

OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

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“Does Ownership to Groundwater Still Matter? A Peek into European Models of Groundwater Resources Ownership”



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12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

In this time of public administration of natural resources, Does ownership still matter for public access to water and sustainable use? During the last decades, several European national legislations changed groundwater ownership models from private to publicly controlled ownership models. The study shows that private ownership of groundwater rights is more common in the northern parts of Europe whilst in the middle and the southern parts, state ownership or ownership by the citizens is more widely used. All ownership models have imperfections regarding public access and protection of groundwater, and achieving these aims will require some sort of societal control beyond what an ownership model alone can offer. The paper demonstrates, especially through examples from Nordic legislation, that public access and control of groundwater can be exercised in countries with private ownership of the resource. Further, the author argues that who owns the groundwater is of less importance in our day because of the public administration and regulation of the resource, but that ownership is still of importance for both the owner and the public.



[Gunnhild Storbekkrønning Solli](#) is a PhD fellow in the Department of Public and International Law at the University of Oslo, Norway. Her research project concerns groundwater management in Norway and includes investigation into areas such as environmental law, public administrative law, and property law. Her research examines the interaction between public regulation and different ownership models in the management of groundwater in Norway, assessing whether current legislation promotes socioeconomic efficiency, sustainability, and public access to water.

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).