#4TH URO LAB REPORT

OCCUPYING URBAN SEAMS

Homelessness, community activism and culture & catastrophe profiteering in New Orleans

URO
URBAN ORDERS

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Table of content

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban Orders (URO) is a transdisciplinary research network consisting of collaborator teams in Aarhus, Berlin, Johannesburg and New Orleans, 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 regulation, 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 more viable and democratic 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 participation, 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 - guides urban planning and city management today. With URO, it is our ambition to help change this agenda.

The core activities of URO center around four 'URO Laboratories' (URO Labs), which occur from 2015-17 in all four collaborator cities. Organized by local steering groups, each URO Lab explores 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, co-design and flexible physical planning.

The 1st URO Lab was held in Aarhus in May 2015. 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 URO Lab 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. Subsequently, we produced a detailed report that outlines the planning, realization and main findings from the event.

The 2nd URO Lab was held in Berlin 25-28 May 2016. It focused on the contested urban orders of the Görlitzer Park in Kreuzberg, Berlin. Located in a diverse and rapidly gentrifying area between two vibrant nightlife districts, the Görlitzer Park continues to afford a number of uses to a wide variety of groups, including migrants, bohemians, local families, tourists and drug dealers. The park has become a key site for administrative and governmental interventions; not least caused by an increasing number of refugees using a space inten-ded for recreational activities. Consequently the park was declared a "danger zone" with

ensuing increases of patrols, raids and arrests. Still, as both the marijuana trade as well as the protests against racial discrimination have escalated, the Görlitzer Park is the site of one of the hottest conflicts of Berlin as well as a symbol for the ongoing struggle over public space and "the right to the city". The Lab examined these issues through discussion, community engagement, and observation, culminating in a final report outlining the case, its findings, and its contribution to the larger exploration of urban orders.

The 3rd URO Lab was held in Johannesburg 2-4 November 2016, and focused on the dynamics involved in making the Johannesburg inner-city area, Braamfontein, a contested urban space. This URO Lab worked with questions including '*How does an urban area become contested?*', '*What are the required qualities for an area to become particularly prone for public contestation and discontent?*', and '*How does the space frame the contestation?*'. These were examined along and around Braamfontein's Jorissen Street during three days of fieldwork and discussion to observe active urban orders, how gentrification processes meet uprisings of the youth against the establishment, and how the momentary interweaving of the social, the economical, and the political create a multilayered urban aesthetic of contestation.

This report describes the 4th URO Lab from its inception and planning to realization, held in New Orleans 10-12 April 2017. The 4th Lab explored the 'urban seams' which both separate and integrate New Orleans' neighborhoods, focusing on the contested nature of the highway underpass between an expanding Central Business District and historic Central City. The Lab used the contested urban seams as a prism to explore homelessness, community activism and culture & catastrophe profiteering in New Orleans. The report outlines the participants' observations and findings, and suggests how the dynamics of this case study might add to or alter our understanding of urban orders.

This and all URO Lab publications can be downloaded from our project website (www.uro.au.dk).

2. THE CASE

New Orleans is a city of strongly defined neighborhoods. Prior to displacement from Hurricane Katrina, its population was among the most native of any city in the United States. While tourism has long driven the New Orleans economy, its many visitors enjoy the music and other cultural traditions often fostered by "low income" neighborhoods including Central City, the Lower 9th Ward, and Tremé, the nation's first African American neighborhood.

While urban seams can develop as commercial corridors that stitch together adjacent residential neighborhoods, or recreational green spaces alongside transit, they also refer to the scars of 1960s bridge and highway development which divided neighborhoods in New Orleans and in cities throughout the United States. The resulting linear, liminal public spaces have met with contention and inspired various mitigating solutions, including removal, across the country. In New Orleans, they have contributed to the separation of neighborhoods, enjoyed use as community or culturally "claimed" space, and often serve as the location for a portion of the city's homeless population.

New Orleans faces a crisis of homelessness as the city's first sustained economic growth period in decades widens the gap between upper and lower class workers and threatens the affordability of housing for many of its citizens. The issue draws both public and private resources yet remains persistent and continues to present challenges related to land use, development, and the right to public space.

A multitude of urban orders are influential within urban seams, certainly when occupied by the city's homeless, and further when they dictate the character and limits of the relationship between two neighborhoods: the legality of occupation and citizens' claims to public space; the municipal practice of homeless "sweeps" which clear or shift encampments following complaints or in anticipation of national sporting events (New Orleans is frequently host to Super Bowls and major tournaments); inconsistent policy enforcement and policing; homeless culture, territory, and pan-handling; crime; both public and private economic development priorities; etc.

The Mississippi River Bridge/LA-90 overpass creates an urban seam which doubles as the front door to Central City, a neighborhood at the intersection of converging cultural, political, and economic forces in present day New Orleans. It lies directly adjacent to the economic engine of downtown and serves as one of the city's important cultural producers, yet has long struggled economically. Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard (formerly Dryades Street) provided a commercial hub for the neighborhood and city's African American population, particularly during segregation, when downtown vendors would not serve black clientele. After a decades-long decline, renewed public and private investment along the Boulevard has raised debate about its character, usership, and direction.

