

## **ARM, the Architecture Research Moments 30-31 January 2015**

PhD candidate: **Asiya Sadiq**

Supervisors: Prof Dr. Scheerlinck Kris, Prof Dr. Verbeke Johan

Title: **“Reframing Collective Spaces in Contemporary South Asia” - Case of Karachi, Pakistan**

### **Paper Topic:**

*“For us, architecture is situated within a larger context and the city is a living organism. All architecture and design becomes formal via public engagement and an understanding of collective problem solving, finding innovative ways to reclaim and reimagining shared public space.”*

*(asiya sadiq polak and christophe polak, The Rising Tide Catalogue Exhibition, Curated Naiza Khan, 2010, Artists Statement)*

Globalization has led to the shrinking of cultural and physical boundaries, an increased sharing of images / aspirations resulting in a widening gap between the old / traditional structures of knowledge, space making and collective space usage in all societies.

The resultant clash between reality and aspirations becomes evident where on one hand, globally the natural and human resources are shared, information is rampant, mobility and telecommunication are fast and cyber distances are shrinking. On the other hand, locally the ecological, economic, social and cultural structures are under threat and need constant redefining and adjusting by both the local and international communities for “reframing sustainable and equitable societies and cities”.

The benefits of conventional collective space projects are often relatively inaccessible to the majority of the population (especially lower middle and poor income communities) because of the favor given to the elite driven, otherwise outdated modernist plans, higher-end residential and retail, entertainment and leisure developments. Spatial divisions thus created foster low levels of trust and social cohesion resulting in socially polarized areas in adjoining communities. The lower middle and poor income communities which inhabit these settlements never become a part of the total urban history, ecology and social setup resulting in a divided city.

The research being presented is part of the ongoing doctorate work, which looks at as found spaces in the author’s practice context and establishes a link between a lack of appropriate collective space structures in a city (in this case-Karachi) and its resultant ongoing socio-political struggles. The main reason being that, in the current research, practice and academic milieu the contemporary city spatial structures remain physically un-documented, politically un-accounted, socio-culturally misunderstood and design wise / technically inappropriate.

Within the larger framework of the doctoral study, this part of the research aspires to critically analyze one of the ongoing research and design projects of the “Orangi Nala” (a perennial river turned sewerage channel) to learn about the current collective space configuration in the city, its ingredients of formation, its traditional and contemporary potential for collective usage, which could be learnt from and tie in with the formulation of a contemporary sustainable design discourse and possible design strategies for public / collective space design for the city.

5 keywords: reframing, public / collective space, traditional and contemporary, lower middle and poor income communities, outdated modernist plans.