

Next50: Collective Futures

Critical-creative perspectives on the built environment in Bangladesh

Call for Contribution

2021 is around the corner, marking 50 years since independence of Bangladesh. What about the next 50 years? In our lifetime, what are the changes that we would like to see in the built environment, particularly in a Bangladeshi context? Beyond urban/rural, critical/creative and spatial/social dichotomy, NEXT50: Collective Futures is a collaborative project that aims to bring together early career researchers, young practitioners, faculty, PhD fellows, postgraduates and self-taught fellows across any allied discipline that deals with the built environment (architects, urban designers, planners, historians, anthropologists, development practitioners, activists, etc...). The call is to share insights on a topic of their

expertise in relation to the future of built environment of Bangladesh. Against the usual top-down approach in an edited book with pre-determined topics such as “sustainability”, this call for contribution is open-ended precisely to cultivate different voices and critical debate about our future. The book is targeted for a larger audience beyond academia and professional fields. It is an act of outreach to bridge between critical/creative ideas and the real world. COVID-19 has shown the need for us to re-think how we see the future and how we engage with it.

Next50:Collective Futures is a step in that direction.

Background

“The world is transitioning to an irrevocable urban future whose epicentre has moved into the cities of Asia and Africa”, Pieterse and SImone (2017) remind us in *New Urban Worlds*. Such geopolitical reconfigurations, along with climate urgencies and pandemics reveal the extent of the “global risk society” (Beck 2015) which we have come to inhabit. Yet the desire here is not split the world in urban-rural binary, but rather look at the interconnections between different forms of human habitation. COVID-19 has revealed the cracks in what we have thought as the normal, and we use it as a point of departure to ask what future awaits us with regards to the built environment. More specifically, what of the future of Bangladesh—50 years from its independence from external colonial forces? Where will we be in the next 50 years? Where should we be? Given that 80 million people may move to cities in Bangladesh in the next 30 years, our urban future is a question that needs reflection now.

The lure of utopia notwithstanding, this call for contribution is a call to question current narratives of the built environment future being presented in Bangladesh, whether driven by populist political agenda or machinations of neoliberal multilaterals. It raises issues that you see fit based on your expertise and/or research/design experience. The aim is not to arrive at definitive answers but rather to shed light on an aspect of human settlement that often is marginalised, overlooked, shadowed or under-appreciated in narrating the development pathways of future Bangladesh.

The call is open to early career researchers, academicians, practitioners as well as thesis and dissertation-level masters or doctoral fellows in built environment and allied disciplines (architecture, building science, urban design, planning, development studies, landscape urbanism, construction, infrastructure, urban sociology). The aim here is to bring into conversation young voices from across the world to assemble a learning network (Illich 1971), rather than just compile a plethora of contributions. With that larger goal in mind, the call for contribution has some specifics so as to provide a coherent structure to the outcome. The contribution is primarily geared towards an edited book that we aim to publish in the last quarter of 2021 to coincide with the 50 years of the independence of the country. The primary audience for the book is policymakers, development practitioners, built environment disciplinarians, and general public interested in human settlement matters. In between an academic journal and an expert opinion piece, the tone of the writing can combine the quality of academic rigour and journalistic flair. We see this venture as an outreach of the research knowledge you have accumulated and a matter of research justice (Roy 2019). By research justice we invoke your positionality and the call for your knowledge to be shared beyond purely academic avenues and towards shaping just public policies and/or opinion in Bangladesh.

Rather than a single voice, the project here aims to bring together an assembly (Hardt and Negri 2011) of researchers, academicians and practitioners. The book serves as the means to start a dialogue across disciplines, bodies of

knowledge and disparate voices that often is not enough to be heard on its own. We do not wish to force a unity either, we respect differences of ontological, political and epistemological stances that may present itself from the contributions. We do not wish to fall in the trap of using themes such as 'sustainability' or 'development' as a given good. Rather, we see the need to unpack the terms with which we have come to think of our future and hence, we do not wish to propose a singular future combining your contributions, but rather bring forth the possibility of many futures lying in wait.

Thematic Openings

What this means specifically for the call is that, other than providing a word limit and a reference format (in the Q&A), the specific topic is open to your research area/expertise as it relates to this concept note. We understand this may seem quite unconventional as an organizing strategy. However, we do wish organizing logic to be emergent from the contributions, by linking across the issues/disciplines and research territories. This is an attempt to break apart the disciplinary silos and to fill in for the lack of a common language between built environment professionals. To do so, we ask a common question to all, **"how will we live in the next 50 years?"**

Rather than being organized by disciplines, this question is further broken down into seven thematic questions.

1 / What will be our values?

2 / How will we govern ourselves?

3 / How will we stay?

4 / What will we eat?

5 / How will we work?

6 / How will we move?

7 / How will we be resilient?

The questions can be mapped in line with the different disciplines / topics / areas of expertise. Please see the diagram in the next page.

Where does your research fit?

How do you see your specific area of interest within the discourse of future Bangladesh?

What are the criticisms of current modes of practice, what are our learnings during the post-independence period and moving beyond that, how may it be constituted in the future?

