



Urban Youth & Outdoor  
Space in Gellerup

# CONTENT

- 4** INTRODUCTION :  
Urban orders and the 1st URO LAB
- 6** Gellerup and Urban Youth
- 9** Methodological considerations
- 12** Organizing and preparing  
the 1st URO LAB
- 15** The 1st URO LAB
- 20** Summary of findings from  
the URO LAB
- 24** The three  
'URO Concerns'
- 31** Urban Orders  
reconsidered
- 37** Perspectives from participants  
of the 1st URO LAB
- 41** The Next Steps
- 43** **Appendix 1** : List of Participants
- 50** **Appendix 2** : The participants reflections on the  
transdisciplinary methodology
- 54** **Appendix 3** : An engineer's experience of the 1st URO  
Lab: Introducing a new process model for the URO Labs

GELLERUPPARKEN



# INTRODUCTION

Urban Orders and the 1st URO LAB

## Urban Orders (URO)

is a transdisciplinary research network based at Aarhus University, Denmark, which focuses on the relationship between the appropriation of urban spaces and new forms of urban citizenship. Taking 'urban order' to signify a dynamic regularity in the relationship between social life in the city and its physical environment, which has emerged without overall coordination, control or use of force, the aim of URO is to develop new transdisciplinary methods for harnessing the potentials of existing urban orders as a basis for creating viable and democratic global cities.

With URO, we argue that global cities today contain multiple and overlapping forms of urban orderings, which, if properly examined, might serve as a basis for making sustainable urban development based on civic participa-

tion, flexible physical planning schemes and a truly transdisciplinary dialogue. Still, while a praxis-oriented understanding of such urban orders is vital for developing viable and inclusive cities, it rarely - if ever - orients urban planning and city management today. With URO, it is our ambition to change this agenda.

The core activities of URO center around four 'URO Laboratories' (UROLabs) to occur from 2015-17 in four collaborator cities: Aarhus, Berlin, Johannesburg and New Orleans.

Organised by local steering groups, each UROLab will explore empirical cases of urban orderings. Based on insights from these four case-studies, our aim is to harness the potentials of the different 'urban orders' for developing a new transdisciplinary approach to global urban development focusing on civic participation and flexible physical planning.

The 1st UROLab was held in Aarhus 28-29 May 2015 and involved academics and practitioners from all collaborator cities except Johannesburg. The theme for the 1st UROLab was 'Gellerup, youth and outdoor spaces'. Focusing on the ongoing upgrading of the Gellerup Park on the western outskirts of Aarhus (the largest urban upgrading project in Denmark), the aim of the 1st UROLab was for the participants to collectively discuss the contested status of the area's urban youth in relation to the use of outdoor spaces and, on this basis, consider new ways of harnessing the Gellerup Park's potentials for developing a more integrative urban environment.

This report describes the 1st URO Lab from its inception and planning to the actual realization. It outlines main findings and suggests ways of refining our understanding of urban orders.

# Gellerup & urban youth



Built between 1968-1972, the Gellerup Park on the western outskirts of Aarhus, Denmark, was imagined as an ideal city and home to the growing middle-class in Aarhus; a modern environment for modern citizens. During the following decades, it became increasingly clear that the ideals associated with the Gellerup Park were not easily realized. Today, the Danish Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs defines the area as 'particularly vulnerable' (ghetto area). 88% of its residents are identified as having immigrant backgrounds, 13 % of youths between the ages of 15 and 24 have faced criminal charges, and 53 % of the residents are younger than 25 years of age (compared with 35 % among the general population in Aarhus municipality). Since 2010, the area's population has decreased by 10% and a recent qualitative study has shown that former residents cite "disturbances and high crime rates" as key reasons for leaving the area.

The youth's use of the outdoor spaces between the area's high-rise blocks is considered as particularly problematic or even criminal by a wide majority of stakeholders, such as the Aarhus Municipality, the Gellerup Park Housing Cooperative, the local police, some civil society associations and some of the residents themselves.

Numerous initiatives have attempted to "get the problematic parts of the youth off the streets" and control the problematic behaviour of youths in Gellerup's outdoor areas, while also encouraging children and young people to participate in public life in positive and constructive ways, e.g. through community clean-up initiatives and organized sports activities.

Among the many stakeholders involved in or affected by the Gellerup project, numerous and often inconsistent ideals exist about what constitutes appropriate living and behaviour in Gellerup and, according to several of these actors, the urban youths in Gellerup are not fully living up to these ideals.

# Methodological Considerations



A central aim of URO and therefore also of the UROLabs is to explore and develop transdisciplinary research methods: It is through transdisciplinary action research that it becomes possible to move across and beyond disciplinary boundaries to create new forms of knowledge and research methods and, by so doing, engage collaboratively and productively with activists and the 'non-academic world'.

As we began to gather information about the central case – the relationship between outdoor spaces and urban youth in the Gellerup Park - we realized that project collaboration was absolutely central for understanding the dynamics of the case and potentially identify new forms of urban orders. Project collaboration is, in other words, a unique form of urban order: During the complex processes of realizing the Gellerup Project, the urban youth are increasingly confronted by activists, state officials and local

resident groups requiring their participation in project activities regarding their presence and use of public spaces in Gellerup. Hence, rather than focusing on the actual use of outdoor spaces in Gellerup as a basis for formulating a set of conceptual ideas about this particular form of urban ordering, we realized that we needed to involve key stakeholders living in or working with urban youth in the area and thereby focus on local processes of cooperation.

For the 1st UROLab, we decided to use methods for cooperation and conversational processes developed by InterChange, a company that facilitates collaborative processes as an 'art of hosting' ([interchange.dk](http://interchange.dk)). The close collaboration between the organisers of the 1st UROLab and InterChange allowed us to become much more attentive to the importance of dialogical processes and collaborative techniques when attempting to develop transdisciplinary approaches

regarding urban development.

The realization of the 1st UROLab furthermore raised a number of key questions regarding different types and degrees of involvement, knowledge dissemination, power relations and scientific methods that the Danish URO core group is currently discussing with our international research collaborators and local activist partners. It is, we believe, through these collaborations that the URO Labs will become a dynamic platform for exploring new opportunities for democratic assembly and civic participation in transdisciplinary dialogue and research.

