

1. Project description

1. Aim of the network and scientific scope

The aim with Urban Orders (URO) is to develop an ambitious and innovative interdisciplinary platform for the study of *the relationship between contested urban rights and the seizure and ordering of urban spaces*. Taking urban rights to signify those privileges (both formal and informal) that become associated with urban spaces and urban occupancies, URO will explore how such rights are contested and negotiated through the seizure and ordering of urban spaces by individual residents, broader collectives and formal institutions. Throughout history, public and private urban spaces have been key objects of political contestation and overlapping processes of ordering without, however, any ambitious interdisciplinary attempts have been made at fully understanding the consequences for people's possibilities of acquiring urban rights. With URO, it is our ambition to close this significant gap.

In order to carry out this ambitious research agenda, URO will bring together researchers from the humanities, social sciences, architecture and engineering. This particular composition of interdisciplinary research fields is necessary because the seizure and ordering of urban spaces is at once technological, physical, political and social. Activities at URO are based on the overall idea that existing research on urbanism lacks a viable interdisciplinary methodology for generating new analytical and practical approaches to urbanism based on empirical and theoretical investigations of how urban rights are contested through the seizure and ordering of urban spaces. Through in-depth empirical investigations, researchers at URO will therefore study the contestation of urban rights in relation to the seizure and ordering of urban spaces and, based on these investigations, develop new interdisciplinary approaches to urbanism in a historical and contemporary perspective. Our expectation is that URO will establish a new and genuinely interdisciplinary field of research on processes of urban ordering.

The focus on contested urban rights through the seizure and ordering of urban spaces will be studied as an interplay of three related themes, which will connect research across disciplinary boundaries:

1. *Urban politics.* With a growing concentration of people in the world's urban centres, new platforms for popular participation and political influence have emerged with considerable consequences for residents' possibilities of acquiring urban rights. This might pertain to the often contrasting claims regarding jurisdiction over a particular urban space or individual residents' contradictory rights, e.g. drug abusers legal rights to use public spaces confronted by local residents' rights to welfare, security and sense of safety. Through these political processes, existing spatial orderings have been negotiated and undergone considerable transformations. In order to understand these complex processes, questions about civic rights and privileges arising from the seizure and ordering of urban spaces have become of key importance. URO will explore how urban spaces acquire political significance and will in this way develop an interdisciplinary framework for studying the politics of urban spaces; formal as well as informal.

2. *Social infrastructures.* Infrastructure is commonly understood in physical terms as systems of highways, pipes, wires, cables, etc. With URO, we want to expand this notion by exploring 'social infrastructure' as the flexible, mobile and provisional intersections of objects, spaces, persons and practices that different types of actors and social networks (e.g. residents, officials, civic associations and commerce) activate in order to self-regulate and possibly secure their occupancies in cities throughout the world. This could be the trust-based bottom-up organizations that order and regulate informal settlements in sub-Saharan African cities, the establishment of privatised surveillance technologies in Latin American city centres or the seizure of public spaces in southern European and Middle Eastern metropolises.

3. *Architecture and urban settlements.* In recent years, processes of gentrification, surveillance technologies, lacking energy provision and the privatization of suburban spaces have been accompanied by new forms of architectural designs, such as CCTV technologies in the UK or the emerging parallel cities in southeast Asia built by foreign investors. The increasing number of overlapping architectural processes crosscutting conventional distinctions between formal and informal, legal and illegal, user and provider,

have considerable consequences for residents' possibilities for acquiring urban rights and thus secure their occupancies.

2. Proposed projects/activities, including a timeline

URO Laboratories: Twice a year, URO will lead a three-day session for the core group and external stakeholders. Three URO Labs (spring of 2015-17) will involve national stakeholders and four URO Labs will be organized with stakeholders from three 'collaborator cities' (See description below) (winter of 2014-17). At each URO Lab, an urban case will be identified from either the national context or from one of the collaborator cities that focuses on how urban rights are contested and negotiated through the seizure and ordering of urban spaces. During the three-day session, all members work towards addressing specific solutions to the case while also charting future issues arising from the particular problematic situation. Participants involve both academic and non-academic stakeholders and all participants will bring their particular expertise to bear on the case being discussed during the URO Labs. A group of relevant Danish non-academic stakeholders have already been contacted.