The New Orleans Mission, which serves the homeless population, sits adjacent to the LA-90 overpass at the downtown gateway to Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. and Central City. Planning efforts include attempts to direct downtown growth and tourism to the Oretha Castle Haley corridor. As the city spurs economic development through its own investment, tax incentives, and facade improvement grants, it effects change on existing urban orders, including homeless occupation and those suggested by the current prevalence of community-oriented non-profits and service providers on the corridor.

Critical to the URO effort was an attempt to understand current 'urban orders' along a corridor widely recognized as a target for investment, yet part of a neighborhood with a strong identity and powerful cultural advocates who have a voice in the process of redevelopment.

The dynamics of current and future redevelopment efforts are shaped by urban orders at odds with each other. Land adjacent to a successful downtown tourist market and business

district and a collection of historic buildings represent an economic opportunity for developers and investors. As public housing has been replaced by mixed-income developments, new dense housing and commercial development has creeped in from the neighborhood's geographic edges, and the City's redevelopment authority has auctioned available lots, property values have slowly but steadily risen in Central City. Meanwhile, residents of this culturally vibrant neighborhood are at work to preserve their social and cultural practices and press for ways new development can benefit the existing population and policy or other changes can avoid wholesale displacement due to lack of affordability.

Outlined above are some of the historic planning and economic factors that shaped the OCH Blvd. and Central City, including the construction of a physical, overhead barrier (highway bridge) between the neighborhood and downtown, and important factors not discussed here at length, including economic and racial segregation and 60s/70s white flight. Among many others, two major additional factors help shape the experience of residents and visitors to Central City, and contribute to our understanding of localized urban orders:

1. New Orleans has long traded on its unique culture, including the production of original music; festival culture with Mardi Gras at its center; an advertised carefree lifestyle; mixing of cultures resulting in rich culinary and performance traditions; and long-standing social groups recognized for cultural production, including Mardi Gras Indian tribes, parade krewes, social aid and pleasure clubs, brass bands, and more. The commodification of culture in New Orleans brings wealth to the City and service providers, but rarely provides direct support for the culture-bearers themselves, contributing to the affordable housing crisis, neighborhood stability, and even neighborhood identity as its leaders and cultural representatives are pushed out.
2. Crime continues to define the narrative of many New Orleans neighborhoods, whether as a deterrent to tourism or in-migration, a cause of out-migration, or the innumerable effects of crime on neighborhoods, education, family stability, etc. Coupled with its status as the most incarcerated state in the most incarcerated country in the world, is the unequal prosecution of criminals by race and class, combining to create an almost insurmountable social and economic cost, particularly given its implementation over decades, and indeed, centuries. However, crime may also slow investment and associated gentrification.

The 4th URO Lab was arranged to understand and examine the prevalent historic, physical development, policy, and social factors apparent in Central City. In some combination, these produce urban orders which shape the intended and actual use of public space, including homelessness, and affect the preservation of cultural practices critical to the identity of the neighborhood.

3. ORGANIZING AND PREPARING THE LAB

The New Orleans organizing committee explored a range of topical cases deemed suited to the Urban Orders framework and approach, building upon the extensive and long-standing engagement through design and other fields of its members, centrally the Small Center for Collaborative Design. Settling on the issue of "urban seams," the fourth URO lab would consider liminal public spaces as a given condition overlaying New Orleans' distinct urban neighborhoods. Focusing specifically on the Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. and the Central City neighborhood, the URO Lab used the socio-political and physical dynamics of the study area to investigate existing, changing, and potential 'urban orders.'

In the backyard of URO Lab 4 hosts, Small Center for Collaborative Design, and drawing upon recent design/build work with homelessness service providers, the study area was chosen as a representation of a number of phenomena common across the city but particularly present and interactive onsite.

Following long-term engagement with cultural, municipal, non-profit, and business figures in and around Central City, the New Orleans team recognized several forces in opposition: the redevelopment of a historic corridor and policing of public space for an audience perceived as outsiders, cultural ambassadors and neighborhood leaders representing the needs of long-standing residents, continued production of culture as tradition and protest, and the commodification of culture that does not benefit its producers.

The lab utilized planned and unplanned interactions with residents, culture-bearers, non-profit and for-profit housing developers, homelessness and housing experts, activists, press, and others to attempt to formulate an understanding of 'urban orders' in Central City New Orleans. The lab allowed for focus on intense information gathering and understanding of the complicated dynamics of the site through various lenses:
- Cultural production, including Mardi Gras Indians and cultural and artistic non-profits
- Community "production," including traditional uses of public space, street culture, and artistic expression
- Touristification, marketing and its non-beneficiaries
- Development, including market assumptions, neighborhood newcomers and the process of gentrification
- Housing and homelessness, including housing cost pressures and the right to public space
- Community identity, including gentrification, the loss of approximately 100,000 black residents to other locations post-Katrina, policing of public space
- Other factors in the use and identity of public space, including the ongoing campaign to remove confederate monuments and reclaiming of public space through cultural use, including highway underpasses

4. THE 4TH URO LAB

The 4th URO Lab brought together perspectives from geography, anthropology, history, engineering, history of ideas, architecture, and urban planning, in addition to those of residents, activists, policy makers, and journalists. The Lab focused primarily on gathering "inputs" from various stakeholders and researchers through panel discussions, casual interactions, observation, and site visits. This approach revealed the complex and interwoven factors that determine perceived spatial imaginaries, spatial conflicts and formal and informal "urban orders" in Central City, New Orleans. The researchers included investigations of cultural production, housing & homelessness, economic development, municipal investment, "touristification," and policing of public space.