# Organizing and preparing the 1st UROLab



In collaboration with Interchange, we selected four main objectives for the 1st UROLab: We wanted to develop a methodological framework for future URO Labs, a methodology for transdisciplinary urban research, project tools for urban management based on self-organisation and civic participation, and, finally, we wanted to consider the kinds of urban orders that might be identified by focusing on youth and outdoor spaces in Gellerup.

As background for working with these main objectives, we decided to create an online case file consisting of textual and visual materials about Gellerup. Materials for the case file were compiled based on the overall idea of working with different kinds of materials (e.g. master plan, rap music videos, police reports, anthropological essays) as equally valid forms of data and thereby allow participants with diverse backgrounds to explore the material from their own perspective.

Two URO team members were responsible for compiling materials and setting up the case file that was to be used by participants as basis for collective discussions during the UROLab. Based on literature searches and interviews with local stakeholders, particular issues were identified that seemed particularly relevant regarding the relationship between urban youth and outdoor spaces in Gellerup. Based on the overall idea of presenting different forms of materials as being equally valid, we decided to organize the case file using an interactive online map (accessible through the URO website) of Gellerup, which gave the URO participants access to different thematic clusters: Grimhøjvej Mosque, Rap School, "Trygghed", The Master Plan, The Shed "Fristedet", Youth Initiatives, and Police Station.

These clusters were accompanied by extended descriptions of the context of Gellerup and also of the various local actors, who use and work with collective outdoor spaces.

During preparation meetings, two central questions continued to emerge namely: who are we doing this for? Whose interests are served by realizing the UROLab? These questions led us to carefully consider how to involve both the urban youth as well as the local stakeholders (the municipality, the housing association and voluntary associations) in the preparation phase as well as during the UROLab. Taking into account the overall ambition of using the UROLab to explore and create avenues for participatory urban development, we increasingly focused on how to allow different interests, concerns and opinions to be heard within the framework of the two-day workshop.

We thus decided to invite members from the section for vulnerable housing areas at Aarhus municipality, managers and front line workers from the Brabrand Housing Association, Gellerup residents involved in community work and, importantly, urban youth from the area who were involved in projects on documenting and creating new ways for young people to use outdoor spaces in the area.

# The 1st UROLab



Three weeks prior to the 1st UROLab, participants were given access to the case file through the URO website and were asked to explore the materials using the interactive map. During the two days of the event, all participants collaborated through participatory exercises, which aimed to allow for sharing of knowledge and views and to explore and discuss the relationship between urban youth and outdoor spaces in Gellerup. Whereas the first day of the UROLab focused on exploring the case, the second day focused on gathering key insights, considerations and concerns.

On the first day of the UROLab, associate professor and URO coordinator, Morten Nielsen, introduced the URO network and described the main ideas behind the UROLab before introducing the Interchange team (Toke, Monica and Trine), who facilitated the process.

Toke presented the program of the UROLab and introduced the four major aims for the workshop:

- To explore the concrete case
- To develop project tools for urban management based on self-organisation and civic participation
- To develop a methodical framework for all URO Labs.
- To develop a methodology for transdisciplinary collaboration.

At the first plenary session, all participants were given the opportunity to present themselves and their motivations for participating at the UROLab after which the overall program of the workshop was presented and briefly discussed.

Using appreciative inquiry methods, participants were then asked to collaborate in small groups and share good examples from their own lives of outdoor spaces being used by urban youth.

Central insights were subsequently shared in plenum and

written on whiteboards. Prior to the event, the Danish core group had visited Gellerup in order to interview local residents and collect images and visual material from the area. During a third session, the core group presented these 'voices from Gellerup' after which a youth activist from Gellerup presented a video about his outdoor fitness project. The subsequent collaborative exercise built on the knowledge shared so far: Participants were asked to discuss "what does it take to create a meaningful intervention in the context of Gellerup, youth and outdoor spaces?" Insights were summarized in a mind-map charting the possible avenues to consider for actual interventions.



The participants then prioritized these suggestions and the seven themes voted highest were used in a fourth session as a basis for discussing how to create successful interventions focusing on urban planning and social work.

The day ended with a fieldtrip to Gellerup where two young community activists invited the participants for a tour around the area.

At the beginning of the second day, central themes and insights from the first day were shared and discussed in an open space session. All participants were encouraged to create group sessions focusing

on a theme or issue that they found particularly relevant for the UROLab.

13 sessions were created and the participants worked in groups on selected topics before presenting visual representations summing up their discussions in a subsequent plenary session.



The last sessions of the UROlab focused on gathering insights related to the four central objectives. Four working groups, each headed by a member of the URO core group, worked on the following themes:

- Concrete suggestions and policy input to Århus Municipality and Gellerup
- Harvest insights of self-organising principles for emerging social, infrastructural and material aspects of Urban order.
- Develop a framework for the future URO-labs
- Harvest insights around interdisciplinary collaboration and language

After group discussions, all key ideas and recommendations were formulated and written up on posters.

This collective process was followed by a session of “peer-coaching” where participants discussed ideas and recommendations in new groups. At the end of this session, the core members of the URO group summarized the insights from their respective groups and reflected on collaborative strategies that had been discussed during the two days.

# Summary of findings from the 1st UROLab



Based on discussions during the first session about the participants' personal experiences with youth and the use of outdoor spaces, we found that good examples were characterized by a considerable scope for self-organisation, e.g. physical spaces affording diverse possibilities for usage while also giving a strong sense of ownership and shared objectives. Such physical spaces might be vast open spaces or "no man's lands" but could also be formal institutions offering a flexible structure or space for multiple initiatives and for allowing different forms of create use. An experience-based approach to creating initiatives and a focus on bridge-building were also issues that were emphasized. Significantly, it was pointed out that some forms of use of outdoor spaces might provoke feelings of a lack of ownership, which might lead to certain safety issues, lack of vision, and low or absent forms of inclusion. Fear of losing control and a sense of unjust appropriation of space

might furthermore hinder new productive initiatives from arising.

