people from Dharavi marched in protest against the use of the word “dog” in the movie’s title. Appearing outside of a theatre in Sion, where the movie was playing, the marchers demanded the film’s title be changed. The protest lasted one hour and was accompanied by flags and banners with slogans such as “Just because we are from slums, it does not mean we are dogs,” and “We are ready to show Danny Boyle what real Dharavi is all about” (figure 1). A professor of media and film studies, Amresh Sinha, portrayed these protests as expressions of discontent from people living in these informal areas within the context of a “modernizing” India, whose advances were not only failing to improve living standards in these informal settlements, they were even degrading those standards.

A few days after the protests were over, Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenged the title and subject of the film in a case that went before the Gujarat High Court. The petition charged that the title of the film was “vulgar, offensive, and intended to defame the country,” and therefore “needed to be changed.” However, the chief justice Radhakrishan, who was hearing the petition and watched the film, discarded the argument:

“The slum boy whether he is called as an underdog or slumdog is not portrayed as inferior to anyone, but has been highlighted and depicted as a jewel from the slums of Mumbai, who has risen to win a fortune. We, therefore, hold that the title ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ is not intended to deny any public decency or morality or defamatory to slum-dwellers.”


810 Johanna Lobo, “Dharavi on the Boyle, blame it on Slumdog,” DNA, February 4, 2009
812 “Slumdog Millionaire faces ‘vulgarity’ test in Gujarat High Court,” The Indian Express, February 11, 2009
813 Radhakrishan in Saeed Khan, “Gujarat chief justice bats for ‘Slumdog…’,” The Times of India, February 24, 2009
Simon Beaufoy, who attended the residents’ protests, expressed – in an interview with The Telegraph – his disappointment that people were insulted by the title. He pointed out that he was not the one using the word “dog.” Rather, this was a term of disrespect popularly used in India.814 Along similar lines, Danny Boyle characterized the objection to the word “Slumdog” as a “terrible misunderstanding” that he tried to correct by relating the word “Slumdog” to the term most often used to define poor and uneducated people: “underdog.”815

Reactions to the use of the word “dog” in the film’s title, a subject upon which the Indian media reported widely, were only one part of the debate. An article in The New York Times, written by Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava, zeroed in on widespread frustration over another part of the title – the word “slum.”816 The article quotes Maju Keny, a college student and resident in Dharavi, as saying that people were upset with the use of “slum” to refer to their settlement. The two activists argued that Dharavi was “probably the most active and lively part of an incredibly industrious city,” and its depiction as a slum “[d[id] little justice to the reality of Dharavi.”817 While Danny Boyle’s cinematic Dharavi is actually a composite of different areas around Mumbai, the movie represents the settlement according to most middle-class Mumbai residents’ conception of it.818 Echanove and Srivastava wrote,

“Understanding such a place solely by the generic term ‘slum’ ignores its complexity and dynamism. Dharavi’s messy appearance is nothing but an expression of intense social and economic process at work.”819

In their words, it is clear that the movie failed to achieve the levels of realism towards which both Beaufoy and Boyle were striving. Even though, based on his experience, Beaufoy described the Juhu community as a “functional town” that is far from what is usually called a slum, “slum” is nevertheless the dominant term used throughout the movie to describe Dharavi,820 The use of the term in the movie’s title brings to mind what the geographer Alan Gilbert explored in his 2007 essay “The Return of Slum: Does the Language Matter?” As Gilbert claims, what makes the word “slum” dangerous is mainly “a series of negative associations that the term conjures up.”821 Additionally, the academic Joe Flood argues that in the West the word is an “unfashionable term” that has been associated with all manner of negative spatial and housing outcomes.822 In Slumdog Millionaire all the damaging aspects of various slums in Mumbai are combined in the depiction of Dharavi.823 Agreeing with Echanove and Srivastava, Mitu Sengupta, a professor of politics and public administration,
wrote in a Canadian newspaper about the movie’s pessimistic narrative and negative image of Dharavi,

“Slumdog, despite all the hype to the contrary, delivers a deeply disempowering narrative about the poor, which undermines, if not totally negates, its apparent message of social justice.”

Underlying these objections and criticisms was a sense that the film’s representation of Dharavi as a place of poverty held a strong appeal for Western audiences. A columnist in The London Times, Alice Miles, characterized the movie as “poverty porn” and opened a new series of discussions over the ethical limitations of the film. This characterization fuelled mass frustration over the film’s nature and dominated several reviews about the movie. While many individuals saw it as an “eye-opener to the global phenomenon of displaced populations,” others agreed with Alice Miles that the movie “can be read as poverty pornography.”

On one hand, people saw the movie as a “simulation” of reality that attempted to copy precisely the “original” elements of a slum. However, here “original” should be understood as a metonym for “imagined.” People who have never visited Dharavi have only media representations to go by and are limited to the view of Dharavi as “Asia’s largest slum” and “the largest open dirty place in Asia.” The differences between Dharavi’s depiction in the media and the real elements that structure Dharavi created what Appadurai terms “disjuncture” between the “spatial and the virtual neighborhood.” Due to its dominance in the mass media for more than a decade, Dharavi was a victim of one of these “virtual neighborhoods,” which are “no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, and elections” but by access to print- and image-centred capitalism. Appadurai believes that this disjuncture can be examined and recognized within five dimensions of global cultural flows, which he terms ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. In Slumdog Millionaire, Dharavi’s representation could be understood as what Appadurai defines as a mediascape:

“Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them in a series of elements out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. The mediascapes provide large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred so that the farther away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic,
even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world.”

These fluid boundaries that Appadurai identifies between the realistic and fictional landscapes reflect the work of Jean Baudrillard and what he initially dubbed “simulacra.” As Baudrillard wrote, within a post-modern context it is hard to make a distinction between the real and the unreal; images have been disconnected from any relation to reality, and the outcome is that we live in an era governed by simulacra. Upon these fluid boundaries Ulka and Jonathan Anjaria, in their essay “Slumdog Millionaire and Epistemologies of the City,” described the film as an “urban navigation that questions prevailing narratives regarding the ubiquity of globalization.” The neo-liberal “global cosmopolis,” which celebrates the multiple economies of capital and is governed by call centres and luxury high-rise condominiums, contains the dirty slum of Dharavi. As Ulka and Jonathan Anjaria claim, the movie represents Dharavi as capitalism’s underside: a space of extreme poverty in a globalized city. The principal dystopic perspective of Dharavi’s layers of existence highlights the dysfunction of a city that applauds neo-liberal optimism.

On the other side of the debate over the movie’s “pornographic” nature, writing against “an apocalyptic and dystopian narrative” of Dharavi is a means to reverse the novel’s negative stereotype of the settlement. As Hall argues, reversing a stereotype does not necessarily mean overturning or subverting it. It might only mean becoming “trapped in the stereotypical ‘other’.” For those who agreed with Alice Miles’s characterization of the movie as “poverty porn,” the most frustrating issue was that the movie damaged not only the image of Dharavi, but also that of a city aiming to upgrade to a “world class” city in a country that aspired to become a quasi “superpower.” Ulka and Jonathan Anjaria, in their essay “Slumdog Millionaire and Epistemologies of the City,” described the film as an “urban navigation that questions prevailing narratives regarding the ubiquity of globalization.” The neo-liberal “global cosmopolis,” which celebrates the multiple economies of capital and is governed by call centres and luxury high-rise condominiums, contains the dirty slum of Dharavi. As Ulka and Jonathan Anjaria claim, the movie represents Dharavi as capitalism’s underside: a space of extreme poverty in a globalized city. The principal dystopic perspective of Dharavi’s layers of existence highlights the dysfunction of a city that applauds neo-liberal optimism.

While the majority of media theorists have seen the movie as attempting to damage the image of a settlement, a city, and a country, some critics have agreed with the academic Sharmila Mukherjee that Boyle’s film has contributed to India’s “discursive formation” (which has spanned the last two decades) and helped pave India’s road to becoming “a subject rather than…an object of history.” Her observations and analysis of the representations in the film focus on India’s ascendance in the global economic sphere after 2000. More specifically, and as she states, the modern country the movie presents is not an enunciation of the “real” India but rather a “translated” India, which compiles the elements that build the future landscape of a globalized city.

In stark contrast to those who believe that Slumdog Millionaire has damaged the image of Dharavi, the statement here is that the film builds on an already prevailing image of Dharavi...
as a slum that needs to change. Instead of focusing on how Dharavi’s representation was placed under various labels such as “poverty porn” or “Slum Chic,” it is important to examine the impact that these representations had on the spatial transformation of the settlement. Thus, during the time when the movie ran in cinemas, in 2009, the economic downturn in the real estate market worldwide caused many developers who had previously shown an interest in participating in the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) to reconsider their involvement in the project. In the movie, there is a scene where the two brothers, Jamal and Salim, meet each other as adults and discuss the future of their city while sitting atop an unfinished luxury condominium in the centre of Mumbai. In the background a new urban landscape, dominated by impressive new high-rise buildings, brings to mind the skylines of cities such as Shanghai and New York. In this scene, Salim turns to his brother and begins a discussion over the future of the slum in Mumbai, while pointing to luxury buildings rising up behind them (figure 2). More specifically, Salim says:

“That used to be our slum! Can you believe that huh? (while the camera shows the skyline). We used to live there, man. Now it’s all business. India is at the centre of the world bhai. And I […] I am at the centre of the centre!”


While the global economy was reaching crisis levels, this scene in the movie celebrated a neoliberal future of Mumbai, a city unaffected by economic difficulties and becoming a new “world class” city. The time of the movie’s release was a very crucial period for the DRP rollout. Salim’s reference to Dharavi as a slum that no longer existed brings to mind the government’s vision of transforming Mumbai into a slum-free city by 2013. At a moment when global developers were losing their faith in the implementation of the DRP, the movie attempted to eradicate any possible doubts about the area’s future and reimagined Mumbai as a city of investment opportunities that was just entering an era of modernity. Slums are not

840 Miles, “Shocked by Slumdog’s Poverty Porn”
841 Slumdog Millionaire, (Film) directed by Danny Boyle (UK: Celador Films, Film4, Pathé Pictures International, 2008)
part of this vision of the city’s future. The levels of realism that Boyle and Beaufoy attempted to reach in this film evoke Beatriz Colomina’s study *Privacy and Publicity*, in which she writes that “realism in film is sometimes defined as a window on the world” and that a realistic film, rather than representing reality, “produces a new reality!” Mukherjee sees something of this nature happening in *Slumdog Millionaire*:

> “An original knowledge-producing, rapidly modernizing entity, is taking place slowly but surely – not in a vacuum, but in the substantial context of a world that is increasingly becoming ‘post-American.’”

In her essay “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism” Ananya Roy gives another label to Mukherjee’s “post-American” world, describing it as a collection of “megacities” involved in a process that she terms “worlding.” In these megacities, the problems of the urban poor, such as disease and an unhealthy living environment, prepare the ground for numerous “reformist interventions.” Roy focuses on the elements that theorize the megacity, which she calls “subaltern urbanism.” The word “slum” plays a predominant role in this development by calling to mind dystopian tales of megacities. In particular, she defines the megacity as another expression for underdevelopment. Roy locates the characteristics of underdevelopment within the representation of Dharavi in *Slumdog Millionaire* and shows that the way the film uses Dharavi as a metonym for slums contributes to the process of what she calls “worlding of the megacity.”

As Roy suggests in her analysis of the term “slum” and its role in the city’s future, the film calls into question not the present or the past, but rather the future of Dharavi at a very vital moment. *Slumdog Millionaire* captured the attention of a global audience for several reasons: first, because it depicted an image of Dharavi that “conforms to orientalist ideologies of an exotic, primitive Other”; second, because it opened a window on a future the government would like to see, featuring a slum-free Mumbai; and third, because it visually introduced Dharavi to a larger population. However, the film’s final vision of high-rises replacing Dharavi has been influential on the different stages of the DRP: it positioned Mumbai as a city of investment opportunities, a vision of the future that no longer included Dharavi.

Due to the movie’s popularity, many people around the world took an interest in visiting Dharavi before it would be demolished and replaced by high-rise commercial complexes. Dharavi began to develop into a tourist destination.

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843 Ibid., 80
844 Mukherjee, “Slumdog Millionaire and the Emerging Centrality of India,” 10
845 Roy, “Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism,” 224
846 Ibid.
847 Ibid.
The Tourist Destination

“Last year, few people would have heard of Dharavi, the Mumbai slum that provides the backdrop for the movie Slumdog Millionaire. But with the film winning best picture at the Oscars, the area is well and truly on the map.”

Once the movie Slumdog Millionaire was released, a global online tourism vendor, Expedia, began promoting Dharavi as one of the top ten worldwide Oscar destinations and offered holiday packages that included tours of the settlement. The journalist Jen Swanson described the situation on CNN News and wrote the following: “the world discovered Dharavi because of the movie ‘Slumdog Millionaire.’” This media exposure on the heels of the film’s 2009 release led to explosive growth in slum tourism in Dharavi. People from all over the world were eager to experience this unique “reality” that was depicted so vividly in the film. In particular, Arthur Hoffman, the Managing Director of Expedia Asia Pacific, explained that movies set in unfamiliar, exotic locations have the power to fascinate audiences and trigger their interest in visiting these places and matching these images with real experience. As he put it, this “can lead to a strange déjà vu, particularly for those who have seen the movie several times.”