The Lab began with an academic panel discussion regarding open space, neighborhood and geographic history, and the making of "urban seams," followed by another led by local and national leaders on housing, homelessness, and public space policy. In the afternoon of Day 1, lab participants chose from a menu of concurrent site visits to a variety of homelessness service providers and mission-driven developers. Initially, two groups were formed to investigate subthemes: (1) Public space, use, and governance, and (2) cultural identity and production. In the evening, a public panel discussion exploring the regulation of public space was held, hosted by the Small Center for Collaborative Design in conjunction with the URO Lab.

On Day 2, participants heard directly from fair housing advocates and low-income legal advisors on the challenges of homelessness and housing within the study area and more broadly in New Orleans. Next were presentations by culture-bearers including arts organizations and Mardi Gras Indians, which led to an extended discussion of the tourist economy, cultural production, and economic exploitation[LF1] .

In the afternoon, lab participants traveled together on a guided tour of contested urban spaces including civil war monuments (since removed), highway underpasses occupied by the city's homeless population and often used as a cultural public space for music and festivals, and youth-led spaces including Parisite Skate Park. Individual group work was suspended in favor of an ongoing group discussion throughout the day.

On the final day of the lab, the group worked to define next steps for the broader URO program, discussed initial findings from the New Orleans lab, and created a detailed framework from which to understand the recent inputs and inform this report.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Touristification as Urban Order: or the production of the tourist place in "new New Orleans"

Intro
Post-Katrina New Orleans has undergone massive urban transformations since the social and political catastrophe[1] of the (not so) "natural" disaster of Hurricane Katrina. But, spatially and socially this had not the same impact for everybody. As so very often occurs, the crisis of a city has been used for fundamental changes in the social urban design. Cynically speaking, this kind of *creative destruction*, in a Schumperterian way, opens new opportunities for the local, regional, and national elites, associated corporations and foundations to roll out their concepts of commodification and reordering of a city formerly quite reluctant and resistant to change, and with a rich cultural heritage including African-American, Latino, and Vietnamese communities.

On the Political Economy of Touristification
The starting point in conceptualizing tourism and its impact on Urban Orders seems ultimately a banal and always true realization: tourism (and the associated central practices of travel, gastronomy, entertainment and hotel industry) consists mainly of the re/production (including the consumption) of commodified and therefore also fetishized places. In this case the phantasmagoria of New Orleans as "The Big Easy" relates to Jazz Bands, Mardi Gras, voodoo, rocking chairs on colonial architecture porches, extravagant plates of shrimp and carnivalistic and hedonistic joys. The main processes of this political economy of the re/production of a touristic place (in the making) are the dialectic interwoven levels of supply and demand, mobility and circulation, and the communication of these elements at the same time.

(A) Supply: Each tourist destination needs a (more or less) differentiated, specific and (more or less) diverse range of infrastructural and service-based offerings to satisfy tourist needs. The character of these offerings varies depending on local markets and their audience. On the whole, this can be seen as a process of local valorization. This does not only contain specific product offers, but also the symbolic exchange value through attributes such as (for New Orleans) Jazz and Blues music, carnival and Mardi Gras, booze and libertinage, French and Creole postcolonial lifestyles, Dixie and the Big Easy. The supply of tourist goods is thus not only to make available central goods and services like places of accommodation, gastronomy and other services. This also includes local mobility and a tangible (and continuous) presence of affects and symbolic artefacts of the tourist resort, which are mostly collective symbols (heritage, places of remembrance, "culture"). However, practical and atmospheric space attributes, such as simple access possibilities, the absence of "anxiety spaces," and

more or less friendly local acceptance to "welcome cultures", that is, the experience of situations of sensual-aesthetic desire and consumption, are also important.

(B) The demand, that is to say primarily the physical search for a tourist place, requires a person who consumes this place, that is, a group of people who go there to spend money on various offerings. The tourism demand thus consists of the condensation of a desire and its consumption at an "authentic" place, i.e. a place that is not necessarily specifically created (or at least the illusion of this authenticity). Tourists must be ready and willing to visit these places, to demand their attractions and to reproduce them continuously. The capitalistic desire has become here an incorporated relationship of consumption, a physically and subjectively lived everyday language of the comprehensive appropriation of a place (and the social objects located there), from the tourist gaze (Urry, 2002)[2] to the comprehensive situational immersion. Tourists are themselves part of the production of space by their presence in these places, they become thus not purely disposable consumers of a commodity but also producers of this touristic place.

