TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S): AN INTERPLAY OF DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Expansion of the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah: Sustainable urban planning and development in a holy city

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
Present in person with a written paper

• Abstract (300 words):
For many years, the negative effects of complex urbanisation and imbalanced development have caused major environmental and community problems. Consequently, the World Commission on Environment and Development has advocated sustainable urban development in order to address the needs of urban communities and improve living standards. It integrates biophysical and socio-economic growth while retaining natural systems. Many governments and institutions now implement such measures. According to UN-Habitat (2014), urbanization shows great potential as a catalyst for prosperity, development and social well-being. New development approaches are needed to reduce harmful urbanisation while achieving sustainability. Urbanization acts
as a powerful transformative power by incorporating three elements: Urban Legislation, Design and Finance.

In Saudi Arabia, the 2016 Demographic Survey shows a rising population: 27.2 million (2010) to 31.4 (2016) – a 4.5 million (33.8%) increase: annual growth of 2.54% (GAS 2016). The early 1970s’ massive oil revenue accelerated urbanization in major cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Mecca, and Medina. Medina has undergone major transformation. Changes in its built environment have affected its character and culture, bringing imbalanced urban development, informal settlements and traffic congestions. The dramatic increase of permanent residents and visitors has stimulated expansion of the Prophet’s Mosque. Existing demographics indicate that visitors will reach 23 million by 2030. This will necessitate further expansion alongside drastic changes in the city fabric – significantly challenging the authorities. This article highlights the impact of the Mosque on Medina’s urban planning and development strategies. It also outlines how the city has evolved and how inadequate planning and management have forced authorities to achieve sustainable urban development. Our investigation notes an urgent need to achieve sustainable urban development and implement national policies balancing urban and socio-economic development while preserving Medina’s spiritual and natural characteristics. To achieve this, all relevant stakeholders must be empowered.

Keywords: Urban planning, sustainable development; urban governance; the Prophet Mosque; Madinah; Saudi Arabia.

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

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