Even though the release of Slumdog Millionaire boosted the number of tourists visiting Dharavi in 2009, slum tours to Dharavi had already begun earlier, specifically in November 2005. This is when Chris Way and Krishna Pujari established their company Reality Tours & Travel Pvt Ltd in Dharavi. Chris Way, who initially went to Mumbai to volunteer as an English teacher in a public school in 2005, travelled to Brazil and attended an organized tour in the favelas of Rio. Although the tour was a very interesting experience, he felt that “there [is] nothing compared to the activity and energy” of Mumbai’s slums and especially of Dharavi. During the summer of the same year, Way approached his friend and later business partner, Krishna Pujari, and suggested that they should start organizing similar tours in Dharavi in order to show visitors the settlement’s spirit of entrepreneurism and economic viability. By exposing Dharavi’s distinguishing mark, the productivity, and by introducing the variety of activities that exist in the settlement, Way and Pujari aspired to dispel the negative stereotypes that only promoted Dharavi as a place of poverty. Way had come to associate Dharavi with slums on the basis of several books, including Sharma’s Rediscovering Dharavi (2000). Pujari’s first introduction to Dharavi and its reputation came in 1991, when his geography schoolbook described it as “the largest open dirty place in Asia,” without mentioning its exact location. He only realized that Dharavi was located in Mumbai in 1994, when a big fire in the settlement dominated the local news.

In October 2005, a few months before the tours began, the two partners visited Dharavi for the first time. During the visit, they walked through most of the settlement and talked with

852 Krishna Pujari, interview by author, Mumbai, September 14, 2013
854 Krishna Pujari, interview by author, Mumbai, September 14, 2013
residents about how their tours might contribute to the area’s improvement. Pujari mentioned that the majority of residents got very excited to hear about this idea and invited the two businessmen to their houses to show them “how clean and well-organized” they were in comparison to what was usually presented in the media. In November 2005, Way and Pujari began operating tours in Dharavi through which visitors could experience a wide range of activities that structured the economic landscape of the settlement. Such activities included recycling, pottery-making, embroidery, poppadum- and bread-making, leather-tanning, and soap-making (figures 3–4). As they wrote in the profile of their company,

“We are an ethical, Mumbai-based travel company that is well known for our guided tours of Dharavi – one of Asia’s largest slums. Our tours are educational, fun and unexpected.”

With respect to the word “ethical,” Way and Pujari claim that 80% of their profits return to the community in several forms, such as educational or sports activities in collaboration with other local NGOs. In 2009, the team inaugurated the NGO Reality Gives – a sister organization with the Reality Tours & Travel – which runs several programmes for the community, such as English and Computer courses (figure 5). The NGO is also located in Dharavi and has set a goal of providing training for children and young adults in the settlement.

Figure 3: In the 13th Compound: Clothing (Waxing) Industry, part of the economic activity visitors see on the Dharavi tour

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855 Ibid.
857 Reality Tours & Travel, See the Real India, advertisement
All of the different tours aim to showcase Dharavi’s diverse population and economic activity. Several of the routes the guides follow include a visit to the commercial and residential areas, a short walk in the Muslim and Tamil areas, and a walk around Dharavi’s industries (figure 6). It is important to emphasize that the interest in Dharavi’s industries was also at the centre of Mukesh Mehta’s agenda for redeveloping Dharavi at the end of 2005. More specifically, a wide range of newspaper articles in November 2005 portrayed a different Dharavi, in which 300 new industries such as jewellers, fashion institutes, and small leather factories would dominate the area and provide job opportunities to many slum dwellers.858

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858 Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi inches towards makeover,” DNA, November 9, 2005
Figure 6: Map of suggested routes in Dharavi by Reality Tours & Travel. Krishna Pujari provided the material (sketch on a map)
Since Reality Tours & Travel set up business in Dharavi, controversy has surrounded the ethics of these tours and the levels of realism they represent to tourists. The controversy is twofold, and the issues it raises have important implications that extend far beyond Dharavi. The word “reality” in the name indicates that the company’s concept is to “negotiate a ‘real’ or a more ‘real’ image of the slum”; the word acts to dispel the already existing negative perception of Dharavi as Asia’s largest open dirty place. The term “real” here deserves closer attention as it reflects the usual Western misconception that poverty and low-income communities are more “real” than pockets of prosperity. While people usually believe that the portrayal of devastation and misfortune is ‘authentic,’ Johan Widen in *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* calls into doubt the whole notion of certain conditions as more real than others.

On the other hand, global tours can, by their very nature, be controversial. The important ethical factor is not so much where such tours take place, but rather how they are conducted. As Bob Ma writes, residents whose lives are placed on display before Western tourists may suffer humiliation. In an article in *The New York Times* about slum tourism, Kennedy Odede, who used to live in the Kibera slum in Nairobi, makes critical remarks about how damaging these tours can be for residents. In particular, she writes,

> “Slum tourism turns poverty into entertainment, something that can be momentarily experienced and then escaped from. People think they’ve really “seen” something and then go back to their lives and leave me, my family and my community right where we were before… Slum tourism is a one-way street: They get photos; we lose a piece of our dignity.”

This type of tourism, which has attracted media interest in the last decades, has crossed the boundaries of traditional tourism and acquired several names, such as “responsible tourism,” “philanthropic travel,” “poorism,” or even “pure voyeurism.” In their essay on “immoral voyeurism” (i.e. slum tours), Evan Selinger and Kevin Outterson propose seven scenarios where this kind of voyeurism might occur:

> - immoral voyeurism occurs when undetected glances invade other people’s privacy and take advantage of their vulnerability
> - immoral voyeurism occurs in some instances where people perceive that they are being observed for demeaning purposes
> - immoral voyeurism occurs when observers are motivated to look at others to further demeaning ends

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861 Ibid., 42
864 Amit Singh Soin, “Slumming it – should we?” *Travel Talk – India*, January 1, 2011
865 Mark Russell, “From Mumbai to Rio, poverty is now a must for every well-heeled tourist,” *Sunday Age*, March 7, 2010
867 Amit Singh Soin, “Slumming it – should we?” *Travel Talk – India*, January 1, 2011
- immoral voyeurism occurs in some instances where the presence of a distinctive group of observers makes people who are observed and not members of that group feel demeaned
- immoral voyeurism occurs in some instances where observers are dishonest about their reasons for observing others
- immoral voyeurism occurs in some instances where members of a privileged group misrepresent the values and beliefs of an unprivileged group on the basis of selective observations of their lives
- immoral voyeurism occurs when people view inappropriate events and images."

All seven scenarios engage the larger question of why participants might wish to take part in such a tour. In his thoughtful analysis of what motivates tourists, Bob Ma conducted quantitative research on Reality Tours & Travel in which he interviewed 193 people who had completed tours of Dharavi. In response to the question of why they had wanted to participate in their Dharavi tours, most gave the following main reasons: curiosity, cultural curiosity that prompted them to seek out the “other” in an “authentic” place, and self-interest. It is intriguing to note that a search for authenticity was one of the major motivations that drove the interest of tourists. The term “authentic” here is a metonymy for the same notion of “the real” discussed above; the same concept could also be defined as the unfamiliar. Daniel Boorstin, in his work *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1961), was the first to examine tourists’ motivations and desire to experience the unfamiliar and “authentic.” As he writes,

“One of the most ancient motives for travel, when men had a choice about it, was to see the unfamiliar. Man’s incurable desire to go someplace else is a testimony of his incurable optimism and insatiable curiosity. We always expect things to be different over there.”

In his analysis of the evolution of tourism, Boorstin argues that through the years this industry, which used to offer travellers unique adventures, has undergone a radical transformation, and slowly the passive tourist has replaced the active traveller. In particular, he writes that nowadays “tourist attractions only serve their purposes best when they are pseudo-events,” and artificial products. Dharavi’s representation in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* is one of these pseudo-events: it only offers one way to perceive the essence of the settlement through the tourist’s gaze. In Boorstin’s analysis, travel has become a “spectator sport” with little of the activity that used to typify tours abroad. This kind of “spectator sport” commercializes poverty itself, making it, in effect, a tourist commodity. As Julia Meschkank writes:

“The generally negative attitudes towards slum tourism tend to be based on the assumption tourists observe slums while sitting on a couch in an air-conditioned room; that they look at the poverty and misery of the slum residents from behind tinted windows.”

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870 Ibid., 85
871 Meschkank, “Investigations into slum tourism in Mumbai: poverty tourism and the tensions between different constructions of reality,” 47
Through this sightseeing experience, which John Lancaster terms “poorism,” tourists believe that they will have a unique opportunity to reach corners of human society that would normally be inaccessible to them and observe how residents of low-income communities face the daunting challenges in their lives.\(^\text{872}\) However, these tours select places and activities that together construct a very particular identity of the area in question. Despite the intention of overturning existing stereotypes about Dharavi, tours like Way and Pujari’s in effect only replace them with new stereotypes. It is in this spirit that Piers Pickard, \textit{Lonely Planet’s} regional publishing manager in Australia, questioned the nature of slum tours after his visit to Dharavi in 2006:

“So is it OK to go on a slum tour? Dharavi isn’t the worst place to live. But it’s not good enough, either. Travel is all about getting under the skin of a place. You can only do this for yourself, so go on the slum tour. Just remember: in Dharavi, it’s easy to be fooled by what’s on the surface.”\(^\text{873}\)

Beyond the debates over the ethical limitations of tours to Dharavi and the charges that they amount to a poverty spectacle, one could argue that these tours have nevertheless contributed positively to the area’s development, especially at a very crucial stage for its future. In particular, at a moment when the government aimed for Dharavi’s holistic transformation into a beautiful city, the settlement evolved into a global tourist destination and attracted people who had never before heard of it to experience its complexities. The advent of tourism in Dharavi has contributed significantly to its economy and created new job opportunities for dwellers, several of whom started working as tour guides or initiated their own travel companies in the settlement. Thus, while in 2006 there was only one company, the Reality Tours & Travel, in the following years more than seven businesses started organizing tours in Dharavi.\(^\text{874}\) The majority of them are run by locals who have taken advantage of the earning potential behind interacting with tourists and showing them their homes, their working spaces, and their daily lives. Some examples are the organized tours by Mohammed and the travel company known as Be the Local (figure 7). One Dharavi resident, Shalman, works as a tour guide in the company Be the Local. He expresses his satisfaction in seeing so many people interested in learning more about his neighbourhood, and he identifies the contribution of such tours to the local economy:

“There are many people today from all over the world – USA, UK, Africa, France, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, Thailand – who are coming to see our place. That gives a boost to industries. I am happy to see that more people are coming here.”\(^\text{875}\)

\(^{872}\) Lancaster, “Next Stop, Squalor”
\(^{873}\) Piers Pickard, “Is Slum Tourism in India Ethical?” \textit{Wanderlust Travel Magazine} 91 (November 2007)
\(^{874}\) Such businesses were Mumbai Magic (The spirit of Dharavi), Incredible Tours and Travel, Thomas Slum Tours, Mohammed’s Dharavi Slum Tours, Be the Local Dharavi Tours, Mumbai Moments Dharavi Tours, etc.
\(^{875}\) Shalman, tour guide at Be the Local Dharavi tours, interview by author, Mumbai, September 17, 2013
Figure 7: The tour guide Shalman from the "Be The Local Dharavi Tours"

The majority of these tours sprang up after the release of *Slumdog Millionaire*. Chris Way from the Reality Tours & Travel reported a more than 25% increase in their tours after the movie began its run in the theatres. More specifically, while in 2008 only 3,150 tourists took part in the Dharavi tours, the number of visitors went up to 5,370 people in 2009, and a year later, in 2010, there was another 10% increase in the number of tourists.\(^{876}\) In September 2013, Krishna Pujari stated that the movie was not the only factor contributing to the booming business: reviews, articles in newspapers, and guidebooks (such as the *Lonely Planet*, the *Trip Advisor*, and the *Rough Guides*) were all important factors that increased interest in Dharavi.\(^{877}\)

Due to their controversial nature, slum tours in Dharavi did not always receive positive feedback from all residents. Jockim Arputham from National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) took issue with the popularization of Dharavi as a tourist site and by representing the activists’ voice he indicated the following:

> “People are upset with this because those who are coming there have no connection with Dharavi. Therefore it is a kind of exploitation that I am opposed to. The kind of tourism is not fair to the people of Dharavi.”\(^{878}\)

However, Bob Ma, who interviewed 54 residents living and working along one of the tourist routes in Dharavi, found that many of them (44.6%) were well disposed towards the tours, although they did not articulate any specific reason. Tourists taking part in the tours, when

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\(^{876}\) Meschkank, “Investigations into slum tourism in Mumbai: poverty tourism and the tensions between different constructions of reality,” 49

\(^{877}\) Krishna Pujari, interview by author, Mumbai, September 14, 2013

\(^{878}\) Michael Atkin, “India’s slum tours: eye-opener, exploitation – or both?” *Deutsche Welle*, January, 28, 2010
questioned how they perceived slum residents’ feelings towards the tours in their areas, gave mixed responses: 37% of the tourists perceived mixed feelings from residents, while 21% felt that residents were happy to have tourists visiting their areas and buying things from their shops.\textsuperscript{879}

At the same time the tours were flowering in Dharavi, the government was already searching for bidders to participate in the ambitious Dharavi Redevelopment Project. The Reality Tours & Travel, which had a very different view of Dharavi’s future, addressed the state’s plan through their website. In the section Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), one of the questions is directly related to the DRP:

“Question: I hear that Dharavi is going to be redeveloped. Will I still be able to see the area?
Answer: The redevelopment plan has been stalled many times and now it looks like the original plan has been scrapped and a new one is suggested. Due to the value of the land in Dharavi now, some say that some sort of redevelopment is inevitable but there are still a lot of issues to be resolved and the developers have still not been announced. It should be possible to visit Dharavi even while the development (which would take several years) takes place.”\textsuperscript{880}

The company’s response to the DRP pays particular attention to the fact that the project has been stalled, and the statement implies that the DRP is not likely to happen any time soon. In September 2013, Krishna Pujari noted that both he and Chris Way were aware of plans for the project when they started the tours. As Pujari noted, “if the project has some sense of social responsibility, it would have been started by now.”\textsuperscript{881} The majority of people who join their tours ask about the implementation of the DRP. In keeping with their company’s policy of neutrality, Way and Pujari avoid getting involved in political discussions, but as Pujari has pointed out, instead of weighing in on whether or not the project is suitable for the settlement, they focus on the consequences such a project might have in the daily lives of Dharavi’s residents.\textsuperscript{882}

The DRP aims to transform radically Dharavi’s landscape by replacing the existing tool-houses with high-rise buildings and small alleys with large roads. The constant delays on the project on one hand and the popularity of slum tours on the other hand have contributed to the many small interventions that are gradually changing Dharavi’s landscape. Such interventions have resulted: a) from slum dwellers improving their houses in order to present a better view of their settlement to tourists; or b) from a collaboration between tourists and residents, in which the tourists share their knowledge with locals and contribute to improvements. As Pujari mentions, there were a few cases in the 13th Compound in which open drains made the area unsafe for tourists to walk through.\textsuperscript{883} Residents who noted these hazards began covering them up to make the areas accessible to tourists.

