



Cow Day & Slumventures

1. The Indian City through the Perspective of a Cow
2. Developed or Undeveloped: Who is Happier?

Cow Day

Rebecca C. Hui

August 2011

Landscape Environment Advancement Foundation
(LEAF), 2011, Doc.7

LEAF is engaged in research and publication in the area of landscape design and environmental planning. It supports research programs of varying durations every year.

Material produced by LEAF may be freely reproduced. LEAF and the author should be acknowledged while doing so.

LEAF invites applications for research positions.

For details please write to,

M/S. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat, 901-Panchtirth,
Opp. Aristoville, S.M.Road, Ahmedabad-380 015.
INDIA

T # 91 79 2692 3054

E # landscapeindia@usa.net

Contents

LIFE THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF A COW

Introduction	01
Collisions	02
Cow Day	04

Rural Village Cow

Lucia Village	07
---------------	----

Old City Cow

Panzy	09
Reading Cow Maps	11
Where She Likes	12
How She Moves	13
The Invisible Cow	14

New City Cow

Circles	15
Where She Likes	17
How She Moves	18
The Invisible Cow	19

Comparing Panzy and Circles	21
-----------------------------	----

A True Story	23
--------------	----

A SLUM CALLED HOLLYWOOD

Form Gives Way to Formlessness	25
Slumconomics	29
Surveying Happiness	31
Mapping Happiness	35

Introduction

Connecting Dots

India is home to twenty two out of the world's fastest growing cities. This phenomenon has sparked of unprecedented debate on how this process will continue over the next couple of decades as well as intense discussion on what is 'development'; how it has begun to affect people across economic scales, and land over diverse geographical range. This dialogue has emerged from within and outside the country; most of which is speculative in its nature; based on specific issues or existing theoretical frameworks.

Curious to understand this phenomenon first hand; Rebecca, an undergraduate student double majoring in architecture and business management decided to come down to Ahmedabad from Berkeley. She decided to understand the city through everyday objects that were visible in the day to day fabric of Ahmedabad. While at first glance, studies like observing a cow and investigating a slum might seem like cliched ideas; Rebecca through her systematic mapping brings some interesting insights into the research. She has not only observed and object but has plotted its life cycle within its urban and rural setting; by connecting points of its pause, transit, transformation by surrounding phenomena; and influence on the same.

The value of this study lies in the fact that while trying to understand the large growing blobs of cities in India; Rebecca chose to document honestly and through a very personal lens, the microscopic ones that form a network below the surface.

Anjali Jain
August 2011

Collisions

An Autobiographical Commentary

I decided to come to Ahmedabad because of the opportunity to witness development in a city known as the fastest growing city in India and third in the world only after Chengdu and Chongqing. It is astounding when the rate of capital flooding into Asian cities can swallow up dirt-and-cow neighborhoods and erupt whole Mannhattans in a short matter of years.

I went to a mall the first weekend I arrived looking for ethnic pants to blend in better with the cultural landscape. As an American girl, it was a reprieve from the non-air conditioned circus that was outside. Yet as soon I stepped outside the mall, three young girls crowded me, pleading at me in Gujarati and pointing toward the coconut stand. Although I tried to weave around them, they were so persistent in chasing me that I gave in. After buying them coconuts, they continued following me, pointing at the ice cream joint. Before I knew it, 2 more children began following me.

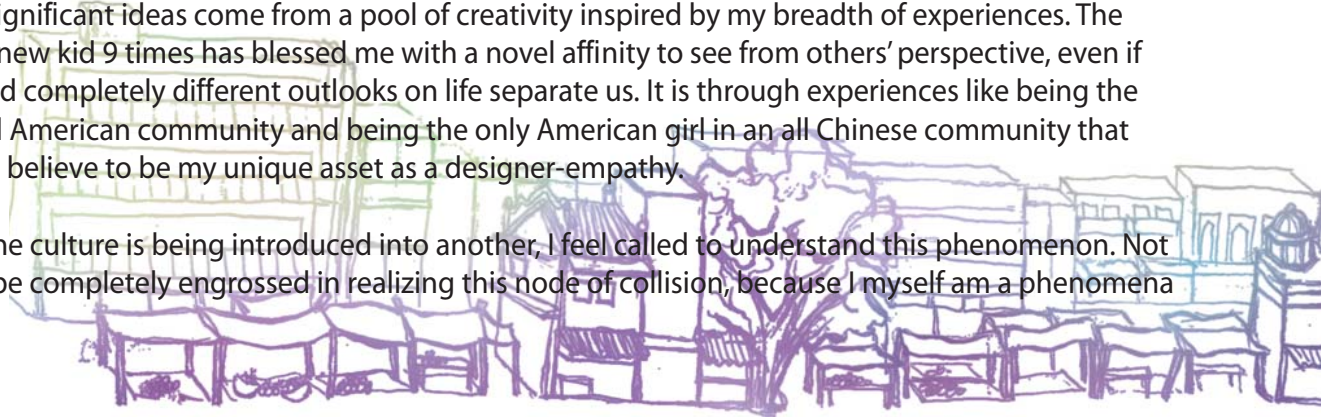
Something is disconcerting about the idea that I can walk out from an iced out megamall to feel dirt beneath my feet, to be watching my step to avoid stepping on people sleeping on the sidewalk, to see cows grazing at a pile of trash, and to encounter real hunger upon seconds of being in a stocked building. Ahmedabad boasts a whopping 66 malls, the most of any Indian city. Yet, the majority of the leasing spaces are not even filled and these malls quickly become obsolete. On the contrary, people are sardined onto the roads, inching to create sleeping space. There is incredible wealth flooding into India, yet desperateness is everywhere.

This anomaly of Western-styled commercial growth and the development of informal neighborhoods is a consequence of design not being able to catch up to the pace of development. It happens when money is poured into wherever we see fit without really understanding the people and neighborhoods our investments will affect. The result is an eerie dynamic of malls, hotels, and skyscrapers sandwiching pockets of rural slums; rural slums that were once long thriving villages.

This is not to say that Indian cities should not develop, because it will happen and India is in a crucial moment in time of taking on the global stage. India is composed of layers of culture and a breadth of diversity built over thousands of years, dissimilar to America's almost blank state at the country's conception. This context necessitates designers to suggest a sustainable model of development that carries India's lower classes and blends with the environmental and cultural landscapes of India. The definition of "developed" for India must extend beyond our idea of 4 wheel sedans and suburban houses. The man driving the auto rickshaw, the boy pushing the tomato cart, the girl feeding the cows will all be part of the developed world tomorrow, one that is more developed than the one I live in right now. But let us hope they can enjoy it as well.

On an autobiographical note, my portrait is composed by a myriad of experiences. I have been to a dozen countries and have moved schools 9 times. I have experienced Navajo Indian Reservation Pow-Wows, wandered the Sonoran desert, enjoyed Hong Kong's boat festivals, accompanied Berkeley's hippies, lived in New Jersey suburbs, danced at Jewish Bar Mitzvahs, performed in Prague's flying cathedrals, and more recently, watched a Hindi horror film. Everything I have learned from educational institutions has been valuable, but the moments that have marked me the most are the instances of being in new places and learning from people of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. My most significant ideas come from a pool of creativity inspired by my breadth of experiences. The experience of being the new kid 9 times has blessed me with a novel affinity to see from others' perspective, even if 10,000 miles of ocean and completely different outlooks on life separate us. It is through experiences like being the only Chinese girl in an all American community and being the only American girl in an all Chinese community that has instilled in me what I believe to be my unique asset as a designer-empathy.

