



POLITECNICO
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Honors thesis

ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY

Abstract

Production/Protection

A different perspective on industrial districts between business and
associationism

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by

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In 2004 Edmondo Berselli wrote: «There was a time when, from Piacenza to Rimini, a multitude of souls built the Emilian Model. Of course, they didn't even know what was the model that was going to become so popular».

This model has been thoroughly investigated and nowadays there seems to be some general agreement on two of its features. On one hand, its economic success which is tied to the very structure of the district (of the eighteen "business cluster" Michael Porter identified in his famous *Viaggio in Italia* in the late 1980s no less than eight were in Emilia). On the other hand, in those lands and communities mutual help, hospitality, inclusion, cooperation/associationism are rooted practice of common living. Nowadays those practices are put through the wringer by the demographic and migratory issue. A sphere empowered by a scattered sustainability that distances it from concepts as charity, donation, casualness. Production and protection stand still as powerful junction of the Emilian Model, continually reshaped by the political, economic and demographic crisis.

The aim of this research is not to retrace those complex dynamics, better analysed by others. Rather, in a much more partial manner, it tentatively wants to observe how these two layers of the Emilian Model lays on the ground. It observes the productive grounds, the associationism networks and the welfare policies. To do so, this research refers to a key city of the Model: Parma, the core of the Food Valley.

The research raises some issues: what is the nature of the relationship between the productive and the associationism ground, beyond the rooted Emilian tradition of Corporate Social Responsibility? What is nowadays the corporate volunteering? Namely, how the business acts when it comes together with social solidarity's issues? And what other effects it can try to accomplish? What effects of propagation are given in those spreading processes? Other than the crucial role of the banking institutions, who else promotes and sustains the solidarity projects? How a mediation which is linguistic, as well as driven by interests and values, takes place? The aim of this research is to highlight some features of this "middle ground" between economy and associational solidarity. That is, to highlight some features of the current development of the district model.

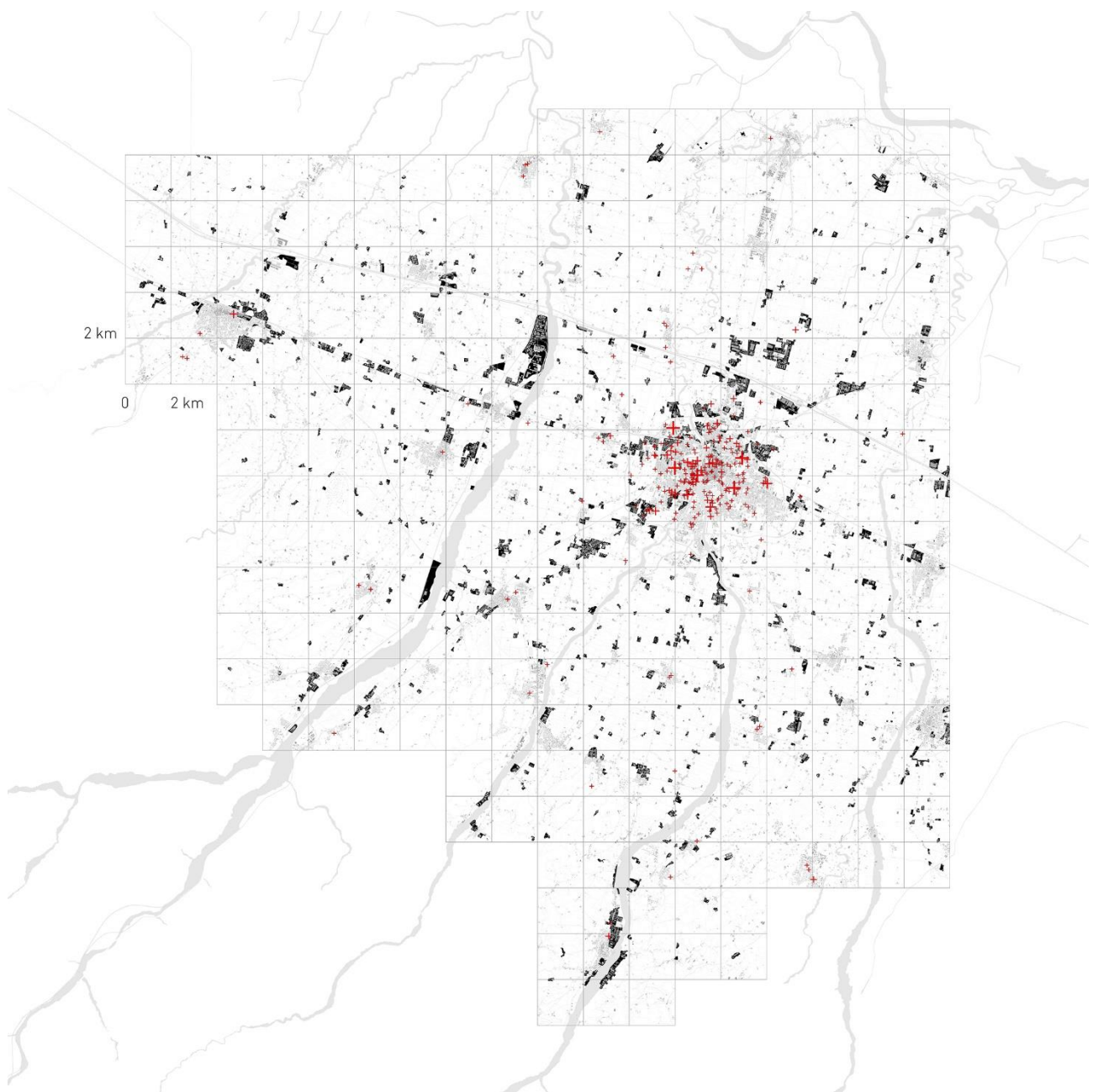


Figure 1 The map shows the superimposition of production space (in black) and associations space (signed with red crosses). Elaboration of the author on the basis of regional cartography.

1. Edmondo Berselli, *Quel gran pezzo dell'Emilia*, Mondadori, Milano, 2004.
2. Michael Porter, *Il vantaggio competitivo delle nazioni*, 1990,
<http://librieconomia.com/scaricare-il-vantaggio-competitivo-delle-nazioni-michael-e/>

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