

*Call for papers*

**Tracing social problems and racialization in Europe:  
social control, violence and ethnic others**

**An interdisciplinary conference hosted by**

**Roskilde University, Denmark**

**4 - 5 November, 2019**

**Keynotes by**

- Professor Claire Alexander, University of Manchester
- Professor Suvi Keskinen, University of Helsinki
- Professor Thomas Ugelvik, University of Oslo

**Conference theme**

European mass media and politics have over the years articulated shifting, urgent social problems – from honor-based violence, social control, youth gangs, to radicalized and terror-prone Muslims. Images of suppressed Muslim women, urban deprivation, ghettoization, and the underclass combined with growing fears surrounding national security and masculinities-in-crisis position ethnic minorities, and especially Muslims, as a recurrent folk devil in European imaginaries (cf. Alexander 2000).

While claims makers declare a given condition as of urgent concern for society – charting a problem that must be addressed including directing ways and means of solving it – others respond to those claims and rework them. Put differently, social problems go through societal processes of construction ('discovery'), reconstruction and consolidation by various stakeholders as the media, the general public, social workers, policymakers, and critics engage in assessing the effectiveness of the policy in question.

Focusing on how certain behaviours, actions or norms in Europe come to be understood – problematized and suggested solved – as social problems, this conference explores how racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender formations play into the emergence, and consolidation, of some practices as social problems.

Whereas some strands of research tie social problems such as social control to an inner, cultural essence in ethnic minority-individuals and primarily explore cultural and religious dynamics within the ethnic minority individuals, families and communities, other studies turn to the consequences of what is understood as an institutionalization of a culturalist line of thought (cf. Keskinen 2017). This strand of research problematizes culturalist discourses, including the intervention programs such discourses give rise to, for being nationalist, racialized and securitized and takes the alternative route of exploring the consequences of the discourses' institutionalization. While this approach

includes analyses of majority politics, media discourses and intervention programs concerning the minority cultures and individuals deemed defective, the first approach primarily explores discourses, norms and practices in ethnic minority families and communities, relating them to culture, race or religion. Notably, the two strands of research rarely consider how both aspects feed into one another when practices around social problems such as social control occur.

Approaching social control, violence and youth gangs as particularly discernible examples of racialized social problems that have gained vast attention, we look to historicize and contextualize these, and related, issues (cf. Ugelvik 2019). We encourage examinations of interactions between majority politics, institutionalization of discourses and intervention programs — and critical engagements with other structural conditions — as well as explorations of ethnic minority practices and dynamics surrounding diverse forms of issues deemed social problems.

For this two-day conference, we invite papers that explore the overlap between social issues and racialization and deal with one or more of the following topics:

1. **Tracing racialized social problems in European societies.** How do social agents, such as social workers, researchers, media associates, politicians, and/or ethnic minorities constitute, and/or co-constitute, social issues as racialized social problems? In what ways are race/ethnicity, religion, age, social class and gender ascribed meanings in both public and private majority and minority discourses on social problems? To what extent, and in what ways, do the discourses affect the ethnic minority individuals in question?
2. **Societal processes of xenophobia and stereotyping.** How do processes of moral panic, stereotyping and islamophobia, etc., influence how social issues are framed as social problems? What is the problem represented to be? How is the social problem in question suggested solved? How do processes of moral panic, stereotyping and islamophobia, etc., influence institutionalizations of, and practices within, social work? And how do social workers 'act back' on public discourses?
3. **Tackling ethno-religious otherness.** How do we, in comprehensive ways, address social issues that fall between 'race' and racialization, culture and culturalism, group and individualization, differentiation and identity, particularization and universalization?

### **Abstract submission**

The deadline for submitting proposals for individual papers is due 21 June, 2019. Please submit a title and abstract of about 300 words, in addition to a short bio (max 150 words) that includes author name, institutional affiliation and contact info.

Please submit your abstract and bio by using this link: <https://events.ruc.dk/racialization/the-event.html>

Please send any enquiries to [liebmann@ruc.dk](mailto:liebmann@ruc.dk)

**Important dates**

Deadline for abstract submission:	21 June, 2019
Notification of abstract acceptance:	9 August, 2019
Draft conference program published:	1 September, 2019
Deadline for conference registration:	1 October, 2019
Final conference program published:	15 October, 2019
Conference:	4 - 5 November, 2019

**Practical information**

The conference will begin on 4 November, 2019 at 9 am and finish on 5 November at 5 pm. Lunch, coffee, tea, and cold drinks will be provided, on both days of the conference, for all registered participants.

The conference is free of charge. Participants are asked to organize travel and accommodation at their own expense.

**Conference host**

The conference is hosted by the project '[Power and \(im\)possibilities: Between structures of inequality and honour culture](#)' and [Department of Communication and Arts at Roskilde University](#).