(C) Mobility and circulation: The interaction between demand and supply overlaps in the area of tourist circulation, the practices of spatial mobility and its economic, political and legal framework of transport, travel infrastructure, accessibility and prices. Circulations and mobilities are therefore a basic condition of tourist practices. If the tourist person does not reach the places of desire, neither a sophisticated offer to advertise nor a long-awaited demand for the synthesis of these two poles will help. Mobility and its possibilities and restrictions are thus the sensitive interface, the hinge of the current "fossil" capitalism (Malm, 2016)[3]. Here also historically contingent transport media (airplane, ship, train, coach) and the therefore applied prices determine the possibility and composition of the tourist traveller. This dynamic, but always temporary reconstruction of the tourist groups is also determined by means of administrative territorialisation, legal travel arrangements and their length of stay.

The dialectic between supply and demand presupposes a communication between these two spheres and mediation to subjects which are in active interplay there. Therefore this last dimension in the communication relations is to be considered.

(D) The medial / communicative level in the narrower sense, connects the three previous levels in a synthesis of communication and knowledge and truth-regimes. Consuming access to a tourist site requires the knowledge of this place as a possibility of presence, access and ways to go there. The imagination of a (temporary) stay in one place is determined by the knowledge about the objects and atmospheres potentially to be consumed there. Travel guides, tour guides and other tourist literature and media provide a comprehensive offer. The communication of such knowledge about historically changing media of all kinds has a

clear iconographic focus. Spatial images and image (re)productions essentially determine the tourist view, their own visual document is a topological testimony of the local consumption, the (photo)camera becomes the indispensable artifact of everyday tourism and the preserved presence. The more images are created, the less they are used as a special medium of the presence proof. Therefore, the camera is still an omnipresent artifact of tourism.

Subversion of supply and demand?
In recent years, there has been an expansion of traditional tourist areas via digital commercial platforms such as VRBO and Airbnb, whose success is related to a broad expansion and acceptance of the sharing economy and aligns with visitors' expanded search for authenticism during travel. Tourism in New Orleans centers around a number of traditional activities that are not planned or executed for tourists (Mardi Gras Indians' Super Sunday celebration, Second Lines, etc.) but are commodified in traditional media advertising and increasingly attended by outsiders. A number of these activities has historically played a central role in African American resistance and struggles over space. The performance of music - notably second lines - in public space has been a way of claiming right to space in a context where African Americans, through processes of gentrification and disaster profiteering, are being marginalized.

The Production of the Community

In recent decades, the idea of *community* has become essential for the making of urban development schemes throughout the world. It orients ongoing struggles for recognition as different civic organizations seek to establish themselves as key political actors, especially in the urban realm. At the same time, they often serve as vehicles for devising formal policies that aim to align state and municipal agendas with those of the populace in what we might describe as "neoliberal cities". To be sure, with the rise of governmental strategies aiming to activate local groups and mobilize the local resources for economic development and extraction, the question of who 'really' can be categorized as being part of the local community becomes intertwined with those of trying to define what the *culture* and *identity* of a specific area actually means.

While many academics and practitioners continue to adamantly refute the idea that a "community" is somehow "organically grown" and therefore worth preserving, the assumption that a delimited urban space might be more or less congruent with a specific community that happens to be living there and which presumably shares some common values and customs continues to affect local political processes. This goes hand in hand with the assumption that the people living in a specific area have a certain cultural and social homogeneity that is comprised of much more than a mere physical proximity to each other.

We therefore propose that with the mobilization of residents and by shaping their cultural identities as a key resource for the making of viable cities, these sets of strategies and practices can be described as a form of "Governance through the Community (GtC)". While in many Western European cities, GtC came to the forefront of urban governance only during the last two decades, it has a much longer and inherently more complex history in the Americas and former colonial nation-states in sub-Saharan Africa. The area of the Central City in New Orleans is no exception. Being a crucial site of local activism during the Civil Rights Movement in the economically booming 1960s, it eventually hit bottom in the 1980s. The difficult and economically challenging years affected not only the physical layout of the area, which is visibly marked by the many vacant buildings and abandoned lots but, equally, the impressions that people continue to have of it as being crime-ridden and dangerous for residents and tourists alike. Since Katrina hit, however, the area has become a key site for a cluster of overlapping but not always coherent planning strategies that allegedly aim to transform its physical layout as well as the socio-economic composition of its population. Municipal investments along the neighborhood's traditional commercial corridor include the New Orleans Jazz Market, New Orleans Redevelopment Authority headquarters, and a state-funded program called Façade Renew which funds improvements to the facades of historic buildings; others include non-profit developers utilizing public money to redevelop the area.

In the political slipstream to the disaster, new actors, such as developers, middle-class residents and investors, have come to the area, stirring both hopes and fears among local residents and officials. Although being encouraged by the prospects of having their historic neighborhoods revitalized, many locals fear that the intensified focus on the area will foster mainly gentrification, exclusion, and the extraction of crucial value and resources.

In effect, local community organizations have demanded to be heard and recognized as legitimate political interlocutors. Simultaneously, these groups are actively targeted by developers and urban administrations, as they aim to benefit from local knowledge and resources as well as legitimacy and political support.