When the influence of one culture is being introduced into another, I feel called to understand this phenomenon. Not just to witness it, but to be completely engrossed in realizing this node of collision, because I myself am a phenomena

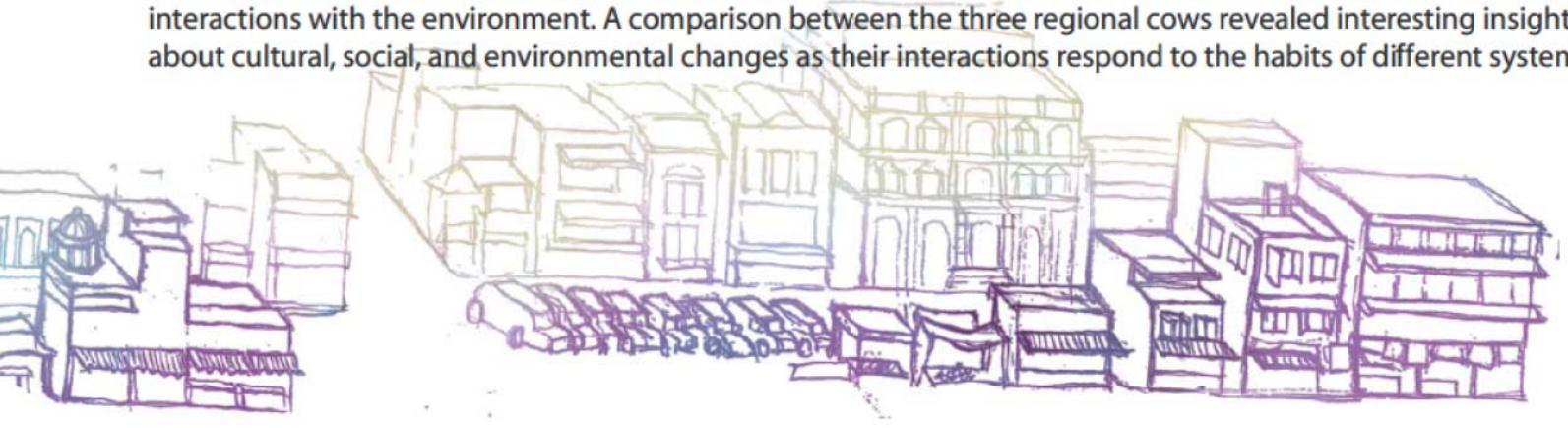


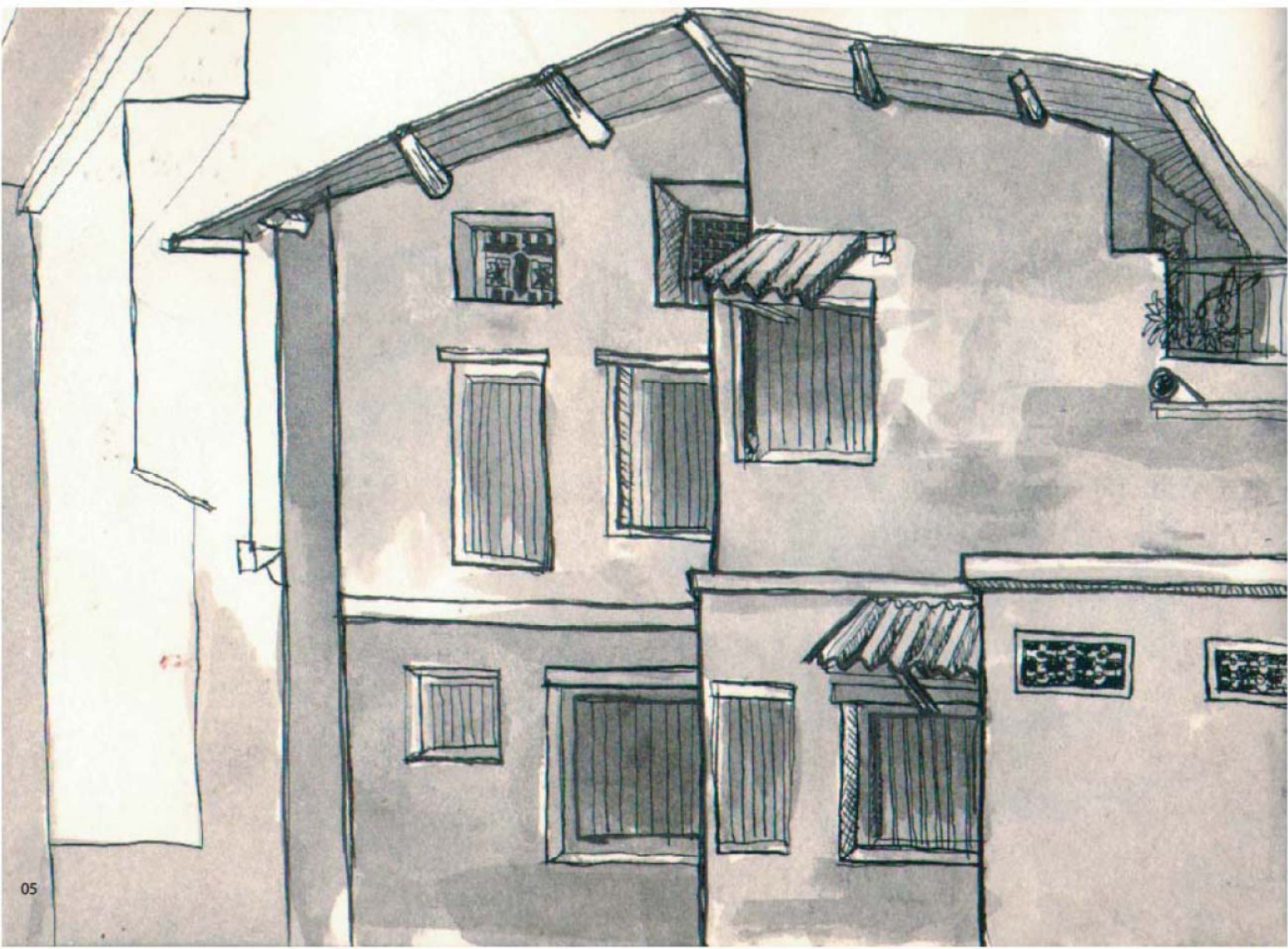
Cow Day

Molecules bounce excitedly in a state of high entropy, or become fixed in a rigid lattice in the vice versa situation. In chemistry, a system's state can be understood by observing how molecules interact with its environment. Likewise, much can be revealed about the state of a changing society by following how its inhabitants "bounce" around its surroundings.

