S19	**QUERYING URBANITY: SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE**
Organisers:	Urvi Mukhopadhyay (West Bengal State University)
	Dr. Kausik Bandyopadhyay (West Bengal State University, India)
Period:	Modern
Date:	Saturday, 1 September, 2012
Time:	14:00-15:30
Room:	111

Description

Contrary to a general perception of the predominance of rural culture in South Asia, the region can boast of an urban legacy which could be dated back to the period before the Christian era. Historically speaking, the region witnessed many waves of urbanisation, and each period of urban experience could claim to have a distinctive cultural pattern. Unfortunately, these cultural patterns were seldom read or analysed under the category of urbanity, perhaps because of the term's heavy linkages with the civic society that emerged in early modern Europe. The interdependence between the notions of civic society as seen in Europe and the concept of urbanity also contributed to a typical understanding of the features of urban culture from a strictly European perspective. Thus, when we come across the term 'urbanity', it is often described by the parameters seen in the enlightened bourgeois cities of Europe. Its image of cosmopolitanism, its civic planning, and commercial aspects of city-dwelling that became coterminous with the notion of urbanity thus seldom reflect non-European experiences. The theorisation of urbanity thus mostly excludes a wide range of city-experiences which both preceded and followed the urban experiences in the Western world. In the colonised world, particularly in South Asia, colonialism brought a new wave of urbanisation where a new code of urbanity was articulated. From the perspectives of urban planning and administrative network, these cities could be described as mirror image of the urban settings of metropolitan Europe, but given the culture they bred, with a nuanced articulation of colonial modernity, the South Asian cities projected a different story. The story receives another twist in recent years when globalization with its apparent standardised images of growth and structured criteria of development arrives in the South Asian context and churns out a new set of complexities in the context of urban culture there. The panel proposes to discuss these unique experiences from South Asia and to enquire how such experiences and their attendant cultural manifestations get reflected and represented in, and influence in turn, architecture, print, celluloid and other performances. It would also like to address the dynamics of urbanity paradigm in the South Asian locale which is closely related to ideological forces such as colonialism, nationalism, communalism, regionalism and globalisation. A proper historical appreciation of these experiences would enhance our understanding of the complexities of the notion of urbanity in a global perspective and would contribute fresh perspectives to studies on the subject.

Potential themes
1. Urban vs. Rural as reflected in South Asian Culture and Media
2. Individual Space and Articulations of Self in Urban South Asia
3. Changing Urban Space: Experiences of the City-dwellers in South Asia in the context of Colonialism, Post-Colonialism and Globalisation
4. Cities and Spectacles: Celebrating Urbanity in South Asia

Scientific Programme

1486 **EXPERIENCING THE URBAN: SOCIAL GROUPS, PUBLIC DISPLAYS AND THE COLONIAL STATE IN DELHI; 1863-1880**
Raghav Kishore (School Of Oriental And African Studies, History, London, U.K.)

990 **URBAN VULNERABILITIES IN "POST-CONFLICT" AFGHANISTAN**
Arpita Basu Roy (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata, India)

339 **STORY OF AN ABANDONED PORT: URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN BENGAL'S SOUTHERN FRONTIER**
Sutapa Chatterjee Sarkar (West Bengal State University, Department of History, Kolkata, India)