During our collective discussions of the relationship between urban youth and outdoor spaces in Gellerup, several possible 'urban orderings' emerged: Brabrand Housing Association and Aarhus Municipality can be considered as the primary organisational actors. While Aarhus Municipality has the planning rights of the area, Brabrand Boligforening has ownership rights but is also accountable to the tenants' association and committee. It is ideally a democratic representation of those residents living in Gellerup. Still, multiple other actors and organisations focusing on specific interests are active in the area: youth boxing groups, Muslim youth homework club, etc. Based on different forms of collective activities, youth living in Gellerup and people from outside the area are brought together through these organisations. This undoubtedly expands the

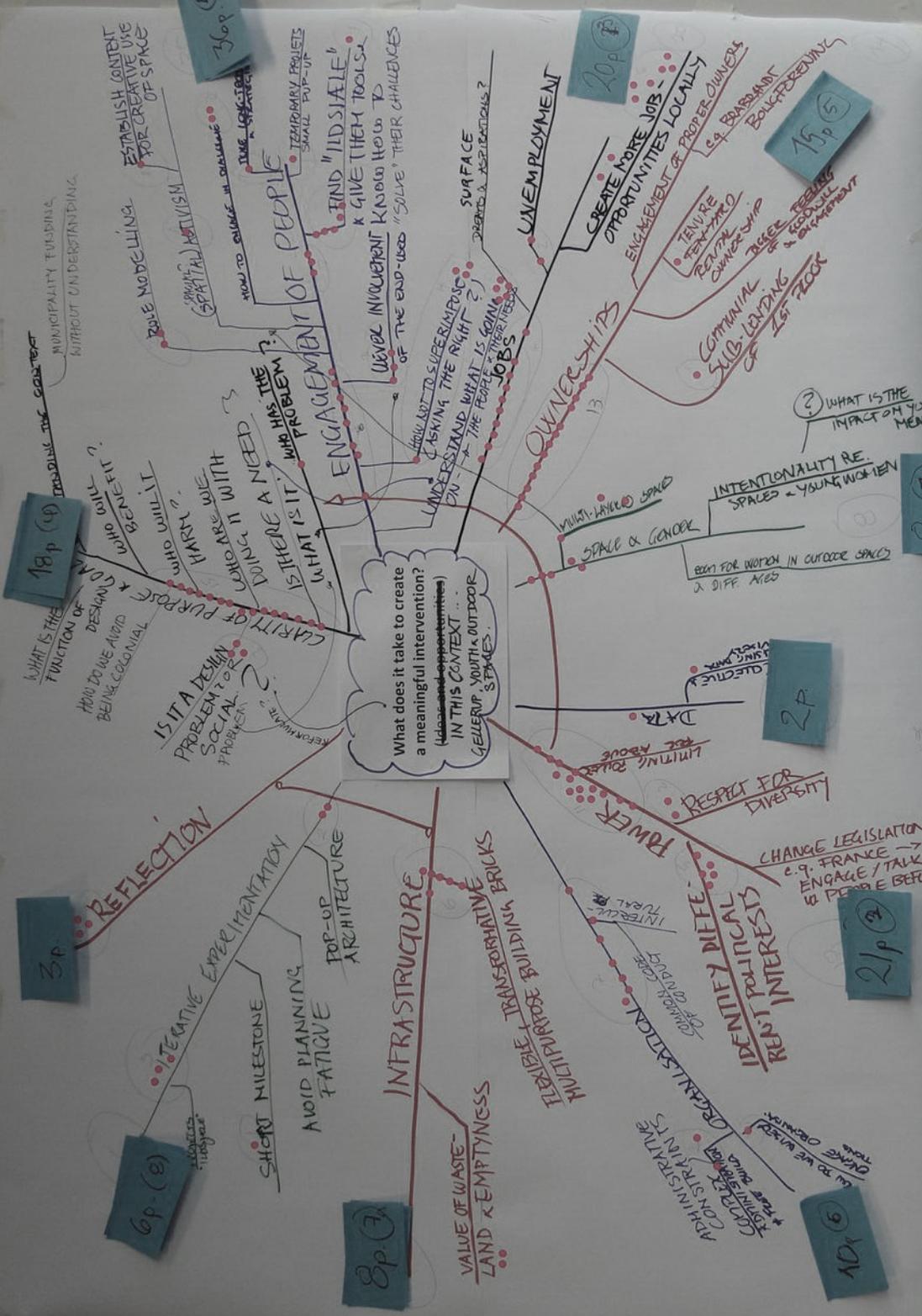
idea of 'urban orders' in relation to urban youth and outdoor spaces and shows how such forms of orderings are not just geographically bound to the area in question but are also regulated in and through broader social networks, interests and senses of community. During sessions on the first day of the workshop, it was discussed how it is claimed that 6-7 groups with approximately 100 members each are responsible for around 90% of the illegal activities in the area. Based on our overall focus on urban orders, we furthermore asked ourselves: Why focus all the attention and intervention only on strengthening organisations, which do not have a strong local anchoring when there are, in fact, small organisations and associations (civil society groups) that are well-functioning, efficient and create a strong sense of belonging?

It was suggested that a way of identifying and giving voice to less dominating forms of urban orders might be to ask

residents to formulate 'counter-narratives' based on their personal experiences and the stories they have been told about the area.

During the planning phase, we continued to ask ourselves a crucial question: For whom are we doing this event? This question did not become less relevant when considering the different forms of urban orders. In mapping out different urban orderings and the actors and organisations that they comprised, it became clear that certain groups (e.g. teenage girls or elders) were represented as a part of the area's problem but not as part of its solution. This realization enabled us to work on specific architectural solutions that could open up outdoor spaces that were now implicitly reserved for a specific group of people: For example, one proposal was to make small café-like places throughout the outdoor spaces in order to invite teenage girls and possibly elders to socially interact and thereby claim their right to the use of the area.

What does it take to create a meaningful intervention? (urban and opportunities) GELLERUP YOUTH & OUTDOOR SPACES



18p (4) WHO WILL IT BENEFIT? WHO ARE WE TALKING IT WITH? IS THERE A NEED? WHAT IS IT?

18p (5) MUNICIPALITY FUSING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING. ROLE MODELLING. ESTABLISH CONTENT FOR CREATIVE USE OF SPACE. SPATIAL ACTIVISM. HOW TO BRING IN OUTSIDE TIME. TENDRILARY PROJECTS SMALL POP-UP. FIND "LIDSTALE" & GIVE THEM TOOLS. LEVEL INVOLVEMENT KNOW HOW TO OF THE END-USER "SOLVE" THEIR CHALLENGES. SURFACE DESIGN & ASPIRATIONS?