Cows roaming in a city are a phenomenon unique to India. Cows and other livestock have participated significantly in Indian society for thousands of years. But as cities develop at unprecedented rates and cultural mentalities begin to change, the state of the cow is also being affected. I figured following a cow and documenting its reactions to different stimuli may reveal some interesting and relatable insights about the state of the changing Indian society.

I followed three cows in regions demonstrating progressing degrees of development. The first in a rural village in Kutch, India's most northwest region. The second in Ahmedabad's Old City, a place that has retained many cultural traditions while juxtaposed against an urbanizing setting. The third cow was found in what would be considered the "ideal urban city". During my journey, I documented the cows' habits of eating, pacing, defecating, and their interactions with the environment. A comparison between the three regional cows revealed interesting insights about cultural, social, and environmental changes as their interactions respond to the habits of different systems





Cow Day

June 29, 2011

Marck Chewk, Old City



Rural Village Cow, Lucia Village

Lucia village is located 30 kilometers north from the city of Bhuj in the western region of Gujarat.

Like most rural villages which sustain by cultivating their own agriculture, Lucia utilizes their cows for farm work.

Stray cows are uncommon in villages as the cows are very much part of the rural society and perceived filially. Some cows would shamelessly approach village huts and "horn" the door when in need.

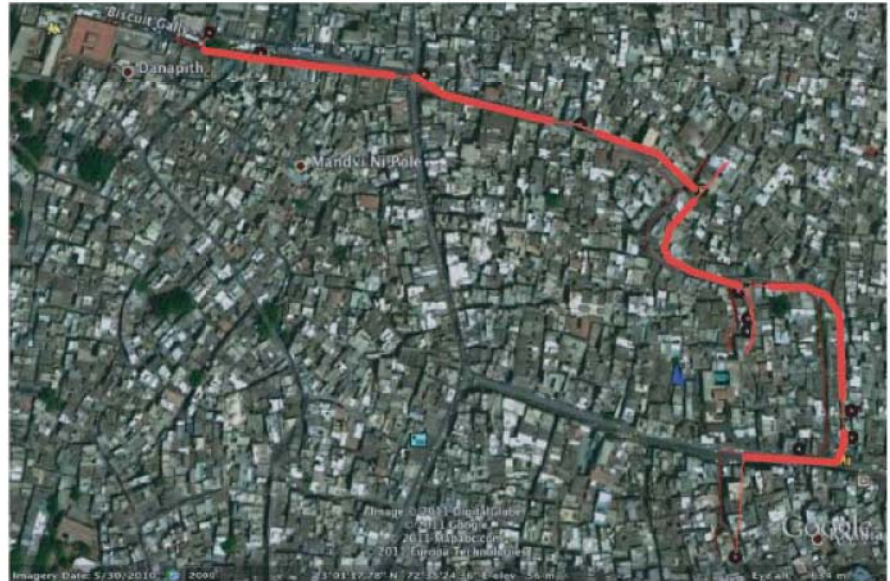




Old City Cow: Panzy

Total Distance Traveled: 1062 Meters

Travel Time: 11:00AM-2:00PM



Old City Cow: Panzy

The Old City is located on the east side of the Sabarmati River. The city is established along the axis of Bhadra Fort and Teen Darwaja. The area is characterized by winding streets with veins of residential districts placed around Bazaars and Mosques. Relics of cultural architecture can be found throughout this region, from residential houses to commercial buildings. A sense of traditional practices can be felt here.

"Panzy" was named Panzy because she was continuously bullied by other cows and dogs . On the brighter side, humans were very filial towards Panzy, hand feeding it Parathas (Indian styled Tortillas) and petting her as they pass by. On her journey, Panzy found many flowers and mango seeds to eat. At the end of her journey, Panzy found a counterpart to rest with in a neighborhood for an hour.



Reading Cow Maps

Where She Likes

This map highlights the places where the cow likes to participate in certain activities (Cowtivities) in respect to a particular area.

How She Moves

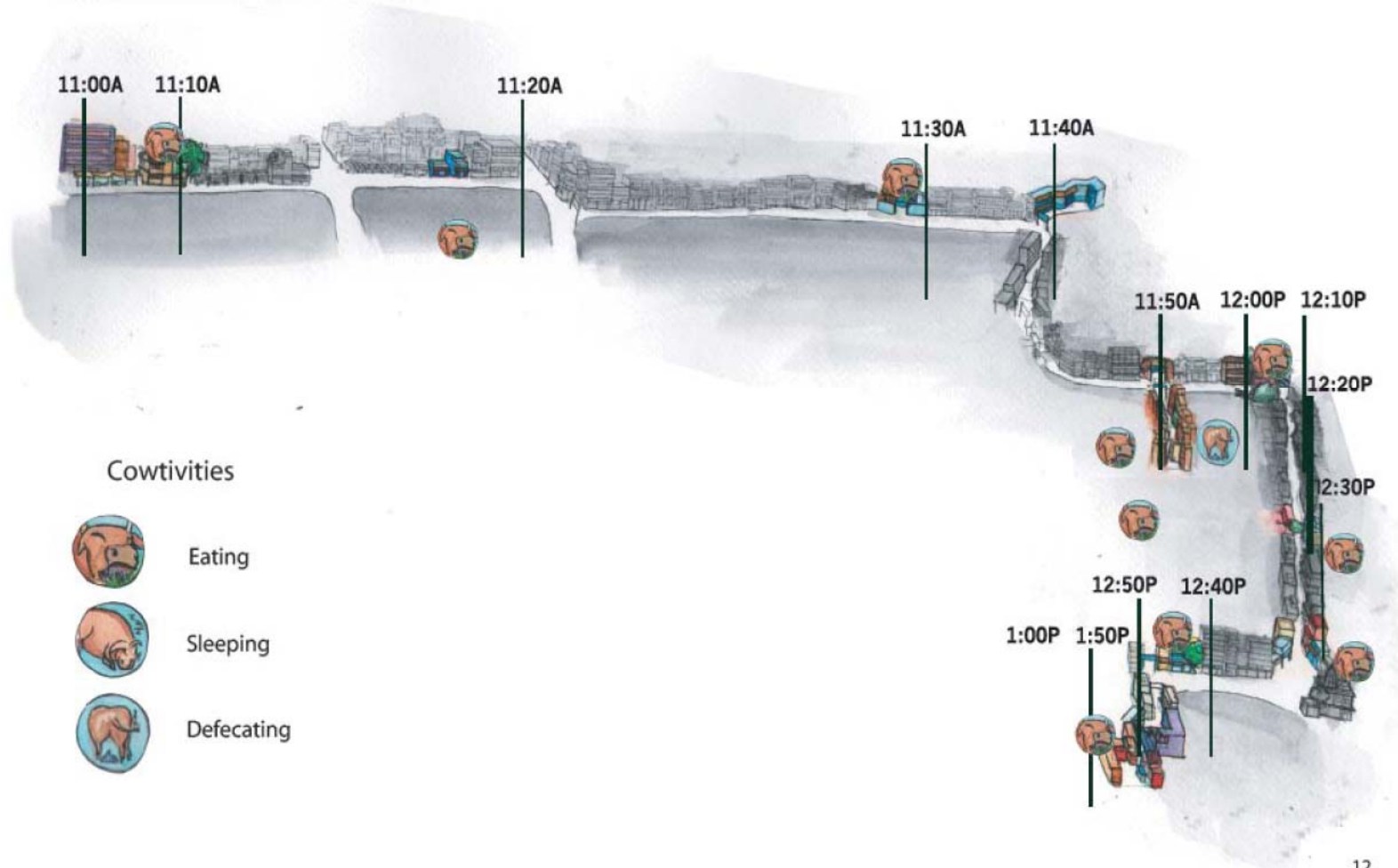
This map intends to show the moving dynamics of a region as it relates to the cow's movement. It records the cow's pacing as she reacts to different stimuli such as the width of the road and surrounding vehicle typologies. Pace was determined by measuring the number of steps a cow took in 30-second intervals.