Brown Bag seminars: The core group will meet fortnightly for an extended lunch session where researchers and non-academic stakeholders (e.g. consultants, urban planners, state officials) present key findings and relevant topics from their ongoing work. It is during these ongoing seminars that interdisciplinary foci will be identified and explored. The network will furthermore use this research format to identify new and uncharted interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies.

URO Conferences: URO will host a yearly international conference focusing on issues related to the contestation of urban rights through the seizure and ordering of urban spaces. The particular topics will arise out of the collaborative work at URO Laboratories as well as the ongoing brown bag seminars. The conferences will have 1-2 keynote speakers, sessions and field trips around Aarhus.

Collaborating cities: URO collaborates with groups of relevant stakeholders (both academics and non-academics) in Chicago, Maputo and Berlin. Contacts have already been established with academics in all cities, and they will identify relevant non-academic stakeholders, such as urban planners, architects, NGO activists, etc.

2014	2015	2016	2017
Inaugural URO Lab URO Network seminars Publication of policy briefs	URO Labs Publication of policy briefs URO Network seminars URO Conference (Fall) Collective publications Applications for further funding	URO Labs Publication of policy briefs URO Network seminars URO Conference (Fall) Collective publications Applications for further funding	URO Labs Publication of policy briefs URO Network seminars URO Conference (Fall) Collective publications Applications for further funding

Involved researchers: Gert Tinggaard Svendsen, Professor of Comparative Politics, School of Business and Social Science; Rubina Raja, professor MSO, Archaeology, Arts; Søren Sindbæk, professor MSO, Archaeology, Arts; Tom Nielsen, professor, School of Architecture, Aarhus; Esben Houborg, associate professor, School of Business and Social Sciences, Bagga Bjerge, associate professor, School of Business and Social Sciences, Kristian Vestergaard, associate professor, School of Engineering; Hans Raaskou Grønne, associate professor, School of Engineering; Jan Christensen, associate professor, School of Engineering; Leo Pedersen, associate professor, School of Engineering; Anders Albrechtslund, associate professor, Information Science, Arts; Anders Troelsen, associate professor, Art history, Arts; Peter Lauritsen, associate professor, Information science; Arts; Anne Line Dalsgaard, associate professor, anthropology, Arts; Louise Fabian, associate professor, History of Ideas; Arts; Boris Brormand Jensen, associate professor, School of Architecture, Aarhus; Mikkel Thelle, assistant professor, history, Arts; Nina Holm Vohnsen, assistant professor, anthropology, Arts; Thomas Friis Søgaard, post doc, School of Business and Social Sciences; Rikke Peters, post doc, Aesthetics and Culture, Arts; Mette-Louise E. Johansen, post doc, anthropology, Arts; Mie Birk Haller, PhD scholar, School of Business and Social Sciences.

4. Future applications and activities

URO will serve as a platform for making an ambitious, interdisciplinary center for urban studies of the highest international standard, which will be based at Aarhus University. Currently, the involved researchers are working on developing a center for urban studies at Aarhus University and, if funded, URO will consolidate this process. One of the world's leading urbanists, professor AbdouMaliq Simone, Goldsmiths, will visit Aarhus University for six months in 2014/15 (through an AUFF grant headed by Morten Nielsen) and will partake in developing URO's international research profile and applying for further funding. Nationally, URO will apply for further funding from FSE (collective research projects) and from FKK (for developing the network further) while also applying for funding from FFU for a particular development-based project to occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Internationally, URO will apply e.g. for ERC grants and, already in 2015, for funding for SANORD collaboration with Wits University, South Africa (agreement of collaboration has been established with professor Paul Jenkins, head of School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University).

URO will be integrally linked to a proposed interdisciplinary Master's Program in Urban Studies at Aarhus University. Whereas the majority of contemporary interdisciplinary MA programs rarely integrate research and teaching as mutually constitutive components, researchers associated with URO will be involved in developing and teaching courses at the Master's Program in Urban Studies. Crucially, both research and teaching will focus on the politics of urban spaces and this unique integration will allow for the generation of unique synergetic benefits for research and teaching.