3p REFLECTION

6p (8) NEGATIVE EXPERIMENTATION

8p (7) INFRASTRUCTURE

3p POP-UP ARCHITECTURE

8p (9) VALUE OF WASTE - LAND & EMPTINESS

2p DATA

20p (6) OWNERSHIPS

15p (5) COMMUNAL SUB-LENDING OF 25F ZONE

2p SPACE & GENDER

10p (9) ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS

2p INTENTIONALITY RE. SPACES & YOUNG WOMEN

2p RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

2p IDENTIFY NEE

2p IDENTIFY POLITICAL INTERESTS

2p TRANSFORMATIVE BRICKS

2p CHANGING LEGISLATION

2p LIMITING RULES

2p BEEN FOR WOMEN IN OUTDOOR SPACES & DIFF AGES

2p WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON YOUR MEN?

2p INTEREST

2p ORGANISATIONAL

2p RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

2p CHANGE LEGISLATION

2p ENGAGE / TALK & PEOPLE BEFORE

# The three 'URO Concerns'



The URO project design is based on an overall ambition of harnessing the potentials of existing urban orders as a basis for creating viable and democratic global cities through a truly transdisciplinary dialogue. In order to experimentally 'kick-start' and maintain this transdisciplinary dialogue, we have set ourselves the challenge of formulating three 'URO concerns' which are of particular importance when seeking to harness the potentials of existing urban orders. After each UROLab, we will collectively revisit the URO concerns already identified in order to discuss whether they need to be reformulated or maintained.

Below, we sketch out the three URO concerns which we have identified from our collaborative work during the 1st UROLab. Needless to say, as we are truly engaging in a work-in-progress, they are tentative and will need further reflection and empirical exploration. Still, we do believe that the three concerns are of crucial importance and that they will form the basis for further critical explorations.

## Who Governs the City?

The Gellerup Plan is one of the last functioning - and also most monumental - examples of a 'single order' planning in Denmark (see more on "single order planning" in section 8): From its conception as a zone accommodating all everyday needs of the inhabitants, to its character as a greenfield "tabula rasa" development, erasing almost completely the historical as well as morphological layers of history and landscape that came before it, to its repetitive building structures that reuse and scale the same relationship between housing unit, access structures, parking areas and open green spaces.

At the UROLab, the complicated relationship between "single order" planning and local practices was acknowledged as being of crucial importance. Both as widely held acceptance of the regulatory norms implied by the "single order" but, equally, the contestations and manipulations of such pervasive governing schemes: For example, the use of the 'perfectly' traffic-separated footpaths by young men on scooters and motor-bikes. This practice of contesting the logics of the "single order" gives to the urban youth a momentary control and power over the infrastructural system and thus allows for their own urban order to be installed and become a relatively functional social and physical system. Another example would be the struggle for the Muslim girls to find and establish gender-coded space within the universally designed 'access-all-areas-for-all'

design of the area. Equally, the establishment of outdoor training facilities for young men created a stable urban order that was parallel to but not in conflict with the “single order planning” of open spaces.

Three overall modalities of the relationship between local practices and the “single order system” were identified at the UROLab: Contesting and breaking (scooters), being dominated by (girls), aligning with (training). Thus, a key question that requires further investigations at future UROLabs is how to develop ordering modes and processes that allow for such multiple orderings that simultaneously confirm, negate and run in parallel to existing “single order” systems.

## Who Owns the City?

During the 1st UROLab (workshop as well as fieldtrip to Gellerup), the specific focus was on the history of the area, the socio-economic conditions of its mostly migrant population and the shifting political status of the area: being on the so-called “ghetto-list” and becoming a widely used case study in public debates when discussing urban crime and disorder. Significantly, what was missing from the workshop was a nuanced discussion of ownership and property rights and, in particular (1) to what extent (hidden) urban orders involving public/private property relations and real estate transactions are both at the core of local conflicts and (2) how they affect planning discourses for the future of the Gellerup Project.

Prior to the 1st UROLab, all participants were provided with information about the changed socio-political agenda in Danish urban development and planning strategies regarding the transformation of former (welfare state oriented) schemes of public funded housing into the more private property oriented ownership of single apartments in this former council housing blocks. In many comparable urban areas throughout the world, transformations in housing and urban development policies are closely linked with deeper economic and political rationalities,

e.g. regarding the revaluation of urban land use and the rise of the real estate market. In relation to the Gellerup Park, such aspects are of crucial importance if we are to understand the dynamics of existing urban orders.

Significantly, one of the most determining powers of urban orders are the materialistic and in various ways culturally and symbolically communicated forms of private and/or public property and ownership. Such factors define who gains profits from what kind of building, territory, space and place, and who – at least ideally- has to care for it. Regulated by laws and the performance of armed bureaucracies like armies, police and governments, systems of property and ownership rights create and reproduce a multiscalar and multilevel landscape of power and order of private property.

## Who Lives in the City?

An important issue that was repeatedly discussed at the 1st UROLab was the clashes and intersections between planning discourses and everyday experiences and imaginaries of people visiting, living and working in the Gellerup Park; e.g. regarding the use of the pathways going through the area or how to properly inhabit the individual apartments. During future URO Labs, we will further explore these conflicts between planning discourse and different counter-narratives that might develop from everyday experiences and imaginaries. Important research questions are: How do urban design and planning discourses construct stories of citizenship and positions of subjectivity in potentially stigmatizing and/or empowering ways? How do people negotiate and contest meanings of existing spaces and visions of future spaces through their everyday practices and productions of counter-narratives (e.g. when using scooters in designated walking areas)? How do these forms of everyday-urbanism and space-contestations contribute to new forms of 'urban orderings'?

Since the 1960s, urban designers, planners and architects have tried to respond to the demand for greater democratization and transparency in decision-making processes. In relation to our three 'URO concerns', it could therefore be relevant to critically explore how different citizens experience and relate to such claimed participatory planning schemes and paradigms.