The Invisible Cow

Imagine following an invisible force and being able to see what it left and took from its path. This map highlights the cow's eating and defecating patterns. These records can be telling of the habits and quality of an area. If there were an efficient waste management system, would it be there? What does the fact that it's on a sidewalk reveal about attitudes towards sanitation? Would it be old if it were being reused for manure?

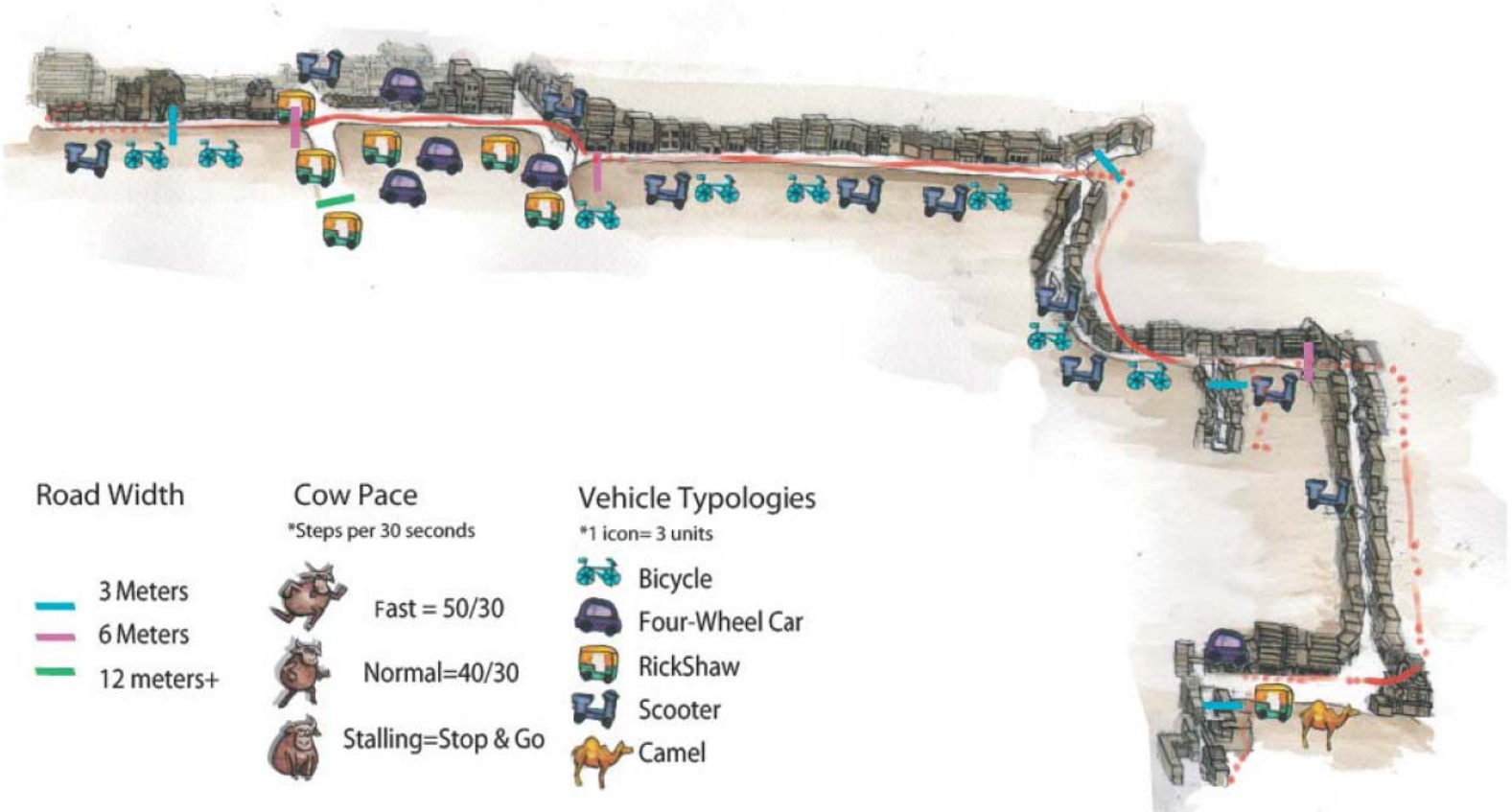
Where She Likes

Residential & Commercial



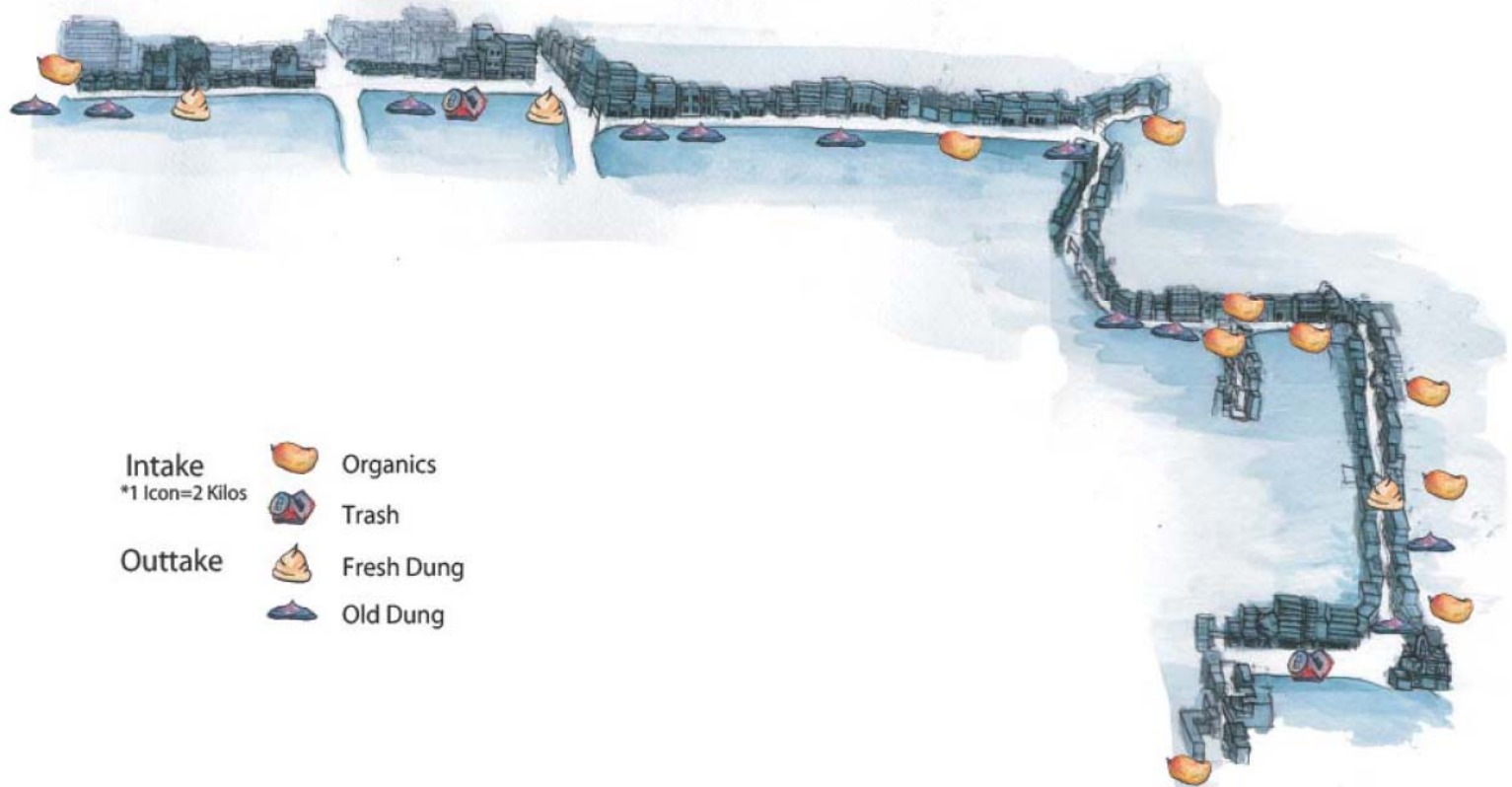
How She Moves

