

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture Construction City  
**Honors theses**

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**Mapping Another\_Mumbai**

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It is highly difficult to see some order in chaos. The whole city of Mumbai could appear as an aggregate of informal neighborhoods, identifiable with the word “slum”, outside the borders of the modernly planned city. Some people see these slums as an illness, ready to attack the city and probably destroy it. However, this extreme simplification turns out to be completely false during the analysis which is here presented. In actual fact, if someone wants to understand the nature, the soul and character of this city, in other words its *genius loci*, he must fully understand the contradictory appearance that characterizes Mumbai. Nothing can explain this environment better than the “slum”, made of different cultures, histories and citizen relationships.



The relationship between Urban Villages and the Metropolis

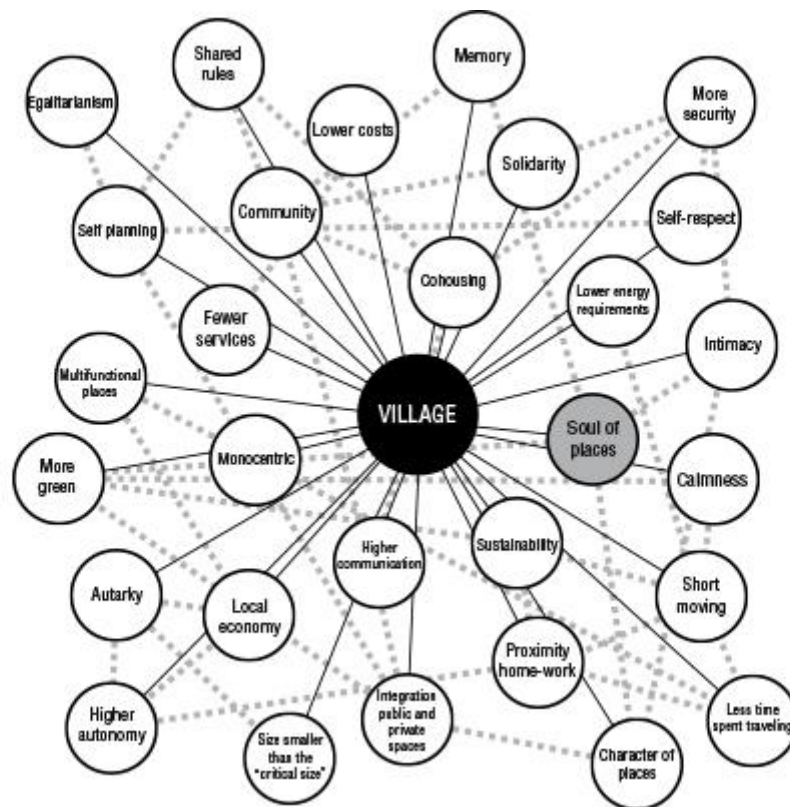
The main purpose of this research is to propose a new way of looking at Mumbai and at its urban villages, starting off from where the largest amount of people actually live. This study is the result of the attentive analysis of official documents on the one hand, and fieldwork throughout the months of March and April 2013.

In official documents we generally tend to refer to an urban development as to the extended areas outside a city as if they were a uniform not well defined area. However, the visits and the interviews of the inhabitants made it clear how these hamlets are different from one another, and how each of them has its own characteristics. Historically it is possible to define the generation of the big metropolitan area from the little villages spread throughout the old seven islands of Bombay. During the Portuguese and English colonial period, these little villages saw their biggest expansion and wealth. Afterwards, they were involved in the development of the modern city from both a geographical and economic point of view, passing from a rural to an industrial settlement. That caused a substantial lack of livelihoods, and the villagers were forced to adapt to a new social role. From this moment onwards the history of the villages is strictly linked to the modern urban structure in a mutual exchange of services and infrastructure struggling to maintain their social structure and traditions.



Inside the Village

The villages visited and mapped during our permanence in Mumbai were 31 in all, as a sample of the area of Greater Mumbai. By highlighting their qualities and mapping their urban structure, it was possible to develop a different concept of the village, passing from a geographical concept to a more realistic one, formed by the relationships between citizens. All the revisions of the data collected are based on these samples, initially in a descriptive way using a comparative table, then more critically to deeply analyze the city structure.



The Village

Regarding current topics such as increasing global population and the lack of available space, the urban village is presented as an alternative solution for the high density city model and low rise residential settlement capable of satisfying the needs of its inhabitants.

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