

Problematic Objects of Property – Form, Materiality, Politics

Annual Conference of the
Collaborative Research Center
Structural Change of Property

November 4–6 2026
Jena, Rosensäle

In contemporary societies, we witness an ongoing extension of property regimes to data, cultural knowledge, human reproductive capacities, rivers, plant varieties, ecosystem services, academic teaching materials, and research results. At the same time, long-standing objects of property, such as land and housing, have been turned into chains of financial titles, such as debts and shares, that are linked to new modes of profiting and of everyday practice. In each case, the objects of property are newly delineated, transformed, and linked in favor of certain rights of use, exclusion, and income streams; they are also subjected to different forms of care or neglect.

In this conference, we take the specificity of objects as a vantage point for understanding contemporary property relations. The world is not a passive material that can be transferred seamlessly into different forms of property. The (potential) objects of property follow a logic of their own that shapes the possible forms of owning them. While nearly everything can potentially become property, the peculiar materiality of things might also defy propertization. By focusing on the “problematic objects” of property, we envisage the processes of coding and re-coding property, the limits of property regimes, as well as their contestations. Our discussions are structured by these aspects:

Formatting and Re-Coding

What are the types of objectification that create the possibility to commodify, financialize or make common use of given or novel objects of property? How are different types of objectification linked to each other, transformed, and combined in order to fit different logics of exclusion or inclusion, control or autonomy, profitability and use?

Material Limits of Property

How does the materiality of property objects support or challenge their specific property status? How is the materiality of property objects linked to normative accounts of the limits of property? What material properties are foregrounded or ignored in the reconfiguration and creation of property?

Politics of Propertization

The coding and formatting of property objects is part of processes such as financialization, digitalization, ecological transformation, the reorganization of social reproduction and public infrastructures, and it is linked to contested divisions between public and private, distributions of use and gain, and access and exclusion. Counter-movements such as municipalization, cooperative production, and ecological conversion aim to re-format property objects and mobilize their material affordances against established property regimes. How is the materiality of the objects of property at stake in the politics of propertization and re- or de-propertization?



STRUCTURAL CHANGE
OF PROPERTY

The conference is organized by the Collaborative Research Centre (Sonderforschungsbereich) 294 *Structural Change of Property*.

Registration

You can register for the conference at:
sfb294-eigentum.de/en/events/

Please register separately for the city walk!

Venue

Rosensäle Universität Jena
Fürstengraben 27
07743 Jena

Information

More information about the conference and the Collaborative Research Centre can be found at:
www.sfb294-eigentum.de.



FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-
UNIVERSITÄT
JENA



Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) – Projektnummer 424638267 – TRR 294

November 4

2:00–3:30 pm	City walk in Jena Walking the Scene – Problematic Objects of Property	
4:00–6:00 pm	Pre-Conference Event Geschichte und Zukunft des Kapitalismus © Kim Siebenhüner und Silke van Dyk im Gespräch mit: Sven Beckert Harvard University Rahel Jaeggi Humboldt University Berlin	Rosensäle

Annual Conference

November 4

	Rosensäle
6:30 pm	Welcome/ Introduction
7:00 pm	Keynote Property as Appropriation of the Future Timothy Mitchell Columbia University

9:00 pm	Reception
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November 5

	Rosensäle		
9:00–10:30 am	Form (Formatting and Re-Coding)		
	<table><tr><td>Panel 1 Property Objects in Reproductive Economies: Substances, Capacities, Infrastructures Catherine Waldby © Australian National University Sigrid Vertommen © University of Amsterdam, Ghent University</td><td>Panel 2 Property in Digital Goods: The Technological and Legal Reformatting of Information and Data Anna-Verena Nosthoff University of Oldenburg Malte Engeler Structural Integrity Collective Simon Gurisch SFB Structural Change of Property</td></tr></table>	Panel 1 Property Objects in Reproductive Economies: Substances, Capacities, Infrastructures Catherine Waldby © Australian National University Sigrid Vertommen © University of Amsterdam, Ghent University	Panel 2 Property in Digital Goods: The Technological and Legal Reformatting of Information and Data Anna-Verena Nosthoff University of Oldenburg Malte Engeler Structural Integrity Collective Simon Gurisch SFB Structural Change of Property
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10:30–10:45 am	Break
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November 5