# Urban Orders reconsidered



The idea of urban planning has its roots in a top-down relation of power, feudal or absolutistic form or government but after WWII, planning was developed also as an indispensable tool or practice for modern western democracies. This led to the practice of what could be called a “single order” planning approach: A practice performed by states and municipalities to regulate and distribute urban growth from more or less practical or rational considerations: creating security for investments in infrastructure by not developing cities in all directions at once, ensuring security and flow in the mobility infrastructure, removing negative effects like pollution created by industrial production etc. Significantly, even though the techniques of urban planning were refined as an increasingly multifaceted number of practices and tools throughout the 20th century, it could still be seen as more or less following the rationality of the ‘single order’. This was not least due to ideas emanating

from modernist architecture, which made a few universal and scalable principles central to urban development: zoning based on function, emphasizing traffic circulation, hierarchical infrastructural systems, weaving of built and open space by introducing green belts, green lungs and maximizing the amount of contact surface between built and unbuilt. The Gellerup Plan is one of the last and also most monumental examples of this single order planning approach in Denmark: From its conception as a zone accommodating all everyday needs of the inhabitants over its character as a greenfield “tabula rasa” development to its repetitive building structure reusing and scaling the same relationship between housing unit, access structure, parking area and open green space.

The 1st UROLab demonstrated and emphasized that a majority of the inhabitants and the daily practice in the Gellerup Plan of today does not fit very well with the original structure

and idea of a singular urban zone for sleeping, eating, recreating and going to school or kindergarten. The 24 hour life within the area was originally planned only for the smaller kids but is now the reality for a much larger section of the inhabitants; both old, unemployed adult and youth.

By focusing on the relationship between outdoor spaces and urban youth, the files, cases and examples discussed at the UROLab documented that many young people spend much of their time in Gellerup but they do so 'outside' or on the edge of the different organizational forms provided by the area's single order concept and layout: playgrounds, sports areas and institutions. Even though the original physical layout of the area is challenged dramatically by the ongoing demolition and restructuring, the single order complex is still dominant as a physical structuring system with its pathways, roads and block-structure. But it is also clear that the unruliness

or messy character of the practices we were presented with at the UROLab radically differ from the idealized life of 8hours sleep+8hours work+8hours leisure imagined as a part of the original single order concept.

At the first UROLab, the discussion focused primarily on how new spatial forms and new socio-cultural possibilities might be considered as embedded into or included within the larger singular urban order. Keywords were: creating ownership, the municipality and housing association giving away some power and control, creating delineations of spaces to be left open to reappropriation and new use by the youth, giving voice and visibility to the different associations [foreninger] that already exist, etc. This could be said to be ideas for creating and supporting sub-orders or adjusting processes within the overall more or less single purpose urban order created by the physical structure of the Gellerup Plan and the organi-

sations for governing it (The Gellerup Housing Association and Aarhus Municipality).

While the concept of urban orders was not directly addressed and qualified during the first UROLab, the discussions of the Gellerup Park at the 1st UROLab suggested that 'urban orders' might be understood as a way of more directly operating with 'sub-orders' within a dominating (built and administered) urban order. Still, during the two days, we also discussed ideas of substituting the dominant urban order by deconstructing the concept, image and discourse of a single urban order, and thereby prompting a transition towards a more substantial dialogue between top-down and bottom-up practices of planning and ordering.

With this research project, we argue that emerging urban socio-spatial patterns, plans and intentions need to be analyzed in their own right alongside and often overlapping with formal planning initi-

atives. This approach emerges from our overall conception of an 'urban order' as a dynamic regularity in the relationship between social life in the city and its physical environment emerging without any overall coordination, control or use of force. As we realized during the UROLab, it is crucial to analytically and practically consider urban orders as a multiplicity: there is never just one urban order active at a given moment in time. Inspired by the work of Thomas Sievert, we therefore suggest that there is not even a system of multiple equivalent orders but, rather 'a possible disorder' of urban orders: multiple and sometimes opposing orderings found in a contemporary urban landscape. By accepting the often chaotic multiplicity of urban orders, Sieverts intends to direct the focus of planning in the contemporary city more towards the 'cultivation' of breaks and inconsistencies than the traditional ideal of establishing (or maintaining) a strong single order optimized for one defined purpose.

It seems clear that – again in terms of physical planning – this is the reality facing Gellerup in the future. And, because of this possible disorder, the area will probably be ‘normalised’ both spatially and socially so that it imitates and replicates the urban aesthetics of so many other parts of the city of Aarhus, consisting of more or less loosely connected areas, urban patches or ‘islands’ following each their own structural logics and with specific cultures attached to them like most other contemporary cities.



# Perspectives

from participants at the

# 1st UROLab



When I first heard about the UROLab, I must admit that I felt slightly intimidated from the description in the invitation. I wondered how I should behave and how people from the UROLab would see me, considering I'm still a HF student and only 19 years old, while the other participants were all academics and therefore 'higher ranked' in the intellectual world. Well, those were my thoughts. Fortunately, I experienced the opposite. I attended the second day and throughout the seminar I didn't feel misplaced during the talks. There were some great discussions and great inputs; I even made a contribution in front of all the participants and had a positive feedback, which made me feel great afterwards. It was a pleasant experience with great people.

**Aysha Amin is student at Langkaer Gymnasium, managing a museum club for girls from Gellerup and photographer in \*dokumentationslauget\*, a group of volunteers from Gellerup documenting the urban changes in Gellerup.**

I work with the social masterplan for one of Denmark's most deprived areas, Gellerup, which was the case for the 1st UROLab. I was therefore quite curious as to what might become of the UROLab. First of all it was exciting for me to meet so many different people with different occupational and regional backgrounds working together to consider possible solutions to the acute problems of a deprived Danish area. As a practitioner, it is always very useful having to explain what I do and get qualified responses and questions from attentive listeners. Secondly it was a really eye-opening experience to participate in a process where people truly came together around a particular theme. The process was facilitated by InterChange using the method called Art of Hosting. Through simple, yet powerful interventions we managed to produce both meaning and meaningful suggestions and solutions to the tasks we as practitioners are facing on a daily basis. I believe that the interchange

between different areas of research and practice came to one of its most powerful manifestations during this UROLab. I can't wait for the next one to happen!