As the intensity of these negotiations has increased, it raises questions about who represents and speaks for the community and what the main threats to its survival might be, and have been most emphatically debated at neighborhood meetings, planning committees, and in the media. The debate has been further complicated by the lack of formal (juridical or electoral) recognition that many of the community organizations have. They have therefore had to base their claims to legitimacy on a set of factors whose validity is extremely difficult – if not impossible – to determine: participants' involvement in activities related to "local culture", the nature of their (historical and personal) affiliation to the neighborhood, etc. Still, several local groups, including various tribes of *Mardi Gras Indians*, have had marked success in promoting a self-descriptive narrative based on a unique and historically grown culture bound to specific neighborhoods and accepted as ingrained in the local culture by more or less everyone living there.

We might thus identify three factors framed by the triangular interrelationship between politics, cultural identity, and urban space, which have been crucial for structuring the particular form of 'Governance through the Community' in New Orleans' Central City:

Firstly, the activation of a spatial identity politics has served as a way of uniting local residents around the resistance to broader urban development strategies.

Secondly, spatial identity politics have become crucial for local development and business investments, which aim to capitalize on local "cultures". Redevelopment along Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, including the Southern Food & Beverage Museum and the NOLA Jazz Market can provide a connection to downtown, facilitating the influx of tourists and tourist spending. These investments are based on proximity to the tourist center, historicism along a traditional walkable commercial corridor, and builds on the strength of the corridor as a cultural hub featuring a number of neighborhood service providers and cultural non-profits whose presence in bad economic times ensured the survival of the corridor, and whose continued

presence may be threatened by the development interests seeking this "cultural" location.

Thirdly, local residents continue to be mobilized to participate in spatial identity politics and invest time and labor into activities that increase the 'quality' of the city, such as the beautification and activation of neighborhoods. This is the case, for example, with the Mardi Gras Indians, whose public performances and festivals have become a key element in the making of local image politics and the entertainment industry but without the latter drawing benefits from tourist-generated revenues.

The Contradictory City

Introduction

The relationship between informal and formal practices -- as well as central and marginal practices and between people of power and those who are oppressed -- are critical to understanding some of the social dynamics that are apparent at the study site (the underpass at OC Haley and the Pontchartrain Expressway). They may also be critical to identifying new approaches to managing this and other similar spaces and milieus that exist throughout New Orleans -- that is, approaches that account for the tension between informal and formal practices that drive much of what makes New Orleans appear to be a unique and vital place for both residents and visitors. By recognizing that tension, which pervades many of the vibrant cultural and social practices that are visible throughout the city, potential approaches may be better able to harness the same energy that sets this city apart.

At the study site, there are the informal practices of some of the least privileged members of society, the homeless people who seek shelter under the cover of the highway and find ways to create temporary homes amidst the concrete columns of the underpass. And, there are the formal efforts of nonprofits, agencies, and other entities that seek to control use of the space beneath the highway, and also to account for and provide services for the homeless.

By attempting to define the importance of informality and informal practices to the culture and people of New Orleans -- and also to its visitors -- while also looking at how those informal practices at other sites and in other realms of public life have interacted with, shaped, and in turn been transformed by formal practices (especially as enforced by those in positions of greater power), we arrive at a New Orleans-specific perspective on the dynamics that are apparent at the study site. This perspective differs from common perspectives on homelessness and the provision of services to homeless people and the planning and management of public spaces, because it suggests that more attention must be paid to the productive potential of the interaction between informal and formal practices that is apparent in the city's history and culture -- "productive" in terms of driving cultural practices that can be creative and empowering for those with the least power and resources. This, of course, requires an optimistic and idealized reading of the history and culture of New Orleans. But even if such a reading is indeed idealized, it may still be possible to suggest that recognizing this productive potential may be of value.

Mardi Gras and the neoliberal city

The New Orleans workshop provided an excellent entry into the exposure of the actors' actions on the urban political scene. In order to understand the power relations in NOLA we need to look beyond traditional 'government' actors. Local government depends heavily on the cooperation of non-governmental actors and on the combination of state capacity with non-governmental resources. Governance, thus, depends on the availability and mobilization of resources and actors outside formal government. When it comes to dealing with homelessness it was clear that solutions were found beyond the (local) state, in NGOs and church actors, for example. Different groups in the city, however, have different access to membership in these public/non-profit coalitions, a product of structural inequalities in access to resources (material, knowledge, social, and symbolic). However, being in the United States, where local states traditionally have relatively limited resources, businesses often become key members in the coalitions. Businesses control resources that make them more attractive as coalition partners over other less resource-intensive groups.

There seems to be a basic contradiction in the way culture is created and spatialized on one hand, and the way it is consumed and capitalized on the other. If we take Mardi Gras Indian events as examples, they are today practiced by different tribes in different neighborhoods, each year transforming public spaces of the city into their stage, expressing their taste, productivity and independence. These activities are not opposed by city leaders (though they are limited spatially by the need for city permits), but neither do they support such events, at least not economically.