\textsuperscript{879} Ma, “A Trip into the Controversy: A Study of Slum Tourism Travel Motivations,” 32
\textsuperscript{881} Krishna Pujari, interview by author, Mumbai, September 14, 2013
\textsuperscript{882} 1ibid.
\textsuperscript{883} 1ibid.
Slum tourism in Dharavi altered the discourse about the DRP in three significant ways: first, by allowing residents and tourists to collaborate in a gradual redevelopment of Dharavi’s landscape; second, by contributing to the local economy and creating new business opportunities for residents; and third, by dispelling the stereotype of Dharavi as Asia’s largest dirty place, even while positing a new stereotype in place of the old one. This new stereotype of the “real” or “authentic” Dharavi has raised questions about how notions of authenticity relate to spaces and communities.
Sustainable Urbanism

“In Dharavi I found an underlying intuitive grammar of design that subconsciously produces [a place] that is walkable mixed-use and adapted to local climate and materials which is totally absent from the faceless slab blocks that are still being built, still, around the world to warehouse the poor despite the failure here in Britain.”

Figure 9: Prince Charles’s visit in Dharavi. Source: Leopold Nicolai Podlashuc, “Deep Democracy, horizontal exchange and the praxis of poop,” Cultural Studies Review 11, no. 2 (September 2005): 167

In 2003, the Prince of Wales spent over an hour in Dharavi at the end of a nine-day tour in India (figure 9). Accompanied by Jockim Arputham from the NSDF and the award-winning Indian writer Magsaysay, Prince Charles walked around the Rajiv Indira Slum Rehabilitation Scheme and announced the official opening of the the second of the upgraded buildings.

The Rajiv Indira Cooperative Housing Society was formed in 1994 in Dharavi, and the initial housing improvement scheme for this settlement was planned in early 1997. This scheme slated 52 apartments for rehabilitation and 36 extra apartments for sale on the open market. Additionally, the scheme called for the construction of a ground-floor bank, which would be leased. The uniqueness of this project lay in the fact that for the first time in Dharavi a society would have allowed settlement dwellers to design and construct their own housing. The project began when all 52 families from the Rajiv Indira community sent out a request to SPARC asking for help in redeveloping their settlement. SPARC agreed and committed itself to assist them by taking on the role of developer. Additionally, the UK’s Department for

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International Development (DFID) supported the scheme in partnership with Citibank, SPARC, and the UK-based Homeless International through the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF). The scheme’s official introduction took place in February 1999, and the first building was completed in 2001, while Prince Charles dedicated the second building in 2003. In his first visit to Dharavi, the Prince of Wales met with 80 women from the NGO Mahila Milan and talked with several residents in the Rajiv Indira Cooperative Society about hygienic conditions and basic amenities in the settlement, such as water and electricity.

Two months after the official release of “Vision Mumbai,” a sequence of recommendations that aimed to transform Mumbai into a world-class city, and only a year before the Dharavi Redevelopment Project was publicly introduced, Prince Charles’s visit attracted the media’s interest and made the front pages of local newspapers with titles such as “Prince in the House of Commons” (in the Economic Times), “He came, he saw, he was conquered” (in The Times of India), and “Dharavi welcomes a royal visitor” (in The Hindu). While the government was preparing a holistic redevelopment plan for Dharavi, Prince Charles expressed his eagerness to extend financial assistance to rehabilitation schemes in Dharavi that would be initiated and implemented only with the participation of local residents. Particularly, he said to the writer Magsaysay that they should “work out the modalities,” and afterwards The Prince Foundation would financially support the project. As he admitted to Jockim Arputham, the Prince of Wales was fascinated with the dominant sense of community development and with the way that people used the space given to them in Dharavi. His observations evoked a sense of optimism for slum dwellers in Mumbai who foresaw that the Prince might offer them new houses. Two such residents are Vidya Swant, who lives in a slum close to Mumbai’s airport, and another Dharavi resident, a rickshaw driver:

“Poor people never get a chance to meet such powerful people. We are never allowed to get close to them. He asked me and I told him what kind of house I live in, that we have no toilet, no water. I explained that we had nowhere else to live. At least if people like him understand our situation, something can happen (Vidya Swant)."888

“I hope his visit will give us a better house (rickshaw driver).”889

Deeply impressed by Dharavi’s rich social and spatial structures, Prince Charles set into motion a process of advertising Dharavi as a case for sustainable urbanism. In the wake of 2009, when the global media was abuzz over Dharavi’s representation in the movie Slumdog Millionaire, the Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment organized a global conference at St. James’s Palace with the title “Globalisation from the bottom up” and invited Jockim Arputham as a keynote speaker. A central challenge for the conference’s lectures was to

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887 “Prince in the house of commons,” Economic Times, November 6, 2003; “He came, he saw, he was conquered,” The Times of India, November 6, 2003; and Kalpana Sharma, “Dharavi welcomes a royal visitor,” The Hindu, November 6, 2003
888 “Prince in the house of commons,” Economic Times, November 6, 2003
889 Kalpana Sharma, “Dharavi welcomes a royal visitor,” The Hindu, November 6, 2003
890 Ibid.
examine Dharavi as a site where people should be placed at the centre of the design process. In fleshing out his foundation’s guidelines, Prince Charles proposed the skeleton of a new design approach that he calls “The Grammar of Harmony,” which departs radically from conventional planning rules.\textsuperscript{892} The central question that prepared the ground for this new approach was as follows:

“Can we actually build in a way that reflects the timeless quality and resilience of vernacular settlements yet improves living standards and accommodates the anticipated flows of migrants to urban areas this century?”\textsuperscript{893}

In asking this question and seeking ways to answer it, the Prince referred to the example of Dharavi. In particular, he said that he found “an underlying grammar of design” there that was absent from the “faceless slab blocks that are still being built around the world.”\textsuperscript{894} Prince Charles’s comments could be a criticism of how Western developers export mass plans of high-rise buildings to low-income areas. But rather than build on the existing “grammar of design,” the government of Maharashtra planned to transform the settlement into a new Singapore with high-rise residential buildings and shopping malls.\textsuperscript{895} In response to the proposed redevelopment project, Jockim Arputham, in his lecture at the conference, found grounds for criticizing and questioning the DRP’s implementation and the state’s plans:

“Many developing countries look to the West as a model – but that cannot be the model. These [western] buildings use too much power and would not be affordable for us. In India, the population has gone beyond all control and it is wrong to expect western development to help us.”\textsuperscript{896}

Prince Charles added:

“I strongly believe that the West has so much to learn from societies and places which, while sometimes poorer in material terms are infinitely richer in the ways in which they live and organize themselves as communities… It may be the case that in a few years’ time such communities will be perceived as best equipped to face the challenges that confront us because they have a built-in resilience and genuinely durable ways of living.”\textsuperscript{897}

Building on the idea of “The Grammar of Harmony” and the related design approach, Prince Charles summarized his observations about Dharavi and similar global case studies, and in 2010 he published the book *Harmony* (figure 10), “a 330-page manifesto.”\textsuperscript{898}

\textsuperscript{892} HRH Prince Charles, “Globalisation from the bottom,” (lecture, The Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment, 6th Annual Conference, St. James’s Palace, UK, February, 2009)
\textsuperscript{893} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{894} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{895} Smita Deshmukh, “Dharavi slum is now reality gold mine,” *DNA*, January 30, 2006
\textsuperscript{896} Jockin Arputham, “The challenges facing informal settlements,” (keynote lecture in The Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment, 6th Annual Conference, 2009)
\textsuperscript{897} Robert Booth, “Charles declares Mumbai shanty town model for the world,” *The Guardian (Global Development)*, February 6, 2009
\textsuperscript{898} Gordon Rayner, “Prince pat for Dharavi: ‘Sustainable living’ in slums impresses Charles,” *The Telegraph*, October 10, 2010
With an opening statement that his book is “a call to revolution,” the Prince of Wales begins by outlining the major threats to the future of humanity. In the chapter “Renaissance,” he condemns the applied “centralized spatial planning devised by specialist planners,” which aims to conquer the 20th and 21st centuries. He criticizes the “top-down” approach to planning as an outcome of neo-liberal strategies:

“A top-down approach to planning has been something of a partner of the industrial-scale, copybook urban scheme. It is driven by the brutal economics of ‘growth’ and competitiveness and the pursuit of efficiency targets that care little as to whether a place ends up with ‘soul’… I have enough experience now to know for sure that if people had been put more at the heart of the planning process, some of the disastrous urban environments created in many cities during the twentieth century might easily have been avoided. I have seen how the power and potential of self-organization can be so effective in some of the world’s poorest communities.”

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899 HRH, The Prince of Wales, Tony Juniper, and Ian Skelly, HARMONY: A new way of looking at our world (London: Blue door, 2010), 232
Challenging one of the grand clichés of modern planning and the role of architects and planners in the formation of cities, Prince Charles extends his thoughts and sketches the outlines of his argument through a case study of Dharavi. In *Harmony* he underlines the principles of a *sustainable urbanism* (figure 11) and extensively evaluates “the real lesson [he] took from Dharavi which is what [he] calls the ‘community capital.’”

**Figure 11:** “The contrast between the typical suburban model (top) that wastes space and promotes discrete zones of land use, rather than a more integrated design (bottom) which conserves space and aims to create cohesive communities. The approach at the top of the diagram is the one all too often handed down by professional planners.” Source: HRH, The Prince of Wales, Tony Juniper, and Ian Skelly, *HARMONY: A new way of looking at our world* (London: Blue door, 2010), 233

In this spirit he suggests that decision-making should be a process initiated only from residents in low-income areas. Faced with severe criticisms and accusations that he had described Dharavi as a model for urbanization, Prince Charles replied through his book and wrote the following:

“I am not saying that self-organized slums, lacking in basic facilities, are a model for future urbanization – far from it. What I do suggest, however, is that we have a great deal to learn about how complex systems can self-organize to create a harmonious whole. There are rules that exist to enable people to live using the wisdom and relationships they are born with, rather than relying on the devised

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900 Ibid., 234
901 Ibid., 234
Against the background of the state’s vision of a Dharavi-free Mumbai, the Prince of Wales was advocating a new design direction, one that took root in India’s reality when his Foundation for the Built Environment announced the opening of its first overseas office in Mumbai in 2011. The new office set as a goal building a new eco-town to 4.1 hectares site either in Calcutta or Bangalore, informed by all of the values and approaches of the Prince’s sustainable urbanism. The new eco-town, which was inspired by Dharavi, aimed to house 15,000 Indian people and to include in the master plan schools, shops, and sports facilities. It would also be modelled on the experimental new town of Poundbury, on the outskirts of Dorchester in the county of Dorset, England. Poundbury is the first city to be built following Prince Charles’s principles of sustainable urbanism and community planning (figure 12).

Figure 12: Poundbury’s Masterplan Guidelines. Source: HRH, The Prince of Wales, Tony Juniper, and Ian Skelly, HARMONY: A new way of looking at our world (London: Blue door, 2010), 239

902 Ibid., 236–237
903 Fay Schlesinger, “The Slumdog Millionheir: Prince Charles to build shanty town for 15,000 as an Indian version of Poundbury,” Mail Online, January 10, 2011; and “Prince Charles wants to build ‘mini oasis in desert’ for Indian slum dweller,” The Times of India, January 11, 2011
The project started in the early 1990s, and more than 1800 people are living there today. Poundbury’s buildings are mainly high-density, low-rise mixed structures that include workshops, offices, local services, and private and social housing. All buildings follow the same standard and are built from the same materials. This new town serves as a “counter-model to the prevailing Modernist paradigm” and as “a practical, genuine alternative to what has become [a] monoculture approach,” which is designed only for people in order to “enhance the social environmental atmosphere.”