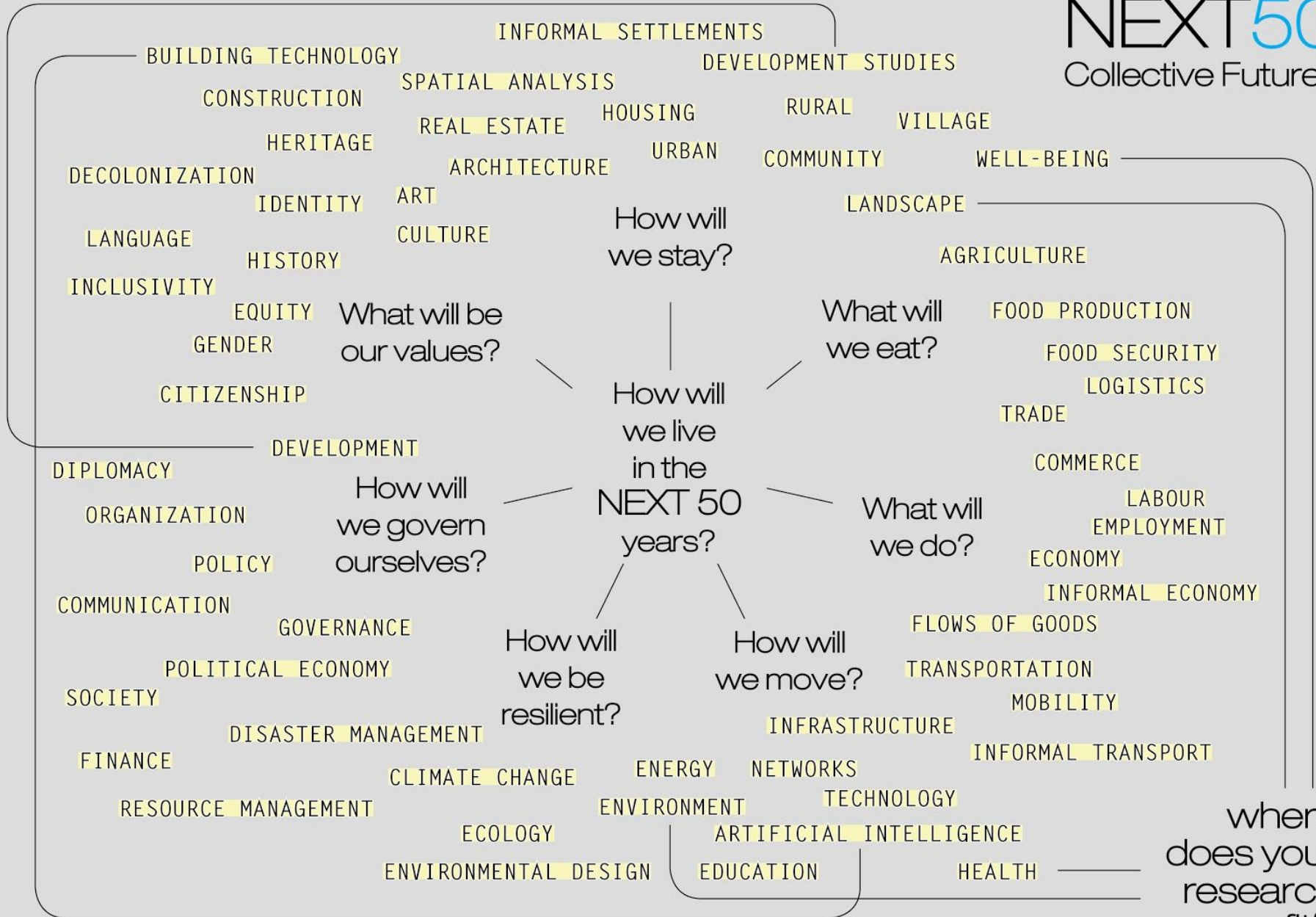
How does it intersect with the ecological, political and social crises that we see? How does it transcend the problems?

How might we strive towards a more socially just and inclusive urban built environment?

What is your vision for a future Bangladesh?

NEXT50

Collective Futures



where
does your
research
fit?

Deadlines

Call for Contribution launched: Oct 16, 2020

Live FAQ Zoom Session: Oct 31, 2020

Deadline for abstract (with keywords) / Dec 16, 2020

Notification of acceptance / Jan 16, 2021

Deadline for full paper submission / May 16, 2021

Peer-review comments + Editorial Feedback / Jun 16, 2021

Revised Submission / Jul 16, 2021

Book Launch / Dec 16, 2021

FAQ

Q: Word limit?

For abstract, 300 words.

For final submission, 3000-5000 (including references)

Visuals accepted: Print quality maps, images, photographic materials with due credits (Images count as 150 words)

Q: Eligibility: Academics, early career researchers, PhD fellows, postgraduate students, practitioners and self-taught fellows from any built environment allied discipline or topic, including but not limited to: architecture, urban planning, urban design, landscape architects, engineers, governance, political and social sciences, agriculture and allied disciplines, development studies etc.

Please see the diagram on page 4.

Q: Language: English (Bangla accepted as well). Editorial support will be provided for authors.

Q: Reference format? Chicago style

The book will be published from a reputed international/national publishing house.

More questions?

Submit a query at www.thisstudioisopen.org/next50

Submit abstract at: www.thisstudioisopen.org/next50abstracts

Join the zoom meeting live FAQ session on Oct 31, Dhaka time 7 pm

Zoom link: <https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/8243069035?pwd=VmtjN1lwMVhxM2pWb3ZXMkxJYVZnQT09>

Contact Us: tanzil.arch@gmail.com

Social media: Follow updates on Context BD facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/contextbd/>

About US

Open Studio is an international think-tank on architecture and urbanism based in the UK and Australia. It has arranged international conferences around the world, the most recent one being the Shanghai Congress. OpenStudio has worked in publishing number of books, the most recent one being [Dhaka Totem](#), by Altrim, Barcelona.

Website: www.thisstudioisopen.org

[Tanzil Shafique](#) is the co-founder and co-director of Open Studio.

ContextBD is the leading online platform of showcasing art, architecture and culture of Bangladesh. Recently, it has published [Aspirations and Ideas: Designing with Context](#), by University Press Limited.

Website: www.contextbd.com

[Saimum Kabir](#) is the Editor-in-Chief of ContextBD.