Mardi Gras Indians and local music are examples of recognized culture that provide a positive

image of the city, and in which black communities are central. Here we see strong brands that attract tourism, and by which hotels, bars, and shops downtown are filled, providing a kind of motor for the overall economy of the city. The communities involved in events like the Mardi Gras Indians' Super Sunday celebration will not go into a fight over the economy - getting their cut so to speak - since for them cultural expression cannot be tied up in creating profit. By definition, for the chiefs, bands, and queens, cultural expression is the opposite of commercialization, which is not a controversial point of view. And this contradiction somehow encapsulates or exemplifies a broader set of contradictions at stake in the city.

Neoliberalized states and financialized real estate interests are fighting hard to produce the city through the logics of exchange value. The urban (land, streets, buildings, homes, parks, etc.) is here seen as speculative commodities. Financialization is a profoundly spatial process, forging social relations that form conditions for urban governance, social geographic change and urban sustainability. Financialization of built environments as a process enmeshed with related processes of commodification, privatization, neoliberalisation, and accumulation by dispossession. This stands in stark contrast to, for example: housing as use value, housing as a basic ecological need (our experiences in the NOLA shelter confirmed this), housing as a human right.

Informality

A key aspect of New Orleans's allure is that it seems to offer an escape from perceived mo-
notony from whence a visitor might come, and a chance to experience a more informal and
spontaneous lifestyle. Marketing efforts, and word-of-mouth accounts portray a city in which
one feels that anything can happen at any moment. Many of these occasions for informality
are created by or associated with the city's historical and cultural events and traditions. For
example, as one traverses the city it is common to encounter a public street being used for
a brass-band parade which anyone is welcome to join (known locally as a "Second Line"
and organized by local social clubs and organizations, in addition to being used as funeral
processions celebrating the life of the deceased). Other public spaces such as sidewalks
and plazas may on any day be occupied and utilized by a range of characters including
musicians, artists, dancers, palm readers, or protesters. Although there have been some
movement towards formalizing these traditions and events (such as parade tracker apps,
permits, restrictions and ordinances) there remains a strong perceived sense of organized
chaos, informality, and spontaneity. This is a key element in the "New Orleans exceptiona-
lism" that pervades discussion of what makes New Orleans New Orleans, and also serves to
draw visitors, outsiders looking for a less ordinary destination for vacations, parties, and even
volunteer trips. For others, it is even a place to purchase a second home or even to relocate.

It is perhaps paradoxical that some of the elements of New Orleans which are celebrated
and glorified as most significant originate from the most oppressed and marginalized sec-
tions of the society. For example jazz music, a genre that has gained worldwide renown
and popularity has its roots in the enslaved and formerly enslaved populations that lived in
the city in the 19th and 20th century. Another well-known and respected cultural tradition
involves the Mardi Gras Indians – carnival revelers whose costumes, songs and rituals are
a combination and expression of the traditions of multiple marginalized groups including
Native Americans and African populations.

Together these institutions create a somewhat contradictory balance wherein some of the
most significant cultural institutions in the city have emerged and persisted from the margi-
nalized and oppressed sections of society. However, it should be noted that appreciation and
respect for cultural institutions does not automatically translate into equality or improvement
of other conditions for these sections of society. Thus, while cultural institutions undoubtedly
provide some benefits (e.g. social cohesion, resilience, etc.) they do not always permit op-
pressed and marginalized peoples to overcome entrenched and institutionalized racism,
segregation, and prejudice.

Control

One way to think about the study site is in the forms of control, predicated on knowing and

tracking, that are necessary to provide services, such as health and human services. Or to provide housing, at set times and in set locations. The formal provision of services requires a trackable identity, with associated information about addictions and legal status. The ownership of housing requires records and tracking of ownership and tenure.

Control, too is critical to the formal marketing of the city's culture. Visitors need to know when events are happening, just as the city and police department need to know, in order to close off streets, provide security, and also to market and to allow for the visitor to take part. This control is predicated on the kind of information that can be shared through apps, guides, and websites, rather than primarily through social networks. Control means, too, the ability to manage events and to provide the appearance of a clean and functioning city that feels safe.

Informal and Formal / Central and Marginal / Privileged and Oppressed
In New Orleans, there is a constant dialogue between the formal and informal, between control and the uncontrolled, between the central and marginal, between the privileged and the oppressed. Within Mardi Gras traditions alone, the evolving relationship between Rex and Zulu today defines Mardi Gras day itself, while the exchanges between Rex and 'tit Rex or between Bacchus and Chewbacchus reflect not only the city's changing demographics, but also the relationship between more established social groups and newcomers, as well as between local culture and broader popular culture. During Mardi Gras, in particular, the swirl of structured events, chance, and the call and response between peoples and groups reaches a threshold where one loses the ability to comprehend or keep track of all who are taking and making what and for whom. There is a persistent testing and crossing of boundaries, and constant exchange between different cycles and cultures.

In physical space, New Orleans has overlapping territories, dominant and secondary structures, primary and secondary affiliations. Simple things like street medians are known as "neutral grounds," which references the history of the city itself and the median as a site for conflict resolution. And these neutral grounds are simultaneously simple strips of grass sometimes planted with trees, but also vital social spaces as well as parade-watching routes, and also a place for people to park their cars when the forecast calls for severe thunderstorms and associated flooding. The contestation and use of space, ideas, words, and images is thick/dense in New Orleans. Some of these practices and traditions require people to be more open/willing to engage each other out in public space, which holds increased potential for conflict, but also and moreso for bridging between communities and peoples.