Pace & Traffic



The Invisible Cow

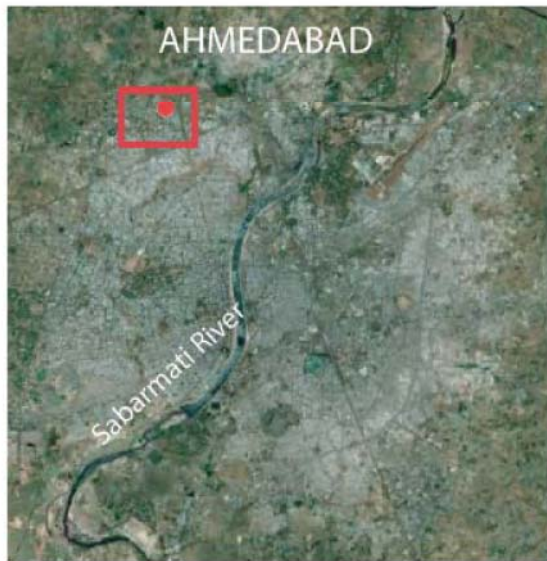
Intake & Outtake



New City Cow: Circles

Total Distance Travelled 1.98 Kilometers

Time: 5:00PM - 7:30PM

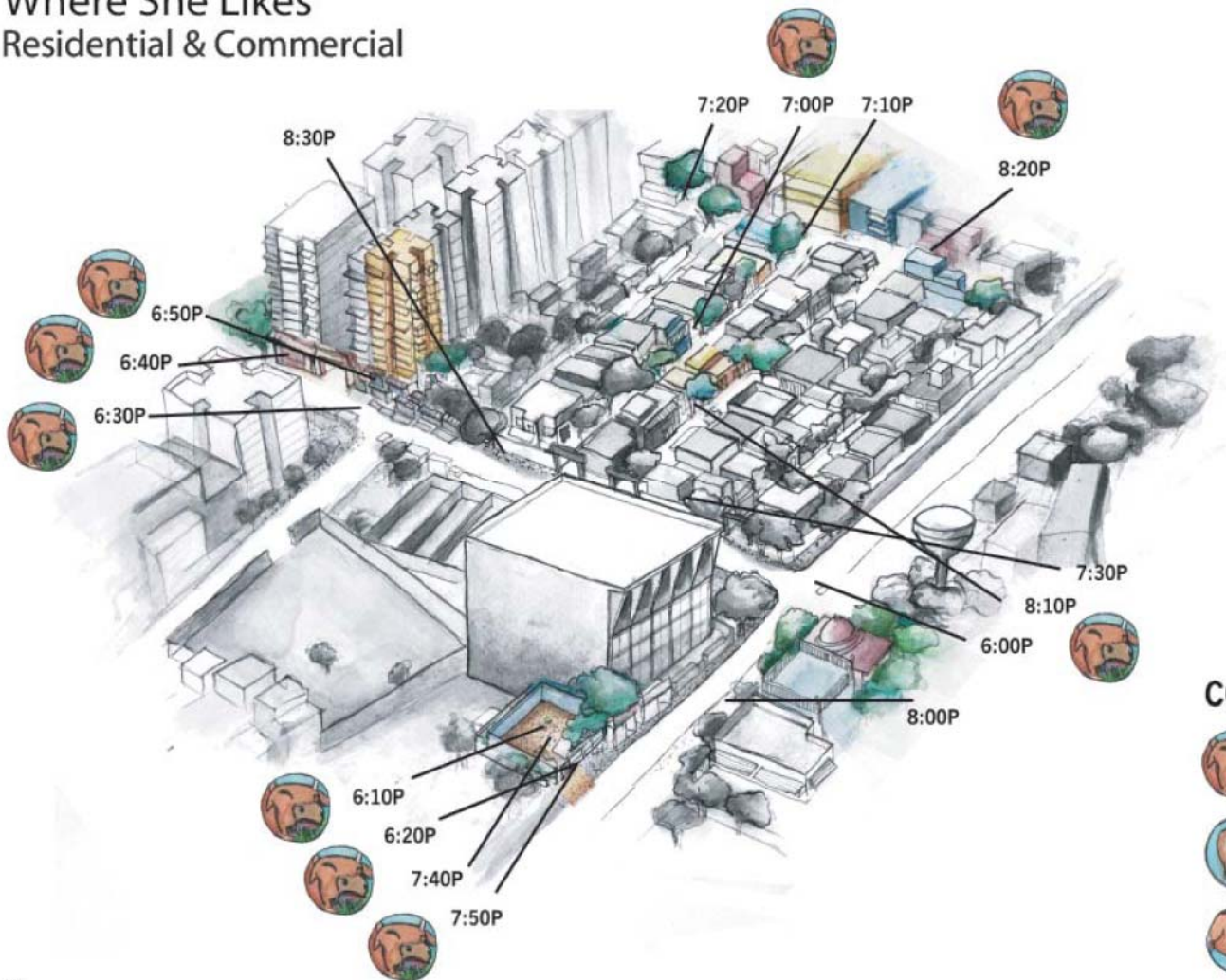


The City of Ahmedabad has experienced tremendous growth in the past few years, to the extent to be rated by Forbes Magazine as the third fastest growing city in the world. The region where the New City Cow was found was in what would be considered a “developed city scene” with features such as high traffic densities, 4 + story buildings, shopping malls, and white-collared workers.

