

The Research Group 'Contested Property Claims' invites to a one-day seminar on:



## **The Commons: Ideas and Practices**

**7 February 2014, 9.30-17.00**

**Preben Hornung Stuen, Aarhus University**

**Fredrik Niensens Vej 2-4, Aarhus**

9.00-9.30 Arrival and coffee

9.30-9.45 Welcome

9.45-10.45 Chris Pierson, University of Nottingham: Getting out of the commons

10.45-11.00 Break

11.00-12.00 Lucy Sargisson, University of Nottingham: Intentional communities and the commons

12.00-12.30 Jeppe Høst, University of Copenhagen: Managing the ocean commons: the problem of equal rights and private property

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.30 Jonas Holst, Universidad San Jorge: Renegotiating freedom – Urban “commoning”

14.30-15.00 Maja Hojer Bruun, Aalborg University: Claiming the Urban Commons

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-16.30 Silas Harrebye, Roskilde University: The private Commons - implications of ownership of the unconscious

16.30-17.00 Discussion

For more information contact Maja Bruun at: [mhb@learning.aau.dk](mailto:mhb@learning.aau.dk)

## **Kick-off seminar 7 February 2014: The Commons: Ideas and Practices**

Contested Property Claims: Moral Reasoning about Property and Justice in Practice, Debate and Theory

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In contemporary societies people generally acquire property within a property regime based on trade, contracts, inheritances, and welfare state redistributions. Sometimes, however, people acquire property in contested acts of expropriation and appropriation: making claims to property that interrupt the dominant system of contracts, exchanges, and so on. These contested property claims raise questions about how individuals and groups confront the norms of a dominant property regime, and illustrate how disagreements over property force social actors to reason about the institution of property as such.

The research project 'Contested Property Claims' will investigate struggles over the control of urban spaces with a special focus on the claims prompted by personal and political squatting. The project integrates studies from several disciplinary areas: an anthropological study of a contemporary social controversy over property, an intellectual history study of property-arguments in ideological and social context, a philosophical study of theories of legitimate expropriation and appropriation and a human geographical study of public spaces as arenas of political protest.

At present we are witnessing a double movement: on the one hand, a global political economic trend of 'propertization' where exclusive, and often private, property rights are attached to ever more common or public goods, and on the other hand, counter-movements with aims ranging from the establishment of immaterial, cultural, intellectual and creative commons to claiming physical space through squatting, guerrilla gardening, "Reclaim the Streets," "Occupy Wall Street" or other events to establish community ownership and challenge current property norms.

Contested Property Claims invites all interested researchers in anthropology, intellectual history, philosophy, political science, sociology, law, geography, planning, and others, to participate in the seminar series "Property in Cultural, Social, and Political Context" in 2014, beginning with a one-day seminar on "The commons: Ideas and practices".

In the February 7<sup>th</sup> one-day seminar we want to explore several aspects of 'the commons' as a normatively loaded concept and as an analytical lens on contemporary practices:

- How have political and moral controversies over the commons developed over time?
- Does the concept of 'the commons' provide social actors with a powerful alternative vision of property relations?
- Does 'the commons' provide an analytical framework for going beyond the restraining dualism of public vs. private?
- Does it provide an analytical concept for understanding not only conflicts over material resources and physical space, but also the social and cultural values of communities – from the local to the national, and perhaps even global, level?