

‘Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted’: Law under Construction in Urban Peripheries

International Workshop — New Delhi, 16-18 February 2027

Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH)/French Institute in India, 2 Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road



Across the urban margins of the Global South, law is not simply applied or ignored. It is crafted, assembled, improvised, contested and under construction—in paperwork and on the ground, at gates and fences, in offices and courtrooms, through rumours, maps, notices, and the threat of prosecution. From the fencing of state lands and the expansion of private enclaves to the legalization of long-standing occupations, the making of urban peripheries is a process of assembling and re-assembling legality. “*Trespassers will be prosecuted*” marks not only exclusion but also boundaries being drawn, jurisdiction asserted, and uncertain property regimes turned into enforceable truth.

This international workshop invites scholars to explore how law is constructed, dismantled, and repurposed in the everyday governance of urban land, infrastructure, and citizenship. We invite papers that trace the actors and practices — developers, residents, bureaucrats, police, lawyers, intermediaries — who participate in crafting legality on the ground. How do documents, contracts, and procedures render some uses of land legal and others invisible? What forms of corporate or

bureaucratic power emerge when state agencies and private entities co-produce law? How do people inhabit, resist, or exploit these ambiguous legal terrains?

We welcome contributions from anthropology, geography, planning, history, political science and law that examine the fabrication of legality in cities and their edges — where the urban future is quite literally *under construction*.

Practical information

This international workshop is organised jointly by the ERC project *Urban Frontiers* at the University of Copenhagen and the Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH, Delhi).

Abstracts of maximum **250 words** should be sent to the organizers by **October 1st 2026**. We will aim at giving a final answer to all applicants by November 1st. Draft papers should be circulated by **January 15th 2027**. They will form the core of a Special Issue/Edited Collection with additional contributions submitted to a publisher during Fall 2027.

For international presenters, CSH and its partners will provide assistance for visa applications. The workshop is free of cost. Lunches, one dinner and a closing cocktail ceremony will be arranged for all participants.

Organisers: David Singh, CSH and Christian Lund, University of Copenhagen

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