

## Call for papers: Conference on Contested Property Claims

Aarhus University, Denmark, 10-11 December 2015

In contemporary societies people generally acquire property within a property regime based on trade, contracts, inheritances, and welfare state redistributions. But these regimes do not always run smoothly. Behind them lie histories of appropriation and expropriation, and from within they are constantly challenged by those who point to the social injustices that they can produce. We call these attempts to interrupt the dominant system of contracts and exchanges 'contested property claims'. They are points of friction where economic, political, and ethical issues around property are brought to light, and they illustrate how disagreements over property force social actors to reason about the institution of property as such.

To address these issues the research project *Contested Property Claims – Moral Reasoning about Property and Justice in Practice, Debate, and Theory* invites scholars from all fields to submit paper proposals on the ways property is performed and contested.

To propose a paper, please send an abstract of (max.) 300 words to [contestedpropertyclaims@cas.au.dk](mailto:contestedpropertyclaims@cas.au.dk).

Read more about the Contested Property Claims project here:

<http://projects.au.dk/contestedproperty/>

Please use this address for any inquiries about the conference. The closing date for receiving abstracts is 15 September 2015.

For more information see our conference website here:

<http://conferences.au.dk/propertyclaims2015/>

### **Streams**

#### **Property, Justice and Time**

Time and temporality are important dimensions of property claims and regimes. Whether based in possession, labour, custom, inheritance, use, or promises of efficiency, the source of legitimacy of property is linked to time. Furthermore, property sets up boundaries of inclusion and exclusion creating differential rights to property; alternative or revolutionary property forms usually offer promises or hopes for a better and more just distribution. How are boundaries of inclusion and exclusion justified and maintained over time and how do they develop or change, both in the lifecycle of individuals, households, states and other social entities?

Property markets and financial capitalism operate with technologies and conceptual divisions of time such as rent, 'futures', 'the long and the short run', etc., imbued with particularly temporal orientations. How are such temporal orientations conceptualized among social actors and are they being redirected after the global economic crisis. This panel explores the temporal dimensions of capitalist and alternative property forms and discusses which notions of time are inherent in different claims to property, property regimes and dispositions.

*Suggested themes:* property regimes, alternative property forms, domestic economies, communism, commons, utopianism, revolution, hope, property markets and finance, debt, credit investment, property as investment

### **Political economy of property**

Any property regime distributes ownership and use rights. The concept of the political economy of property highlights property as fundamental to the capitalist economy as well as the distributive aspects of property regimes summarized in the concepts of possession and dispossession. Many property regimes operate on a zero-sum basis: my property excludes your access, an exclusion guaranteed and policed by the property regime. There is a contingent dimension to this: certain processes, rules, signs and performances made this property mine and excluded others and because those property practices differ in time and place. This makes any property regime part of the political economy.

*Suggested themes:* property as a negative or positive concept; property as quantity vs. quality; possession and dispossession; property regimes as distributive systems; conflicts over property as distributive conflicts and over the idea of property as such; the relation between economic systems and property systems

### **Property and subjectivity**

A relation exists between having and being. Rights, liberties and opportunities are often tightly connected to various property regimes as are notions of self, status and identity. This panel explores the ways in which property and personhood interacts, how different forms of ownership make for different subject positions and how our engagement with objects and places owned by us or others inform our sense of self. Property is also performed through self-descriptions as owners, caretakers, protectors, consumers etc.

*Suggested themes:* property and personhood; ownership of body; neoliberalism as updated 'possessive individualism'; corporations as persons; property regimes and identity; consumption as identity process; inequality and identity

### **Property as institution and idea: law, morality, and justice**

Property can be studied as a complex set of legal rules, as a collection of cultural practices, and as a normative idea laden with historical meaning. In this panel we will examine the complementarities and the tensions between these approaches, looking at the fits and misfits between the social institution as it is performed and the normative idea as it is articulated by theorists and practitioners. Are there good normative reasons for reforming the laws of property in various legal systems? Are there good epistemological reasons for reforming traditional ideas of property that do not seem to reflect either current law or practice? What can we learn from comparative studies of property law, practice, and ideas, across cultures?

*Suggested themes:* the changing laws and practices of property; comparative studies of property practices and ideas; 'progressive' accounts of property in law; the epistemology of property; formal and informal rules and sanctions regulating property; the rights and wrongs of property regimes; the rights and duties of those with and without property.

### **Spatialities of property**

All practices take place in space, a space that is inevitably structured by a property regime. Yet little work has been done on the various spatialities of property, neither by geographers, property theorists nor others. Nonetheless, the most important forms of property relate to geographical categories, such as territory, space, and place in that these categories are often the object of property, that which is being owned. Recently, the humanities and social sciences have been affected by the so-called spatial turn. What might a spatial turn of theorizing and analyzing property mean? Furthermore, progressive thinking about property as a non-stable product of ongoing contestation mirrors humanist conceptualizations of these geographical categories. In what ways

does this make fertilization across disciplines possible? Inviting both mainly theoretical or analytical papers, the panel explores these and related questions.

*Suggested themes:* the spatial significance of property; ownership in relation to space and place; territorial distribution of property; enclosure vs. the common