The Study Site
The underpass at OC Haley can be seen as a site where these contradictions and tensions manifest. The site is simultaneously an entry/portal/gateway to and from Central City and

the Central Business District, even as it is a place of shelter for the homeless. The highway itself was constructed in support of the formal economy and definitely not for the power-less, and yet it provides shelter by virtue of its scale and design. The space is situated at the juncture of two areas that are both experiencing rapid change, with many different kinds of development (commercial) and activity (gov't and nonprofit).

The names and labels that we choose to use -- e.g. corridor or overpass or gateway -- will help set expectations and perception. And what this space becomes, who it welcomes, and what cultures it supports will be an indicator of the direction in which the city is headed. In particular, it will shed light on the values that determine the ways in which services are pro-vided for the underserved, as well as how the city will support diverse cultural practices and allow for multiple readings of public space that are both formal and informal.

More importantly, can addressing the issue of the homeless population under the highway serve the civic, cultural, and participatory impulses that are are unique to New Orleans, and that harness the tension between informal and formal to greater good? That is, can service become indulgence?

6. THE THREE URO CONCERNS

Based on collaborative work during the 1st URO Lab in Aarhus, three URO Concerns were identified and used during the 2nd URO Lab in Berlin to orient the discussion and to challenge our preconceived ideas about the dynamics and workings of particular urban orders:

- Who Governs the City?
- Who Owns the City?
- Who Lives in the City?

Rather than translating adjusted URO Concerns as interpreted through the filter of prior labs, the New Orleans lab posed questions based upon the original structure of who owns/uses/governs the city. The lab posed straightforward questions to guide participants' discovery of site dynamics through presentations, observation, and interviews:

- What are the observable orders governing New Orleans' contested urban seams?
- Who are the stakeholders and how do their actions contribute to the contested nature of urban seams?
- What policy, design, or civic actions have determined the nature of these spaces, and what else might be considered?

The lab focused on the right to occupy public space, including use of 'in-between' spaces by the homeless and the intent of policing to facilitate conflicting use by 'new users' and encourage new development, alongside the use of public streets for traditional cultural practices such as music and performance associated with the Mardi Gras Indians in the face of the commodification of African American culture.

The city's specific character dictates such an approach: struggles over public space in New Orleans are especially characterised by gentrification, 'catastrophe profiteering', race-related conflicts around space including policing, cultural production including music and performance, and the perhaps intangible nature of New Orleans' 'street culture.'

As such, Lab 4 concluded with the researchers redefining the 3 URO concerns as follows:

- Who profits
- Who governs
- Who produces

Throughout the workshop, the questions *who governs* (the city), *who profits* (from urban development) and *who produces* (the city and urbanity) emerged as central elements in understanding the urban context of New Orleans. These issues are classical questions asked in urban studies when trying to make sense of the urban order and power relations in particular urban contexts.

Who profits?
The municipality, selected local economic stakeholders (bars, restaurants, hotels, tourist companies, image producers), also selected elites, real estate owners, developers, local guides.

In the US, where local states traditionally have relatively limited resources, public/private partnerships are often assembled to conduct development of parks, housing, and other public amenities. Large business interests and even large non-profits control resources that make them more attractive as municipal and state coalition partners over other less resource-intensive groups, including community development corporations.

Who governs?
The municipality, developers and planners, local "community leaders", the police, the churches.

As stated elsewhere in this report, in order to understand local power relations, we need to look beyond traditional 'government' actors. Local government depends heavily on the cooperation of non-governmental actors and on the combination of state capacity with non-governmental resources. Governance, thus, depends on the availability and mobilization of resources and actors outside formal government.

Who produces the city?
Cultural workers, culture-bearers, the people that "live their heritage," tourists/party-goers, those who are able to articulate a specific version of the New Orleans myth, paradigm owners.

Specifically, it is important to note that the producers of the city are in the case of New Orleans very rarely those who profit from the production. The city's musicians earn poverty wages at an average of $18,000/yr, and many artists, performers, and other culture-bearers earn even less. Hospitality workers who help to produce the experience of the city for tourists are also low wage earners, as Louisiana is a "right to work" state where unions have long been thwarted. Restructuring the central URO concerns allowed for a more accurate platform from which to observe the contested public space of New Orleans, including its neighborhood streets (claimed by producers including the Mardi Gras Indians), commercial corridors (kept vibrant by cultural producers during long-dormant economic periods and now faced with development benefitting others), and underpasses (occupied by the homeless population also responsible for the production of the daily urban experience).

7. URBAN ORDERS RECONSIDERED

The URO network and progression of four consecutive field labs are intended to understand the potentials of the different processes of urban ordering toward the development of a new transdisciplinary approach to global urban development focusing on civic participation and flexible physical planning.

Transdisciplinary planning, lab participation, and post-lab analysis has built upon the organization of early labs through recent sessions by building a core group of common participants and a shared-yet-flexible format to include information gathering, site observation, presentation, and discussion in both small and large working groups. Benefits of this approach include shared knowledge of cases and background, common research threads, and developed shorthand for common experiences.