“Circles” was named Circles because she kept circling the same route, three times to be exact. She spent the majority of her time in residential areas or enclosed concaves, while moving quickly through districts with heavy traffic. Circles’ interactions with her human counterparts were not as fortunate as that of Panzy’s. The humans were very hostile; dunking her with water when she got too close to shops. When crossing the road, cars would honk at Circles (though no concept of road kill, just yet). It is no surprise that she behaved quite restlessly, even horning a woman at a bus stop.

Where She Likes

Residential & Commercial



COWTIVITIES



Eating



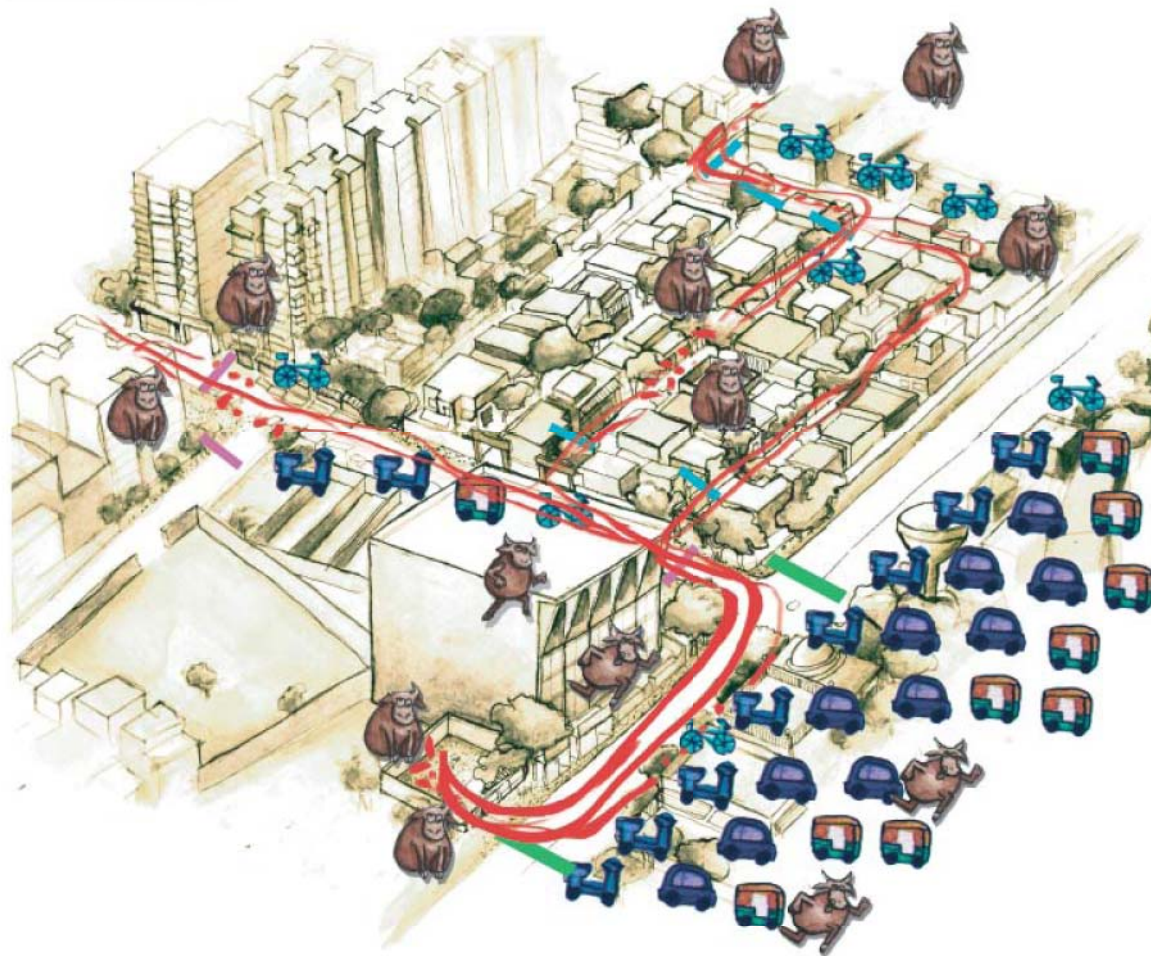
Defecating



Sleeping

How She Moves

Pace & Traffic



Cow Pace
*Steps per 30 seconds



Road Width



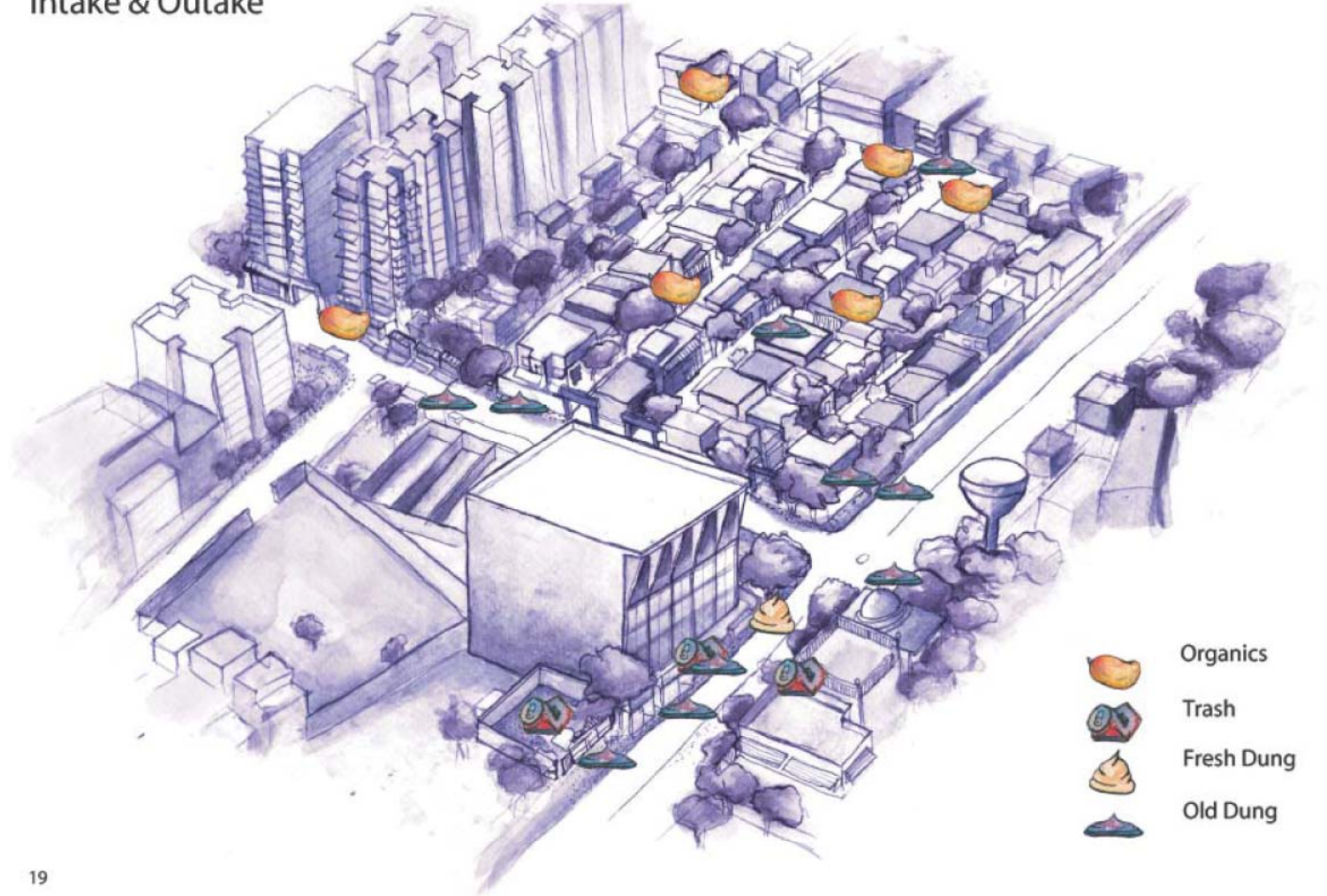
Vehicle Typology

*1 Icon= 3 Units



The Invisible Cow Map

Intake & Outake





Comparing Circles and Panzy

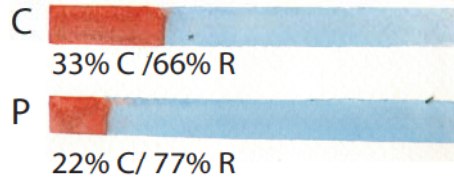
Habits of the cows and their environment during their 3 hour journeys

REGIONAL PREFERENCES