Modelled along Poundbury’s guidelines and Dharavi’s community capital, the suggested Indian eco-town is planned for mainly low-income populations and aims to be high-density “but pleasant.” Around the same time that Prince Charles was turning Dharavi into an iconic example of sustainable urbanism, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project as a model for urbanization came to engage the attention of the city of Ahmedabad. The DRP’s Public-Private Partnership (PPP) pattern, which has not even started its implementation, became a model for other Indian cities after 2011.

Prince Charles’s argument that the West should learn from Dharavi became a mere irritation in the context of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project. The Prince’s lecture to the conference at St. James’s Palace in 2009 and his written “manifesto” in 2010 challenged not only the stereotype that Dharavi was just a slum, but also the prevailing image of Dharavi as Asia’s largest dirty open space. Prince Charles has contributed to the discourse about Dharavi by constructing a new image of the settlement as a viable space for sustainable living and by opposing the DRP’s deceptive notions of progress. In stark contrast to the politics of resistance presented earlier, which originated from local non-governmental organizations, this time resistance came from a powerful corner – that of the Prince of Wales, whose influence extends to audiences around the world.

One influential person inspired by Prince Charles’s speech at St. James’s Palace was the British designer, developer, and television presenter Kevin McCloud, who in January 2010 launched a two-part TV special located in Dharavi, Slumming it! The programme was produced for Kevin McCloud’s Grand Design series on Channel 4 of the BBC and follows McCloud during his two-week journey to Dharavi. Speaking in an interview about the reasons for his visit to Dharavi, McCloud indicated the settlement’s reputation and its continual promotion by many people, including Prince Charles. In a reference to the Prince of Wales’s words, McCloud starts his show by questioning Dharavi’s representation as a resilient and durable slum that has “what we [the West] lack.” While the speech of the Prince sets the background for the TV show’s first scene, McCloud introduces the impetus behind his visit to Dharavi as follows:

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904 The Prince of Wales, Juniper, and Skelly, HARMONY: A new way of looking at our world, 239
905 Ibid., 240
906 Ibid., 242
907 A representative of the Prince’s Foundation in “Prince Charles wants to build ‘mini oasis in desert’ for Indian slum dweller,” The Times of India, January 11, 2011
908 “1st slum redevelopment on Dharavi model gets nod for Ahmedabad,” The Indian Express, July 15, 2011
910 Kevin McCloud, Slumming it!, Episode 1, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Im0tHRs9Bng [Accessed December 17, 2013]
We don’t see him [Prince Charles] selling high grove and buying a slum in Mumbai. It smacks like hypocrisy...When I think of a slum, the thing, I think the most about it, is misery, in a way. To everyone saying these people are not miserable but they are intensely happy. I don't buy that! I am going to see for myself if this place can in any way be an alternate to anyone's problems.”

At the beginning of his trip, McCloud describes his first impressions of Dharavi as a “hell home” where water is contaminated and sanitation is rudimentary. Jonathan Raban, in his study Soft City, argues that cities are depicted as “hellish” as a result of people’s vanity in their search for a Utopia. But here, in Dharavi, “hell” resulted from the struggle to survive. The unhealthy, toxic living conditions, the numerous rats, and the sea of rubbish used to camouflage people's housing – all captured McCloud’s attention and shaped his first impressions of Dharavi. His mission was to spend two weeks eating and sleeping in the settlement and afterwards to present this experience to the English television audience. But beyond the scope of his assignment, he was also intrigued to discover “the lessons to be learnt about architecture and planning,” which Prince Charles had examined in his book.

McCloud’s first day was spent in the Transit Camp, where he was very disappointed with the living conditions. As he puts it, instead of observing the “community value” of Dharavi, to use the grand cliché of architects and planners, he saw no more than a huge “toxic slum.” But his pessimism did not last for long: as soon as he stepped into Dharavi’s Main Road, he became caught up in the excitement over how people use space in Dharavi, and he described it as follows:

“Absolutely fantastic! I am beginning to see that this place has got something to teach us, about the way people use space. Every inch is price. Place here is flexible, it changes to people's needs.”

McCloud then visited Kumbharwada, the pottery colony, where he spent most of his time. Building on the idea that Kumbharwada is like an open village within the city, McCloud began recognizing the value of community and public space in such areas; he came to similar conclusions in Koliwada and in the 13th Compound. At the end of his trip, McCloud, who was initially sceptical of Prince Charles’s words, came to believe and demonstrate that Dharavi, despite the fact that it is the “noisiest, dirtiest and smelly place” he has ever been, is also “an embryotic city, humming with human energy and determination.” In concert with Prince Charles’s statement that the West has much to learn from Dharavi, the two-part TV programme concludes with the argument that Dharavi is clearly not just a slum, and it should not be placed in the centre of redevelopment plans because it has more to offer everyone as it stands today.

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911 Ibid.
913 Wales on Sunday, January 3, 2010, Kevin McCloud tells Lisa Williams
914 McCloud, Slumming it!
915 Ibid.
916 Ibid.
McCloud’s initial views on Dharavi and his depiction of it as a dirty and noisy slum sparked recriminations from the Indian authorities. In particular, the Indian High Commission in the UK accused McCloud of damaging the country’s tourism industry by filming “poverty porn.”17 Dharavi’s entrapment in the stereotype of a slum according to portrayals in the mass media is relevant to considering the increasing frequency of what the sociologist Stanley Cohen calls “moral panic.”18 In the case of the TV show, this “moral panic” was developed as a threat to Indian values and traditions that formed part of the tourist campaign. Like the ethical objections in the media that dogged the movie Slumdog Millionaire, the discussions about Slumming it! in the popular English press generated criticisms. However, the buzz around it did not last for long since more TV shows and documentaries about Dharavi that addressed similar issues – The Real Slumdogs, and Dharavi: Slum for Sale – also attracted media interest.

Observing and noting the predominant patterns that are directly linked to the flowering of accusations over the “moral crisis” in the TV show Slumming it!, it is also important to uncover the dynamics that are related to the “redevelopment crisis” that was predominant in Dharavi during that period. The second part of the TV programme addresses the issue of forging a poverty agenda; this part sheds light on the aspiring Dharavi Redevelopment Project through an interesting discussion between Kevin McCloud and Mukesh Mehta, the DRP’s “architect and property tycoon.”19 Having witnessed Dharavi’s economic and social possibilities, McCloud challenges Mehta’s ambitious plan to collaborate with Norman Foster in building high-rise and high-tech buildings for Dharavi’s residents. In particular he wonders how the existing qualities of Dharavi, such as the community capital of the settlement in its present state, will be affected by moving the population into high-rise buildings. Moreover, in this second part of the TV show, McCloud visits a fashion party in Bandra, an expensive suburb of Mumbai close to Dharavi, and discusses the DRP with guests. It is striking that almost no one at the party has ever been to Dharavi, and not many of them have ever heard about the plans for implementing the DRP. The ignorance McCloud’s TV programme uncovers among Mumbai’s citizens contradicts the emphasis of the two other documentaries that were released in 2009 and 2010 and set their focus on Dharavi’s future – Dharavi: Slum for Sale and The Real Slumdogs (figure 13).

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17 Anita Singh, “Channel 4’s slum series ‘poverty porn’,” The Daily Telegraph, January 25, 2010
18 Stanley Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 28
A Playground for Ambitious Urban Planners

In a global metropolis like Mumbai, a magnet for rich and poor, “Dharavi is a prime real estate, a playground for ambitious planners.” This was the introduction of Dharavi to the audience in Dharavi: Slum for Sale, a documentary that was released on January 22, 2010. With an awareness of the various lenses through which Dharavi has appeared before the public eye (as a “cancerous lump,” a “tourist destination,” and a model for “sustainable urbanism”), the director of Dharavi: Slum for Sale, Lutz Konermann, took aim at the prevailing narrative surrounding the plans for redeveloping Dharavi. This documentary deserves closer scrutiny, for it enshrines some of the most crucial political and social concerns for the future of the settlement. With an air of fact-focused reliability, Konermann’s 80-minute documentary uses footage showing real figures involved in the DRP’s development from 2004 to 2009.

The documentary initially paints a profile of Mukesh Mehta through his interactions with Dharavi’s residents and political figures, with his collaborators, and with the media. The film presents him in various settings, such as his office, his house, at an academic conference, and in Dharavi itself (figure 14). In one early scene, the camera enters his expensively furnished office at the moment when Mehta and his team celebrate the successful release of the DRP advertisement to the news media. While opening champagne and eating a piece of chocolate cake (despite his ironic statement that he is “on diet”), Mukesh Mehta expresses his satisfaction about the release of the advertisement about the DRP and the project’s clearance. Additionally, in the documentary we can observe Mukesh Mehta’s connection to the public sphere as the camera witnesses some of his interviews in the media.
The documentary also makes an attempt to draw on the lived experiences of local residents and thus attempts to tell three individual Dharavi stories from an “inside” perspective:

1. The story of Rais Khan and his family (daughter and son), who are in the tailoring business, demonstrates the housing challenges the urban poor face in Dharavi. These three protagonists are forced to leave the room they have been renting because they can no longer afford it. Unable to find another room in Dharavi, they must spend some nights on the street. Their difficulty in finding accommodations is one of the many daily struggles typical for many Dharavi residents and people who live in megacity slums.

2. The second story revolves around a young girl in Dharavi, Soni Srivastava. After attending school in the morning, Soni spends the afternoon beautifying and improving the infrastructure of the house where she lives with her mother and sisters. This story underlines the motivation and enthusiasm of Dharavi’s residents for improving their living conditions. Soni’s story belies the predominant perception that Dharavi’s residents oppose any change in their living spaces.

3. The third and last story profiles Ranchhod Tank, an entrepreneur in Dharavi who lives and works in Kumbharwada. This story offers a view of the unique typologies of structures for living and working in Dharavi and addresses the value of the communities that develop when local businesses are located on the ground floors of residential buildings.

All three stories attempt to portray the locality and durability of everyday life in Dharavi in visual terms. Through the placement of these different tales as parallels to the portrayal of Mukesh Mehta, Konermann begins to unravel the strengths and weaknesses of the redevelopment strategy in Dharavi and other slums. Additionally, the activists Sheela Patel from SPARC, Jockim Arputham from NSDF, and Bhau Korde also appear in the documentary and represent the forces of resistance to implementing the DRP. Against the background of possible brutal displacements of slum dwellers, the camera of Dharavi: Slum for Sale depicts resistance to the plan in the form of a protest led by Jockim Arputham, in
which residents block the streets of Dharavi to oppose the project. What is striking is the limited representation of how resistance is portrayed. As examined in previous chapter, the layers that structure the resistance to the Dharavi Redevelopment Project rely on multiplex interactive activities, which mostly include research and creativity that are not depicted at all in the documentary. Here the camera focuses on resistance as a process involving protests and street blockades.

In stark contrast to the definition of a documentary as an objective representation of something factual, Dharavi: Slum for Sale is an example of a subjective interpretation of reality, which creates strong images that have the power to arrest the attention of the viewer. The very fact that the film’s director is Swiss makes it likely that the film will reach a primarily Western audience rather than Indians. For too long, the West has looked at Dharavi exclusively through the prism of poverty and underdevelopment, a perspective that is also maintained in the documentary. The documentary attempts to make the case that the DRP is unsuitable and unviable for Dharavi’s future and the major tool it uses is a means for eliciting a response. Mukesh Mehta is pictured as a typical businessman driving his Mercedes and visiting luxury hotels, and Dharavi is portrayed as a settlement where people are struggling to survive and showing their opposition to the DRP through protests and marches. Although these conditions clearly do exist in Dharavi, what the documentary fails to display is the area’s holistic atmosphere of entrepreneurship and creativity. Dharavi: Slum for Sale is the first attempt to give visual form to the DRP narrative for the world to see at a moment when the project’s guidelines were in flux: instead of inviting private builders, planners decided to allow MHADA to implement it. The creation of this artefact, towards the beginning of 2010, was a distillation of a complex crossing of issues that governed the news, and although the film presented a narrow view of the politics of the DRP, it demonstrated to a global audience that the implementation of the project would not be beneficial to Dharavi’s residents.

A year earlier, in 2009, the National Geographic Channel released a documentary entitled The Real Slumdogs, which also placed its focus on Dharavi. With its primary emphasis not on the future of the settlement, but rather on the present and the past, the documentary portrayed three key aspects of Dharavi: social, geographical, and economic. In an effort to convey a concrete interpretation of daily living conditions in Dharavi, the documentary begins by describing the area as “India’s largest slum, in which there are ‘extraordinary’ people who call the settlement ‘home.’” These first words crystallize the film’s general assertion that Dharavi is a slum although its residents are exceptional and transcend the framework of an “Asian megacity.” To illustrate these social aspects, the documentary is arranged into five different stories, each of which exposes the living conditions of one resident’s family. Thus, the first story elaborates upon the life of Laxmi Kamble, a single mother who works in the recycling industry and collects waste in order to save enough money to enrol her daughter in school. The second story focuses on the life of Babu, an unregistered rag picker in the 13th Compound who struggles to earn enough money to survive. The third story describes the vision of a rickshaw driver, whose desire is to become a Bollywood actor and to secure a better future for his family. The fourth story introduces the life of a tailor who envisions a better

920 “The Real Slumdogs” (Documentary), The National Geographic Channel, 2009
921 Ibid.
future for his son. (The latter currently attends school in a local NGO in Dharavi.) Finally, the last story outlines an individual’s spirit of entrepreneurship and shows his dedication to his multiple enterprises, including bakeries and a tailoring business. Like the documentary *Dharavi: Slum for Sale*, all five stories probe the hurdles that Dharavi’s residents confront on a daily basis in the face of problems with basic amenities like clean water and reliable electric power. Thus, despite the nuanced portraits of these residents, *The Real Slumdogs* can be said to justify representations and conceptualizations of Dharavi as a slum.