However, aside from this initial translation from Aarhus to Berlin, there was relatively insignificant depth of discussion of similarities between labs or how the central URO concerns might progress and transform given inputs and analysis from each prior lab. Given the complexities of each case study and site(s), freedom was given to each city's lab organizers to structure participants' activities. The time constraints of each lab coupled with the depth of contextual understanding necessary to properly observe local phenomena made positing informed theories difficult in real time, though new insights were attained both during labs and in transdisciplinary collaboration on written analysis as follow-up to each lab and included in this report and others. Though difficult within the timeframe of individual labs, the task of finding broader themes and lessons across labs is now underway with the benefit of four completed labs and the continued participation of the core transdisciplinary team, the results of which will be available in future publications.

Future serial labs may benefit from additional collaborative, in-person analysis to feed and shape the next in a series of URO labs. Though it may be equally significant that this collective knowledge builds within the core participant group, additional guidelines may make it easier to draw threads through diverse case studies on different continents while still allowing freedom to select sites and focus areas at the local level.

The labs have allowed reflection by the researchers about the conceptualization of 'urban orders' in that they are never a determinate outcome or a pattern that can be definitively stated, say, through empirical investigations, archival studies, or in conference auditoriums. Rather, there is a rhythmic relation between partially erased, provisionally established, and potentially emerging patterns of ordering.

The Lab in New Orleans made us even more sure that we have to speak about processes of orderings more than about urban orders. This includes the process of homeless populations feeling at home in the city, the touristification of the city, and the commodification of its culture and identity.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Anders Lund Hansen	Human Geography, Lund University
Anna Brand	Assistant Professor, Planning & Urban Studies, University of New Orleans
Aron Chang	Urban Designer & Director, Blue House
Brad Powers	PhD Candidate, City, Culture, & Community, Tulane University
Carol Reese	Professor, Tulane School of Architecture
Chloe Tucker	PhD Candidate, City, Culture, & Community, Tulane University
Dustin Robertson	PhD Candidate, City, Culture, & Community, Tulane University
Elena Kaarup-Christensen	URO Assistant/MA-student, Anthropology, Aarhus University
Fred Karnas	Senior Fellow, Kresge Foundation
Laura Bryan	District "B" Land Use Director, Office of City Councilwoman Cantrell
Leo Pedersen	School of Engineering, Aarhus University
Louise Fabian	History of Ideas, Aarhus University
Marla Nelson	Associate Professor, Planning & Urban Studies, University of New Orleans
Mikkel Thelle	History, Aarhus University
Morten Nielsen	Anthropology, Aarhus University
Peter Gall Krogh	Design, Institute for Engineering, Aarhus University
Richard Campanella	Urban Geographer, Tulane University School of Architecture
Sergio Padilla	Director of Arts & Culture, Blue House
Shirley Laska	Professor Emerita of Sociology, University of New Orleans
Stefan Höhne	Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin
Thomas Bürk	Geography, Universität Hamburg
Wes Cheek	PhD Candidate, City, Culture, & Community, Tulane University

Hosts - Small Center for Collaborative Design, Tulane University School of Architecture:

Sue Mobley	Public Programs Manager
Nick Jenisch	Project Manager

APPENDIX 2: PROGRAM

Monday, April 10

9:00 am   Light breakfast available

9:30 am   Introductions & Orientation: Nick Jenisch, Sue Mobley, Morten Nielsen

10:00 am   Framing the Issue: Urban Seams as Public Space
                 Panel Presentation & Discussion

11:15 am   Homelessness & Public Space Policy
                 Panel Presentation & Discussion

12:30 pm   Lunch & Working Groups

1:45-3:00 pm   Site visits and/or self-directed exploration
                 Option 1: New Orleans Mission
                                  1134 Baronne St.
                 Option 2: Ozanam Inn
                                  843 Camp St.
                 Option 3: Unity for Greater New Orleans
                                  2222 Tulane Ave.

3:30 - 5:00   Site visits and/or self-exploration
                 Option 1: Alembic Community Development
                                  1307 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., 2nd floor (mezzanine)
                 Option 2: New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
                                  1409 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.
                 Option 3: Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
                                  1610 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.

5:00 pm Working group debrief

6:00 pm Red Beans Roundtable: Public Space
                 Panel discussion is part of Small Center's Spring series exploring the regulation
                 and use of public space; Dinner is available

Tuesday, April 11

8:30 am   Light breakfast available

9:00 am   Housing & Services
               Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
               Southeastern Louisiana Legal Services
               Downtown Development District

10:15 am   Neighborhood Leaders & Cultural Institutions
               Ashé Cultural Arts Center
               Central City Renaissance Alliance
               Mardi Gras Indian Council

11:30 am   Working Group Meetings

12:30 pm   Lunch

1:45 pm   Guided tour (shuttle bus)
               Lee Circle
               I-10 Claiborne Overpass
               Parisite Skate Park (under I-610 overpass)

4:30 pm Working Group debrief

Wednesday, April 12

9:00 am   Light breakfast available & Working Group meetings

10:00 am   Group presentations

11:00 am   Final discussion & wrap-up