**Henning Winther, Manager of the Social Masterplan, Brabrand Housing Association**

When I signed up for the workshop *The City as a Living Room* at the School of Architecture in Aarhus, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I did not really know anything about user involvement, anthropological field study, urban planning and certainly not that I actually was quite interested in these topics. I participated in the workshop and the further into the process we got, the more it dawned on me what it was actually about. And, also, that I had to participate in the 1st UROLab to test myself and my interests to see if it really was something that truly caught my attention. At the UROLab the participants were from many different professions and age groups. Some had an almost cynical approach to vulnerable neighborhoods, and did not think it would be possible to change anything if people were not interested in change themselves. This group had already experienced many negative examples of unresolved problems and flawed interventions that seemed to do more harm

than good. By contrast, other participants at the UROLab had experienced how professionals like us came to the city to help and create change but would not listen or did not have time to familiarize themselves properly with the problems. As I see it, there are different useful tools in all the various groups that were present the two days at the UROlab. And if we combine and complement each other, it may turn out to look like a real solution potential. One suggestion: I think it would be really cool to have some 'chaos pilots' or similar in the next UROlab in Berlin. And then we need to do something concrete and make dreams into reality so that the end result is more than intellectual speculation.

**Emilie Jaspers, Stud. MA .  
Aarch. AAA**

# The Next Steps



In the fall of 2015, a planning workshop will be held in Berlin in order to commence preparing the 2nd UROLab to occur in May 2016. At the time of publication, we are consolidating our collaboration with local stateholders in Johannesburg and will start prepare the 3rd UROLab to take place in the fall of 2016 during the coming months. Based on shared insights from the 1st UROLab, the Danish core group currently is planning an academic journal article tentative planned for publication in the fall of 2016.

**Please check our website ([uro.au.dk](http://uro.au.dk)) for further information about upcoming activities.**

# Appendix 1: List of Participants



Alexander Siig Kristensen  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
alexander.siig@icloud.com

Anna Holder  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Aarhus School of Architecture  
anna.holder@aarch.dk

Asger Schou  
Civil Engineer, Aarhus School of Engineering  
assc@ase.au.dk

Astrid Majland Gornitzka  
Student Assistant at Bolig Kontoret Århus (Housing Association)  
amg@bk-aarhus.dk

Aysha Amin  
Dokumentationslauget in Gellerup  
aysha\_amin96@hotmail.com

Bagga Bjerge  
Associate Professor, Center for Alcohol and Drug Research,  
Aarhus University  
bb.crf@psy.au.dk

Carolina Henriques  
Assistant Researcher, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa  
carolinanhenriques@gmail.com

Danielle Guldmann Sekwati  
Den Gamle By, Outreach Project, Gellerup and MA  
in Anthropology  
dgs@dengamleby.dk

Elena Kaarup-Christensen  
BA student in Anthropology  
elena.kaarup@gmail.com

Emanuele Sabbatani  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
4003657@stud.aarch.dk

Emilie Jaspers  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
4002750@stud.aarch.dk

Engin Erkus  
Ghetto Workout Gellerup  
engin-erkus@hotmail.com

Esther Julie R. Ellingsen  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
4002775@stud.aarch.dk

Helya Ahmadi  
Gellerup museum & Dokumentationslaug Gellerup  
helya\_ahmadi@hotmail.com

Henning Winther  
Manager of the Social Masterplan in Gellerup  
hewi@bbbo.dk

Jan Christensen  
Associate Professor, Aarhus School of Engineering  
jch@ase.au.dk

Jason Sumich  
Fellow in Social Anthropology, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)  
j.m.sumich@googlemail.com

Jeppe Fischer  
MA student in anthropology, Aarhus University  
jeppe.fischer@gmail.com  
Jonas Strandholdt Bach

Anthropologist and Internal Consultant  
at Brabrand Boligforening  
jost@bbbo.dk

Jørgen Eskemose  
Associate professor, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts,  
School of Architecture, Department of Human Settlements  
jeske@kadm.dk

Katrine Duus Terkelsen  
Research Assistant with URO and MA student  
at Aarhus University  
duuskat@gmail.com

Katrine Rhindal Møllmann  
BA student in Architecture  
4001948@stud.aarch.dk

Kristian Vestergaard  
Associate Professor, Aarhus School of Engineering  
kv@ase.au.dk

Laust Lund Elbek  
MA student in Anthropology, Aarhus University  
laust.lund.elbek@hotmail.com

Leo Pedersen  
Associate Professor, Aarhus School of Engineering  
lpe@ase.au.dk

Lotte Knakkegaard Nielsen  
MA Student in Anthropology, Aarhus University  
lotteknakkegaard@gmail.com

Louise Fabian  
Associate Professor, History of Ideas, Aarhus University  
idelfl@cas.au.dk

Louise Nørgaard Glud  
PhD fellow Informationsvidenskab, Aarhus University  
imvln@dac.au.dk

Maja Hojer Bruun  
Assistant professor, Aalborg University  
mhb@learning.aau.dk

Mathias Cramer  
MA student in Anthropology  
cramer89@hotmail.com

Mia Prahm  
Researcher, MA in world cities and urban life  
mia@prahm.dk

Mikkel Thelle  
Director of Danish Center for Urban History and  
Assistant Professor at Aarhus University  
iksmikkel@cas.au.dk

Morten Nielsen  
Associate Professor, Aarhus University  
etnomn@cas.au.dk

Nadia Helmy Ahmed  
MA in Arabic and Islamic studies  
ahna@aarhus.dk

Nanna Schneidermann  
PhD, Research Assistant with URO  
n.schneidermann@gmail.com

Nick Jenisch  
Project Director and Architect, Tulane Regional Urban Design  
Center, Tulane City Center  
trudc@tulane.edu

Nicki Brask Damm  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
4000706@stud.aarch.dk

Pia Katballe Sørensen  
Residents' cooperation, the Physical  
Master Plan for Gellerup and Toveshøj  
pks@aarhus.dk

Rasmus Birk  
PhD Student, Department of sociology &  
social work, Aalborg University  
rbirk@socsci.aau.dk

Silke Holmqvist  
MA Student at Cultural History, Aarhus University  
silkeholmqvist@gmail.com

Sofie Palsgaard Nommensen  
BA student in Architecture, Aarhus School of Architecture  
4000380@stud.aarch.dk

Stefan Hoehne  
Dr. des, Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Historische Urbanistik,  
Center for Metropolitan Studies  
stefan.hoehne@metropolitanstudies.de