The documentary assigns a geographic identity to Dharavi when it describes it as “one of the most expensive pieces of real estate of the world,” and as a “real estate developer’s dream.” This representation brings to light the logic of why Dharavi has been placed in the centre of redevelopment efforts since 1985. Even though the documentary begins by outlining Dharavi’s strategic location in Mumbai and the increasing interest in redeveloping the settlement, it only dedicates the last five minutes to the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, in stark contrast to *Dharavi: Slum for Sale*, which is primarily structured around the DRP. Finally, Dharavi’s economic viability is a central aspect of *The Real Slumdogs*, which shows working people involved in recycling in the 13th Compound, pottery-making in Kumbharwada, and tailoring. As the film’s narrator states,

> “The real life placed behind the movie is a slum that defines expectations, a vibrant community with its own schools, places of worship and entrepreneurial enterprises.”

Although this documentary appears to have several similarities to *Dharavi: Slum for Sale* and *Slumming it!*, the reason it is linked to the politics of representation is because of the figures that foreground the background of the film. In particular, the reporter chooses to include in the documentary’s main narrative three voices that are not directly connected to Dharavi but play an important role in events that inform the discourse about the settlement: Krishna Pujari, the founder of the Reality Tours & Travel; Kalpana Sharma, the writer of *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia’s Largest Slum*; and Vinod Shetty, the founder of ACORN Foundation in India. All three have contributed to the discourse of Dharavi by representing different identities of the area. While Krishna Pujari promoted the settlement as a tourist destination, Kalpana Sharma presented it as a village within a city, and Vinod Shetty identified it as a vibrant community through ACORN’s *Dharavi Project*. Following Foucault’s post-structuralist theory, “discourse” is used here to denote a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge. In this case *The Real Slumdogs* is another form of knowledge that contributes to this already constructed reality of Dharavi. Additionally, it is important to note that all five stories are also linked to the represented three figures. For example, Laxmi Kamble is not only a rag picker in Dharavi, but also a volunteer in the ACORN foundation in India. Similarly, Babu has worked with Vinod Shetty in the past for another documentary known as *Waste*, and the tailor’s son is attending English courses in the Reality Gives, an NGO initiated by Reality Gives & Travel.

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922 Ibid.
923 Ibid.
As a topic, Dharavi has many histories, which function through various representations. Even though the documentary is built over some of these histories, it is crucial to acknowledge that the master story that guides its narrative is the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. As it is stated in the documentary, the widespread discussions of *Slumdog Millionaire* are what led to Dharavi’s sudden popularity. As the title suggests, *The Real Slumdogs* claims to replace Swarup’s fictional Dharavi with a *real* or *authentic* one: a collection of images and stories that are built on the discourse of Dharavi. Built on a complex dialogue between Dharavi’s several histories, nothing can be more representative of Dharavi than how *The Real Slumdogs* defines it in the concluding words, as an “extraordinary place, built from ingenuity and dedication.”

The different representations surrounding Dharavi also set into motion a new academic agenda that was developed mostly in 2009 and 2010.

**Academic Discourse: Dharavi as a case study**

The discourse surrounding Dharavi has led to academic discussions worldwide. The settlement’s social, spatial, and economic transformation became a topic over the last decade, and Dharavi has become an academic case study with which numerous scholars have wrestled. Several universities around the world have embraced issues related to Dharavi’s present and future within their educational agendas, particularly in the fields of architecture, urbanism, arts, business, and economics. This section tracks four examples of scholarly occasions – the Urban Age International Conference in Mumbai; a graduate design studio at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP); a case study in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program at Harvard Business School (HBS); and a research project organized by the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm – all of which have involved Dharavi in their academic frameworks and sought to correlate their scholarly concerns with the plans for Dharavi’s future. Particularly, the section highlights the backdrop and emergence of each occasion; it explores different levels of participation, including partnerships; and finally, it attempts to evaluate the outcomes of these scholarly interventions in association with Dharavi.

In November 2007, responding to growing concerns about urban governance, economic development, and decision-making, the London School of Economics (LSE) held its seventh “Urban Age International Conference” in Mumbai. The series of conferences, organized through the Cities Program in partnership with Deutsche Bank’s Alfred Herrhausen Society, aimed to shape the thinking and actions of urban leaders towards more viable cities. The official web page states the goals of the series:

“Urban Age believes urban leaders can learn from each other to find better local solutions to global challenges. This is accomplished by advocating high standards

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924 Ibid.
for the built environment as well as intelligent city governance and management structures.”

Mumbai, often invoked as a conceptual prison-house of Asia’s urban poor and an iconic example of the Asian city of slums, was a logical choice for the conference. The large crowd of academics, politicians, activists, and professionals gathered at the Mumbai Hilton to evaluate housing policies and to “draw the links between events and developments in India’s urbanised areas with trends worldwide, widening the lens from the local to the global.” With remarkable consistency to the interest around slums, a large number of experts gathered on November 2, 2007, in one of the conference rooms to attend the session titled “Housing the Urban Poor,” chaired by Darren Walker, the Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York.

Mukesh Mehta, the “architect” of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, opened the discussion with a ten-minute statement, “Dharavi: A Global Case.” Mukesh Mehta’s statement was the second presentation in a row and followed the lecture by Swadheen Kshatriya, the Principal Secretary of the Housing Department, Government of Maharashtra, who introduced the state’s plan for making cities without slums. At the beginning of his presentation, Mukesh Mehta mentioned that ten minutes were not enough to demonstrate all the complexities in Dharavi and to explain what the DRP “is all about.” However, his lecture succeeded in introducing the five-sector plan and sparked a discussion.

The third speaker discussing Dharavi was Jockim Arputham, the founder of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), who was also part of the Concerned Citizens for Dharavi, which opposed the DRP. A few months before the Urban Age International Conference, Arputham wrote a letter entitled “An offer of partnership or a promise of conflict,” in which he examined the history of the DRP through the residents’ eyes and explored their ideas for Dharavi’s future. In the letter’s conclusion, Arputham reveals the need for an alternative redevelopment project that would involve both the intense participation and aspirations of the residents. Central to this alternative strategy is the need for an accurate geopolitical survey that could be managed by local forces. The letter was released to the media, and discussions over Dharavi’s future flourished. As a result, Arputham’s lecture at the Urban Age International Conference was one more opportunity for him to promote what he had already revealed in the letter he had shared with the media, where he raised awareness about the limited participation of Dharavi’s residents in the area’s transformation.

The lectures preceded a series of statements by central figures in architecture and planning in Mumbai, such as Shirish Patel, Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava from URBZ, and the architect P.K. Das. Given the intensity of the contemporary politics of Dharavi, the topic attracted a sizeable and interested audience, and a debate unfolded between governmental

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927 Ibid.
929 Swadheen Kshatriya, “Reforming the Housing Debate,” lecture, Urban Age Mumbai Conference, Mumbai, November 2, 2007
representatives, activists, local architects and planners, and key figures in the DRP’s realization. The Urban Age International Conference of November 2007 was the first time that Mukesh Mehta and Jockim Arputham had come together on a panel before an international audience to address the complex anxieties of many over Dharavi’s future. The Conference in Mumbai was one more step in publicizing the debate over Dharavi’s future and widening the scope from a local to a global event. The audience comprised academics and theorists from all over the world who noted Dharavi’s uniqueness and incorporated that awareness into their professional agendas.

The second scholarly occasion that involved Dharavi occurred within the academic field of Business and Economics. “Dharavi: Developing Asia’s largest slum” is a 25-page case study that has been integrated into finance, infrastructure, and sustainability courses at Harvard Business School (HBS) in Boston since 2009.\footnote{931} As a daily Indian newspaper remarked,

> “Written in the year that ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ swept the Oscars, the case uses imagery and even the occasional quote from the movie. It tracks a real estate developer’s journey, negotiating the various risks and questions that inevitably arise during redevelopment. Add to that fact that Dharavi is a very complex place with different communities that have strong personal views on redevelopment and it becomes a perfect candidate for a case study for the world’s brightest minds.”\footnote{932}

Associate Professor of Business Administration Lakshmi Iyer collaborated with the lecturer John Macomber and the researcher Namrata Arora, from the HBS India Research Center in Mumbai, and developed a case study on Dharavi that considers the potential risks and challenges of the new proposed model of redevelopment through a private and public partnership in Mumbai’s largest informal settlement. The study focused on the DRP, and the main protagonist was Rance Hollen of Warwick Capital, a real estate developer in London who was part of one of the consortia in the bidding process in 2009. The case study involved the decision Hollen faced: having succeeded in several rounds of selections, he needed to decide whether or not to place his bid in the final round for redeveloping Dharavi. Based upon observations regarding the predominant patterns of slum redevelopment projects in India, and noting the global recession of 2008, the case study questioned whether the DRP ever promised to be a successful project, and it asked what Rance Hollen or any other developer should do: participate in the final round, or walk away from the bidding?

The research for the study was finalized within three months and included interviews with key figures such as Mukesh Mehta, representatives of NGOs, Dharavi’s residents, and the CEO of the Dharavi Development Authority (Gautam Chatterjee). The study assesses Dharavi’s emergence and its strategic location in Mumbai, the slum redevelopment process in Mumbai since the 1970s, the introduction of the DRP, and the politics of resistance from its residents and local activists. Additionally, the study offers fundamental statistics for Dharavi’s economy and land-use patterns. Recognizing that Dharavi is a battleground of conflicting opinions and political forces, the case study challenged 150 students in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program in the HBS in 2009 deciding whether it’s worthwhile to bid

\footnote{931}Iyer, Macomber, and Arora, “Dharavi: Developing Asia’s Largest Slum”

\footnote{932}Nikhil Menon, “From Mumbai’s Dabbawalas to Dharavi, Harvard Professors mining India for lessons in management,” The Economic Times, June 17, 2011
as a developer and evaluating whether or not the entire DRP should be. The case elicited an extensive range of responses, and the debate mainly encompassed the socio-economic layers of the project. In particular, and as Namrata Arora mentioned in the press, the social and spatial issues that had framed the debates over Dharavi (land use, land rights, ownership of land, the role of the private sector, and the interests of slum dwellers) informed the students' deliberations.933

John Macomber, who has taught a unit on Dharavi in several business-oriented courses in the HBS, claimed that most of the students were surprised that resistance to the project came primarily from local residents. As he stated,

“Western students tend to be focused on the plumbing and toilets...They can’t quite fathom why the people here might not want to live in towers. Or the implications of not being able to run their business out of their house. Students from emerging economies, on the other hand, understand this better.”934

The majority of the students argued that the developer should not take part in the project and mentioned that the private sector should not form part of such projects. Macomber, who believes that the DRP is “capital efficient, resource efficient and the fastest possible way to develop housing in Mumbai,” was very much surprised when his students concluded that the “Dharavi project is too risky.”935 On the other hand, Lakshmi Iyer, who also worked on the study with John Macomber, said that while some students questioned the project’s viability, others identified it as a great business opportunity that was a worthwhile risk to take.936 Considering the fact that 2009 was a crucial year for the DRP due to the global economic slowdown and the political setting, with national and state elections, the debate over Dharavi’s future in the HBS generated widespread interest in business and real estate clusters. As Lakshmi Iyer successfully noted, there are two principal reasons that Dharavi and India are of major interest from an academic standpoint: the first is the opening up of India’s economy, which brings more global investors into the country at a moment of a global recession, and the second reason is the high economic growth recorded in the last two decades and the growth of a “significant middle class.”937

A parallel interest in Dharavi’s redevelopment process can also be observed in architecture and urban design studies. The third academic occasion was a challenge presented to graduate students attending the Master in Architecture and Urban Design programme at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP) of Columbia University in New York. During the 2009 spring semester, 26 international students visited Dharavi for two weeks in early January as part of a design studio. Within this framework they were challenged to produce alternative scenarios and interventions for the development of the settlement in the future. During the students’ visit, four chawls in Dharavi were chosen for examination

935 Ibid.
In a collaboration with the Sir J.J. College of Architecture in Mumbai, the research platform PUKAR, and the local organization URBZ, students were invited by the residents to generate new designs for homes for them in Dharavi. These residents, particularly members of the Omkar Cooperative Housing Society, sought support in their legal battle with the government over participation in the DRP. The residents’ agenda was built on three arguments: a) their chawl could not be identified as a slum since it had official recognition from BMC and paid a municipal fee every month; b) since their chawl was not a slum, it should not be included in the DRP; and c) the local residents, who were technically co-owners, had the right to develop their dwellings on their own. The outcome of the two-week students’ work in Dharavi was presented to the community in mid-January, and afterwards it was also presented in court, which decided that the Omkar Cooperative Housing Society would take part in the DRP as originally planned, without any local participation.

