TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Norrbotten's Technological Megasystem as a heritage discourse: paradoxes and controversies

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
The paper investigates controversial impacts industry has on uses of built heritage in the northernmost part of Sweden, focusing on conceptualisation of Norrbotten’s Technological Megasystem (NTM). NTM was designated as a national industrial heritage site in 2001. Its core sites are the iron ore mines in Kiruna and Malmberget, the railway connecting the mining towns to the harbours in Narvik (Norway) and Luleå, the hydropower plant in Porjus, along the Lule River, and the fortress in Boden, established to protect those resources. Urban transformations of Kiruna and Malmberget, with the necessity of historic buildings to be demolished or relocated to continue mining, exemplify a first paradox. The
economic paradigm that since the 19th century created a built environment, with recognised heritage values, is now destroying that same environment. In the mining towns, decisions about preservation of built heritage, which are supposed to be long-term oriented, depend on volatile fluctuation of iron ore price in the global market. The technological evolution of NTM is also challenging the connection between built heritage and local communities, which exemplify a second paradox. NTM, once labour intensive, requires fewer and fewer workers, but is nevertheless more productive than ever. As a result, settlements and communities like Porjus, Kiruna and Malmberget are gradually becoming almost redundant or “expendable” for the industry. This opens the question about present and future uses of this built heritage. In some cases, it is at risk of being exploited as a private strategic asset (company areas of Malmberget and Kiruna), in other cases it is affected by processes of underuse and musealisation (Porjus and Boden’s fortress) or overuse and gentrification (Svartöstaden neighborhood in Luleå).

The paper presents paradoxical case studies of heritage management, but it also critically investigates contrasting perceptions and representations related to the narrative framed by the NTM heritage discourse.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Andrea Luciani, born 1981, has a MS in Architecture and a PhD in Preservation of Architectural Heritage at Politecnico di Milano. His research has dealt with the analysis of indoor climate within heritage buildings, with the evolution of environmental standards for preventive conservation and with the history of climate control systems in museums and historic conservation environments. His interests have also covered the conservation of modern heritage and, more recently, the discussion of the concept of resilience in the field of building conservation. As Post-Doc at Luleå University of Technology, he is currently involved in a research project to study how to make heritage timber buildings more energy efficient in cold climates. This position gave him the opportunity to enter in contact with the controversial topic of the urban transformations of the historic mining towns of Malmberget and Kiruna.

Jennie Sjöholm, born 1974, has a MS in Integrated Conservation of Built Environments at University of Gothenburg and PhD in Architecture at Luleå University of Technology. Her research has dealt with heritagisation of built environments, and how heritagisation interacts with structural changes in the built environments. The conceptualisations of built heritage in the urban transformation of Kiruna was a case study in her doctoral thesis. As associate senior lecturer in urban design & conservation at Luleå University of Technology, she is currently studying heritagisation processes in the town of Luleå, and how postwar architecture is perceived as heritage.