Thomas Bürk  
Dr., Institute of Geography, Universität Hamburg  
thomas.buerk@uni-hamburg.de

Tom Nielsen  
Professor, Aarhus School of Architecture  
tom.nielsen@aarch.dk

# Appendix 2: The participants' reflections on the transdisciplinary methodology



The participatory and transdisciplinary workshop format, where in general well received by individuals already working or living in Gellerup and by the students. Some of the involved researchers had a more mixed evaluation. In the last part of the lab we harvested together with the participants informations about, how the participants had experienced the transdisciplinary cooperation. The following concerns and conclusions where suggested by the different participants. We are well aware that some of these experience and suggestions can seem internally conflicting. We see that as an interesting and fruitful part of further research and method developing

- “The common subject made is possible to speak without single disciplinary jargons dominating”
- “The trans-disciplinary methods of the workshop made a great space for people without a professional academic background (people living in Gellerup and students) to contribute.”
- “Architects at present dominate in Gellerup, and there is a lack of transdisciplinary ways of problem solving, which made this workshop so rewarding.”
- “In order go beyond the different scientific methods and conceptualizations we must bring the different approaches more clearly out to start with.”
- ”The format made people feel safe to contribute, but the outcome was more unclear/still in the making”

- "Consider if all types of participants shall necessarily contribute in all faces of the lab. Maybe a session with researcher alone in the end would be worth trying at the next lab."
- "As an 'opening lab' it worked well because all had the experience that they where heard and that they contributed."
- "The lab managed to open up and initiate a dialogue between researcher and stakeholders, but the fact that the focus where so much on the process in this specific case contributed to the fact that the suggested 'solutions' did not have a particularly high level."
- "Some researches experienced that it was difficult to contribute with the 'scientific knowledge' they had"

### **Methodological recommendations learned from Lab1**

- Ask trans-disciplinary teams to contribute in cases like Gellerup
- Let different types of scientific and activist approaches present the common case in plenum as a an opening session
- Focus on the common subject in the middle
- Do not make a vision to early, explore together
- Maybe don't tell who you are and where you come from to early
- Let the specialists present their knowledge in a specific session.
- Transforming the concept does not solve the problem.

- Focus more on standpoints less on disciplines.
- Take academic terms seriously.
- In order to gain common ground we need concrete common cases
- The languages we use construct Gellerup (and other cases) in different ways, which is something we should be aware of. We should be make that a common knowledge and methodological strength we bring forth.
- Ask people from different interpretations to explain their view on/experience with the place involved in the case.

### **Ongoing questions and future challenges**

- How to create true, sincere openings towards different academic fields?

How for everyone not think his or her own discipline is the most important?

- How to best give voice to 1 persons perspectives?
- How to develop common conceptual framework
- How to create new Trans-disciplinary Story-telling?
- How to accumulate knowledge and how to make progression in our knowledge
- Further enlighten and explore urban (dis-) orders and use them proactive in our research

# Appendix 3: An engineer's experience of the 1st URO Lab



## Introducing a new process model for the URO Labs

The focus of Urban Orders was initially defined as “the appropriation of urban spaces and new forms of urban citizenship”. For an engineer this is a very broad and unspecific definition compared to those definitions of projects that technicians like us use: In general, engineers define a project according to exact and precise goals, a limited time span, and an expectation of a unique process and/or product as a result.

It is the ambition with the four URO Labs to develop a methodology for transdisciplinary collaboration. In order to fulfill this ambition, insights are needed of the different participants' areas of expertise, such as engineers' collaboration methods and processes. For a practitioner, like an engineer, project processes are always defined by the contract between clients, other consultants, advisors, contractors, authorities, producers and suppliers. Crucially, the purpose of the contract is to make a precise description of the responsibility for the different tasks in the process and in the project, as well as establishing a framework for the future collaboration and communication of the participants in the team. Stakeholders conventionally use a structure and an organization that are shared among the stakeholders, e.g. regarding project planning, management, communication methods, meetings and documentation and collaboration. When using these tried-and-tested methods, needs for developing a unique 'transdisciplinary' language and a common understanding of the project conditions are absent: it is simply built into the core framework of the project.

Hence, given our background in project work, for the engineers, the aim of developing a transdisciplinary methodology for all URO Labs is a challenging task. Through my involvement in the URO Lab, I have thus come to realize that in order for engineers to engage and collaborate with other disciplines (and their quite unfamiliar frameworks and methods) and develop a transdisciplinary methodology, we need to have an in-depth understanding of our own scientific discipline and background.

While the objective of developing a common methodology and approach for studying local 'urban orders' was clear, the 1st URO Lab did not succeed in establishing a solid framework for the different disciplines to work together. Let me give a few examples:

First, the workshop did not fully succeed in creating a collective platform that allowed the different participants to get to know each other, share knowledge and build a common language by which to collaborate. A language based on different academic disciplines.

Second, the lack of the kind of project management that we normally use had the unfortunate consequence that a couple of the engineers soon left the workshop: They simply did not see the relevance of the project. They were unable to identify a structure and methodology, which would give them the opportunity to integrate their project approach and they did not find that other stakeholders were interested in exploring this further.

Third, the Danish core group included both a project manager and the practical coordinator of the 1st URO Lab. From my perspective as an engineer, the

core group had not built into its project model what we normally define as a "protection of the diversity of cross-disciplinary professionalism", manifested e.g. by the presence of fourteen architectural students. This over-representation of one stakeholder group had the effect of shifting the focus during the process, especially during the final and critical debate when we outlined and prioritized topics for further consideration.

Fourth, during the workshop, the discussions were kept at a very abstract level when attempting to establish a common transdisciplinary framework and methodology. Many of the ideas we were able to generate, describe and prioritize, were not framed as integral to a substantive and technical process that would ensure immediate development and concretization of the common framework and methodology.