Even though the court’s negative decision would also apply to any other alternative development proposal, the graduate students returned to New York, and within a five-month

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semester they produced seven alternative projects for developing Dharavi. During this period, students attended presentations from external lecturers such as Mukesh Mehta and Anjali Monteiro, member of the TATA Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. Additionally, Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava from URBZ, and also Bhau Korde (an activist and local resident in Dharavi), gradually evaluated all projects, which proposed development plans for Dharavi that could serve as alternatives to the governmental DRP. Eschewing the idea of a slum-free Dharavi, students built on the venerable ideas of community participation and socio-ecological transformations, and as a consequence they generated a toolkit of alternative strategies for progressive self-development for the settlement. With the assistance of local residents and activists a discourse in academia was generated that supplemented the politics of resistance to the DRP on a level that had only previously manifested itself among local forces and organizations.

One example of a project resulting from this studio was “Equity Through Infrastructure: Synergizing Local and Municipal Needs.” At the centre of this proposal was the government’s plan to build a new monorail and elevated walkways to pass through Dharavi. In the DRP’s plan the monorail investment serves the municipal need for a better connection between the north and the south of Mumbai. However, the elevated walkways have limited functions inside Dharavi. The team began exploring their “alternative” solution by accepting the monorail as an opportunity for transforming and upgrading the settlement. Thus, their proposal creates a new topography in which they expand and maximize street surface area without destroying the existent urban fabric. The team also proposed a new elevated level above commercial buildings only on commercial streets to accommodate additional social and productive space (figures 16–19).

Figure 16: Elevation that shows the suggested new topography in Dharavi. Project “Equity Through Infrastructure: Synergizing Local and Municipal Needs,” by Pierre-Louis Gerlier, Martha Kolokotroni, Nita Yuwaboon, and Tahaer Zoyab, in Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, Kate Orff, eds., Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment (New York: GSAPP Columbia University, 2009), 52

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939 All projects were exhibited at the URBZ office in Dharavi, at the Sir J.J. College of Architecture, and at the Year-End Show in Columbia University at the end of 2009 and all projects were publicized on the website www.dharavi.org. Furthermore, the academic publication “Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Development” was released the same year.
**Figure 17:** Photo-collage that shows the new elevated topography in the project "Equity Through Infrastructure: Synergizing Local and Municipal Needs," by Pierre-Louis Gerlier, Martha Kolokotroni, Nita Yuvaboon, and Tahaer Zoyab, in Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, Kate Orff, eds., *Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment* (New York: GSAPP Columbia University, 2009), 52

**Figure 18:** Section on a street wider than 10 meters and narrower than 15 meters. Project "Equity Through Infrastructure: Synergizing Local and Municipal Needs," by Pierre-Louis Gerlier, Martha Kolokotroni, Nita Yuvaboon, and Tahaer Zoyab, in Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, Kate Orff, eds., *Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment* (New York: GSAPP Columbia University, 2009), 50
Figure 19: Section of a street wider than 15 meters. Project “Equity Through Infrastructure: Synergizing Local and Municipal Needs,” by Pierre-Louis Gerlier, Martha Kolokotroni, Nita Yuvaboon, and Tahaer Zoyab, in Michael Conard, Geeta Mehta, Kate Orff, eds., Mumbai, Dharavi: Scenarios for Redevelopment (New York: GSAPP Columbia University, 2009), 49

All seven of the 2009 projects were critical of the existing DRP proposal. None of them accepted it as a model for future development in Dharavi, and on this basis they suggested alternative solutions. This amounted to an extension of the politics of resistance, aimed at the DRP, within a global academic discourse. Representing Dharavi as a case study in several academic fields – such as business, economics, architecture, and urban design – and through various formats (conferences, design studios, and university courses) contributed to a holistic examination of Dharavi’s politics that formed guidelines for the DRP from the perspectives of experts in different fields. The last occasion in this section is an art programme, initiated in 2006 by the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm, which integrated Dharavi into its curriculum.

In the context of the project Art & Architecture, which followed artistic traditions of social engagement, a group of 11 artists, architects, and writers initially travelled to Dharavi in spring 2005. Inspired by Goya’s etchings of the Napoleonic Wars and the striking photographs of New York slums by Jacob Riib, the group intended to investigate and depict the story of a specific informal settlement. Dharavi offered the possibility of “[twisting] the informal society toward a formal one” and showing “the power in people’s abilities” while “[encouraging] politicians and stakeholders to listen to Dharavi’s inhabitants,” and at last to improve the living conditions by suggesting changes to infrastructure and services in the settlement.940 The group revisited Dharavi in spring 2006 and in 2007, when only two

940 Maria Lantz and Jonatan Habib Engqvist, “Preface,” in Dharavi: Documenting Informalities, ed. Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 9
members of the group returned. In all three trips the members of the group closely collaborated with Sheela Patel and SPARC, with Jockim Arputham and the NSDF, and with women of the Mahila Milan. Their findings were published in the academic book *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* (2009), in which they summarized the “concrete” goals of the project:

“To increase knowledge about informal living in cities; to suggest more participatory and inclusive descriptions of the urban poor; and to increase infrastructure in informal areas by searching out new collaborations and networks. In short to sustain ability.”

Capturing the limitations of the DRP, the Dharavi art project attempted to expose potential strategies through which art and architecture could contribute to social and political discussions. By using creative rather than scientific means, the research group challenged the prevailing media representation of Dharavi. In forming a holistic narrative of the settlement, the group applied all possible documentation tools, such as mapping, photographs, and a land ownership survey.

In stark contrast to the government’s imprecise survey of Dharavi, the group of the Royal University College of Fine Arts gradually documented small communities in the settlement with the assistance of residents and local NGOs, and this documentation offered a clearer view of Dharavi’s internal structures. One example was the PV New Chawl/Poonawalla (figure 20), in which the group documented all the activities and businesses located on that street, along with the different typologies of housing structures that dominate the area.

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941 Ibid.
Furthermore, the participants explored the numerous businesses that build the economy in Dharavi and portrayed them through pictures and statistics. The publication *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* came out of the symposium “Informal Cities,” organized in Stockholm. Artists and architects from all over the world attended the event and discussed Dharavi’s evolution. The uniqueness of this project, as the participants wrote in the book, lies in the fact that it involved many voices and used art and architecture to frame questions about the future of Dharavi within the framework of the DRP. In particular, the statement at the beginning of the publication foresees the following outcome and impact of the art and architecture project:

“The task we have given ourselves with this book is impossible and we are by no means claiming to solve any of Dharavi’s fundamental problems. But if this book can map out some of the complex structures that we saw on our short visits and communicate a few of the creative, truly sustainable structures of this area, we have at least started a process.”^942^  

All four academic events examined in this section successfully mapped out the settlement’s complex structures and turned it into a pot-pourri of narratives that is in many respects more startling than ever. While the Dharavi Redevelopment Project monopolized the attention of those with political interests in Dharavi, a range of other possible interventions captured the focus of academic groups. Alternative development methods, lectures, and publications related to Dharavi awakened the interest of economists, members of the business community, architects, artists, and writers. A series of case studies involving Dharavi raised challenges regarding the settlement’s future and further cultivated a growing resistance to the DRP. Even though the results were not noticeable at first, the combination and variety of representations of Dharavi not only contributed to the extensive delays in implementing the DRP, but also led to a reconsideration of the project’s nature and guidelines.

**The Spectacle of Dharavi**

“To think about modern architecture must be to pass back and forth between the question of space and the question of representation. Indeed, it will be necessary to think of architecture as a system of representation, or rather a series of overlapping systems of representation.”^945^

In *Privacy and Publicity* (1996), Beatriz Colomina argues that the modernization of architecture in the 20th century has led to practices of representation that are found in mass media culture. She identifies the space where architecture evolves as a space of “moving images” and as a space of “media and publicity.”^944^ In order to be part of this space, one only need observe it from the outside, through the creation of several representations. Her argument accepts architecture as an intervention of media on an actual space, and instead of

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^942^ Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Maria Lantz, eds., *Dharavi: Documenting Informalities* (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2009), 14

^943^ Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, 13

^944^ Ibid., 7
recognizing the building as a traditional architectural object, she understands it as a representational site that is also developed by the popularization of images within films, photographs, books, and drawings.\(^945\) Within a post-modern context, David Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, also claims that elements that dominate architecture and urban design practices constitute a collage of “ephemerality and chaos” that might be culled from fiction.\(^946\) For Harvey, space is understood as an autonomous area that is formed through following “aesthetic aims and principles.”\(^947\) The communication of several events over space replaces traditional architectural interventions and constructs in their place an “antispatial” environment, in which space is understood as a pot-pourri, as “an emporium of styles” filled with colourful entries, as Raban puts it in *Soft City.*\(^948\)

Harvey’s post-modern space of unequal development and Colomina’s modern urban fabric of “moving images” recall the establishment of Dharavi as a spectacle in the last two decades – a spectacle that is shaped from images and stories that predominated not only in the media, but also in tourist activities and the field of academia. Within the framework of these events, Dharavi has developed into a representational site that was colonized socially as a site of ephemerality, in which weaknesses and several levels of power meet. All of these different representations of Dharavi contribute to both the construction and erasure of elements that form the actual territory of the settlement, and to the transformation of Dharavi into a multilayered environment – both spatial and “antispatial.” Each interpretation offers a view of Dharavi to a new audience, introducing different elements of Dharavi’s structure in the process.

The examined events (figure 21) occurred in several formats – narrative and documentary films, visits, and case studies – and attracted the interest of media worldwide. They were selected for this section as examples that fit the criteria of having been popular or well-known and having occurred during the relevant time frame. All of them arose after 2004, the year that the DRP was officially introduced, and promoted an image of Dharavi as a speculative site and a prime location for private real estate developers all over the world.

\(^945\) Ibid., 14
\(^947\) Ibid., 66
\(^948\) Raban, *Soft City*, 68
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<th>Source of Representation</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
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<td>the book (J. d. f, written by Vikas Swamy and the movie Shalini Millionaire, directed by Danny Boyle, screenplay by Simon Beaufoy)</td>
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<td>A cancerous lump in the heart of the city [Mumbai]</td>
<td>UK (by an Indian writer)</td>
<td>The introduction of Dharavi in fiction and literature a year after the DRP's official inauguration</td>
<td>Through the use of strongly negative language to describe Dharavi, the book suggests that the settlement is a threat to the city and should be demolished. This supports the state's plan to transform the area into a &quot;beautiful city&quot;</td>
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<td>Narrative Film</td>
<td>Dharavi Tours: Reality Tours d. Travel, by Chris Way and Krishna Patel</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>The largest dirty slum in Asia</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>The population of Dharavi in the film sparked discussions and hundreds of articles about Dharavi 2. It offered an opportunity to rethink the relationship between popular media and Dharavi 3. It gave a boost to tourism in Dharavi and thus created new job opportunities for locals</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Tourism - Dharavi (English and Indian businessmen)</td>
<td>Dharavi Tours: Harmony, directed by Lutz Konermann</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>A place of energy with a spirit of entrepreneurship and economic viability</td>
<td>Dharavi (by an Indian businessman)</td>
<td>1. Boost in the local economy: new business / job opportunities for locals 2. Interaction between residents and tourists towards a gradually spatial development of Dharavi's landscape 3. Contribution to the community children and adults in Dharavi (English language, training courses, sport activities) through the NGO Reality 4. Exposure of tourists to Dharavi's immense business and social possibilities 5. Depicting the negative image of Dharavi as &quot;Asia's largest slum&quot;</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Popular Figure in the Public Sphere</td>
<td>Prince Charles's visit to Dharavi, the lecture on Dharavi and the publication of the book Harmony.</td>
<td>2003, 2009, 2010</td>
<td>A resilient and durable settlement in which there is an underlying grammar of design</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1. Attracted the interest of media 2. Introduced Dharavi to a different audience in the UK and supported the idea that the West should learn from it 3. Prince Charles advocated the relocation of a new town in India built on Dharavi's community capital</td>
<td>Prince Charles's words worked against the evolution of the DRP, as it was also stated in their website: &quot;The redevelopment project has been still moved many times.&quot; This implies a low likelihood of the project's implementation. The tour guides emphasize the political negative impact of the DRP on Dharavi's residents</td>
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<td>Television</td>
<td>TV Special: Slumming it! By Kevin McCloud</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A dirty and noisy slum</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1. It offers a raw depiction of Dharavi and touches on important issues (negligent residents, the survey process) 2. It discusses the role of the community and the importance of public spaces in Dharavi 3. It defines Dharavi as a &quot;noisy, dirty and unsafe place,&quot; and confirms the image that Western populations have for India and Dharavi</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Dharavi: Slum for Sale, directed by Lutz Konermann</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>A prime real estate location</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1. It enriches the political and social concerns for Dharavi's future 2. It represents different issues that are involved in the politics of Dharavi (activism, residents, authorities) 3. It fails to display the holistic view of Dharavi, turns central another stereotype</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Documentary</td>
<td>The Real Slumdog, by the National Geographic Channel</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>India's largest slum</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1. It discusses the future of the settlement through the lens of the settlement's residents 2. It reflects the creative entrepreneur and creativity that dominates the settlement 3. It is an extension of the politics of resistance to the DRP in Dharavi</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Academia - Conference</td>
<td>Urban Age Mumbai, organized by LMI Cities</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>An area of conflicts</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>It offered the opportunity to integrate the politics of resistance with the politics of money under the same panel and to introduce the conflicts over the DRP to an international audience</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<td>Academia - conference MBA</td>
<td>Largest Slum, a case study in courses at Harvard Business School</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>A case study for studying Business and Finance</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>It expanded the discussion of the DRP to business and finance academic discussions and challenged graduate students to suggest whether the project should be implemented or not</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academia - Design Studio</td>
<td>Dharavi: The Future of Slum Design, directed by Tom Muus</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>A vibrant community that has become an icon of urban issues related to informal settlements in the developing world</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>It offered seven alternative design scenarios for Dharavi's future development that contradicted the existing DRP</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia - Art and Architecture</td>
<td>Informalities, a case study in Art &amp; Architecture program at the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm</td>
<td>2005 - 2009</td>
<td>An informal settlement, built on industries and manufacturing</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Through this project, students mapped out some of the complex structures in Dharavi and communicated a few of the creative, truly sustainable structures of this area. They contributed to a cleaner view of the population and land ownership in Dharavi that the government was lacking</td>
<td>Despite the fact that the global economy was in a tailspin at the time, a scene in the movie celebrates a neo-liberal future of Mumbai, of a city that is not affected by any economic difficulties but instead is emerging in a new “world-class” city, in which the DRP has already been implemented and Dharavi is replaced by high-rise luxurious housing</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the representations of Dharavi in various forms of media and academic discussions highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of the settlement. While some portray Dharavi as a vibrant and resilient community, others emphasize its negative impact on the local economy and the need for redevelopment. The DRP, a large-scale urban renewal project, has been a subject of considerable debate, with both proponents and critics presenting various arguments and perspectives. The media and academic discussions have played a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and influencing policy decisions related to Dharavi and similar informal settlements in urban environments.
Figure 21: Table of events presented and discussed in the chapter