*By percent of time spent in each region

Commercial

Residential



Both cows preferred to stay in residential areas

DEFECATION PATTERNS

*By patch

Side walk

Road



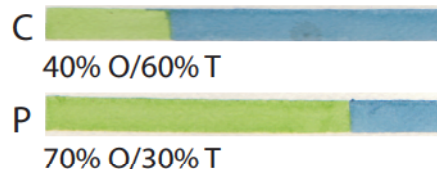
There was much more dung on the road versus the side walk in the old city than in the new city

DIET

*By kilo of consumption type

Organics

Trash



Circles consumed more than twice the amount of trash that Panzy consumed

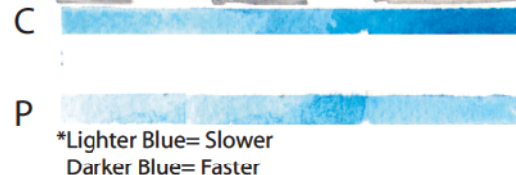
PACE AND ROAD WIDTH

*By number of steps taken per 30 seconds lapsed

3 M

6 M

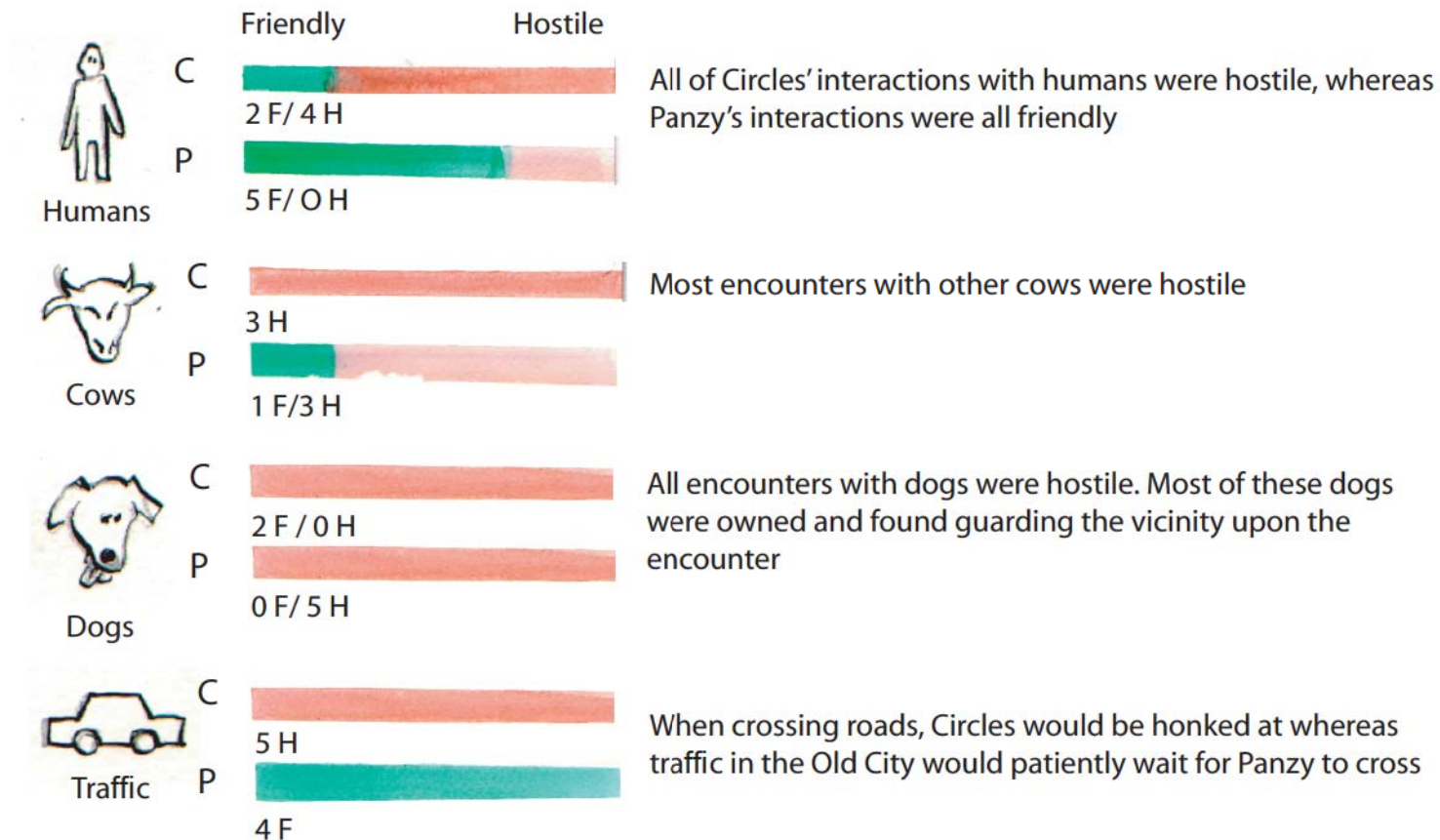
12+ M



Both cows walked slower in narrower roads and faster in wider roads. But Circles walked at a faster pace than Panzy in general.

NATURE OF INTERACTIONS

*By number of encounters



A True Story



One sunny day, I was enjoying a coconut on Mandvi Beach



Then, a cow pranced towards me, boldly sticking its tongue inches away from my face towards my coconut



All of a sudden, the man working at the coconut stand came out of nowhere and socked the cow in the face!

