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

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Networks and Patterns of Technology, Culture and Society: the Case of Lucknow Old City, India

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:

i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):

Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populated state, is a city of about 2.8 million population, which has a layered history through the Mughal and British periods and is known for its living heritage. Spatially, the city spreads over a Municipal area of 350 sq. km. and has new planned areas, British cantonment areas and the old organically evolved core as its disparate components. This paper is set in the locality of Aminabad, a cauldron of traditional activities and dense urban fabric, displaying signs of decaying infrastructure and a de-gentrifying society. But the social interactions prevalent here are vibrant and are dominantly visible as living heritage through cultural landscapes and events like the celebration of
traditional festivals rooted in religion as well as the secular leisure of kite flying, which are long dead or dying in other metropolitan cities of India. However, these old urban areas are intricately tele-networked and the ubiquitous telecommunication towers form a new visual in the Lucknow skyline, a testimony to the huge subscriber base present in these dense neighbourhoods. Here in old Lucknow, ‘spaces of flows’ and ‘spaces of places’ (Castells, 2000) appear to be superimposed in a complex pattern with flows of information, flows of people, and networks of culture and history interacting in a dynamic, temporal equilibrium. Also the role of the state and caste politics can be traced in the narrative of development, maintenance and decay of secular infrastructure linked to the timeline of shifts in political power play.

The paper maps the social, cultural and information technology networks in selected parts of the old city and establishes links between them to decipher the complex pattern of layered history of the state bound within the mechanics of politics. The empirical study conducted in old Lucknow serves as a testing ground of some of the postulates of contemporary urban discourses.

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

1. Dr. Sheuli Mitra is an architect and urban planner by training and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. She is presently also heading the Environmental Planning Department of the institute. She has been engaged in industry and academia for the last 20 years. Her research areas include urban studies with focus on urban transformations and renewal, and the social and economic inequalities in land and housing markets. Through her research and studios she attempts to find interfaces between social, economic and cultural dimensions influencing urban development processes. She is involved in undertaking research and consultancy works for the Government of India in this domain. She has post graduate and doctoral scholars working with her and has presented and published her work in national and international forums. She has been the Dean of Research and Development of the institute and is keenly involved in the institute’s urban research agenda.

2. Dr. Tapas Mitra is an architect and urbanist. He is an Associate Professor and presently the head of the Department of Urban Design in the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. In the last 25 years, he has worked on diverse issues of the urban core of Indian cities, specifically in the old city areas of Calcutta, linking social and spatial transformations with collective memory and the urban myth. Tapas Mitra teaches various courses in Architecture, Urban Design and Conservation related to Design theory, Aesthetics, and Urbanity. He is a self-taught artist and teaches techniques of documentation in old and new city areas through sketch-crawls and on-location drawing. Dr. Mitra has been a featured artist thrice in the international website of Urban Sketchers. He has been an invited international faculty and lecture leader at the 8th International symposium of Urban Sketchers in Chicago in 2017. He also has post graduate
and doctoral scholars working with him in the domain of urban studies and has presented and published his research work internationally.