This table illustrates the barrage of representations that shaped the ways Dharavi has been defined over the last two decades. An interesting point that arises from all occasions described above is the fact that all of these representations originated outside of India. At a moment when planning authorities adopted a neo-liberal approach to redevelopment, imitating cities such as Singapore and Shanghai, individual figures outside of India attempted to participate in the discussion over Dharavi’s future and introduced alternative ways of understanding and promoting the image of the settlement. The majority of them were Englishmen, and this is important to highlight considering the fact that India was a colonized country. The result was an electronic “British invasion” that has influenced the discourse about Dharavi and even the process of development itself by calling worldwide attention to the enclave.

Throughout the study of the discourse surrounding Dharavi since 2004, this chapter supports the argument that the potentially radical transformation of a “slum” space depends on much more than public authorities. Constructing a discourse around a space like Dharavi can serve as a strong force for either resisting or helping a government in its projections about the future of that space, and the way various actors have represented the settlement has contributed to the extended delay in implementing the DRP. Dharavi’s many representations have played a significant role in projecting and spreading ideas about the area, in some instances attracting different audiences to visit it. Through the many interventions presented here, Dharavi has emerged as a meeting space for exchanging ideas among visitors and locals, with these exchange events in many instances impacting the settlement’s transformation. As a powerful tool to transform space, representation and stereotyping can form the cornerstone of a new planning methodology.
Part C: Conclusion
“Eventalizing singular ensembles of practices, so as to make them graspable as different regimes of ‘jurisdiction’ and ‘veridiction’: that, to put it in exceedingly barbarous terms, is what I would like to do.”

Towards a Strategy of Eventalized Planning

One of the clichés of urban studies is that designing and planning the future of slums is either a top-down or a bottom-up affair. In the case of Dharavi, the state machinery, NGOs, and residents have been portrayed as the origins and engines of change, with various political practices interrupting or accelerating planning processes. The politics surrounding Dharavi have not only involved problematic responses to the proliferation of slums, they have also engendered creative endeavours to discover new paths for designing the future of densely populated urban settlements.

This research is a journey that challenges the principles driving the planning process in slums. Ultimately, the journey points the way to a methodological reorientation that can steer planners into more efficient avenues of spatial change. The standard principles that have enabled architects, planners, and politicians to carry out the work of analysis and design are mainly adopted, but residents and NGOs have also contributed to the process of change in ways that are often spontaneous and improvised. Against the background of wider research on Dharavi, this thesis, instead of asking what the practices of transforming Dharavi’s urban fabric are, asks what practices would be the most effective. Effective planning here is understood as Guy Benveniste termed in *Mastering the Politics of Planning: Crafting Credible Plans and Policies That Make a Difference* (1989):

“What is effective planning? It is, first of all, planning that makes a difference. It is not a sterile exercise, a number-crunching demonstration, a routinized paper-shuffling event with no consequences. It gets results. Second, the results are worthwhile.”

This journey began with an analysis of the limitations and ramifications of the doctrines behind planning in Dharavi and ends up with a consideration of other political dimensions to the problems, and with suggested directions for developing a specific method and tools for successfully planning the future of slums.

The central aim is to uncover the principles behind and consequences of an autonomous spatial transformation that is already taking place in the settlement. In assessing the instruments of such a transformation, the concepts associated with this process and the results that it obtains, this research traces could be termed here as *eventalized planning*. Eventalized planning is a method of analysis and form of discourse that depends on the construction of discourses that can potentially inform design. In this method plans and drawings are the triggers that activate change. Eventalized planning is a product of collective and academic experiments with existing research patterns and constructed discourses from popular media. Even though this method of analysis has specific characteristics that are different from existing types of planning, it is also oriented towards concerns and conditions related to what is usually characterized as participatory planning. While the geographical focus of this

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research pertains to a particular settlement, the issues that it addresses have important implications that extend far beyond the borders of Dharavi.

Three major notions comprise the mechanisms of the existing politics in Dharavi: change, money, and resistance. A fourth notion, the settlement’s representation, involves contemporary politics and comes into focus through an analysis of the powerful stereotypes and cultural or commercial images from books, film, and tourism. These four areas are concerned not only with urban design and planning issues, but also with popular media and related social events. All four notions of politics are assessed throughout different chapters that underscore not only the connections among these ideas, but also the asymmetry in their relationships with one another. In evaluating and understanding their impact on Dharavi’s spatial transformation, this research also examines the context that gives rise to them. Four objectives are associated with the four notions examined here: vision (associated with change), power (associated with money), creativity (associated with resistance), and the formation of specific events (associated with representation).

While each chapter includes a section at the end that draws conclusions, these concluding remarks address the four notions of politics that have undergirded the analysis throughout this study. As a group, these investigations demonstrate contemporary geographies of what could be called the politics of planning. As this dissertation shows, these geographies are assessed within two main methodological categories: strategic and participatory planning. The first category analytically examines the process of the unsuccessful, top-down planning in Dharavi and examines the reasons behind this failure. The second category builds on the bottom-up practices of resistance to state-led projects for the settlement and addresses the tools deployed in opposition to the state plans. The concept of eventalized planning draws from participatory planning and defines a developed method of analysis in this thesis that moves away from top-down planning; this method accepts that the formation and transformation of space constitute a constructed process that greatly depends upon existing discourses.

**Strategic Planning**

The (business) concept of a strategic plan refers to an organized and highly controlled process of envisioning a particular future. Strategic planning is analytical in nature and maps out all the necessary actions needed for achieving the desired vision. In stark contrast to long-term planning, strategic planning begins with the anticipated vision and finds ways and tactics to accomplish it. In this thesis, the concept of strategic planning is used to describe the amalgamation of methods, tools, and mechanisms that have been deployed from the top down to achieve the vision of a slum-free Mumbai. Strategic planning in Dharavi has originated from the political mechanisms that have aimed to change a slum into a beautiful city through a series of governmental schemes.

The analysis of six schemes in this dissertation serves to explain the strategic planning mechanisms for change in Mumbai’s slums (whether those urban spaces are viewed as problems or opportunities). The changing roles the state has taken on in association with slum settlements and the different approaches the state has used are unravelled in several historical
stages following India’s Independence. The six examined projects are the following: the Slum Improvement Programme (SIP) of 1971, the Slum Upgrading Programme (SUP) and the Prime Minister Grant Project (PMGP) of 1985, the Slum Redevelopment Scheme (SRD) of 1991, the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme (SRS) of 1995, and the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) of 2004. These projects correspond to different conceptions of the state’s role in effecting change: the state as demolisher, contributor, or developer. In none of these roles and none of these schemes has the state enjoyed success: each scheme has been anchored in a complex set of strategic and political interactions that have caused efforts at enacting positive change to fall short.

The Demolisher
Demolishing slums was the first strategy adopted by the government towards the proliferation of such areas in the 1950s. As a response to the endlessly proliferating shanty towns, the city’s municipality (BMC) pursued the “bulldozer method” after legalizing this clearing strategy through the first Bombay Municipal Corporation Act in 1954. This act pointed to the “structural despair of sanitary defects” that made the Mumbai slum “unfit for human habitation.”950 The new policies – the city’s first attempts at “solving” the “slum problem” – were set in motion without the involvement or input of architects, planners, or residents.

This strategy resulted in the temporary disappearance of many slums; to the slums’ residents it often meant the loss of not only their homes, but also their jobs. Driving them out of the slums created the hardship of removing them from the services and economic opportunities upon which they relied. Most dwellers preferred to return to their original spots and rebuilt their shelters from scratch. The state’s approach of clearing slums failed to take into account how and why these areas existed and had been expanding, and predictably, the demolitions soon ended. The policy legalizing slum demolition had clearly not been an effective way to achieve the vision of a slum-free Mumbai. However, this first appearance in a government document of a definition of slums, together with this first step in governmental decision-making that took slums into account, began a new era of discussions and policies for the planning of cities without slums.

The Contributor
At the beginning of the 1970s the state readdressed the slum issue. By this time it had moved from viewing slums as a problem to seeing them as a solution to the problem of housing migrants. Consequently, slums formed part of the city’s future plans, and instead of clearing them, the state began upgrading them. The government’s new role in relation to slums is reflected in its attitude towards them as a legitimate part of Mumbai’s reality. However, even though the state seemed to have taken a friendlier approach to fixing slums, the words used to describe them in policy statements suggested that they were nevertheless seen as a source of danger.951

951 The Government of Maharashtra used the following language: “Any area that is or may be a source of danger to health, safety or convenience of the public of that area or of its neighborhood, by reason of that area having inadequate or no basic amenities, or being unsanitary, squalid overcrowded or otherwise and the buildings in any area, used or intended to be used for human habitation are in any respect, unfit for human habitation or by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation light or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors, detrimental to the health, safety or convenience of the public of that area.” Source: Government of
The slum upgrading strategy in Mumbai relied on three essential instruments: policy-making (as already mentioned), surveys, and upgrading schemes. For the introduction and the implementation of such schemes, two governmental institutions were also established in the 1970s: the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA). SRA’s responsibilities were to review the slum areas, to conduct the slum surveys in the city, and to initiate and implement upgrading projects. The new role of the Controller of Slums was not only to prevent the proliferation of slums, but also to protect these settlements from demolition. On the other hand, MHADA was founded as the state body responsible for constructing and selling housing units for low- and middle-income groups. As a facilitator, and not a direct provider, MHADA deals with the funding and implementation of slum upgrading projects and has considerable impact on the development of such areas.

The first slum survey in Mumbai was held on January 4, 1976. This survey was a head count that lasted a single day and revealed that almost 40% of the city’s population resided in slums. For the first time, slum dwellers were accepted as official Mumbai residents, and by acquiring identity cards, they secured their participation in upgrading projects. The survey has been a powerful governmental tool for not only recognizing the feasibility of these settlements as social entities, but also achieving security for their population. According to Foucault’s concept of “governmentality,” housing security plays an important role in the way governments exercise power. In his lectures at the Collège de France between 1977 and 1979 titled *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault explored governmental instruments of power and included surveys among them, arguing that the government survey has “the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument.” The first slum survey in Mumbai illustrates Foucault’s argument: it helped the government to exercise control over the population while also planning the future of the city’s slums.

Equipped with its survey data, the government attempted to integrate slums into society through a series of upgrading schemes. However, none of these schemes were successfully implemented due to major hurdles such as the following:

- Contestations over the spatial allocation: It was unclear if the land of each settlement was municipal, state, national, or private land
- The absence of long-term financial planning
- A lack of transparency in surveys
- Political battles between state and municipal agents and institutions.

All hurdles depended strongly upon political layers and revealed how problematic upgrading would prove to be. These problems exposed the need to focus on new approaches to planning slums in Mumbai.

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*Maharashtra, Maharashtra Slum Areas Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment Act of 1971, Maharashtra Act No. XXVIII of 1971, Chapter 2, Slum Areas 4 (Mumbai, 1971), 20
The experience of failure in the previous upgrading projects served as a reason for expanding governmental approaches to slum transformation. This was the moment when the concept of upgrading was replaced by the idea of redevelopment. Slums were accepted as places of not only social but also political and economic interest, and fixing them entailed engagement with different political agendas. Thus the state reached out to those with an interest in Dharavi’s future and initiated strategic collaborations with slum dwellers, global organizations, and private developers. Housing co-operatives and special committees played a central role in these collaborations. In the 1980s it was the first time that the private sector was also introduced as a potential associate of the government in fixing slums. To facilitate this process, the state revised slum policies and offered slum dwellers the opportunity to participate on the political arena. Thus, Mumbai’s informal settlements became the terrain of economic contention and negotiation. Even though redevelopment was a more ambitious and democratic strategy, it did not manage to solve the problematic nature of urban slums and failed to achieve the vision of a slum-free Mumbai. While the focus of this strategy pertained to the transformation of slums, the approaches used were not that different from practices that had already been used in the upgrading strategy. Like previous efforts at effecting change in Dharavi, this strategy faced the following hurdles:

- As was true of upgrading schemes, development projects faced disputes over spatial allocation
- The provision of legal tenure to slum dwellers became a political “problem” for the main parties, which felt they were losing their power
- In-situ reconstruction in high density areas proved to be highly problematic
- Several competing projects were being considered at the same time
- The lack of long-term planning resulted in the lack of transit camps.