## **A new workshop model:**

Below, I introduce an alternative model to the URO Labs, which may result in the identification, description and prioritization of needs and by a more structured process may integrate these in a feasible project proposal for whoever might subsequently work with these needs. This model is necessary of several reasons: I believe that the core URO team need to define and execute a cross-disciplinary framework and methodology for clarification of more or less unknown needs. This will make it possible for us to generate new local insight and ideas as well as perhaps formulating actual solutions while exploring the four URO cases. Moreover, it is our stated goal that we identify and invite relevant stakeholders, users, citizens and experts in order to identify and harness the potentials of local 'urban orders'. It is therefore crucial that we ensure that the URO Labs function as catalysts for a genuinely interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration culture, where everyone contributes with core competences. Finally, I believe that with this process design, we might motivate academic staff to remain active during the entire URO Lab and hopefully contribute with an open mindset so that ideas and needs can serve as impetus for setting up actual projects.

One of the ways of significantly improving the process of the URO Labs will be to do a mapping of stakeholders: I think that stakeholders must be

hand-picked according to a principle of identifying and inviting relevant individuals, so-called 'first movers' from the business sector, independent creative people, experts and 'early birds', who might bring the knowledge of possible needs and ideas to the process, especially before they are generally known to the wider public and turn into "problems". To be sure, it is undoubtedly a huge task to identify and invite these stakeholders. They might be persuaded, however, by carefully explaining how and why participation in the project will be useful and will create opportunities for productively affecting the conditions of urban life in cities throughout the world. By thus emphasizing the relevance of the project, it should not be a problem to get local stakeholders to participate and approve of the needs that we identify. If we can't motivate the participants, the URO Lab will surely be an empty and meaningless process!

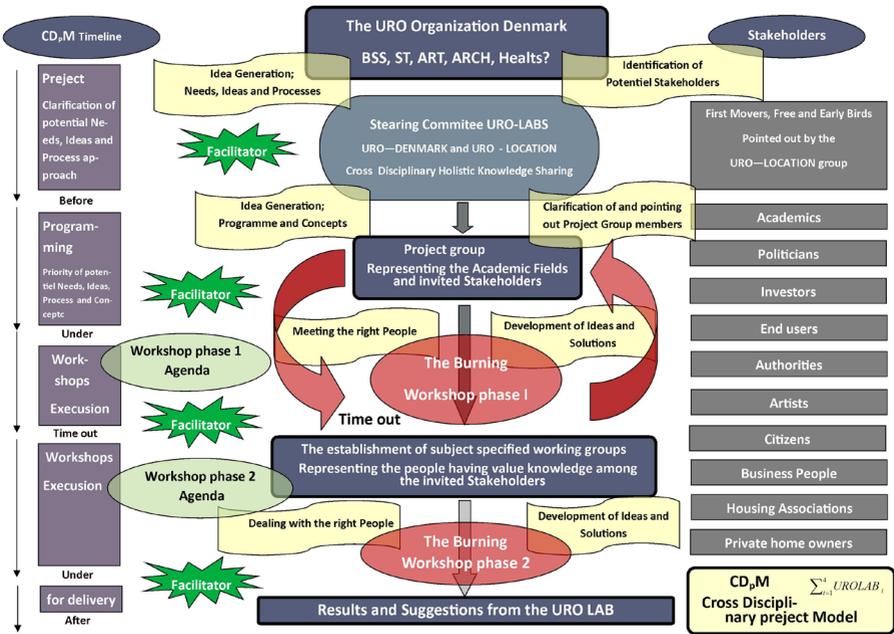


Figure 1: The revised process model for the URO Labs

With the revised process model, I have tried to make a Flow Chart as an advanced ‘Stage Gate’ model that shows a sequence of activities, which I suggest must be followed in the coming URO Labs, if we want to achieve our objectives.

Significantly, it is not simply a process model; it is also a power structure: a division of roles which outlines the involvement of stakeholders and shows the support and management to be executed by a ‘facilitator’ (An “InterChange-TOKE-model” (our facilitator of the 1st URO Lab)).

This process model works on multiple simultaneous levels. I have highlighted the chaotic process of identifying and managing unknown needs and ideas, which we have to integrate in our so-called 'preject' phase (that is: clarification of potential needs, ideas and process approach).

Prior to outlining the structured process leading towards defining a project proposal, the group of URO collaborators from the four collaborator cities have to implement a process that will identify more or less unknown needs and ideas. It is, I believe, crucial that we focus on getting initial insights, which will help the local organizers in formulating a strategy for getting towards defining and describing concrete project ideas and proposals.

The next step then is for the local organizers to identify relevant stakeholders and participants. Their overall task is precisely to make a workshop program, conduct and coordinate the workshop process based on our overall objectives but, at the same time, be attentive to ideas and synergies that arise during the process

Crucially, I believe that the workshops need to be divided into two phases: Phase 1 is parallel to the first day at the 1st URO Lab: A comprehensive process of developing ideas without necessarily focusing on the participants' professional background.

Phase 2 will involve only the URO core group and a group of selected professionals and is structured around particular academic topics and ideas identified during Phase 1.

Between Phase 1 and Phase 2, there is a small break intended to prevent topic processing from becoming too bulky and repetitive. During this break, the organizers will identify the most relevant and valued topics for further discussion in Phase 2. This selection of topics cannot be done by vote (as was the case at 1st URO Lab), but has to be based on a qualified dialogue.

# Contributing Authors:

**Katrine Duus Terkelsen,**  
Department of Anthropology,  
Aarhus University,  
duuskat@gmail.com

**Leo Pedersen,**  
Aarhus School of Engineering,  
lpe@ase.au.dk

**Louise Fabian,**  
Department of History of Ideas,  
Aarhus University,  
idelfl@cas.au.dk

**Mikkel Thelle,**  
Department of History,  
Aarhus University,  
iksmikkel@cas.au.dk

**Morten Nielsen,**  
Department of  
Anthropology,  
Aarhus University,  
etnomn@cas.au.dk

**Nanna Schneidermann,**  
Department of Anthropology,  
Aarhus University,  
n.schneidermann@  
gmail.com

**Stefan Hoehne,**  
Institut für Kunstwissenschaft  
und Historische Urbanistik,  
Center for Metropolitan  
Studies,  
stefan.hoehne@  
metropolitanstudies.de

**Thomas Bürk,**  
Institute of  
Geography,  
Universität  
Hamburg,  
thomas.buerk@uni-  
hamburg.de

**Tom Nielsen**  
Aarhus School  
of Architecture  
Tom.Nielsen@aarch.dk



## Urban Orders contact information:



Official website: [www.uro.au.dk](http://www.uro.au.dk)



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