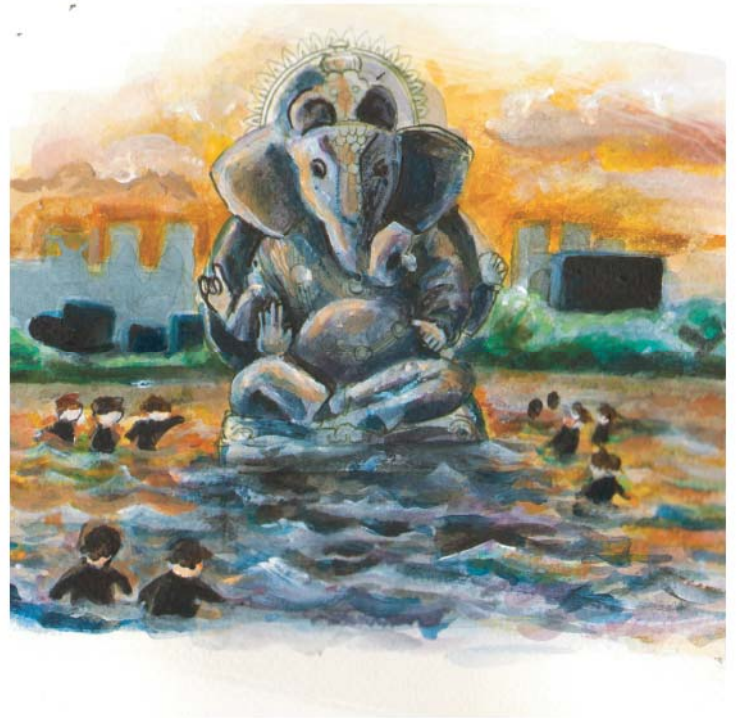
Ganesha Lord of Prosperity



Visarjan Festival in September



Statues are submerged into ocean



A Slum Called Hollywood

I asked a slum resident, “If you had a college degree and the opportunity to make a lot of money, what would you do with that money?”

Obviously, he’d become a doctor or businessman and move out of this slum.

Instead, he said: “We have lived here for 200 years and our economy, culture, and way of life revolves around building these statues of Ganesh. I would take the degree and money to become a better artisan and carve Ganesh more beautifully.” When we think about slums, we think poverty, corruption, and unhappy people. Yet I would say that image is quite off key having encountered Gulbai Tekra, informally known as “Hollywood”. The things I noticed first were typical from a foreigner’s eye: People clashing symbols in a temple, tents lined up with fire stoves all throughout the street, and half naked children running around. But what struck me most were the infinite stacks of elephant idols lined up on the streets. I am not entirely sure the story behind the name “Hollywood”, but my theory is that the sight of this slum is so contrasting against the two commercial districts nearby that it appears to be a painted set-up you’d only find in Hollywood.

Ironically, Ganesh is the God of prosperity and success. In a developed society, happiness is often perceived as having achieved success and attained a comfortable life. Slum eradication has been an aggressive agenda with development objectives in hopes to achieve “happiness” by encouraging the pursuit of a more formal occupation and comfortable living. City inhabitants have a negative perception of the slum and have been pushing for its eradication. As a result, the government will be shutting down the slum in September to widen the roads and build bus stops. But before generations of communities are displaced and their homes destroyed, let us think carefully about the values of the communities who live there. Are we any happier off living in a developed state, in the hustle and bustle stress of work? Do money and a more comfortable life necessarily make us happier? Can slum dwellers still teach us about community, values, and happiness?



Gulbai Tekra

Slumconomics

Procedure



Plaster of Paris strengthened by coconut fibers is mixed



Mix is placed into rubber template and left to dry for 1-2 hours



Limb parts are assembled onto statues



Statues are painted and crafted for detail



Statues are ready for sale

The village's entire sustenance is *Ganesh*
Employment? Making *Ganesh*
Religion? Worshipping *Ganesh*
Education? How to make *Ganesh*

Sale & Distribution



Small
0.5 meters
100 ₹



Medium
4-5 meters
1500-2000 ₹



Large
7-8 Meters
10000 ₹



Production 80,000 statues per year

Distribution Across India by wholesalers

Costs Labor wages-250/300 ₹ per statue | Rubber stamp mold-175 ₹

Pro 20% of statue price

Employment 95% statue workers | 5% other

Surverying Happiness

Methodology I went door to door at the slum and asked for their background, mood, and stories. I then asked them to describe their happiness on a scale from 1-10 and gave them that number of commercial districts nearby.



Bhorda
Statue Worker
Gulbai Tekra
6

"The government is going to destroy my home to build a bus stop"



Vardhan
Office Assistant
Gulbai Tekra
3

"I hate the rain"



Jagdish
Flutist
Gulbai Tekra
10

"I've lived here for 50 years.
But I am worried about my home"



Wathi
Widow
Gulbai Tekra
1

"My husband just died and
my child is blind"



Abha
Statue Worker
Gulbai Tekra
10

"I love the rain"



Veeri
House Wife
Gulbai Tekra
8



Madhu
House Wife
Gulbai Tekra
8



Solanki
Statue Worker
Gulbai Tekra
1

"I don't know where we'll live"



Dallu
House Maid
Gulbai Tekra
10



Khalibhai
Rickshaw Driver
Ahmedabad
5



Raju
Unemployed
Gulbai Tekra
3

"Evictions "



Bhani
Bakery Manager
Ahmedabad
9

"Business is going well"



Vishal
Electrical Engineering
Ahmedabad
5

Tired"



Rajiv
Finance
Ahmedabad
5

"I'm tired"



Yogi
Tour & Travel Consultant
Ahmedabad
3

"I am anxious for admissions results for Columbia's MBA program."



Salia
Marketing
Ahmedabad
5



Suhash
Finance
Ahmedabad
5



Manesh
Cafe Manager
Ahmedabad
4

"No guests"



D.K.
Engineer
Ahmedabad
4

"To be happy, one
must be successful"



Vineet
Govt Service
Ahmedabad
3

"I travel too
much. I'd
like to be
with
my family"



Bharat
Statue Worker
Gulbai Tekra
1

"My wife just
died and I have
five boys"



Kali
Civil Worker
Ahmedabad
8



Shreya
Engineering
Student
Ahmedabad
8

HAPPINESS MAP

HAPPINESS METER



RELEVANT REASONS



Development intends to improve quality of life.

REJECTION RATIOS		
	City	Slum
Refused to be Interviewed	6	0
On a basis of "being late"	3	0
Refused to be photographed	4	0
On a basis of having to hold flowers	2	0
Asked "What is this for?"	12	0

But as we develop, do we...

become more aware of our egos?

trust less?

overcomplicate contentness?

Acknowledgements

To all the cows that never judged me for being a creep

To Mr. Aniket Bhagwat for providing me with the oppoirtunity to pursue this study, and more importantly, helping me realize life beyond "market value"



Rebecca Hui is pursuing simultaneous undergraduate degrees in Business Administration and Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. This study is part of her summer training of 10 weeks. In her free time, she enjoys sketching, playing cello, and creative writing.

E# rebeccahui3@gmail.com



Landscape Environment Advancement Foundation
INDIA