At the core of this study lies the extended examination of one redevelopment project, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP). The inauguration of this ambitious project in 2004 – an attempt to transform Mumbai into a Singapore or Shanghai – exemplifies the crisis of modern development and planning practices. Informed by neo-liberalism, projects such as the DRP attempt to address poverty concerns such as deteriorating conditions in health, education, and sanitation. With a global agenda of creating a slum-free world, these development projects have relied on collaboration between public and private sectors. In stark contrast to the previous slum upgrading projects in Mumbai, the DRP was the first to introduce such collaborations, in which several actors participate in the process of transformation: the government, NGOs, and developers, but also the residents, the architect of this project, and journalists. The experience of the DRP serves as an example of the hurdles any such projects faces in the current climate:

- The highly complex bureaucratic apparatus that includes the structure of top-down politics in Mumbai; the absence of socio-economic surveys and the delays and changes in official positions
- The global economic downturn, which mainly affected public-private collaboration, and the lack of experience in slum development among most of the private developers
- The misuse of the project for political causes, such as elections and party alliances, and the problem of transparency
- The revival of the clearance strategy to replace the dominant strategy of upgrading; the challenge of the architect’s role and the change in the official process of transforming slums.

Dharavi, and Mumbai’s slums in general, became an arena of political conflict and competition in which different visions competed with each other. Attracted by this latest effort to redevelop Dharavi, researchers and planners attempted to investigate alternatives for its transformation. Rethinking Dharavi requires acknowledging its complexity and adopting different lenses for examining the issues and problems that any successful plan for change must confront.

As Jonathan Raban points out in Soft City, “behind all these strategies lie a savage contempt for the city and an arrogant desire to refashion human society into almost any shape other than the one we have at present.” All examined and described methods and tools used to fix slums after India’s Independence have failed to change and transform radically their nature, particularly in Dharavi. This review of the main practices in tackling the increase of slums allows us to view planning as a pure managerial activity. This politics of slum planning has not only shown the change in the state’s role, it has also demonstrated how the process of transforming slums has been nothing more than a governmental trend – a trend towards greater bureaucratization within a limited timeline. This approach to transforming slums can hardly be called successful or democratic.

**Participatory Planning**

Participatory planning has dominated various narratives in India for over a decade. As Guy Benveniste writes in Mastering the Politics of Planning (1989), participation provides “a mechanism to ensure the democratization of planning and thus to permit those affected to have a voice in the decision process.” This thesis investigates the role of participatory activities in planning procedures and argues that in the context of Dharavi, the majority of these activities have involved resistance to governmental plans.

Three social movements are important for this analysis: the Mumbai Alliance (an alliance comprising the organizations SPARC, NSDF, and Mahila Milan), the URBZ team, and India’s ACORN foundation. Their planning methods and strategies for resisting the DRP have mostly eschewed traditional methods of struggle (such as street blockage and demonstrations) in favour of a highly rational process for opposing the neo-liberal “mirage of development.”

To involve Dharavi’s residents in the process of planning the settlement’s future, the Mumbai Alliance worked with architects, planners, and academic institutions and prepared an alternative plan to the DRP. This collaboration between residents and the Alliance attempted

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to bridge the communication gap between the government and Dharavi’s population. An important part of their planning approach was the enumeration strategy, which the government had used earlier for very different aims. As Appadurai wrote, “the creation and use of self-surveys are a powerful tool for the practice of democracy internally”; self-surveys could be used to oppose governmental forms of documentation. The role of the survey has been a critical piece in the Alliance’s resistance strategy: it has become a vehicle for interfering with governmental plans and influencing their development. The Alliance challenged the government’s use of its survey for planning and criticized the DRP’s design; it also collaborated with a local architecture school – KRVIA – to produce alternative drawings and a new master plan. Through this new master plan, the Alliance called attention to the limitations of the existing planning policies; established credibility as a potential partner with the government; and influenced a change in approach to slum schemes. Furthermore, a major outcome of the Alliance’s contribution to the DRP’s process of realization was that it also affected the project’s temporal discontinuity.

The Alliance’s contribution in stalling the DRP represents a powerful mechanism for motivating participatory planning in Dharavi. However, the critical point here is that such participation initiated by the Alliance has also proved compatible with the government’s planning structures. While it has challenged the state’s approach, the Alliance has had no significant impact on the prevailing politics of planning. Reiterating Guy Benveniste’s words, participation in such cases could also be the “Achille’s heel of planning” and as David Mosse stated, “participation has no longer the radical connotations it once had.” Such observations relate back to Foucault’s concerns about the complex structures of power relations. Particularly, Foucault’s analysis concerning power requires us to shift our attention from the state and accept that power must be approached and understood as something that circulates, or rather, “as something which only functions in the form of a chain.” In Foucault’s argument power exists everywhere, and individuals are the vehicles of power. Thus, as Lois McNay wrote in Foucault: A Critical Introduction (1994),

“To understand power… it is necessary to analyze it in its most diverse and specific manifestations rather than focusing on its most centralized forms such as its concentration in the hands of a coercive elite or a ruling class. This focus on the underside or everyday aspect of power relations Foucault calls a microphysics rather than a macrophysics of power.”

The microphysics of power in Dharavi are also identified within Mumbai’s Alliance structures. Despite the aims of participatory planning, the deployed planning methods in the DRP involve different levels of power that in some cases, as Benveniste argues, might “reduce

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957 Benveniste, Mastering the Politics of Planning: Crafting Credible Plans and Policies That Make a Difference, 45
the power of the weak by making them more dependent on the expertise of those who have access to knowledge.”\textsuperscript{961} Thus, as Uma Kothari writes,

\begin{quote}
“Even when individuals think they are most free, they are in fact in the grip of more insidious forms of power, which operate not solely through direct forms of repression but often through less visible strategies of normalization.”\textsuperscript{962}
\end{quote}

Without discounting the role of the Mumbai Alliance in the process of planning Dharavi, this analysis focuses on the limitations of these “regimes of practices” and addresses the need to open up the discussions about planning informal settlements. This requires a deep understanding of the power relations that run through social bodies and shape the stories of participants. Such a process entails investigating other sources that influence urban spatial transformation without necessarily fitting into the top-down vs. bottom-up dichotomy. The two examined movements, URBZ and the ACORN foundation in India, have based their work upon research, creativity, innovation, and media; their tools have included exhibitions, workshops, identity cards, and publications.

The URBZ team introduced alternative approaches to spatial change in Dharavi, drawing from new sources of creativity, innovation, and research. With the introduction of design workshops and exhibitions, the team helped to unleash the resourcefulness and creative visions of Dharavi’s residents. URBZ developed several theoretical concepts and introduced Dharavi into academic discussions on slum transformation. A new link was created between residents and researchers around the globe that developed independently of narrow political interests.

The ACORN foundation’s contribution in India was to use public media, a series of social activities, and the establishment of community centres to encourage local participation in Dharavi. It created a new link between unregistered (illegal) slum dwellers and the public sphere. ACORN issued identity cards and highlighted the entrepreneurial spirit in Dharavi, arousing the interest of professionals who worked on alternatives to the governmental plan.

In a departure from the ready-made and “traditional” methods of planning slums, URBZ and the ACORN foundation in India offer the basis and possibility of pursuing another method for bringing about change, through \textit{eventalized planning}. This term derives from Foucault’s notion of eventalization, which underlines the importance of investigating specific events in constructing new geographies of knowledge. While in strategic and traditional participatory approaches planning has relied upon drawings, master plans, policies, and surveys, the instruments of eventalized planning are the representations of space and the stereotypes that derive from examining particular events. These representations contribute to both the construction and erasure of elements that form the actual territory of the settlement. They help shape its transformation into a multilayered environment.

\textsuperscript{961} Benveniste, \textit{Mastering the Politics of Planning: Crafting Credible Plans and Policies That Make a Difference}, 67

Stereotypes arising from media coverage and various public events form the basis for examining eventalized planning in relation to Dharavi. These stereotypes include the following:

- A cancerous lump in the centre of Mumbai
- A slum-tourism destination
- A case study of sustainable urbanism
- A playground for ambitious urban planners.

Each of these representations has had a gradual but considerable impact on plans for the settlement’s future shape. In stark contrast to previous planning approaches, eventalized planning is independent of governmental schemes and the goals of leading NGOs. (However, this kind of planning can prove a strong force in helping the state and NGOs in their projections about the future.) Eventalization in Dharavi has contributed to delays in the DRP’s implementation and also triggered specific social and spatial changes. Dharavi’s different representations through several popular events have played a critical role in drawing attention to the area, in some cases attracting various audiences to visit it. It can be said that eventalized planning in Dharavi has contributed to its development into a meeting space for exchanging ideas among visitors and locals, with these exchanges in many instances impacting the settlement’s transformation.

The key point in this closing chapter is not only to explain this planning approach, but also to indicate pathways for putting this approach into practice. Both conflictive practices of planning – strategic and participatory – are management activities that involve a heavy dose of politics and resistance. Participatory planning resists governmental policies and approaches either within or against state norms and guidelines; strategic planning relies on the formation of policies and governmental plans, and if necessary it resists bottom-up strategies.

The vision of a slum-free Mumbai has for many years been at the centre of redevelopment plans for Dharavi. These projects have aimed to integrate informal communities with the rest of the city, by offering the residents what they already have, an apartment. As a result, high-rise buildings that typically go unfinished have been erected in Dharavi and in other Mumbai slums. One example is the first “experimental” building in Dharavi’s sector five. Construction began in an empty lot last year but has since halted for political and bureaucratic reasons, with no clear indication of when and whether the building will be completed. The experience of such projects in Mumbai has already demonstrated that instead of eradicating slums, government actions have actually contributed to their expansion. Unfinished government buildings offer more opportunities for dwellers to move in and construct temporary shelter.

However, the point of this study has not been to make predictions about the DRP, although judging from the experience of the past decade, the first experimental building would seem destined to become just another vertical addition to an already existing slum.

This thesis has not only demonstrated the limitations and failures of for-profit projects, it has also shown the importance and impact of specific events in changing the social and spatial fabric of Dharavi. These events have their origins with people residing outside of Dharavi who have created particular representations of it through films, books, documentaries, lectures,
and art events. Similar events have also originated with NGOs operating from within Dharavi, but their significance has not been adequately represented outside the settlement, and thus they have not managed to attract as much governmental interest. What is missing today in Dharavi is a link between internal and external events, or otherwise a platform where all these events might meet and generate discourse that can attract interest beyond state and local stakeholders (residents, NGOs, etc.). The existing fabric of Dharavi offers opportunities to create collective spaces that can generate and promote communication, participation, and action. These spaces could be either physical or digital and could be launched by groups such URBZ and ACORN in order to negotiate between top-down and bottom-up approaches through eventalized planning.

One could imagine a range of spaces – buildings, public areas, social media, etc. – that could host transformative events on a daily basis. Such spaces could accommodate activities related to tourism, the film industry, academia, art, or social gatherings. Even though they would function independently of government, the state could take the lead in providing these spaces. Innovative collaborations in this spirit among the state, residents, NGOs, and foreigners could lead to the gradual transformation of slums. While the DRP was conceived as a way of bringing in private developers and allowing them to make a considerable financial profit on a state project, the state’s own experience of redevelopment has largely entailed losing a great deal of money. A different, more promising avenue for change is to create such collective spaces and, instead of involving private real-estate developers, to invite private institutions or enterprises (such as tour companies or film directors) to participate.

Eschewing the old strategies of traditional planning methods and the stereotype of the slum as a cancerous lump, eventalized planning offers a means of exploiting the opportunities that informal settlements offer. The resulting solutions can be profitable not only for the government, but also for the community and the local NGOs. Eventalized planning is a design and planning method that is neither top-down nor bottom-up: it originates from in between.

One concern regarding the implications of this methodology goes far beyond the borders of Dharavi. Case studies from around the globe where different social conditions prevail (for example, a high degree of criminality) might generate different kinds of events. What kinds of events are relevant here, and how do they contribute to transforming and shaping the socio-spatial conditions of these areas? How could the role of government change in association with residents and NGOs in eventalized planning? And what potential partnerships and collaborations would take shape through this process? A second concern is the need to assess the consequences of the suggested methods for the field of urban design in general: What would change in the field of urbanism if we accepted eventalized planning as a way of shaping space? And how would broader political and economic changes affect these events? Further research might focus on the form, shape, and structural programme of these creative platforms that generate and promote communication, participation, and action. It might also explore the optimal location of such platforms: Are they better placed in central locations or spread throughout different areas of a settlement? And finally, what other kinds of possibilities would emerge once eventalized planning is accepted as an important tool not only in the field of urbanism, but also in architecture?
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