	Rosensäle		
10:45–12:15 am	Keynote Land as a Problematic Property Object K-Sue Park University of California, Los Angeles		
12:15–1:15 pm	Lunch Break		
1:15–2:45 pm	<table><tr><td>Panel 3 Property in Land: Agriculture, Infrastructures, Territory Christian Lund University of Copenhagen Laura Calbet University of Stuttgart Anne Tittor Johannes Kepler University Linz</td><td>Panel 4 Property in Non-Human Organisms: Regimes of Owning Plant Varieties Jocelyn Bosse Queen’s University Belfast Veit Braun University of Augsburg Maria Gerullis University of Göttingen</td></tr></table>	Panel 3 Property in Land: Agriculture, Infrastructures, Territory Christian Lund University of Copenhagen Laura Calbet University of Stuttgart Anne Tittor Johannes Kepler University Linz	Panel 4 Property in Non-Human Organisms: Regimes of Owning Plant Varieties Jocelyn Bosse Queen’s University Belfast Veit Braun University of Augsburg Maria Gerullis University of Göttingen
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2:45–3:00 pm	Break		
3:00–4:30 am	Matter (Material Limits of Property)		
	<table><tr><td>Panel 5 Property of ›Natural Resources‹ – Problems and Strategies of Owning Water Andrea Ballestero University of Southern California Madeleine Moore University of New South Wales Andrea Muehlebach University of Bremen</td><td>Panel 6 Properties of Knowledge: Ways of Owning and Financing Universities Mads Hansen University of Technology of Compiègne João Gabriel Vasconcellos Godoy Independent researcher</td></tr></table>	Panel 5 Property of ›Natural Resources‹ – Problems and Strategies of Owning Water Andrea Ballestero University of Southern California Madeleine Moore University of New South Wales Andrea Muehlebach University of Bremen	Panel 6 Properties of Knowledge: Ways of Owning and Financing Universities Mads Hansen University of Technology of Compiègne João Gabriel Vasconcellos Godoy Independent researcher
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	Student Forum © (Re-)Conceptualizing Property: Making Sense of Societal Transformation. Student Perspectives on Structural Change Fachschaftsrat Soziologie		
4:30–4:45 am	Break		

November 5

	Rosensäle		
4:45–6:15 pm	<table><tr><td>Panel 7 Property and Wildlife in a More-than-Human World Bram Büscher Wageningen University Stéphanie Domptail Justus Liebig University, Gießen Léa Lacan University of Cologne Selma Lendelvo University of Namibia</td><td>Panel 8 Property in Housing: Wealth, Assetization, Financialization and Use Hanna Hilbrandt University of Zurich Cody Hochstenbach University of Amsterdam</td></tr></table>	Panel 7 Property and Wildlife in a More-than-Human World Bram Büscher Wageningen University Stéphanie Domptail Justus Liebig University, Gießen Léa Lacan University of Cologne Selma Lendelvo University of Namibia	Panel 8 Property in Housing: Wealth, Assetization, Financialization and Use Hanna Hilbrandt University of Zurich Cody Hochstenbach University of Amsterdam
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6:15 – 6:30 pm	Break		
6:30–8:00 pm	Keynote Operational Property Quinn Slobodian © Boston University		

November 6

	Rosensäle		
9:00–10:30 am	Politics of Propertization		
	<table><tr><td>Panel 9 Property and State Sovereignty: Geopolitically Contested Resources and Infrastructures Alke Jenss Albert Bergstrasser Institute, Freiburg Oliver Prausmüller University of Vienna Stefan Schmalz, Mara Schaffer SFB Structural Change of Property</td><td>Panel 10 Racial Capitalism: The Long-Term Consequences of Enslavement and Humans as Property Objects Chi Hyun Kim Humboldt University Berlin Grit Grigoleit-Richter University of Passau Felix Krämer SFB Structural Change of Property</td></tr></table>	Panel 9 Property and State Sovereignty: Geopolitically Contested Resources and Infrastructures Alke Jenss Albert Bergstrasser Institute, Freiburg Oliver Prausmüller University of Vienna Stefan Schmalz, Mara Schaffer SFB Structural Change of Property	Panel 10 Racial Capitalism: The Long-Term Consequences of Enslavement and Humans as Property Objects Chi Hyun Kim Humboldt University Berlin Grit Grigoleit-Richter University of Passau Felix Krämer SFB Structural Change of Property
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10:30–11:00 am	Break		
11:00–1:00 pm	Concluding Roundtable Problematic and Contested Objects of Property Petra Gümplová, Varun Patil, Tilman Reitz, Michael Schwind, Ute Tellmann, Lisa Vollmer SFB Structural Change of Property		
1:00 pm	End of Conference		