Concept Note

The Urban Rhetoric
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Our cities are an interconnected web of social, cultural, physical, environmental and many more such layers. As urbanists and architects we tend to focus on the physical parameters that govern the everyday built and unbuilt space. Parameters that are quantifiable and tangible. As spatial designers, it is equally important for us to understand the temporal and intangible parameters that are implicated by our designs. Human behaviour in a particular space and the interpersonal relationships that users develop while using that space is one such intangible aspect which remains underexplored in spatial studies. "Local communities have diverse needs, including a need for physical and mental wellbeing, meaningful human relationships, high standards of living, recreational activities, and a high-quality residential environment . These factors contribute to the establishment and development of human relationships at the level of communities, social groups, or entire societies." "In urban areas, in particular in small towns, strong interpersonal relations and the attachment to one's place of residence contribute to the "homeliness" of urban space"(Zagroba, Szczepanska & Senetra, 2020)

"Space that surrounds every individual, in which an individual exists, interacts and performs, is known as '**human space'**. Organization of the built environment around the users within their human space is known as '**spatial order'**." (Raipat, 2021) Human perception of a particular space, its spatial order and the impact of this spatial order on '**human behaviour'** and '**interpersonal relationships'** is the crucial point in spatial studies which largely contributes towards social studies. Space and society are two independent concepts that function in total entanglement. when space becomes a place it's given a name." "space and society are circular: they are distinct but interactive and produce a cumulative effect."(osti, 2015) This issue of 'The Urban Rhetoric' intends to bring together the spatial and social disciples that are so interdependent yet disconnected. An Individual tends to develop a cognitive association with the space in which they exist and this cognitive relationship is responsible for their behaviour in it. This association could also be an influence of habit or culture. "Culture is one factor contributing to people's perception of how proxemics should be used. people from different cultures have different views on what proper personal space should be." (Luthans, Fred, Jonathan, 2009) Concluding that user behaviour in a particular space is majorly governed by the user's perception of the built environment around them, it is safe to suggest, based on this perception humans tend to develop '**defensible spaces'** around themselves which define their behaviour in it and the relationships that they develop in it. This is known as **'Spatial Empathy'** and is responsible for determining the extent of inclusivity and human centric quality that the designed space has to offer. City planner Oscar Newman developed the concept of defensible spaces to define "how public and semi public areas in public housing can be brought under the control of residents." he suggested that 'Surveillance' and 'territoriality' are two crucial

components of defensible spaces which can be controlled by appropriate placement of door, windows and other openings or visual and physical connections or barriers.

Space as one of the most expensive commodities today demands a healthy balance between economic growth, social development and protection of local traditions and cultural identity in its design process. As a consumable product its nature, character and demand is in continuous transformation that depends on the typology of needs, wants and aspirations of its users. Spatial order and harmonious urban development strategy strongly influence perceptions of an urban space, strengthen the local identity and architectural traditions of users. "Every place is designed by the space created around the built/physical entity placed in it, the use of the building itself and the users who use it. The spatial order of the built environment imposes a specific behaviour in its users." (Raipat, 2021) As humans develop a cognitive relationship with the environment surrounding them, this relationship dramatically impacts their behaviour and attitude towards others around them as well, hence impacting the interpersonal relationships. (Stangor, 2020) "Spatial organizations power can be used to communicate both positive or negative attitudes by affirming or denying a particular language or behaviour and facilitating the setting of the tone of a space or an organization." (Raipat, 2021) "Honouring the cues given by a built environment- such as- where to have private conversations- can help keep everybody comfortable" (Ronch, 2020)

The Fourth issue of The urban Rhetoric aims to develop a narrative that can assemble a multidimensional connection between the built environment and its users, hence interconnecting spatial and social studies through articles that have been developed based on opinions, research explorations and design strategies. THis issue shall try to answer the vital, human centric - urban design question which has been asked and answered several times, yet remains unsolved - "What is the impact of Spatial order on Human behaviour and interpersonal relationships?"

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