PhD Course

Governance at the Edge of the State: Public authority and property in conflict environments

September 8-11, 2015, University of Copenhagen.

The Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, the Conflict Research Group, Ghent University, and the Department of Geography, University of Zürich, in collaboration with Roskilde University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences organize a four-day PhD course from 8-11 September 2015.

The theme of the course is Governance at the Edge of the state: Public authority and property in conflict environments. The study of public authority has proven to be one of the most fertile fields to gain a better understanding about everyday governance practices in violent settings. Starting as reaction to the stereotypic depiction of conflict zones as anarchic and lawless, scholars from various disciplines have tried to identify how a wide variety of institutions, which cannot be solely attributed to the state, operate and perform in these areas. Rather than starting from normative ideal-type depictions of how states should function, this research starts from an empirically grounded analysis of the social relations and power structures that attempt to shape and organize public authority in contexts of conflict and violence. A particular arena where these daily negotiations and contestations can be discerned is property. Apart from an understanding of property as a material good such as land or housing central to everyday livelihoods, property is also and foremost approached as a relational and social concept, more specific as a particular claim, which is enforced towards other people. Property understood in this sense allows grappling with the mechanism in which people both access property and how claims to property are produced, enforced and disputed within daily social encounters.

This course responds to a growing demand for guidance and feedback from PhD students that are developing their thesis within this new field of research. It wants to bring together PhD students from a number of disciplines in social sciences and humanities with some of the protagonists of the current debate on power, public authority and property. Combining the methodological and conceptual capacities of three research groups (each of the organizing centers having a large experience in the study of daily forms of governance and the conceptualization of public authority and property), it aims for a better understanding of the complex relations between public authority and property in conflict settings. Through lectures by leading authors in these debates and the in-depth discussion of PhD student’s research papers by these international experts, it provides a key opportunity not only for PhD students to present and discuss their work with senior researchers in the field, but also to further the debate in this emerging field.
Specifically, the learning objectives of the course are:

- That participants are knowledgeable about major contributions to the study of resource conflicts and non-statutory and statutory public authorities
- That participants are knowledgeable about theoretical and methodological approaches,
- That participants are able to critically assess their own and others’ work on non-statutory and statutory and deliver constructive criticism to their peers

Programme

There will be daily lectures by senior experts and parallel working group sessions with in-depth discussions of the participants’ research papers by the senior experts. A detailed program will be communicated shortly after approval of your application.

Lecturers

- Professor Michael Watts, UC Berkeley
- Professor Nancy Peluso, UC Berkeley
- Professor Koen Vlassenroot, University of Ghent
- Associate Professor Bert Suykens, University of Ghent
- Professor Benedikt Korf, University of Zürich
- Associate professor, Tim Raeymaekers, University of Zürich
- Professor Andrea Nightingale, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Associate professor Tobias Hagmann, University of Roskilde
- Professor Christian Lund, University of Copenhagen

Practicalities

The course will be open to around 25 participants. We invite applications from PhD students from (but not limited to) social sciences whose research project is in line with the thematic scope of the course. Their work should be based on extensive fieldwork.

Candidates can apply by sending both a 1 page CV and a 1000 words outline of the research paper they want to discuss at the course. This outline should specify how their PhD project relates to the overall theme of this course and give clear indications on the theoretical and methodological approach adopted. Applications should be sent to Susanne Weibel (sw@ifro.ku.dk) no later than May 1st 2015. Successful applicants will be notified by June 1st 2015.

The participant’s fee is 200 €. Lunch on all days and one dinner will be provided. Participants will have to cover own transport and accommodation.

Working language: English.

ECTS points for participation: 5.